



STUDENT HANDBOOK

 *2026-2027* 





Welcome to Health Sciences Charter School

Introduction

To achieve our mission, every member of the Health Sciences Charter School must respect the rights of all members of the community. This means creating and maintaining an environment that is physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe, orderly, and conducive to learning. The information in this handbook provides the guidelines for all of the behaviors and expectations that will assist in creating a positive environment in which each student, parent, and teacher can contribute to and learn from.

Mission Statement

To provide school age youth with an academically challenging learning environment that prepares them to communicate effectively, think and reason critically, value diversity, engage in service learning, pursue academic excellence, obtain sustainable and quality careers in the healthcare industry and become productive and valued members of the community.

Our Purpose

The primary purpose of Health Sciences Charter School is to provide a seamless educational experience from early childhood through high school graduation. We equip students with the foundational academic skills, critical thinking, and social-emotional development needed to succeed at every grade level, while empowering them to pursue higher education and meaningful careers in the growing health sciences field.

Essential Partners PLC Statement

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) of the Health Sciences Charter School is an extended learning opportunity intended to foster collaborative learning among the students, faculty, staff, parents and professional partners within the school. The school curriculum is designed to extend the classroom practice into the community and bring different community personnel into the school to enhance the learning of the students. Although all individuals are responsible for their own actions, feelings and opinions, it is the common good of the community that guides the decision making at Health Sciences Charter School



A Message from your Principal

Dear Students,

On behalf of the Health Sciences Charter School, it is my pleasure to share the **2026-2027 student handbook with you**. Please take the time to review the information in this handbook, both as a student and with your family. The handbook outlines the rules, expectations, and information necessary for a successful year at Health Sciences.

This school year, we're renewing our academic focus and ask that you pay special attention to our restorative practices, uniform policies and cell phone policy. We need your cooperation to remove all distractions so we can focus on learning and student success.

This year promises to be full of exciting learning opportunities, with increased options for sports, after-school activities, and numerous college and career-focused events. Whether you plan to enter the workforce, attend college, join the military, or provide service to others, now is the time to start. Our dedicated staff is here to help you achieve your goals and is looking forward to supporting you on your journey.

We encourage you to partner with your teachers, seek out extra help, take advantage of our extracurricular clubs and activities, and explore the many work-based learning opportunities available throughout the year to maximize your high school experience.

We are looking forward to a wonderful school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nichole Walls".

Nichole Walls
Health Sciences Charter School
Principal



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Calendars/Schedules

Academic Schedule

HEALTH SCIENCES CHARTER SCHOOL | 2026-2027 CALENDAR

AUGUST '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

6 (0) DAYS IN SESSION

SEPTEMBER '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

21 (20) DAYS IN SESSION

OCTOBER '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

21 (21) DAYS IN SESSION

NOVEMBER '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

18 (18) DAYS IN SESSION

DECEMBER '26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

17 (17) DAYS IN SESSION

JANUARY '27						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

19 (18) DAYS IN SESSION

*Teachers complete 1 week of PD in August-ANY additional week.
19-20 - AUGUST REGENTS EXAMS
24-26 - NEW TEACHERS RETURN
27-31 - SUPERINTENDENTS DAYS

1 - SUPERINTENDENTS DAY
2 - FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
7 - LABOR DAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)
25 - HS PEP RALLY

2 - END OF 5 WEEKS
7 - PROGRESS REPORTS DUE
12 - INDIGENOUS PEOPLES & ITALIAN HERITAGE DAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)
14 - SAT (SENIORS) & PSAT (JUNIORS) HS ASYNC*

6 - Q1 ENDS
11 - VETERANS DAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)/Q1 REPORT CARDS DUE
25 - HALF DAY (DAY OF SERVICE)
26 - 27 - THANKSGIVING BREAK (SCHOOL CLOSED)

11 - END OF 15 WEEKS
16 - PROGRESS REPORTS DUE
21-23 - HOLIDAY DRIVE
24-31 - WINTER BREAK (NO SCHOOL)
24-25 - CHRISTMAS (SCHOOL CLOSED)

1 - NEW YEAR'S DAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)
18 - MLK DAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)
22 - END OF QUARTER
26-28 - HS REGENTS EXAMS
29 - RATING DAY (NO STUDENTS)

FEBRUARY '27						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

14 (14) DAYS IN SESSION

MARCH '27						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

18 (18) DAYS IN SESSION

APRIL '27						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

20 (19) DAYS IN SESSION

MAY '27						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

20 (20) DAYS IN SESSION

JUNE '27						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

18 (17) DAYS IN SESSION

3 - Q2 GRADES DUE
5 - LUNAR NEW YEAR OBSERVANCE (CLOSED)
15 - PRESIDENTS DAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)
16- 19 - MID-WINTER BREAK (NO SCHOOL)

10 - EID AL-IFTR (SCHOOL CLOSED)
12 - END OF 25 WEEKS
17 - PROGRESS REPORTS DUE & SAT (JUNIOR) ASYNC*
26 - GOOD FRIDAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)
29 - EASTER MONDAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)
26-31 - SPRING BREAK (NO SCHOOL)

1-2 - SPRING BREAK (NO SCHOOL)
7-8 - SEMESTER 2 9-12 INTERIM EXAMS/ 7&8 ELA EXAM
9 - LAST DAY OF QUARTER 3/RATING DAY (NO STUDENTS)
14 - REPORT CARD GRADES DUE
28-29 - 8th GRADE SCIENCE EXAM
PSAT (SOPHOMORE) ASYNC* TBD
WIDA Speaking Window Open* TBD

12-13 - 7 & 8 MATH EXAM
14 - END OF 25 WEEKS/PROM - HALF DAY/7&8 RATING DAY
19 - PROGRESS REPORTS DUE/SENIOR DINNER
31 - MEMORIAL DAY (SCHOOL CLOSED)

14 - UNIVERSAL REGENTS PREP DAY
15- 24 - REGENTS EXAMS
18 - JUNETEENTH OBSERVANCE (SCHOOL CLOSED)
24 - END OF 4TH QUARTER, LAST DAY OF CLASSES, FINAL GRADES DUE, GRADUATION REHEARSAL
25 - RATING DAY/GRADUATION

Key: 192 TEACHER - 4 SUPER DAYS - 182 STUDENT DAYS IN SESSION

Superintendent's Day
Quarter 3
Breaks/NO SCHOOL/SCHOOL CLOSED
Quarter 2
Quarter 1
Rating Days
Quarter 4
Regents/Local/SAT & PSAT/3-8 NYSED Exams
Half Days

Calendars/Schedules

Bell Schedule

Blocks	Monday-Friday
All Staff PLC	8:00-8:40
1st BLOCK	8:40-10:00
2nd BLOCK	10:03-11:23
CREW/LUNCH 1	11:26-11:56
LUNCH 2/9th CREW	11:59-12:29
GAP 1	12:32-12:38
LUNCH 3	12:41-1:11
GAP 2	1:13-1:20
LUNCH 4	1:22-1:52
4th BLOCK	1:55-3:15

Academics

Academic Information

1. **Marking Periods:** Health Sciences Charter School operates on four (4) Marking Periods (MP) per school year for all grade levels (K, 7–8, 9–12).
2. **Grading & Passing Standards:**
 - a. **Kindergarten:** Student progress is evaluated using standards-based performance indicators (e.g., Exceeds, Meets, Approaching, or Below Standard) aligned with NYS Next Generation Learning Standards, rather than numerical averages.
 - b. **Grades 7-12:** Numerical grades are calculated for each course, with **65%** designated as the minimum passing grade. Final course averages combine the four marking period grades and local or state final examinations.
3. **State Assessments & Final Exams:**
 - a. **Elementary (Kindergarten):** Screener and diagnostic assessments are conducted throughout the year to track foundational literacy and numeracy growth.
 - b. **Middle School (Grades 7–8):** Students take mandatory NYS Grade 7 & 8 ELA and Mathematics assessments, as well as the Grade 8 Elementary-Level Science Test. Teachers may opt to substitute required state assessment scores or end-of-year projects for local final exam grades.
 - c. **High School (Grades 9–12):** Students complete local final exams, course projects, or NYS Regents Examinations. Regents scores are factored into final grades per course policy.
4. **Promotion & Credit Requirements:**
 - a. **Kindergarten & Grades 7–8:** Academic promotion is based on overall mastery of NYSED grade-level standards, attendance, and targeted intervention outcomes.
 - b. **Grades 9–12:** Course credit is earned on a credit-accumulation basis. High school students must pass all core required subjects and corresponding Regents exams (65% or higher) to earn course credit and fulfill diploma requirements.
5. **Summer Programming:**
 - a. **Mandatory Four-Week Summer Session:** All enrolled students participate in the mandatory four-week summer session as part of the school's extended-year model.
 - b. **Credit Recovery & Remediation:** High school students who fail a core course must enroll in summer credit recovery. Middle school students failing core content areas will participate in targeted academic remediation during the summer session.

