



MINNESOTA EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING ACADEMY

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy

Student & Family Handbook

2020-2021

Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year!

Dear MELA Families,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! We are honored that you have made the choice to be a part of our school community, and we are committed to building a strong home-school partnership with you; we recognize how critical this partnership is to ensure the success and well being of each child in your family we serve. We believe that our students' academic, social, and emotional needs are best met when we work in partnership to provide a consistent, safe, nurturing, and intellectually challenging school environment. We are excited to have each of you be part of our community of learners, and look forward to working together to ensure that this year is a wonderful experience for your child and family.

Our goal is to provide the very best education possible to students in Maple Grove and the surrounding communities. Every member of our faculty and staff is committed to supporting every student to develop the skills, knowledge, and agency required for future academic and career success. We know you share this ambitious goal for your child as well, and we are honored that you have chosen Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy (MELA) as your child's school. In order to work as a team, and to promote consistency in our childrens' lives, we ask that you take some time to review this student-family handbook. The policies and procedures are built to guide our practice and to establish a school environment that allows each child to thrive. The handbook lays out the rules we live by in our schools, and the clear expectations we set for our students—and what we ask of our families—to enable us to consistently and fairly treat each and every student with dignity and respect.

Please take some time to carefully review and discuss this handbook with each child in your family who is joining our school community. We recognize that each of us—parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators—must work together as a team to meet the needs of our children. Strong, consistent messaging between school and home sets a positive tone for expectations and outcomes. To confirm that you have reviewed this handbook and agree to follow the school's rules and guidelines, please sign the confirmation page and return it to your child's teacher. If you have questions, or if you would like to discuss any part of this handbook, please reach out to us. We are always happy to work collaboratively with our parents to ensure a great learning environment for our children.

I am joined by the entire MELA team in looking forward to celebrating your child(ren)'s many successes with you as the 2020-2021 academic year unfolds.

Warm regards,

Danielle Fields

Executive Director
Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy

Student and Family Handbook Confirmation Page

In this student and family handbook, we strive to clearly share our MELA expectations so that all our students understand what it takes to be successful. We rely on strong communication among students, parents, and school, and we ask that students and parents sign this page to indicate that the handbook has been received and that they have had the opportunity to review it and discuss it at home. Thank you for partnering with us, and best of luck this year!

I verify that I have read and discussed the contents of this student and family handbook.

Student Signature _____

Date _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

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Handbook Purpose:

The 2020-2021 MELA Family-Student Handbook is a resource and guides for Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy families to ensure strong home-school partnership. The handbook provides detailed information about our school's academic and behavioral expectations, policies and procedures. The resource is intended to provide guidance and context to ensure students' success. Parents will be asked to review the handbook, and to return the signed agreement page affirming and accepting the school's rules and expectations. Our campus directors will be sharing the handbook with all families. In the event of a policy or procedure change that occurs during the year, campus directors will clearly communicate that change with families.

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Overview:

All members of the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy team are driven by the conviction that students learn in different ways and that all students can achieve at high levels. Our school is a positive and purposeful place to learn and grow, and our dedicated staff members create lively, engaging classroom experiences that challenge and inspire our students. We take our work very seriously and ask you to make an equally serious commitment to the expectations of our school community in order to ensure both a successful school year and a successful academic future for your child. Our aim is to engage families to collaboratively support our students' academic, social, and emotional development and to ensure their success for bright futures.

Mission

The mission of Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, an educational practice leader committed to social justice and the elevation of access and achievement in underserved communities, is to support each child in becoming an engaged and curious learner, a confident self-advocate, and a creative problem-solver by setting high expectations and nurturing a positive culture that honors diversity, collaboration, and optimism.

Vision

We will innovate, trailblazer and collaboratively lead a public education transformation that positively impacts the greater education community and ensures that each and every one of our Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy students thrive in college, career, and life.

Values

Culture: We value and protect our positive, high-energy culture built on optimism, meaningful relationships, transparency, and mutual accountability as we collaboratively serve our school communities.

Innovation: We imagine and incubate new ideas and actively encourage risk-taking, inquiry, entrepreneurial thinking, and learner-agency.

Wellness: We nurture and strengthen the social, emotional, and physical well-being of each member of our school community and intentionally develop habits of success.

Social Justice: We prioritize and engage in the work of equity and access and boldly promote and protect the rights of others.

Diversity Statement

At Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, we value diversity. We recruit, retain, and support a diverse talent pool that is representative of our school community. We believe in cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment that celebrates and honors all students, families, staff, and their unique perspectives. We know that we are a stronger and richer community as a result of diversity and inclusivity, and are committed to intentionally strengthening our individual and collective capacity to teach and lead in a culturally-proficient way. We believe that diverse perspectives are critical to student growth and achievement and instrumental in fulfilling our vision and mission.

A statement in Support of Immigration Rights

Since our founding in 2015, Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy has been a welcoming community for all students, families, and team members. A sense of social justice and a fierce commitment to educational equity is central to our organization and schools. We know that together, we can support each other, and raise our voices for justice, tolerance, and a more inclusive nation. Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy takes the safety of its students, team members, and greater community seriously – diversity, equity, inclusivity, respect and are foundational elements of our communities. Recent Federal immigration policies have heightened the concerns of all of us. We stand with our immigrant students and their families. We firmly believe that the safest and most beneficial place for our students is a classroom alongside their fellow students where they can work toward a bright future. The strength of Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy lies in its diversity where each student is supported and loved:

- Regardless of citizenship and/or immigration status, each of us has certain fundamental rights under the United States Constitution and under State and Federal laws. Among these rights is a simple one: All children in the United States have the right to a free and appropriate public education.
- We maintain a safe place for all students and their families—as well as our broader community. Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy does not, and will not, monitor the immigration or citizenship status of our students; under the law, we are not obligated to monitor the citizenship status of our students. We do not share private educational records with immigration officials unless required by a court order or authorized in writing by a parent, guardian, or adult student.
- Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy campuses is not routinely open to public access. We maintain control over who enters/exits our buildings. Further, Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy retains the right to demand a warrant before permitting law enforcement officials—including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers— to enter any school area (areas that include school buildings, playgrounds, parking lots, etc.).
- Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy has a clear anti-bullying policy that neither condones nor permits hazing or threatening remarks about one’s legal status.