High Honors and Honor Roll

In order to be eligible for the High Honors designation, a student must have an overall grade point average of 90 with no grade lower than an 85.

In order to be eligible for the Honor Roll designation, a student must have an overall grade point average of 85 with no grade lower than an 80.

Graduation & Academic Program Requirements

These Graduation Requirements are subject to change based on the New York State Board of Regents Approval

Middle School Academic Requirements (Grades 7–8)

To ensure middle school students are prepared for high school level work, NYSED requires completion of specific units of study across 7th and 8th grades. Students must successfully complete instruction in:

- **English Language Arts (ELA):** 2 units of study
- **Social Studies:** 2 units of study
- **Mathematics:** 2 units of study
- **Science:** 2 units of study
- **Physical Education:** Participation required every year
- **Health Education:** ½ unit of study
- **Art and/or Music:** 1 unit of study total
- **Technology Education / Family & Consumer Sciences:** Required units of study integrated into the 7–8 curriculum
- **World Languages (LOTE):** 1 unit of study by the end of 8th grade

Required Courses

Please see the following course credit requirements to obtain a Local Diploma, a Regents Diploma, and a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation.

	Type of Diploma and Credits Required		
Course	Local Diploma	Regents Diploma	Regents with Advanced Designation
English	4	4	4
Social Studies	4	4	4
Math	3	3	3
Science	3	3	3
LOTE/Second Language	1	1	3
Art/Music	1	1	1
Health	.50	.50	.50
Physical Education	2	2	2
Electives	3.5	3.5	1.5
Total Credits	22.0	22.0	22.0

Additional Notes Regarding the Various Diploma Options and Credit Requirements

- Students are only eligible to receive a Local Diploma if they receive Special Education services through identification by the Committee on Special Education. These students are eligible to take a Regents Competency Test (RCT) to satisfy State Exam Requirements in each of the five Subject Areas.
- An integrated course in Mathematics, Science, or Technology may be used to satisfy the third credit in Math or Science for a Local Regents Diploma. Please see a School Counselor for specific details.
- In lieu of the three required credits of LOTE, a student may substitute a five credit sequence in Art, Fine Art, Business, Technology or Career Education. Please refer to the Course Selection Book located on the school website for more detailed information www.healthsciencescharterschool.org.

Additional Graduation Requirements

All students are required to complete 100 hours of community service to graduate. We recommend that students make the effort to complete 25 hours of community service each year so they do not need to try and cram 100 hours in at the end of their senior year.

Summer Programming

Health Sciences Charter School operates on a year-round educational schedule. All enrolled students across Kindergarten, Middle School (Grades 7–8), and High School (Grades 9–12) participate in a mandatory four-week summer session.

College Courses

The college courses program requires that students must have an 80% by the end of the 3rd quarter to be selected. They must also successfully complete all academic requirements.

Summer School Eligibility

- **High School Credit Recovery & Summer School Eligibility (Grades 9–12):**
 - High school students may participate in up to two courses during summer school.
 - To be eligible for course credit recovery, students must have an end-of-year grade between 55% and 64% and an attendance rate of at least 80% in the course.
 - Students must complete 30 hours of class instruction per course. Upon successful completion, a grade of "65" will be recorded on the student's transcript.
 - **Regents Examination Prep:** High school students who pass a course but fail the corresponding NYS Regents Exam are required to complete a one-week Regents review course in August before retaking the examination.
- **Elementary & Middle School Remediation (Kindergarten & Grades 7–8):**
 - K–8 summer programming focuses on foundational literacy, math skills, and targeted academic remediation to support grade-level readiness for the upcoming school year.

New York State Regents Exam Failures: Students who pass the course but fail the New York State Regents examination will be required to attend a one week review course for Regents prep and take the Regents exam in August.

SAT and ACT Testing

Typically, students in grade 11 take the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) towards the end of the academic year, usually in April, May or June. The SAT is a three hour and forty five minute test that measures critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing abilities. It is essential to pay attention to the deadlines of this testing.

Many students also take the ACT (American College Testing Program). Depending on a student's strengths, he/she may score higher on the SAT or the ACT. Health Sciences Charter

School recommends that students take both exams. Specific questions or concerns regarding the SAT or ACT can be answered through the registration bulletins or Guidance Department at the school.

The fees for these tests range from \$45.00-\$60.00. Students who receive free or reduced lunch are eligible to receive fee waivers. Please see the Guidance Department for further information. Registration can be done online.

SAT: www.collegeboard.com/reg

ACT: www.actstudent.org

Health Sciences Charter School's Code is: 335577

Academic Integrity (All Grades)

Students at Health Sciences Charter School are expected to submit work for evaluation that has been completed solely by that student, unless group assignments have been designated to. Academic integrity is expected to be maintained at all times. Students should remember that any information taken from a written source must be appropriately documented/cited or that constitutes plagiarism. If a student is found cheating, it will become a disciplinary matter that may be punishable by loss of credit for that assignment and/or further consequences. Students who are unclear about assignments should get instructions from the teacher in writing.

Violations of Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of research data, destruction or misuse of the schools' academic resources, and academic misconduct. This policy applies to all Health Sciences Charter School courses, program requirements, and learning environments in which academic credit is offered, including service learning courses, study abroad program, and internships. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in academic and behavioral consequences dependent on the offense and severity.

1. **Cheating:** Cheating is any action that breaches school expectations or academic guidelines. This includes unlawful access to examination materials; use or temporary ownership of unauthorized materials during a quiz or exam; unauthorized assistance by other students or acceptance of such assistance.
2. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is any action that promotes academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. The intentional and deliberate copying of any resource, written and verbal, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that is the work of another.
 - b. Tendering work of someone else or completing an assignment as one's own work.
 - c. The use of another's work or idea without proper acknowledgement.
3. **Fabrication or Falsification of Research Data:** Fabrication or falsification of research data is any action that misrepresents or purposely alters the process and results of academic research and analysis. This includes but is not limited to: falsifying data as part of a lab, service learning requirement or any other academic endeavor.
4. **Destruction or Misuse of School's Academic Resources:** Destruction or misuse of the school's academic resources includes but is not limited to: unauthorized access to or use of school resources including material and equipment, theft, intentionally damaging library materials and improper use of school computers relative to the educational integrity of the institution. Violations of this nature may also fall under the Student Code of Conduct.
5. **Academic Misconduct:** Academic misconduct is any action that intentionally discourages the responsible and appropriate sharing of ideas inside the learning environment. This includes but is not limited to any attempt to exploit a classmate or classroom instructor for educational gain, persistent aggressive, hostile, or threatening

treatment of a classmate or classroom instructor, advisor or other school personnel and/or actions or behavior that violate standards for ethical academic behavior established by Health Sciences Charter School. Violation of this nature may also fall under the Student Code of Conduct.

Intervention Services:

At HSCS, we understand that each student has different needs and learning styles. It is our goal to meet each of our diverse learners as best as we can. Therefore, HSCS has the Response to Intervention Team (RTI). This team was established to enable teachers to meet student's unique educational needs. The team is composed of a combination of teacher/s, School Counselor, School Nurse, and an Assistant Principal. The team meets to discuss interventions and strategies based on data and research to assist struggling students. Progress is also closely monitored to ensure students are successful.

Attendance

Attendance/Tardy Policy

All students in Kindergarten, Middle School (Grades 7–8), and High School (Grades 9–12) are expected to attend school every day instruction is in session unless excused.

- **Written Explanation Required:** All absences require a written note signed by a parent/guardian or medical provider detailing the reason for the absence within three (3) days of returning to school. A parent/guardian may excuse a child for up to two consecutive days.
- **Compulsory Education Age (K & Grades 7–8):** Under NYS law, regular attendance is required for students of compulsory school age. Unexcused absences for K–8 students will trigger student support team reviews, parent conferences, and attendance improvement plans to resolve barriers to attendance.
- **Course Credit & Attendance Policy (Grades 9–12):** At the high school level, classroom participation and attendance directly impact course credit. High school students who accumulate sixteen (16) or more unexcused absences in a full-year course (or a prorated number for half-year courses) may be denied academic credit for that course.

Definitions

- Absent - The student is not in the school building for the entire day or does not attend the assigned class during the entire period of time allotted for that class.
- Tardy - A student enters the building after the designated arrival time or a student enters a class after the designated start time.
- Truancy - Truancy is the unlawful absence or irregular attendance upon instruction by a student of compulsory education age. A significant, unexcused absentee rate has a detrimental effect on the child's education.

Based upon the students of Health Sciences Charter School, the school's education and community needs, values and priorities, HSCS has determined that absences and tardiness will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standard:

Excused	Unexcused
Personal Illness	Family Vacation
Illness or Death in the Family	Babysitting
Unsafe Travel Conditions	Hair Cut
Religious Observance	Obtaining Learner's Permit or License
Medical Appointments	Oversleeping
Quarantine	Missed Bus
Required Court Appearances	Private Instruction
Approved College Visit	Wedding
Approved Cooperative Work	Any other reason not listed in "Excused" List
Late Bus Verified by NFTA Personnel	

Every student is to attend school for instruction for the entire time that it is in session, unless there is an excused reason for not attending school. Any absence not included as excused is considered unexcused. Each absence must be accounted for and a written explanation of the absence, signed by the parent/guardian, must be presented by the student following each absence within three days.

Truancy

New York State Law requires that a student attends school every day. Truancy will not be tolerated. A parent conference and disciplinary consequences will result.

- Students with attendance concerns will have letters sent home frequently to advise parents/guardians of any attendance concerns.
- Students with attendance concerns will be referred to the School Counselor/Social Worker.
- Students and Parents/Guardians will attend an “Attendance Hearing”.

Entering School Tardy

It is crucial that students arrive on time to school in order to have a successful school day. Therefore, the following policy has been established:

Tardy students in grades 7-12 will face automatic detention that will be served with teacher or administrative detention. Additional tardiness will result in additional consequences, which includes a parent meeting, enrollment in an Attendance Improvement Program and personal accountability training. In the case of an extreme circumstance, a determination of consequences will be made by an administrative member.

Entering Class Tardy

Students in grades 7-12 are provided with three minutes of transition time between classes and are expected to arrive at class before the bell. Weekly tardiness is tracked and in the event that a student fails to arrive to class on time, the following consequences are in place:

- Each Tardy per day = 15 minutes of after school detention
- Students who are frequently tardy will be reviewed by administration to determine corrective action.

Student Attendance and Course Credit

Health Sciences Charter School believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student’s performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student’s final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work. Consequently, for each marking period a certain percentage of a student’s final grade will be based on classroom participation as well as the student’s performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. as determined by the building administrator and or classroom teacher. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student’s grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the

marking period. NYS requires students to complete 1200 minutes of labs in science courses. Students that fail to complete the required lab minutes will be deemed ineligible for the science Regents Exams. In addition, students who have sixteen (16) unexcused absences in a course will not receive credit for the class.

Unexcused Absences and Assigned Coursework

Transfer students and students re enrolling will be expected to attend a prorated minimum number of the scheduled class meetings during their time of enrollment. Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class schedule meeting time.

Working pursuant to an approved independent study program.

Receiving approved alternative instruction.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school sponsored activity are to arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher. Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness or early departure, it shall be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up missed work.

Student Notification

In order to ensure that parents/persons in parental relation and students are informed of School's policy and the implementation of specific intervention strategies to be employed, the following guidelines shall be followed:

1. Health Sciences Charter School will provide a copy of the Attendance Policy to each student.
2. The policy will also be included in the Student Handbook which will be distributed to all students.
3. An orientation session for students will take place upon adoption of the policy at the beginning of each school year and/or upon registration of new students.

Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, HSCS will develop and implement grade appropriate/level strategies and programs including, but not limited to:

- Attendance honor rolls will be posted in prominent places in the school and included in the newsletters, and, with parental approval, in community publications.
- Monthly drawings for prizes at each grade level to reward perfect attendance.
- Grade level rewards for best attendance.
- Classroom acknowledgement of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificated, recognition chart, bulletin boards)
- Assemblies collaboratively developed and promoted by student council, administration, PTA and other community groups to promote good attendance.

Food Service

Food Service Information

Health Sciences Charter School participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) which is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students.

Schools that adopt CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students categorically eligible for free meals based on their participation in other specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). To learn more information about the program we use, please visit the following link:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>

All enrolled students will receive one free breakfast and one free lunch per full school day. Second meals and a la carte Smart Snacks are available for purchase daily by cash or electronic transfer of funds to individual MySchoolBucks student accounts (information provided below). All students enrolled in the After School Program will receive a free Smart Snack.

MYSCHOOLBUCKS:

Easily pay for school meals online this year! Create your free MySchoolBucks account to conveniently and securely add money to your student's meal account online or with the mobile app. You'll be able to view cafeteria purchases, check your student's balance, receive low balance alerts and pay for snacks and additional meals! As a reminder, ALL students receive 1 free breakfast and 1 free lunch each school day. Purchases are not necessary unless students are buying a la carte snacks or extra food beyond their free meal. We appreciate you using this online option as a way to help reduce the amount of physical cash and check handling that would typically happen in the serving line. If you need assistance with your account, you can find helpful how-to videos and answers to commonly asked questions by visiting myschoolbucks.com. Or, you can contact MySchoolBucks directly by logging into your account to start a chat conversation or give them a call at (855) 832-5226.

Get Started Today:

1. Go to myschoolbucks.com or download the mobile app
 2. Create your free account and add your students using their school name / student ID
 3. Add funds using your credit / debit card or electronic check
- Note: For each transaction, you will be charged a program fee.
4. Set up automatic payments and never forget to send in lunch money again!

Eating in the Building

Students are not permitted to eat in classrooms or other parts of the building unless approved by administration. Students are not permitted to leave the building to obtain outside food or have food delivered to be brought into the building. Any outside food that is brought in will be held by staff until the end of the school day.

Discrimination Policy

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print,

audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Code of Conduct

Student Code of Conduct

This Code sets forth the school's expectations for student behavior during school hours, on school property, during school-sponsored transportation, and at off-campus events. The goal is to maintain a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for all students from Kindergarten through Grade 12.

Code of Conduct

The Health Sciences Charter School Code of Conduct is intended to achieve and maintain a positive school environment that emphasizes academics and provides all students, parents, teachers and administrators with a clear knowledge of the limits within which students will be required to operate. Discipline, as a social and organization undertaking is the result of a complex series of factors and interactions. A review of the research indicates that a successful discipline program must strive to establish a balance between two elements; order, which reflects the needs of the school, and interest and satisfaction, which reflects the needs of the individual within the school. The challenge of establishing a discipline procedure lies in formatting in a set of rules and regulations that successfully curb acts of disruption and or violence, while stimulating students' interest in participating in learning. A successful discipline program consists of a pleasant school atmosphere with emphasis on self-control, good attendance, good behavior and an organization with proper and necessary security.

It should be known that disciplinary consequences may change at the discretion of administration.

The Health Sciences Charter School policy applies to the school day that covers pre and post school time, in school buildings, and on school grounds. It also pertains to any school function, or any school related or sponsored activity, whether on or off of school grounds.

Given that every act of misbehavior cannot be anticipated through school rules, the administration will be required to make judgments regarding acts of misconduct, which are not covered in this handbook. It is the right and responsibility of the administrator to exercise immediate judgment in any matter in which students and/or staff are placed in situations which pose danger to their life, or which creates a major disruption to the learning process. The administration has the right to alter any of the rules and regulations listed in this handbook when, in their professional judgment, the situation may require such an alteration.

The administrator reserves the right to use other appropriate consequences that may not be listed such as community service, written letters of apology, etc. for disciplinary action. Knowing the rules is the responsibility of all students and therefore, any claims of not knowing the rules will not be honored. In conclusion, it is expected that students at Health Sciences Charter School will be held to high academic standards. It is also expected that students will be respectful and courteous of others while representing his or her school. This includes the normal school day as well as any school related events.

Policy Framework & Restorative Practices

Health Sciences Charter School balances clear expectations with restorative interventions designed to help students learn from mistakes and repair harm.