School Information

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy
9060 Zanzibar Lane North
Maple Grove, MN 55311
(763)205-4396
www.mnela.org

School Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Wednesday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Calendar



MINNESOTA EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING ACADEMY

Mon, Aug 24	-	Fri, Aug 28	Teachers / Paras Workshop
		Mon, Aug 31	First Day for Students
		Mon, Sep 7	Labor Day
Thu, Oct 15	-	Fri, Oct 16	Education MN Conference
Wed, Nov 25	-	Fri, Nov 27	Thanksgiving Break
Mon, Dec 21	-	Fri, Jan 1	Winter Break
		Mon, Jan 18	MLK Day
		Mon, Feb 15	President's Day Break
Thu, Apr 1	-	Fri, Apr 9	Spring Break
		Mon, May 31	Memorial Day
		Fri, Jun 4	Last Day for Students
		Fri, Jun 11	Last Staff Day

Please note Early Dismissal on the following Dates:

Wednesdays:		Other Days:	
Wed, Sep 16	Wed, Dec 2	Wed, Feb 24	Wed, Apr 21
Wed, Sep 23	Wed, Dec 9	Wed, Mar 3	Wed, Apr 28
Wed, Sep 30	Wed, Jan 6	Wed, Mar 10	Wed, May 5
Wed, Oct 7	Wed, Jan 13	Wed, Mar 17	Wed, May 12
Wed, Oct 14	Wed, Jan 20	Wed, Mar 24	Wed, May 19
Wed, Oct 21	Wed, Jan 27	Wed, Mar 31	Wed, May 26
Wed, Oct 28	Wed, Feb 3	Wed, Apr 14	
Wed, Nov 4	Wed, Feb 10		
Wed, Nov 11			
Wed, Nov 18			

Parent Teacher Conferences and Student Goal Planning

The partnership between home and school is very important in a child's education. Parent Teacher Conferences provide an opportunity for meaningful collaboration and goal setting.

Trimester 1	
Begins	Monday, August 31, 2020
Ends	Tuesday, November 24, 2020
Trimester 2	
Begins	Monday, November 30, 2020
Ends	Friday, March 5, 2021
Trimester 3	
Begins	Monday, March 8, 2021
Ends	Friday, June 4, 2021

Report Card Distribution Dates	
T1	Tuesday, November 24, 2020
T2	Friday, March 5, 2021
T3	Friday, June 4, 2021
Calendar Legend	
 	No School
 	1pm Dismissal
 	Parent Teacher Conferences
 	Teacher Workshop-No school
 	First and Last Day of School

** For 20/21, Fall conferences will be coordinated and communicated by MELA through social media and Class Dojo.

Each family will have an opportunity to share meaningful information with MELA educators to start the 20/21 school year off on the right foot!**

Per the District School Calendar Policy - The following days are reserved as Emergency School Closing Days. MELA does not anticipate that these days will be student attendance days. In the event that student attendance days fall below State requirements, these days will be used to make up instructional time. Parents will be notified accordingly.

Emergency School Closing Make-Up Days: - Monday, June 7, 2021 - Tuesday, June 8, 2021 - Wednesday, June 9, 2021 - Thursday, June 10, 2021 - Friday, June 11, 2021

2020-2021 School Calendar

August 2020					February 2021				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5
10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12
17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19
24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26
31									
21				22	23				135
September 2020					March 2021				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	10	11	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30			29	30	31		
20				42	15				150
October 2020					April 2021				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
			1	2				1	2
5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30
18				40	20				170
November 2020					May 2021				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6	3	4	5	6	7
9	10	11	12	13	10	11	12	13	14
16	17	18	19	20	17	18	19	20	21
23	24	25	26	27	24	25	26	27	28
30					31				
14				74	4				174
December 2020					June 2021				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11	7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18	14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25	21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31		28	29	30		
19				93					
January 2021					July 2021				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
				1				1	2
4	5	6	7	8	5	6	7	8	9
11	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15	16
18	19	20	21	22	19	20	21	22	23
25	26	27	28	29	26	27	28	29	30

Section 1: Enrollment and Entrance Requirements

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA (See Appendix)

TITLE IX GRIEVANCE (See Appendix)

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY (See Appendix)

Enrollment

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy is a public school and pursuant to state law, must enroll in an eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building. When that occurs, students will be accepted by lot and admitted as further described in the enrollment policy. Please visit the website for more information at www.mnela.org.

Entrance Requirements

In the 2020-2021 school year, Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy will serve students in pre-kindergarten through grade 6 who meet the following requirements:

1. Reside in Minnesota
2. Kindergarten Age five (5) by September 1, 2020
3. Pre-Kindergarten Age four (4) by September 1, 2020

*If your child does not meet the age requirement, he or she may apply for early entrance to kindergarten.

Medical Requirements

Students enrolling in the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy must present a physical examination report, including a vision and hearing screening, and record of their immunizations, as required by the state of Minnesota. Students are required to have a physical examination and a record of their immunizations on file no later than the first day of school. A classroom teacher will refer a student to the Health Office whenever symptoms indicate the possibility of illness, injury and/or pain. Minor injuries are treated at school.

Each child is required to have an Emergency Contact form on file. This form requires the names and phone numbers of three responsible persons, who are at least 18 years of age, who can be contacted in case the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Re-enrollment

Each spring, parent/guardians are required to complete an intent to return form. Once the intent to return form is completed, with an indication that students will return, a written notice will be sent to parents via a letter and email detailing the registration process. Once the online registration process is complete, the student is considered fully enrolled for the upcoming school year.

Student Withdrawals

We are honored when parents choose Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy for their child's education, and it is always our hope that students remain enrolled with us throughout the duration of the school year. However, there will be circumstances that require students to

disenroll from our schools (e.g., the student's family moves to a distant location). In those instances, we are required by law to have the registering parent/guardian complete a withdrawal form on campus in order to initiate the transfer of records to the child's new school. The receiving school must submit, in writing, a request for student records in order to release and transfer student records. Additionally, we would like to ask parents to complete a very brief exit survey.

Equal Educational Opportunities

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy is committed and dedicated to the task of providing the best education possible for every student in the district for as long as the student can benefit from attendance and the student's conduct is compatible with the welfare of the entire student body.

The right of the student to be admitted to school and to participate fully in classroom instruction and extracurricular activities shall not be abridged or impaired because of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap.

Students who have been identified as having a handicap or disability, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act, shall be provided with reasonable accommodations in educational services or programs. The student may be considered handicapped or disabled under this policy even if they are not covered under the district's special education policies and procedures.

Complaints regarding the interpretation or application of this policy shall be referred to MELA's Chief Compliance Officer and processed in accordance with procedures established by Minnesota Statutes. MELA's Chief Compliance Office for the 2019-2020 Academic Year is:

Danielle Fields
9060 Zanzibar Ln N, Maple Grove, MN 55311
Tel: (763) 205-4396
Fax: (763) 999-6988
E-mail: dfields@melaschool.org

Section 2: Student Wellness, Health, and Safety

WELLNESS POLICY (See Appendix)

Contact Information

We are committed to excellent communication between school and home. To ensure that our messages are successfully delivered to you, it is essential that we have your most current contact information on file. If you move your home address, or change or add a phone number or email, please be sure to contact your school's office to let us know of the changes. We rely on you as our partner to keep lines of communication open.

Campus Visitor Procedure

All parents/guardians and visitors must enter through the marked main entrance of the school and sign in at the administration office (or designated visitor sign-in location). Visitors who leave the administration office will be given a badge that must be visibly worn at all times while in the building.

Arrival and Dismissal Expectations

MELA opens to students at 7:30 AM each day for the Before School Program. Students not enrolled in the before school program may not enter the building until 8:45 AM unless students or family members have a previously arranged appointment with a staff member. Our staff members are very busy in the mornings preparing for a successful day of learning and therefore, they are unavailable to supervise students prior to the official start of the day.

Similar to arrival expectations, because students require supervision at all times, it is important that students are picked up on time. Please note that students will only be allowed to leave campus with people who are listed on the official Parent-Approved Dismissal Form. Our teachers and staff members work very hard, and as a courtesy to our hard-working teachers and administrators, we thank you in advance for arranging pick-up plans for your child.

To ensure our students' safety it is important that families follow these arrival and dismissal expectations:

- Drop off and pick up are located at the side door near the parking lot. The drop off in the front of the building is for bus drop off and pick up only.
- Always make sure that children wear their seatbelts.
- Cross streets only at designated crosswalks.
- Children may only exit the car once it has safely pulled up to the curb.
- Children should not be left unattended in a parked vehicle.
- Never double park or block access on the street, fire lanes, neighboring alleys or driveways.
- Please remember that unless you have a hands-free device, it is illegal to text message while driving.

After School Care Programming

Wednesday After School Program

1:00pm-4:00pm

Must Register Child. Limited Spots Available.

Pick-up expectations

- Students must be picked up no later than 4:15 pm. If students are not picked up on time, late fees may be applied and may result in removal from the after-school program.
- Please remember that students will only be allowed to leave campus with people who are listed on the official [Student Dismissal Authorization Form](#).

Attendance Procedures & Expectations

At Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, we expect all students to attend school, on time, every day. Daily attendance is the first step in ensuring academic success. In Minnesota, school attendance is compulsory for all students (ages 6-17). MELA's developmentally appropriate curriculum is fast-paced and ambitious, and students can quickly fall behind when they are absent. Our goal is to have the most engaged student body and to cultivate a sense of responsibility by being at school regularly, on time, and for the entire school day. Only cases of illness and family emergency should prevent a child from attending school or completing his/her academic obligations. Excessive absences put students at significant risk for retention. Please do not allow your child to miss a day of school except for serious illnesses or family emergencies.

Attendance and punctuality are responsibilities to which we hold all students accountable. We emphasize the importance of regular student attendance by constantly communicating the message to students that school and education are vitally important to their future. From a compliance standpoint, our school is held accountable for student attendance by the Minnesota Department of Education. Our annual School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) rating includes student attendance and can positively or negatively impact our school's score. In order for a student to achieve a 96% attendance rate or higher, he/she may only miss seven or fewer days of school (excused or unexcused).

The Parent/Guardian partnership with us is essential to ensure student attendance. The attendance procedures outlined below are intended to encourage fundamental student attendance. For the children's safety, it is important that home/school remain in close communication around absences.

Communicating Your Child's Absence

- For each day of your child's absence, please be sure to call the school office before 9:00 AM to alert the school and provide the reason for your child's absence. We maintain careful attendance records for each student, and it is important that we have the proper information to document.
- An absence may be reported in one of three ways:
 1. Call the attendance hotline at 763-205-4396 and leave a message
 2. Fill out the Student Absence Form on the school website
 3. E-mail MELA Info at melainfo@melaschool.org

- Please include the name of the child and the reason for the absence. Parents can also send a follow-up note to their child when the child returns to school. If the child is absent and the parent/guardian has not informed the school, a staff member of the school will make a reasonable attempt to contact the parent/guardian by phone. **If a child has three (3) unexcused absences they are considered truant.** Parents will receive notification via first-class mail that the child is truant. If the child continues to be truant, the parent may be subject to juvenile court proceedings.
- Safety is a crucial priority. In the event that a student's absence has not been called in by 9:00 AM, the school will call home to inquire about the absent student's whereabouts.
- If you know your child will be absent for an extended period of time, please share that information at the time of your first call. You need not call in each day if the information has been communicated. However, if the absence extends beyond that which was reported, please be sure to stay in close contact with the school.
- For absences of five (5) or more days due to illness, a doctor's certificate is required to excuse the absence and return to school.
- A doctor's certificate must also be provided to excuse medical appointments scheduled during the school day.
- Students who are absent eight (8) or more days per trimester and twenty (20) or more days per school year, are considered excessively absent. Continued absences may result in the student attending mandatory summer school and/or being retained in that grade. A parent conference may be required after eight (8) or more absences in one trimester.
- Families are discouraged from taking vacations or trips during the school year. If, however, family trips are unavoidable, the school should be notified several days in advance, if at all possible.
- Please remember that coming to school each day is crucial to learning. Research has conclusively established that absences, late arrivals, and early dismissals impair a child's academic growth; further, they undermine opportunities to earn incentives and participate in multiple academic and non-academic activities.

Absence Coding

All Absences (excused or unexcused) are considered absences and are reported in your child's record. A student is marked absent any day that he or she does not attend school. Suspensions/dismissals are considered absences and are marked as excused absences.

Excused Absences

The following circumstances will be considered excused absences with a valid excuse note:

- Illness of the student.
- Medical or dental appointments for the student.
- A death in the student's immediate family.
- The necessity for the student to attend a judicial procedure.
- Observation of a religious holy day by members of a religious group.
- Exclusion, by direction of the authorities due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons.

Unexcused Absences

When a student returns to school after an absence without a note, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. If notes for excused absences are sent within 48 hours of the absence, they will be updated in the student information system as excused.

The following circumstances will be considered as unexcused absences:

- Family vacations
- Oversleeping
- Car trouble
- Traffic trouble
- Sibling illness
- Childcare issues
- Other non-essential absences that are not an illness or emergency related

Early Dismissals

Students are expected to remain in school until the end of the school day (4:15 PM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 1:00 PM on Wednesday). Early pickups are disruptive to learning. Students with medical or dental appointments that require early dismissal must bring a note to school the following morning and submit it to the Main Office. In rare instances, and with advance notice, an un-calendared early dismissal may be necessary. Students need to be in attendance for the entire school day to participate in extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, school dances, etc.,).