- **Kindergarten:** Disciplinary responses focus on instructional guidance, social-emotional learning, peace corner reflections, parent communication, and guided conflict resolution.
- **Middle & High School (Grades 7–12):** Responses follow a progressive, restorative framework incorporating restorative conferences, mediation, behavior contracts, loss of privileges, and administrative consequences where necessary.

Bullying (The Dignity for All Students Act)

In accordance with New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (NYS Education Law Article 2), Health Sciences Charter School is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, harassment, taunting, intimidation, and bullying.

- **Definition:** Bullying or harassment is defined as the creation of a hostile environment through conduct, threats, intimidation, or verbal/physical abuse that reasonably interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or physical/emotional well-being.
- **Protected Classes:** DASA protects students from discrimination or harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and expression), or sex.
- **Reporting:** Students, parents, or staff who witness or experience bullying should report the incident immediately to a teacher, counselor, or administrator. Reports can also be submitted anonymously using the online portal on the school website.

Please follow up with the Assistant Principal or Principal if incidents are not resolved. Students should not be afraid to do the right thing!

Disruptive Behavior Responses

In all disciplinary matters, students will be provided notice of the alleged misconduct and an opportunity to present their version of the facts. Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior, responses range from instructional/restorative interventions to administrative consequences.

- **Elementary (Kindergarten):** Focuses on age-appropriate behavioral guidance, redirection, peace corner/reflection time, parent communication, and social-emotional skill building. Formal suspensions are reserved only for extreme safety concerns as required by state guidelines.
- **Middle & High School (Grades 7–12):** Utilizes a progressive discipline approach. Depending on the infraction, responses may include restorative circles, loss of privileges, teacher or administrative detention, in-school restriction, or suspension. Minor infractions may lead to elevated consequences if part of a persistent pattern.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices are a relational approach to building and maintaining community while addressing conflict and harm. The primary goal is to build a strong sense of community and to repair relationships when harm occurs, rather than simply punishing the offender. This approach is proactive, focusing on preventing harm by creating a positive school culture, and reactive, providing a structured way to respond to conflict.

The Philosophy

The core philosophy of Restorative Practices is rooted in the belief that people are happier, more cooperative, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them. This shift in mindset moves away from a punitive model—where the focus is on who is to blame and what their punishment should be—to a restorative model, which focuses on:

- What happened?
- Who was affected?
- What are their needs?
- How can we repair the harm?
- How can we prevent this from happening again?

Implementation Prior to Suspension

Restorative Practices are a relational approach to building community, preventing conflict, and repairing harm when violations occur. Rather than relying solely on punitive measures, our goal is to keep students engaged in learning while holding them accountable.

Core Restorative Principles When behavioral expectations are not met, interventions guide students through five key questions:

1. What happened?
2. Who was affected by what happened?
3. What are the needs of those involved?
4. How can we repair the harm?
5. How can we prevent this from happening again?

Kindergarten Behavioral Support Framework

Kindergarten behavior is viewed as part of active social-emotional learning. Interventions focus on teaching appropriate behaviors, adult support, and self-regulation:

- **In-Class Guidance & Redirection:** Re-teaching classroom routines, using visual reminders, and quiet calm-down/peace corner breaks.
- **Adult-Guided Conflict Resolution:** Facilitated, age-appropriate conversations with teachers or counselors to help young students express feelings and repair small conflicts (e.g., sharing, simple apologies).
- **Family Collaboration & Support Plans:** Early parent communication to align home and school routines, paired with individualized behavior check-ins when extra support is needed.

Grades 7–12 Tiered Restorative Framework

Middle and high school students participate in a multi-tiered restorative structure that pairs personal accountability with progressive discipline:

- **Tier 1 (Universal):** Classroom-based community-building circles, explicit behavioral expectations, and clear conflict-deescalation routines.
- **Tier 2 (Targeted Interventions):** Formal restorative conferences between students/staff, peer mediation, behavior reflection journals, counselor check-ins, and teacher/administrative detention.
- **Tier 3 (Intensive Interventions):** Mandatory restorative re-entry circles following a suspension, formal Behavioral Contracts, and Individualized Behavior Plans (BIPs).

By prioritizing these restorative steps, we can address the root causes of conflict, teach students valuable social and emotional skills, and build a more inclusive and supportive school community. This approach ensures that we are not simply punishing behavior, but actively educating our students on how to be responsible, empathetic, and contributing members of our school community and beyond.

Early Childhood Behavioral Continuum (Kindergarten)

Instead of a rigid infraction/consequence matrix, Kindergarten behavior is managed using a developmental continuum:

- Minor Behaviors (Inattention, sharing disputes, minor outbursts):
 - *Interventions:* Teacher redirection, positive reinforcement, peace corner/calm-down breaks, and guided peer resolution.
- Moderate Behaviors (Repeated disruption, emotional meltdowns, physical push/shove):
 - *Interventions:* Parent notification, temporary removal to a supervised co-regulation space, SEL support with counselor/social worker, and simple restorative actions (e.g., drawing a picture/helping clean up).
- Severe Safety Concerns (Intentional physical harm to self/others, extreme unsafe runner behavior):
 - *Interventions:* Immediate administrative/counselor response, parent/guardian emergency conference, creation of an Individualized Behavior Support Plan, and referral to the Response to Intervention (RTI) team. Out-of-school suspension is used only as a last resort for severe safety emergencies per state guidelines.

Secondary Discipline Matrix (Grades 7-12)

Definitions for the Purposes of This Code

- “*Short Term Suspension*” shall refer to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a maximum of five days.
- “*Long Term Suspension*” shall refer to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than five days.
- “*Expulsion*” shall refer to the permanent removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons.

A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be minimally subjected to a short term suspension, unless the Principal determines that an exception should be made based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the students’ disciplinary record. Such students may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures set forth in Part D of this Code and depending on the severity of the infraction, a long term suspension also may be imposed and referrals to law enforcement authorities may be made.

Level 1 Behaviors: Teacher and Support Staff Intervention

Teachers will address Level 1 Behaviors through a variety of steps and interventions (5 Step Process). If teacher interventions are not successful, teachers will contact home immediately.

- Aim to teach and correct behavior and find alternatives so that all students have the opportunity to learn and demonstrate respectful behavior in the classroom.
- Expected when the student has no major prior incidents and interventions have not been put in place and were not deemed required due to the level and nature of the behavior

Level 2 Behaviors: Teacher and Assistant Principal Intervention

Parents are contacted immediately and a Level 2 Behavior Discipline referral needs to be completed.

- Involves school administration and aims to address and change behavior by stressing the seriousness of the behavior while attempting to keep the student in class with the general population.
- Appropriate when supports have been put in place in the classroom to address behavior on multiple occasions but the behavior has continued to negatively affect the learning of the student and others.
- May involve the short term removal of a student from the school because of the severity of the behavior (AP).
- May be appropriate when behavior appears to be escalating (repeated offenses) even after interventions and supports have been put in place.

- May involve the removal of a student from the school because of the seriousness and severity of the behavior (AP).
- Possession of Marijuana/Hydes/Vapes in school, to and from school, or on the grounds of school sponsored transportation.

Level 3 Behaviors: Principal and Head of School

Contact with parents will be made by administration.

- May involve students being placed in an alternative setting or home instruction that provides additional structure to address the behavior.
- May be appropriate when the students' behavior seriously affects or threatens the safety of any members of the school community.
- Strictly focuses on monitoring the safety of the school community and deals with the most severe discipline issues.
- Possession of Marijuana/Hydes/Vapes in school, to and from school, or on the grounds of school sponsored transportation.

Discipline Matrix

Level 1 Behaviors (non-referrals): Teacher Intervention It is expected that teachers intervene in their own classroom or supervisory space.	
<i>Student Infractions</i>	<i>Range of Consequences and Interventions</i>
• Interrupting, calling out, talking out of turn, using a loud volume of voice • Leaving seat without permission • Leaving work or other spaces dirty or messy • Refusing to complete work • Using inappropriate language or profanity • Consuming candy, soda, snacks, etc. without permission • Arriving to class unprepared (without pen, pencil, paper, etc.) • Sleeping/putting head down, not engaging in the lesson • Non-compliance/not following directions • Cell phone violation • Cheating	• Reminder of expectations • Verbal warning • Private conversation • Offer time and space • Contact parent • Apology of action • Seat Change • Additional assignment • Teacher Detention • No Pass List (for your class) • Loss of computer privilege Other consequences can be assigned at teacher's discretion. Refer to classroom management plan using 5 step process
Teacher and Administrative Operating Procedures for Level 1 Offenses	
1. Teacher records observations, interventions and parent contact. 2. Teacher monitors teacher log, parent contact log and in classroom behavior. 3. Teacher shares observations and trends with PLC and Grade Level team members. 4. Makes referrals to the Student Support Team or RTI as needed. 5. Teacher follows up with the Assistant Principal with specific questions and an intervention plan.	