Student Appointments

It is the family's responsibility to schedule medical and other appointments outside of school time. Because students are dismissed at 1:00 on Wednesdays, please make every effort to use Wednesday afternoons for daytime appointments. On the rare occasion when your child has a medical appointment during the school day, he/she should not be absent for the entire day. Please be sure to provide a doctor's certificate to excuse the absences.

Attendance Terms:

- Attendance Rate: Your student's attendance rate is the percentage of days present out of total days enrolled; attendance rate includes both excused and unexcused absences.
- Absence Rate: Percentage of days absent out of total days enrolled; absences include excused, unexcused, suspensions, and course cutting
- Truant: Student with one or more unexcused absences
- Habitually Truant: 7 or more unexcused absences per year

Chronic Absenteeism

We are committed to our students' success, and specific supports and interventions for chronically absent students are detailed below:

First notification of Chronic Absenteeism:

- After six unexcused absences, students will be referred to the Hennepin County's Attorney's Office(HCAO) be@school program.

- A letter is sent to the parents directing them to attend a Parent Group Meeting (PGM). At the PGM, a be@school program counselor will explain compulsory school attendance laws, consequences for continued unexcused absences and services available to assist families. In some cases, families will be assigned to a community agency to provide social services.

Second notification of Chronic Absenteeism:

- If there are three additional unexcused absences after the PGM meeting, the school will report educational neglect or truancy to the HCAO and a social worker will be assigned to help meet the child’s educational needs. In many cases, a School Team for Attendance Review (STAR) meeting will be scheduled to develop a specific plan to improve attendance and prevent the matter from going to court.

Third (and beyond) notification of Chronic Absenteeism:

- The final component to the be@school program is that legal action may be taken if students continue to have unexcused absences. This could include the filing of a Child in Need of Protective Services (CHIPS) petition for children under 12, or the filing of a truancy petition in Juvenile Court for older children.

Homeless Students

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy will always support maximum school attendance regardless of housing status. Homeless students, like all students, need to be at school each day. Each campus has a Homeless Student Liaison which is typically the Counselor/School Student Support Coordinator that serves as the primary contact for support. If you are ever uncertain as to who that coordinator is, please call Autumn Terlouw at 763-205-4396.

Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect and Abuse

As professionals working in a field that serves children, we have an ethical and legal responsibility to report suspected child neglect and abuse. The law requires educators (mandated reporters) to file a report with the local Department of Child and Family Services / Child Protection Services when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been, or is in danger of being neglected or abused. Local agencies and police departments are responsible for investigating reports of neglect and abuse and for determining how a case will be resolved. School personnel are not required to inform families when the local Department of Child and Family Services / Child Protection Services has been contacted.

Health Services

A teacher or staff member will refer a student to the Health Office whenever symptoms indicate the possibility of illness, injury and/or pain. Minor injuries are treated at school. However, a child’s parent or guardian will be contacted in the event of major injuries and illnesses.

Each student is required to have an [emergency contact](#) form on file. This form requires the names and phone numbers of three adults (18 years or older) who can be contacted in the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Staying Home From School Due to Illness

Parents/guardians **must keep their child home** if the child has any of the following illnesses:

- Head lice
- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Acute cold
- A sore throat
- Earache
- Swollen glands
- A severe cough
- Inflamed or red eyes/ conjunctivitis
- Listlessness, weakness, drowsiness and/or flushed skin
- A headache
- A rash or skin eruptions of unknown origin

Exclusion:

We will follow the exclusion guidelines listed below which are taken from INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS: INFORMATION FOR DIRECTORS, CAREGIVERS, AND PARENTS OR GUARDIANS prepared by Hennepin County Community Health Department, Epidemiology Program. We must exclude a child with any of the following conditions:

Chickenpox	Until all the blisters have dried into scabs; usually about 6 days after rash onset
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)	Bacterial (with pus) until 24 hours after treatment begins. Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge that causes matting of the eyelids; pain or redness of the eyelids.
Diarrhea (Infectious)	Please see Diarrhea Exclusion
Diarrhea (Uncontrolled)	Until uncontrolled diarrhea stops or until a medical exam indicates that it is not a communicable disease. (Uncontrolled diarrhea is an increased number of stools, compared with a person's normal pattern, along with watery stools, and/or increased stool that cannot be contained by use of the toilet)
Fever	Axillary (armpit) temperature: 100 F or higher; when accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Measure temperature before giving medications to reduce fever. The child may return when symptoms are gone for 24 hours and no fever reducing medication has been given.
Impetigo	Until the child has been treated with antibiotics for a full 24 hours.
Lice (head)	Until after the first treatment and no live lice are seen.
Rash With or Without Fever or Behavior Change	Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not that of a communicable disease.
Respiratory Infections (Viral)	Until the child is without fever for 24 hours and is well enough to participate in normal activities. No exclusion for other mild respiratory infections without fever as long as the child can participate comfortably. Symptoms include a runny nose, chills, muscle aches, sore throat, sneezing and coughing, and being more tired.
Ringworm	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
Scabies	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started.

Signs/Symptoms of Possible Severe Illness	Until a medical exam indicates the child may return (unusually tired, uncontrollable coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing).
Streptococcal Sore Throat	Until at least a full 24 hours after treatment begins and the child is without fever for 24 hours.
Vomiting.	Until vomiting stops (vomiting is defined as two or more episodes in the previous 24 hours).

Other reasons for exclusion:

If a child is not able to participate in child care program activities with reasonable comfort, including outdoor play, or a child requires more care than staff can provide, they will be excluded.

When a child in our care has been medically diagnosed with a communicable disease, we will notify the appropriate health authorities and follow their recommendations to provide information to parents of all exposed children. The child care program will notify the parents of exposed children on the same day or within 24 hours by:

- Posting information on the classroom doors
- Parents are required by State laws to inform us within 24 hours (exclusive of weekends/holidays) when their child has been diagnosed as having any contagious disease.

Diarrhea Exclusion:

Diarrhea: When the bowel pattern suddenly changes to a loose, watery stool that occurs more frequently than usual, it is probably diarrhea. Characteristically, diarrhea soaks through underwear and clothing, and preschool children may not get to the toilet in time. It has a distinctive smell that is noticeably different from the child’s normal BM’s. If BM is abnormal (texture, color, odor) for that child- the child would be excluded. Preschoolers may complain of stomach ache, or not make it to the toilet in time. **Children who become ill during the school day will be required to go home as soon as possible.** It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to either pick up their child or make arrangements for a person listed on their student’s emergency list to pick up their child. Sick children must be picked up within an hour of being contacted by the school.

If a child is sick at home or is sent home from school for an illness, he or she is NOT to return to school for the remainder of the school day. Students may return to school ONLY AFTER they have not vomited and are fever free (without medication) for 24 hours.

Parents/guardians are asked to contact the school regarding any problems concerning their child’s health, medications, or communicable diseases.

If activities are to be limited after a serious illness or accident, a statement from a physician is required. The statement must indicate the length of time the limitation must be in place.

Children cannot be left in the classroom during recess without a teacher present. **All** children who attend school are expected to participate in recess. If a child is too sick to go outdoors for fresh air and exercise, the child should be kept at home. Exceptions will be made only upon written request from a physician.

Communicating Illness Matters with School

Families are asked to contact the school regarding any problems concerning their child's health, medications, or communicable diseases. If your child has been diagnosed with a chronic or communicable disease, please keep your child home and contact the school nurse so appropriate response plans can be developed to prevent the event of spreading. Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to the following: strep throat, flu, meningitis, hepatitis, chickenpox, scarlet fever, hand foot mouth disease, fifth disease, infectious mononucleosis, and pink eye. A doctor's note will be required upon the student's return after treatment.

Illness at School

When a student becomes ill at school, we must protect his or her health and the health of all other students. Consequently, we must require the student to go home as soon as possible. To protect the well being of students and staff, it is important that ill students are picked up in a timely manner and remain at home until they have recovered from the illness. It is essential that families have a plan in place for the occasion that their child gets sick at school (as our schools are not equipped or sufficiently staffed, to properly care for sick students at the school). We thank you in advance for making arrangements with the family and friends listed on your emergency contacts form to help keep our school community healthy. All students who have been ill must be symptom and fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Activity Limits or Restrictions at School

If activities are to be limited after a serious illness or accident, a statement from a physician is required. The statement must indicate the length of time the limitation must be in place. A doctor's release is required in order to resume physical activity following hospitalization, surgery, or bone injury.

Recess activities are an important part of each child's school day. All children who attend school are expected to participate in recess. If a child is unable to take part in recess activities, exceptions will be made at the director's discretion following a written request by parent, guardian, or physician.

Medication

Medications will be administered during school hours **only if medically necessary** to maintain a student's health.

- Cough drops and cough syrup are **not** medically necessary at school

Before medications can be administered at school, parents/guardians and the child's physician must complete the required forms. These forms can be obtained from the school nurse's office or on the school website.

No medications will be given at school except for those which have been prescribed by a physician and which are needed to support the child in school. Any medication that is taken at school **must** be brought to the nurse's office by the parent/guardian in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy. This label must include:

- The student's name
- The prescribing physician's name
- The name of the medication

- Dosage instructions (how to administer, dose and frequency)
- The pharmacy phone number

If the student needs to take medication at school, the parent/guardian should bring the medication (**in its original container**) to school, not send it to school with their child. The parent/guardian is also responsible for picking up their child's medication if it has been discontinued. If the medication is not picked up in a timely manner, the medication will be thrown away. All medications that have not been picked up at the end of the school year will be thrown away.

Over-the-Counter Medication

Designated school staff can dispense over the counter medications to students with written parent/guardian consent only. The consent is valid for up to 2 weeks. Students are not allowed to self-carry over-the-counter medication, which includes cough drops or lozenges.

Head Lice

In accordance with CDC, and AAP policy, students with head lice will continue to have access to instruction but their exposure to other students should be reduced. For example, headphones or sharing of personal items like hats, etc. will be monitored. Students with signs/symptoms of head lice will receive a confidential scalp inspection by the school nurse/trained school staff. At the end of the school day, the families will be notified via telephone and provided with written health education on head lice treatment.

Upon the student's return, the nurse/trained school staff will re-screen the child for evidence of live lice. The parent/guardian should also provide evidence of treatment (i.e. prescription product, letter from a healthcare provider, etc.) In recent years, lice have become more resistant to over-the-counter shampoos so multiple treatments may be needed or prescription chemical products (shampoo/lotion) that are more effective are sometimes needed to treat.

Food Allergy Policy

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy asks families to notify the school of any known food allergies. The parent should provide documentation from a medical professional regarding the specific allergen that affects their child. Parents will also need to complete an Emergency Care Plan detailing instructions and permission for medication to be given by designated personnel.

Parents will need to provide the antidote for anaphylactic reactions, including EpiPens or Benadryl, depending on the treatment prescribed by their physician along with consent to provide the antidote for anaphylactic reactions, as prescribed by a physician.

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy is able to do the following to ensure the safety of children with food allergies:

1. To the extent possible, MELA will request that parents do not bring the food allergen in for a snack or for any other learning activity. The teachers will also refrain from bringing the allergen in for the snack or for use in a learning activity. The school cannot guarantee a completely safe environment.
2. MELA will request that all children wash their hands upon entering school and before they eat.

Recess

Recess is a non-instructional time during the school day during which students have the opportunity to develop and practice valuable skills that will help them succeed academically and socially. Goals of recess include increasing physical activity time, learning and practicing social skills, engaging in developmentally appropriate games, and having fun! Recess is part of the school day. Basic expectations for behavior inside the school extend to recess. Whenever possible, we encourage outdoor recess, which allows students to get fresh air, provides an opportunity for students to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity and gives students more activity options than most indoor spaces. We ask Parents/Guardians to send their students to school with appropriate clothing for outdoor recess. Please note: We cannot accommodate requests for an alternative recess experience (we lack the ability to offer adequate recess space and supervision in more than one location). The following cold and warm weather guidelines will be used to determine whether or not the indoor/outdoor recess takes place.

Cold Weather Guidelines

- Above 32 degrees with or without wind chill: Recess should be held outdoors.
- Between 15-31 degrees with or without wind chill: Director's discretion.
- Below 0 degrees with or without wind chill: Recess should be held indoors.
- Precipitation: Snowy and icy conditions should be evaluated for student safety and attire.
- Preparedness: Students should have appropriate outdoor attire to stay warm and dry during recess.
- Playground safety: The playground equipment and surface (i.e., icy conditions) should be evaluated to determine whether students can safely play outdoors.

Warm Weather Guidelines

- Heat index of 90o F or below: Recess should be held outdoors.
- Heat index between 91o F and 94o F: Director's discretion.
- Heat index above 95o F: Recess should be held in a cool location.