Level 2 Behaviors: Teacher/Assistant Principal Intervention

Parents are contacted immediately and a Level 2 Behavior Discipline referral needs to be completed.

<i>Student Infractions</i>	<i>Range of Consequences and Interventions</i>
● Chronic Level 1 infractions ● Possession of or use of any prohibited electronic devices (ex: cell phones) ● Leaving classroom or assigned room without permission ● Challenging authority (insubordination) ● Directed language (profanity at another teacher, student or staff member) ● Using sexually explicit language or making inappropriate gestures ● Skipping class ● Bullying ● Fighting - both in school and at the train station ● Going to view or record a fight ● Social media threats and altercations ● Instigating incidents/fights ● Possession of a Vape/Weed Pen ● Property Damage ● Chronic Absenteeism ● Smoking in the Building ● Chronically out of Uniform ● Coming into the Building Under the Influence Other incidents not listed that may occur will be handled accordingly.	● Alternative Instruction ● Behavior Reflection Form ● Behavioral Contract ● Lunch detention ● Creating a plan for reparation ● Teacher-Student Mediation ● Peer Mediation ● Parent contact ● Privilege restriction ● Support from a counselor ● Cell phone confiscation ● Parent Conference with Assistant Principals ● ISS ● OSS ● Saturday Detention ● Restorative practices Other consequences can be assigned at administrator's discretion.

Administrative Operating Procedures for Level 2 Offenses

1. Review teacher log and phone journal to determine if this is a common problem across classrooms. (If it is level 1 behavior that occurs multiple times, a parent must be contacted prior to referral or teacher will be asked to do that prior to administration stepping in).
2. If the behavior does not appear to be a part of a pattern for the student, one of the consequences will be assigned in addition to parent contact.
3. If the student continues to exhibit the undesired behaviors and actions listed in level 2 (or is a chronic level 1 offender), their parent will be contacted to attend a parent meeting.
4. If the student continues to be an issue after multiple consequences and interventions (SST referral, RTI, counseling, BUL program, check in/check out, etc.), the student will be required to return with a parent and will be placed on a behavior contract, in addition to privilege restriction for the remainder of the school year.
5. Once all options have been exhausted, the student will be referred to the Principal for final determination.

Level 3 Behaviors: Assistant Principal/Principal Intervention

Contact with parents will be made by administration.

<i>Student Infractions</i>	<i>Range of Consequences and Interventions</i>
● Violation of DASA ● Physical Contact resulting in bodily injury to a student or staff member ● Sexual contact on school grounds ● Drug and/or weapon offenses ● Reckless endangerment ● Riot ● Bomb Threat ● False Alarm ● Weapons possession (no intent, non-firearm) ● Theft ● Criminal Mischief (vandalism) ● Drug/Alcohol Use/Possession ● Serious violation of acceptable use of technology policy (recording a fight)	● Presentation of evidence and recommendation from Assistant Principal ● Principal's hearing ● Impartial hearing (if needed) ● Determination of consequence ● Mandatory counseling/treatment ● Last Chance Behavioral Plan/Contract ● Short Term Suspension - Five Days or Less ● Long Term Suspension - Six to Thirty Days ● Expulsion - Principal

Level 3B (VADIR): Behaviors and Principal Intervention

<i>Student Infractions</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
● Homicide ● Forcible Sex Offenses ● Robbery ● Assault with Serious Physical Injury ● Arson ● Kidnapping ● Reckless Endangerment with Injury ● Possession of Firearm ● Weapons Possession with Intent ● Alcohol/Drug Possession with Intent to Sell ● Continued DASA Offenses ● Bomb Threat	● Expulsion Proceedings ● Investigation ● Impartial Hearing ● Manifestation Determination Hearing (if needed) ● Principal's Hearing ● Principal Recommendation to the Board ● Documentation in the Student Management System ● VADIR Report

All definitions are taken from the state website and can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/schoolsafety/vadir/glossary08aaug.html>

Behavioral/Attendance Contract

School staff may design written agreements with students and their parent/guardian subject to punishment under this code to identify target behaviors, define expectations, and describe consequences, provided that the affected student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) are informed that the decision to enter into such a contract is voluntary. Any student on a behavioral/ attendance contract will be closely monitored monthly for progress, at which time the contract may become void pending appropriate behavior/attendance.

Types of Detention (Grades 7-12 Only)

There are several different levels of detention that may be assigned as consequence for misbehavior.

Lunch Detention

Lunch detention will begin promptly. Students who are assigned lunch detention are expected to report to the assigned area immediately. Students are expected to eat lunch or complete assignments in silence. Students will not be allowed to put their head down and sleep. Failure to obey these rules will result in further disciplinary action.

After School Detention

After school detention will begin at 3:15 p.m. and dismiss at 3:45 p.m. Students who are assigned extended detention will serve extended detention from 3:15 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Any student who arrives at detention late, will not receive credit for that detention and be considered absent. Students are required to bring school work or a writing assignment will be assigned. Transportation for the students will be the parents' responsibility.

Times are subject to change at Administration discretion

- No use of electronic devices
- No talking
- Failure to report may result in further disciplinary action and/ or loss of school privileges.

After notice to the student and parent(s) or guardian(s), a student may be suspended from participation in any or all extracurricular activities. The student and parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be given an opportunity to meet informally with the Principal and/or the teacher involved. If possible, the Principal or teacher shall hold any requested meeting prior to imposing the suspension from participation in extracurricular activities.

Saturday School Detention

Saturday school detention will begin at 9:00 a.m. and dismiss at 12:00 p.m. Any student who arrives at detention late will not receive credit for that detention and be considered absent.

Students are required to bring school work or a written assignment will be assigned. Transportation for the students will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the student.

Types of Suspension

There are several different levels of suspension that may be assigned as a consequence of misbehavior in addition to out of school suspension. For definitions of the out of school suspensions, please see *Definitions for the Purposes of This Code* on page 12.

In School Short Term Suspension (Grades 7-12 Only)

Students may be temporarily removed from the classroom and placed in another area of the school where the student will receive substantially equivalent education. The student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will be given a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference regarding such suspension with whoever was involved in imposing the suspension.

Suspension from School Transportation (All Grades)

As the result of misconduct occurring on a bus or other student transportation, and after notice to the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), a student may be suspended from school transportation. When such action amounts to suspension from attending school because of the distance between home and school and the unavailability of alternative public or private transportation, the school will make appropriate arrangements for the student's education.

Firm disciplinary consequences will apply to any student who is at school or a school sponsored activity under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other illicit substances or in possession of them or of paraphernalia for their use. Elevated consequences will apply to any student who sells or distributes such substances at school or school sponsored activities. The term "drugs, alcohol or other illicit substances" in this policy refers to substances including, but not limited to, alcohol, tobacco (including smokeless tobacco), inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, look a-likes, any substances referred to as "designer drugs", prescription and non prescription medication. Health Sciences Charter School policies and programs are aimed at prevention, intervention, and support.

Out of School Suspension (All Grades)

Grades 7–12: Assigned for major safety or disciplinary violations (Levels 3 & 4). Written notice and an opportunity for an informal conference with administration are provided to parents/guardians per NYS Education Law § 3214.

Kindergarten: Consistent with NYSED early childhood guidance, out-of-school suspensions for Kindergarten are strictly restricted to extreme safety emergencies where a student's presence poses an immediate, direct threat to the safety of themselves or others.

Alternative Instruction During Suspension: Pursuant to NYS law, any student of compulsory school age who is suspended from school will be provided alternative instruction (e.g., homebound tutoring, digital coursework, or assigned work pickup) to ensure academic continuity.

Behavioral Contracts & Support Plans

- **Individualized Behavior Support Plans (Kindergarten):** Developed collaboratively with the student's family, classroom teacher, counselor, and RTI team to set up positive reinforcement strategies, visual schedules, and sensory breaks.
- **Behavioral Contracts (Grades 7–12):** Written agreements established between administration, the student, and their parents/guardians following significant or repeated disciplinary issues. The contract outlines clear behavioral targets, required restorative goals, and specific support services.