Section 3: Student Scholarship and School Programs

Curricular Approach

Coursework at all campuses is committed to a college and career preparatory curriculum based in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics instruction, as well as coursework in social studies, science, and enrichment, including physical education, art, music, and other campus-specific courses. The Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy' curriculum (based on Common Core State Standards and MN Academic Standards), builds in complexity and rigor as students progress through the grade levels. The students' curricular experience aims to develop critical thinking skills, student agency, and deep mastery of grade level content.

We recognize that all students are unique and come in with varying levels of readiness and mastery in subject areas. In addition to learning at their grade level, Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy students have time to learn at their level. Approaches for personalized learning include working directly with teachers in a small group environment, solving problems using adaptive online programs, and reading books that are selected based on students' readiness and interests.

Personalized Learning

At Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, students are active partners in their education, and teachers strive to design learning experiences that provide students with the right content, at the right time, in the right place, using the right mode of instruction. Students are encouraged and expected to own their learning. To nurture their learning independence and foster a strong sense of learner agency, students are equipped with explicit strategies and structures. The pace and depth of learning are calibrated to fall within each student’s zone of proximal development where success is within reach, yet significant effort and stretch are required. Personalized learning promotes pleasantly frustrating learning, and through practice, persistence, and the effective and creative use of available resources, students develop a growth mindset. They are able to navigate the challenges of rigorous learning through their use of self-regulation and behavior strategies that are cultivated through effective Social Emotional Learning programming.

Assessment

To challenge each learner with the right content—with the right supports at the right time—Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy staff must regularly assess students and reflect on their current progress. These assessments range from formal standardized tests, classroom quizzes, digital learning platform work, or informal teacher observations. Assessment is also not limited to academic areas. In our effort to support students in becoming competent, self-actualized individuals, we also look at a variety of measures that address the development of the “whole child.” This data is paramount in our instructional decision-making, and we strive to include multiple measures of student achievement and well being.

Our schools use several research-tested student assessments to measure students’ learning and monitor their progress including NWEA MAP Growth, FastBridge, DIBELS, MCA, WIDA, DRA as well as the end of the unit and interim curricular assessments. Each assessment provides unique information about students’ current level of performance, growth over time, and mastery of skills. Assessment scores and progress are shared with parents throughout the year.

Additionally, all Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy uses blended learning programs and core curricular resources with common assessments. These include Lexia Core5, ST Math, Benchmark Advance/Adelante, Engage NY Math, and the Summit Learning Program. Teachers and other staff meet regularly to review student progress and develop plans to support and motivate students on their journey.

Student Privacy

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy pledges to protect student privacy. We only provide building and network staff who require the information to have access to it. Further, we will not share student data with outside organizations without your informed consent.

Grading & Reporting

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy views communication with families around student academic performance as essential, paramount and two-way. Supporting students in their

efforts to grow and learn to their maximum potential requires home support and open lines of communication between school staff and families. We also live in an incredible age in which a family need not wait until family teacher conferences to get an update on their students' performance and progress. Many of our curricular resources have a secure online portal through which parents can access student information. Our teachers are always happy to update parents on elements that are not captured in the portals.

In addition quarterly report cards and progress reports, students also receive communication around their NWEA MAP Growth three times a year.

Depending on your student's grade level and academic program, there are some differences in grading and reporting. Below is an explanation of Standards-Based Reporting and the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Middle School model. Below are several other items related to student assessment and reporting.

Standards Based Grading (Elementary School)

Standards-based grading (SBG) communicates how students are performing on a set of clearly defined learning targets called standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what a student knows, or is able to do, in relation to pre-established learning targets, as opposed to simply averaging grades/scores over the course of a grading period, which can mask what a student has learned, or not learned, in a specific course. SBG enables teachers to accurately represent students' abilities rather than the assignments or extra credit they complete.

A student's performance on a series of assessments and performance tasks will be used to determine a student's overall grade in a course. Practice assignments (homework) are just that, practice, and thus serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers. Scores on practice assignments should not be used as a major component of a student's academic grade. Teachers may require students to complete all of their practice work prior to allowing them to take, or retake an assessment or performance task.

The report card indicates students mastery toward individual standards:

- A score of (4) indicates that a student exceeds a standard by consistently demonstrating an advanced level of understanding and/or the ability to apply their knowledge across multiple contexts at a higher level than the grade level standard.
- A score of (3) would indicate that a student has independently achieved the standard. The student demonstrates mastery of the standard.
- A score of (2) would indicate that a student is developing an understanding of a standard, but still may be in need of additional instruction and/or support.
- A score of (1) would indicate a minimal understanding of a standard. The student shows limited evidence of understanding the standard.

Grading for Students with Disabilities

Each student with a disability will be provided accommodations in accordance with the specifics of his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan (a 504 Plan provides for accommodations for a student who has a disability, but who does not require special education services). The IEP or 504 Plan identifies the appropriate supports for the student's specific

needs. Although most students with disabilities will be assessed using the general grading scale, a modified grading scale may be deployed if the IEP or 504 Plan calls for it. All students with disabilities will receive grades in the same courses as their peers. Students with disabilities receive a standard Report Card in addition to the IEP or 504 Plan Report Card. On the IEP Report Card, the special education teacher and/or related service provider describes the student's progress toward meeting the specified annual goals.

Progress Reporting & Report Cards

Each year, families can expect regular communication about each of their student's performance and progress. Each quarter, Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy will provide a report card to show where a student stands at that point in the year. The report card serves as a snapshot in time. Between reporting cycles, we will also issue Progress Reports to provide students and families with the information required to work to improve student performance prior to the end of the quarter. Families who would like additional information about their child's performance are always encouraged to contact their child's teachers and building leaders.

Grades at Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy are aimed to accurately report a child's current level of competency at each reporting window. Final grades reflect students' growth over time and indicate the levels of mastery a child has achieved over the course of the year.

- At the elementary level, we use a standards-based report card that shows student mastery of grade-level content standards based on evidence from their work in their classes.
- At the middle school level, students earn traditional letter grades based on their mastery of content standards and application. Grades are determined based on the Summit Learning Platform Cognitive Skills Rubric, which is a Stanford University research-tested rubric for rating student performance. In addition to their summative projects, students complete content focus areas to support their learning. Both components are converted into letter grades for the purpose of reporting.
- Students receive a report card once per quarter and progress reports two to four times per year. We believe it is important for a parent/guardian to meet with us to pick up a child's report card and consequently, have established these quarterly meetings as a parent/guardian duty. If you cannot personally attend a meeting, we ask that you contact the school beforehand.