Administration of Prescription or Nonprescription Medications in the School Setting (All Grades)

A written order from a duly licensed prescriber and written parental permission to administer medication is required. All medications, including non-prescription drugs, given in school shall be prescribed by a licensed prescriber on an individual basis as determined by the student's health status.

Dress Code

Students may wear any school apparel that the administration deems to be acceptable. Health Sciences Charter School has a uniform policy to help create a safe and orderly environment, instill discipline, and eliminate the competition and distractions caused by varied dress styles. Students are expected to arrive in uniform every day. Please cooperate, display modesty and neatness, and take pride in these clean, neat and attractive uniforms.

Purpose and Rationale: The School's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school related functions. This will pertain to school related functions on and off of school grounds.

Health Sciences Charter School students should understand all dress code expectations and be in uniform daily. Morning checks during breakfast will be conducted daily by support staff and by all school staff throughout the day.

	Acceptable Attire	Unacceptable Attire
Uniform Tops: Kindergarten	● Navy Blue HSCS Short Sleeve Polo Shirts	● Any not school issued shirt ● Inside out shirts/sweatshirts ● Hoodies
Uniform Tops: Middle School	● Light Blue HSCS Short Sleeve Polo Shirts ● Royal Blue HSCS Crewneck ● Royal Blue HSCS Full Length Fleece	
Uniform Tops: High School	● Royal Blue or White HSCS Short Sleeve or Long Sleeve Polo Shirts ● Royal Blue HSCS Crewneck ● Royal Blue HSCS Full Length Fleece	
Notes: ● All fleeces must have a uniform shirt worn underneath them ● Seniors are occasionally allowed to wear their Senior Hoodies to school on certain days designated by the Administrative Staff		

	Acceptable Attire	Unacceptable Attire
Uniform Bottoms - All Grades	• Black or Khaki Dress Pants/Slacks • Black or Khaki Skirts • Black or Khaki Shorts or Capris • Plain black belts	• Cargo Pants, Leggings, and Jeans** • Sweatpants outside of PE • Undergarments should not be visible • Sagging Pants • Rips, holes, excessive zippers, excessive pockets, and/or chains. • Pants or skirts with patterns on them.
Notes: • Shorts and Capris may only be worn from May 1st through October 15th. • Shorts, Capris, and Skirts must be of a length of 1 inch above the knee or longer. • On pre-determined Fridays, students will be permitted to wear approved blue or black jeans. The rules regarding patterns, rips, etc all still apply to the jeans on these days.		
Footwear - All Grades	• Shoes (Solid black or brown) • Sneakers (Black or white with complimentary color variations) • Boots**	• Flip Flops • Sandals • Heels of any kind • Open Toed Shoes • Slippers • Platforms • Wedges • Timberlands • UGGs
Notes: • Boots may be worn during the winter months, however a change of shoes must be brought to school to change into before entering homeroom. • Shoes or sneakers should be leather or rubber soled and appropriate for school.		
Headwear - All Grades	• Students upholding a religious obligation or have a medical concern will be permitted to wear headwear/headgear upon approval from administration.	• Fitted Hats, Knit Hats • Head Scarfs, Durags • Ear Warmers, Headbands, Bandanas • Ski Masks, Bonnets • Any other headgear that has not been approved by administration.
Book Bags, Purses, Backpacks - Middle School, High School	• Students are permitted to carry an approved clear plastic backpack during the day.	• All other book bags, totes, purses, and back packs must be placed in the student's locker for the duration of the school day.

	Acceptable Attire	Unacceptable Attire
Jewelry - All Grades	• One Necklace • Two Rings • Two Bracelets • One set of Earrings • One Watch	• Any other unapproved jewelry.
Notes: • Excessive amounts of Jewelry is prohibited • Hoop shaped earrings must be the size of an ID card.		
Nails - All Grades	• Students have permission to wear silk, gel, or acrylic nails at a professional and appropriate length (at the discretion of administration)	
Physical Education Apparel - All Grades	• All students are required to dress in appropriate HSCS physical education apparel for every class session held in the gymnasium or related facilities for courses that can include but are not limited to: Physical Education, Yoga, Personal Fitness, First Aid & CPR, etc.	
Physical Education Apparel: Tops	• Athletic t-shirt (any color) • Long sleeve athletic t-shirt (any color) • Crew neck sweatshirt (any color)	
Physical Education Apparel: Bottoms	• Athletic drawstring shorts • Athletic drawstring sweatpants • All athletic shorts/sweatpants must have a drawstring and be worn above the hips in an appropriate manner at all times. Baggy or sagging shorts or pants will absolutely not be tolerated.	
Physical Education Apparel: Footwear	• All students must wear sneakers during PE, Yoga, Personal Fitness, and/or First Aid & CPR. Any students wearing footwear other than sneakers will not receive credit for the day and will also be required to make up the class session. • The PE instructor will articulate specifically prohibited apparel in the course syllabus.	

Dress Code Enforcement

Administration will have the final determination of the appropriateness of student dress code compliance. Any student not adhering to the dress code will have their parent/guardian contacted to bring their uniform to the school and be required to wear a Health Sciences scrubs uniform until then or may not be permitted inside the school environment until they are in code and additionally may receive additional consequences.

Distraction Free Phone/Electronics Policy and Guidelines

New York State Bell-to-Bell Phone-Free Policy

In accordance with NYS Education Law, Health Sciences Charter School maintains a strict bell-to-bell restriction on personal internet-enabled devices during the school day. From arrival until dismissal, student smartphones, smartwatches, personal tablets, and wireless earbuds/headphones must be turned off/silenced and securely stored.

Storage Procedures by Grade Level

- **Elementary (Kindergarten):** Personal electronic devices are strongly discouraged. Any personal devices brought to school must be turned off and turned in to the classroom teacher or stored in designated classroom storage upon arrival.
- **Middle School (Grades 7–8):** Students must place their personal electronic devices (phones, smartwatches, earbuds) into their assigned Yondr pouches upon entering the building. Pouches must remain locked throughout the entire school day—including during classes, passing periods, and lunch—and will be unlocked at dismissal.
- **High School (Grades 9–12):** Students must turn in all personal electronic devices to designated Support Staff upon entering the building.
 - Support Staff will issue the student a numbered claims ticket upon receiving their device(s).
 - Devices will be safely stored in a secured area throughout the school day.
 - At dismissal, students must present their claims ticket to Support Staff to receive their device(s). If a ticket is lost, verification procedures will apply before the device is released.

Permitted Exemptions (Per NYS Law)

In compliance with state regulations, personal devices may be authorized only under specific circumstances:

1. Documented medical management plans (e.g., continuous glucose monitoring).
2. Formal accommodations mandated in a student's IEP or 504 Plan.
3. Specific instructional directions authorized directly by a teacher/administrator.
4. Emergency situations coordinated through school administrative

Violations

Using Phone During School

If a student is caught using their phone, the Administration will collect the student's phone and call home.

Repercussions for unauthorized phone use will include but not limited to:

- Parent Phone Pickup
- Detention
- In-School Suspension
- Community Service
- Daily Phone Confiscation
- Extended Detention
- Saturday School

- Parent Conference
- Lunch Detention
- Restorative Practices
- Phone contract

Methods for Parent/Guardian Contact

If a parent needs to get in contact with their child during the school day, they can contact the school directly at 716-888-4080 to request to speak to their child or to deliver a message to their child. Parents can also contact their child's Assistant Principal directly to deliver a message for their child or to request to speak to their child.

Exceptions/Exemptions

Arrangements will be made for students with medical conditions and needs to access their devices when required. Students who need to utilize their device for appointments, emergencies and/or case by case situations will be accommodated and assisted by their administrator or a support staff member.

Internet and Computer Access

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Access to Health Sciences Charter School's network, computers, and digital learning tools is a privilege provided for educational purposes. All students (K–12) must abide by the acceptable use guidelines. Unacceptable uses—including accessing inappropriate content, bypassing content filters (e.g., VPNs), cyberbullying, hacking, or damaging equipment—will result in loss of technology privileges and disciplinary action.

CIPA Compliance & Internet Filtering

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the school enforces internet filtering controls on all network devices to block content that is obscene, harmful to minors, or inappropriate.

- **Monitoring:** Student internet activity and network usage are monitored by administrative staff for safety and educational compliance.
- **Digital Citizenship Instruction:** In accordance with CIPA and NYSED standards, students in Kindergarten, Grades 7–8, and Grades 9–12 receive age-appropriate instruction on online safety, proper interaction on digital platforms/social media, and cyberbullying awareness and reporting.