Homework

Homework usually falls into one of four categories: practice, preparation, studying, or extension. Relevant homework should provide individualized assignments that tap into students' existing skills or interests and leverage student motivation. In examining field research, Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy recognizes that certain homework practices are beneficial. At the elementary school level, homework can help students develop study skills and habits and can keep families informed about their child's learning. At the middle school level, student homework is associated with greater academic achievement. Below are a few guiding principles for assigning homework:

- **The benefits of homework vary by age.** The older the student, the more likely homework will have a beneficial effect.

- **The amount of time students are expected to work on homework changes over time.** For elementary students, 10-30 minutes of homework each night is appropriate. For middle school students, homework should not exceed one hour per night.
- **Homework should be tailored to each student’s needs in order to support personalized learning and improvement.** It is imperative that homework is individualized and relevant to each student.

Students are responsible for completing all assessments, assignments, and homework. In the event of an absence, students are expected to make up what they missed while they were away from school. Teachers, and in some cases, learning platforms, are the best way to stay informed about missed assessments, assignments, and homework.

Grade Level Promotion

Students who have demonstrated mastery of grade level content, knowledge, and skills will be promoted to the next grade level each spring. School and network teams use multiple measures (e.g., grades, attendance, assessment scores, academic performance, etc.) to determine academic, social, and emotional readiness for the next grade level. School teams will communicate with parents in the event that a student is at risk of retention and will partner with families to develop an action plan for student improvement. In an effort to maintain a strong home-school partnership, parents are encouraged to closely monitor their child's academic progress to ensure he or she stays on track throughout the school year. CPS Board policy indicates Kindergarten students may not be retained.

Promotion Criteria for Students with Disabilities

A student with a disability receiving special education and related services under an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is expected to meet the modified promotion criteria outlined in his/her IEP. If a student with (or suspected of) a disability, is not on track to meet the promotion requirements outlined in the IEP, the IEP team will reconvene to revise the IEP. Promotion criteria are not modified for a student with a disability who is not requiring special education or related services, but who is receiving accommodations under a 504 Plan.

Instructional Materials

Any necessary instructional materials are provided to students throughout the school year. Instructional materials include items such as novels, hands-on tools, and headphones. It is the responsibility of Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy students to care for and return any borrowed materials at the end of the school year in good condition. Replacement costs and/or damage fines will be assessed for any lost or damaged materials. These fines must be paid in full before a final report card will be issued, transfer of records sent, and/or registration accepted for the next school year. Parents are ultimately responsible for damage to or loss of any instructional materials, audio/visual equipment, computers, electronic device or other school materials used by their child/children.

Field Trips

A range of cultural and educational field trips are scheduled each school year. Field trips are enriching learning experiences that enhance the curriculum and connect what students are

learning in the classroom to their neighborhood, the community, and their own lives. Because field trips often require additional payment, teachers work hard to ensure that the content and structure of the day is meaningful.

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy does require that a parent or guardian provide a signed permission slip as a way for parents to affirm that their child is permitted to attend and participate in the planned field trip. If a permission slip is not provided, the school will reach out to the families to ensure that this expectation has been communicated and understood and to ensure that the student is able to participate in such valuable learning experiences with their peers.

In the event that a student does not have parental permission to attend the field trip, he/she is still expected to attend school. An alternative learning plan will be created for the student.

Parents and other family members may also be asked to serve as chaperones for their children when safety and/or behavior concerns exist for a given child. If a parent/family member is unavailable to chaperone when safety/behavior concerns exist, a special meeting may be called to prepare for a positive field trip experience. Clear behavior and safety expectations will be reviewed with families and students, and parents/family members are asked to partner with the school by reinforcing established expectations. Depending on the situation, the school has the discretion to restrict a student's field trip participation in the event that a parent/family member is unavailable to chaperone. Decisions of participation will be made by the school director on a case-by-case basis.

Field Trip Chaperones

The ratio of chaperones to the student is:

- 1:10 teacher to student ratio with a minimum of two chaperones, and one must be a certified teacher employee.
- Kindergarten – 2nd grade: preferred 1 parent/guardian for every 6 students

To ensure student safety and to promote a positive field trip learning experience, we rely on parent/guardian and family chaperones as partners in the education of our students. Each chaperone is directly responsible for his or her group of students and should remain in contact and connect with the lead teacher throughout the field trip. Chaperones are asked to carefully follow the directions and guidelines set forth by the classroom teacher and/or school staff members on the trip. Our students are ambassadors of our school, and they must act in accordance with our school rules and expectations while participating in field trip experiences. Chaperones will be provided with clear guidelines and expectations prior to each trip, and chaperones are expected to uphold the school's expectations at all times. Any questions regarding the rules and responsibilities should be directed to the team leader or classroom teacher. Chaperones must sign a [Chaperone Responsibilities Agreement](#) before attending any trip.

Field Trip Dress Attire for Students, Teachers & Chaperones

Students attending a field trip must adhere to the uniform expectations outlined in the field trip permission slip, which will generally be the school or PE uniform. As representatives of

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, teachers and chaperones should wear school appropriate attire or school t-shirts/spirit wear.

Field Trip Refunds

Refunds will not be issued for illness, injury, or loss of field trip due to disciplinary actions.

Section 4: Student Code of Conduct

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy CHARTER SCHOOLS DISCIPLINE CODE (See Appendix)

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS FOR DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/IMPAIRMENTS (See Appendix)

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy CHARTER SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (See Appendix)

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (See Appendix)

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy CHARTER SCHOOL USE OF INTERNET, COMPUTER ACCESS AND ELECTRONIC MAIL (See Appendix)

Discipline Code

The Discipline Code has been written to support maintaining a safe, nurturing, participatory, and productive learning environment for all students. At Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, we rely on the Code of Conduct to guide our response to student misbehavior. Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy resolves behavioral incidents by teaching students social and emotional skills, shaping positive behavior, and repairing the harm that has been done. We believe in utilizing a restorative approach when supporting students through conflict that reinforces each student's social and emotional skill development. Restorative justice is a mindset that holds relationships at the center of a community. When harm occurs within the community, we gather multiple perspectives in order for all to be heard and for students to have the opportunity to repair any harm that has been done. Restorative practices are the tools that support healthy and safe learning environments. These tools include restorative circles, conversations, and personalized consequences that are intended to help students repair the harm they have caused and restore relationships within the learner community.