NYS Education Law § 2-d & Data Privacy

Health Sciences Charter School is committed to protecting student data privacy. Under NYS Education Law § 2-d, student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is protected from unauthorized commercial use or disclosure. Parents/guardians may view the full *Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security* on the school website.

Device Usage by Grade Band

- **Kindergarten:** Classroom-based, school-managed devices are utilized for guided instructional learning. Devices do not leave the classroom.
- **Grades 7–12:** Students assigned 1-to-1 learning devices (e.g., Chromebooks) are responsible for bringing their device to school fully charged each day and treating school-issued hardware with care.

Lockers

Elementary Storage (Kindergarten): Cubbies

- **Usage:** Kindergarten students are assigned individual classroom cubbies to store their backpacks, coats, extra clothes, and personal belongings during the school day.
- **Guidelines:** Cubbies are open storage spaces designed to help young students build daily organization habits. All items brought to school should be clearly labeled with the student's name.

Secondary Storage (Grades 7–12): Assigned Lockers

- **Assignment & Use:** Middle (7–8) and High School (9–12) students are assigned an individual locker at the beginning of the school year to store textbooks, outerwear, physical education attire, and personal belongings.
- **Locker Rules:**
 - Students must keep their lockers locked at all times and are responsible for maintaining their assigned locker's cleanliness and security.
 - Combination numbers and locker access must not be shared with other students.
 - Modifying or damaging school lockers is strictly prohibited.

School Ownership & Search Policy (NYS Educational Property Guidelines)

- Lockers and cubbies remain the exclusive property of Health Sciences Charter School and are provided solely for student convenience.
- School administrative personnel reserve the right to inspect lockers, cubbies, and school storage spaces at any time without prior notice.
- Personal items stored within a locker or cubby (such as backpacks or bags) may be searched whenever school officials have reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school policy.

Passes

Elementary Safety Protocol (Kindergarten)

- **Staff Escort:** Kindergarten students do not carry individual hall passes. Young students are escorted by a staff member (teacher, aide, or specialist) or walk in structured class lines when transitioning through the building, using the restroom, or visiting the nurse's office.

Secondary Pass Policy (Grades 7–12)

- **Official Pass Requirement:** Middle and high school students are not permitted in the hallways during class time without an official physical or digital hall pass issued directly by a staff member.
- **Designated Destination:** Students must travel directly to and from the destination specified on their pass (e.g., Restroom, Main Office, Nurse, Counselor). Deviating from the path or stopping in unassigned areas is prohibited.
- **Pass Restrictions:** Passes will not be issued during the first 10 minutes or last 10 minutes of a class period, except in medical or emergency situations.
- **Pass Misuse:** Misuse of hall passes (e.g., roaming, extended delays, or using another student's pass) will result in temporary loss of pass privileges and administrative follow-up.

Student Shadows

Any students that have not been enrolled in HSCS previously are able to come to the school to shadow a student ambassador. All student shadow visitations must be set up through the guidance office prior to. It is requested that if you have made an appointment for your child to shadow and are unable to attend, please contact the guidance office in a timely manner to reschedule.

Financial Items

Student Balances

Students are expected to take care of any negative balances or past due payments that they may have within the school prior to being able to participate in any school activities, purchase new uniforms, athletic wear, or any other circumstances that may arise. This also applies to receiving any requested information or documents such as release of records, transcripts, diplomas, etc.

It is prohibited for students with unpaid balances to be shamed in any way, including by announcing their names, using hand stamps to identify them, making them use a different serving line, or sending home clearly marked notices that they have an unpaid balance.

It is the students' responsibility to take care of these payments in a timely manner before they may receive the item or document in question.

Senior Dues

All seniors are required to pay their senior dues which are set up on a payment plan. These dues go towards events such as graduation, prom, yearbook, etc. These dues must be paid before a student can purchase senior hoodies, prom tickets, yearbooks etc.

Miscellaneous

Emergency School Closings

In the event of inclement weather or any other related situation that jeopardizes the safety of students and/or staff, an announcement of emergency school closings will be posted on the HSCS school website, which can be found at: www.healthsciencescharterschool.org

Additional school resources and local media outlets will also be utilized and include: Local Television/Automated Calling Service

In the event that you are unable to access any of these resources, please call the school at 716-888-4080 prior to sending your child to ensure their safety.

Interscholastic Athletics

As the premise of our athletic philosophy, HSCS believes that active participation in the Interscholastic Athletic program plays a crucial role in the overall development of students. The Health Sciences Charter School's focal point is to provide students with multiple opportunities to fulfill his or her potential through involvement in a highly competitive and structurally sound program. In achieving this, the HSCS Department of Athletics has embraced these guiding principles:

- To promote leadership qualities, sportsmanship, character development, and academic excellence in our student athletes.
- To employ coaches and staff members who exude a high level of moral integrity and ethical behavior, including good sportsmanship and a desire to assist student athletes' learning and growth.
- To contribute to the enhancement of institutional morale among students, faculty, and staff while providing parents/guardians, community partners, and friends with a means by which they can identify with the school during athletic events, contests, or activities.
- To function responsibly in all our initiatives, programs, and operations, which includes providing equal treatment and opportunity for student athletes, athletic coaches, and all staff in employment, athletic department programs and activities as required by state law and Section VI policy.
- To maintain fiscal and operational integrity by balancing budgets and carrying out sound management practices.
- To enhance the program with the assistance of community partners to create more profound learning experiences for students.
- To comply carefully with institutional, conference, and section regulations.
- To ensure and value ethnic and gender diversity among coaches, staff, and student athletes, consistent with the school's beliefs.

Health Sciences Charter School students will have the opportunity during the 2026-2027 school year to participate in:

- Boys JV/Varsity Football
- Boys Soccer
- Girls Volleyball
- Game Day Cheerleading
- Wrestling
- Boys JV/Varsity Basketball
- Girls JV/Varsity Basketball
- Competitive Cheerleading
- Indoor Track
- Outdoor Track
- Girls Flag Football
- Boys 7 on 7 Football

For grades 7 and 8, Health Sciences Charter School offers the following modified athletic opportunities in addition to the high school level:

- Boys Football
- Boys Basketball
- Girls Flag Football

Students who actively participate in the Interscholastic Athletics Program have a personal responsibility to succeed in the classroom before they have the privilege of participating in athletic contests.

Fire Drills

Directions to follow are posted in each room. Students are to remain outside the building until given the proper signal to re-enter the building. Students are to remain absolutely silent with their teachers during this time. Failure to do so will result in a disciplinary consequence.

Immunization Policy

Health & Immunization Policy (NYS Public Health Law § 2164)

In accordance with New York State Public Health Law, all students entering or attending Health Sciences Charter School must be fully immunized against specific vaccine-preventable diseases to attend school. Proof of immunization must be submitted to the School Nurse prior to the start of the school year or within 14 calendar days of the student's first day of attendance.

Required Immunizations by Grade Level:

Kindergarten: All kindergarteners must have the

- DTaP/DTP/Tdap: 4–5 doses Polio (IPV): 3–4 doses (final dose administered after 4th birthday)
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella): 2 doses
- Hepatitis B: 3 doses
- Varicella (Chickenpox): 2 doses

Middle School (Grades 7–8): All Kindergarten requirements, plus:

- Tdap Booster: 1 dose (administered at age 10 or older).
- Meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY): 1 dose (required for entry into Grade 7).

High School (Grades 9–12): All lower-grade requirements, plus:

- Meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) Booster: 2 doses required for Grade 12 (or 1 dose if the initial dose was received at age 16 or older).

Exemptions & Non-Compliance Rules Medical Exemptions Only: Per NYS law, religious exemptions are not accepted. Only valid medical exemptions signed annually by a NYS-licensed physician (MD or DO) will be evaluated by the school.

Mandatory Exclusion Policy (NYS Public Health Law § 2164)

New York State law strictly mandates that no student—including newly enrolled Kindergarten students—may attend school for more than 14 calendar days from their first day of enrollment without submitting complete, up-to-date immunization records or medical proof of immunization in progress.

- **Day 15 Mandatory Exclusion:** On the 15th calendar day following a student's start date, any student who remains non-compliant and lacks a documented, confirmed healthcare appointment for missing doses will be excluded from attending school until valid records are provided to the School Nurse.

- **Kindergarten Booster Verification:** Incoming Kindergarten students must have received their final booster doses (DTaP, Polio, MMR, Varicella) on or after their 4th birthday. Vaccines administered prior to age 4 do not fulfill NYS entry requirements, even if the student previously attended Pre-K.

Students who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted in school.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items should be reported or taken to the Main Office. If you have lost an item, it is your responsibility to seek assistance from a staff member to ensure it is safely found.

Lost or Damaged Textbooks

In the event a student loses or damages a textbook, they will be required to pay for it in the Business Office before a new text will be issued. Students who have an outstanding balance or missing books will not receive transcripts or student records upon leaving the school.

College Textbooks - If a student is participating in a college course offered by Health Sciences, they will be expected to pay a fee to rent a textbook for that course. This fee must be paid prior to the beginning of the course.

Student Privacy

The Family Educational Right and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) guarantees parents/guardians access to their students' education records. These rights transfer to students at the age of 18.

Requests should be made to the school counselor. Please note that in order to withdraw your student from HSCS, you must come into the main office and sign a release of records. Your child's records will not be released unless there is signed documentation.

Visitors

Visitor Safety Protocol & Entrance Requirements

To maintain a safe and secure environment for all students and staff, all visitors—including parents, legal guardians, contractors, and guest speakers—must enter through the designated primary entrance and report directly to the Main Office immediately upon arrival on campus. *Please note that under no circumstances should a parent or visitor go directly to a teacher's classroom to confront a teacher.*

- **Identification & Check-In:** All adult visitors must present a valid, government-issued photo ID (e.g., Driver's License, State ID, Passport) to be scanned into the school's visitor management system.
- **Visitor Badges:** Once cleared, visitors will be issued a printed visitor badge indicating their name, date, and assigned destination. The badge must be visibly worn on outer clothing at all times while on school grounds.
- **Departure:** Visitors must check out at the Main Office and return their visitor badge prior to exiting the building.

Grade-Band Visitor Policies

- **Elementary (Kindergarten):**
 - **Classroom Visits & Events:** Parents/guardians attending classroom celebrations, volunteer events, or parent-teacher conferences must arrange their visit with the classroom teacher at least 24 hours in advance and receive administrative approval. Unscheduled visits or walk-ins to Kindergarten classrooms during instructional time are not permitted.
 - **Student Sign-Out & Early Dismissal:** Only individuals listed on the student's emergency contact form with valid photo identification will be permitted to pick up or sign out a Kindergarten student early.

- **Secondary (Grades 7–12):**
 - **General Visitor Access:** Visitors are not permitted in secondary hallways, cafeterias, or classrooms during normal operational hours unless accompanied by a school administrator or staff member for a pre-scheduled appointment.
 - **Unauthorized Guests:** Students are strictly prohibited from bringing non-enrolled guests, friends, or relatives into the school building or onto school property during the school day.

Working Papers

In compliance with New York State Labor Law, students who are 14 to 17 years old and plan to work must obtain an official Employment Certificate (Working Papers) prior to beginning employment.

- **Application Process:** Application forms are available in the Main Office or Guidance Office.
- **Requirements for Issuance:**
 1. **Completed Application:** Signed by the student and a parent/legal guardian.
 2. **Proof of Age:** Verification via birth certificate, passport, or official state-issued ID.
 3. **Physical Examination Certification:** Proof of a physical examination completed by a licensed healthcare provider within the past 12 months certifying the student is fit to work.

Academic & Attendance Expectations

While Working Papers are issued through the school district, student employment must not interfere with academic success or daily attendance. The school reserves the right to review employment certificates if a student exhibits severe academic decline or chronic absenteeism.

Elementary & Middle School Note (Grades K–8):

Under NYS Labor Law, children under 14 years of age are not permitted to hold standard employment certificates.

Complaint and Inquiry Policy

Informal Complaints

Any individual or group can bring complaints to the Health Sciences Charter Schools administration at any time. Often, issues or complaints can be resolved informally at the school, and do not need to involve the formal complaint process described below. Where appropriate, you may wish to use this more informal approach, which may result in a more timely resolution of the issue and which is also suited to dealing with issues that do not involve a violation of the charter or law. Even issues involving a violation of the law or charter may be able to be resolved informally and you may wish to use this avenue before making a formal complaint. You are not required to use the informal process and using the informal process does not prevent you from using the formal complaint process later.

To make an informal complaint, follow the process below:

Complaints or inquiries concerning instruction, building management, academic concerns, discipline, or culture concerns are to be referred to the school representative in which the matter pertains, and directed to the appropriate level of response according to the following sequence:

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Department Head
3. Building Principal
4. Head of School

If the complaint is not resolved by the Head of School, the individual or group may bring the complaint to the Board of Trustees.

If the complaint is about the Head of School, the individual or group may bring the complaint directly to the Board of Trustees.

To contact the Board of Trustees, use the electronic form on the school's website at healthsciencescharterschool.org by going to the Our School menu and clicking on the [Complaints/Concerns option](#) or send US Mail to Health Sciences Charter School, Attn: Chair of the Board of Trustees, 1140 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14209.

The Board of Trustees shall investigate and respond to all complaints in a timely manner and shall serve as the appeals body for any complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved.

When submitting an informal complaint, include

- A detailed statement of the complaint
- What, if any, response you received to date
- What specific action or relief you are seeking
- Contact information for you - name, address, email address, telephone number

Formal Complaints

Any individual or group may bring complaints to the Health Sciences Charter School Board of Trustees. Section 2855(4) of the Charter Schools Act provides that any student, family member, staff member, individual or group may initiate complaints directly with a charter school's Board of Trustees ("charter school board") without going to school staff or leadership as a first step alleging a violation of the Charter Schools Act, the charter school's charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the charter school. There are no deadlines to initiate filing a complaint with the Board of Trustees. Complaints may be submitted to the Board at least one week prior to the next regular Board meeting at which time the complaint will be officially addressed. Complaints submitted less than one week prior to the next regular Board meeting will be addressed at the subsequent Board meeting.

Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regular meeting. Every effort will be made to respectfully address each matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group

that presented the complaint. The Board, as necessary, may request the Head of School, the Building Principal, or another responsible party to investigate and/or act upon the complaint and submit a written report to the Board. The Board shall create a written response, with appropriate determinations and rationales, to every complaint submitted in writing. Responses will be delivered in writing or via email within 30 days, or as soon as it is practicable thereafter.

The manner in which the Health Sciences Charter School Board of Trustees documents, manages, and responds to complaints is determined by the NYS Charter School Law Section 2855(4) which establishes a complaint process.

If an individual or a group has a complaint about the management or operation of Health Sciences Charter School or about a possible violation of the Health Sciences Charter School charter, or the NYS Charter School Law the complainant may present the complaint in writing to the Health Sciences Charter School Board. The complaint may be sent by using the electronic form on the school's website at healthsciencescharterschool.org via electronic form by going to the Our School menu and clicking on the [Complaints/Concerns option](#) or by mail to Health Sciences Charter School, Attn: Chair of the Board of Trustees, 1140 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14209.

The complainant should include the following details in the written complaint:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the Health Sciences Charter School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from Health Sciences Charter School.
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and Health Sciences Charter School.
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you - name, address, email address, and telephone number.

If the complainant believes the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may then appeal to the charter authorizer, the New York State Board of Regents (NYSED). Upon receiving such a complaint NYSED is required to investigate and respond.

Bringing a Complaint to the Board of Regents

The Board of Regents has delegated the authority to the Commissioner of Education to handle complaints brought to the Regents concerning charter schools. All complaints brought to the Board of Regents/Commissioner concerning charter schools must be submitted in writing to the State Education Department's Charter School Office, either via mail at: Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234, or via email to: charterschools@nysed.gov The subject line of the email should read: Complaint [Name of School].

The contents of the letter/email should include:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from the School's board of trustees.
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and the School. You should maintain additional copies of all correspondence and materials for your own files.
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you - name, address, email address, and telephone number.

Investigation of a Complaint brought to the Board of Regents

The Charter School Office, on behalf of the Commissioner and the Board of Regents, will conduct any investigation that it determines necessary and appropriate regarding complaints that have been appropriately filed concerning charter schools. This investigation may include contacting the school concerning the complaint, providing a copy of the complaint to the school, and requesting additional information or materials from you and/or the school.

Upon completion of the investigation of a complaint brought to the Board of Regents, a decision will be issued by the Commissioner, which may include a remedial order as appropriate. A copy of the Commissioner's decision will be provided to you and the School.