In accordance with the Discipline Code, all disciplinary responses must be applied respectfully, fairly, and consistently, and must protect students' rights to instructional time whenever possible. Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy is responsible for educating all students. Out-of-school suspensions are a last resort and imposed only when Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy determines that:

- Staff and/or students would be in danger of physical, emotional, or mental harm if the affected student remains on campus, or
- A student has severely disrupted the learning of other students in school and responses short of out-of-school suspension are demonstrated to be ineffective.

When imposed, suspensions should be part of a larger strategy for addressing students' behavioral needs and preventing future incidents.

Bullying & Harassment

MELA Anti-Bullying Policy (See Appendix)

Bullying and harassment stand in the way of our Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Mission and Vision and impede the tenets of our PRIDE framework (of problem-solving, responsibility, integrity, drive, empathy, and teamwork). Our school has adopted the No Bully System for preventing and responding to harassment and bullying during school and after-school programs, school field trips, school-sponsored events, and when students are traveling to and from school. This school-wide system applies to all students, teachers, staff, specialists, and anyone who works on our campus, whether employed by the school or district, working as contractors or volunteers.

Bullying occurs when a student, or group of students, repeatedly try to hurt, humiliate or get power over another student. Four specific types of bullying are defined below:

- Physical bullying is when a student or group of students uses physical force to hurt another student (e.g., by hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, taking a student's belongings or stealing their money).
- Verbal bullying is when a student or group of students use words, images or gestures to intimidate or humiliate another student (e.g., by taunting, name-calling, teasing, put-downs, insults, threats, and blackmail).
- Relational bullying is when a student or group of students excludes or isolates another student (e.g., through leaving them out, manipulating others against them, or spreading gossip or rumors).
- Cyberbullying is when a student or group of students use their cell-phones, text messages, emails, instant messaging, the Internet and social media to bully another student in any of the ways described above.

Bullying is different from conflict. Conflict is an inevitable part of life and can occur at school when a student perceives another student as being an obstacle to what they want or value. If students are in conflict but are not using bullying to get power over the other student, our school is committed to helping the students talk it through.

Bullying may at times amount to harassment. It is harassment to target a student online or face-to-face because of her or his actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or because she or he is associated with a student or group of students with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Sexual harassment is when a student is targeted with unwanted sexual comments, gestures, attention, stalking and physical contact that cause a student to feel uncomfortable or unsafe at school, or interferes with the student's schoolwork.

Bullying & Harassment Prevention & Response

MELA Bully Free Pledge (See Appendix)

MELA does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind for any reason. Students are safeguarded and may not be penalized for reporting bullying or harassment.

Bullying and harassment cause pain and stress to students and are never justified or excusable as “just teasing” or “just playing.” When a student stands by doing nothing or laughs or posts comments online when others bully, they are participating in bullying. The students at MELA have agreed to join together to treat others with respect, both online and face-to-face so that we keep our campus bully-free.

All students agree to:

- Value student differences and treat others with respect both online and face-to-face
- Report any suspected bullying to a staff member immediately.
- Never take revenge or ask someone to hurt a student who has reported bullying.

Our school takes a problem-solving approach to bullying. We have staff members who are trained as Solution Coaches® to bring together a Solution Team of students to help end the bullying. At Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, we are committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all of our students, and as a MELA school, we also adhere to the MELA Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Uniform

The MELA uniform is a visual representation of our school’s culture. Students wear it with pride. The uniform unites our students as learners and as a community. All students are expected to be dressed and groomed in a manner that will not be disruptive to the educational process. If any item of your child’s uniform becomes a distraction or violates any of the above, they will not be able to wear it. Any dress, jewelry, grooming, or fashion statement that are gang affiliated are not permitted. This will be under director discretion and director will have final approval.

Students are required to wear the MELA uniform every day. The specific components of the uniform are described below:

Lower Portions of uniforms for K-8 Students are limited to khaki shorts, pants, skirts, skorts, or jumpers.

- No cargo pants, stretch, spandex, jeans, jeggings, or leggings.
- All skirts and shorts must be an appropriate length, for school activities, falling right above the knee. Any hem more than two inches above the knee is a uniform violation. Uniforms should also be an appropriate fit.

Shirts/Tops:

- All shirts may be worn in short or long-sleeved versions.
- Navy blue or light blue polos with or without the MELA logo
- Students may wear a SOLID navy blue cardigan sweater, sweater vest.
- Students may wear a MELA Mustang sweatshirt.

- In cooler weather, students may wear solid navy blue long-sleeved shirts underneath their MELA shirts.

Shoes and Socks:

- Flip flops, slippers, moccasins, Crocs, sandals, and heels are **not** allowed.
- Students must have gym shoes at school to participate in Physical Education.
- Cold weather boots may only be worn to and from school and during outdoor recess.
- Students must bring other shoes to wear during the school day when cold weather boots are worn to and from school.

Accessories:

- Jewelry must be limited in both size and quantity.
- Smart Watches are not permitted. Please see the cell phone and other electronic device policy.
- Only head-coverings worn in accordance with religious observation are allowed.
- Bandanas, and/or handkerchiefs that are worn on the head as fashion accessories are not permitted.
- A student may not wear makeup to school.

Articles of clothing, boots, tennis shoes and lunch boxes should be marked with the child’s name, and grade, or room number so they may be returned if lost.

Dress Down and/or Non-Uniform Days

At certain times throughout the school year, students may be able to participate in dress down/out of uniform days. Certain guidelines will be sent home for these days. If a student is not dressed appropriately, his/her parents/guardian will be required to bring a change of clothes to school and students may lose the privilege to participate in future dress down days.

Articles Not To Be Brought To School

Objects that create a safety hazard or interfere with school procedure should not be brought to school. Undesirable objects will be confiscated if brought to school without the teacher’s permission. Any money sent to school with your student should be kept to a minimum. The school is not responsible for any money that is sent to school with your students.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

The school expressly disclaims liability for any lost or stolen electronic device brought to school. “Electronic device” means any battery or electric-powered item not specifically authorized by the school, including but not limited to cell phones, E-Readers, handheld games, game systems, Mp3 players, tablets, and similar devices.

Cell phones and other electronic devices that are brought to school by a student must be turned off and turned in to their classroom teacher at the beginning of each school day. The device will be returned to the student at the end of the day.

A student’s failure to have a cell phone or electronic device turned off and turned in during ongoing school hours or a student’s possession of a cell phone or electronic device while

attending a school event or fieldtrip, constitutes a Category I Offense. Any subsequent failure to have a cell phone or electronic device turn off and turned in while inside a school building constitutes a Category II Offense, and the cell phone or device may be confiscated by the Director until a parent/guardian conference occurs.

Students are not allowed to use cellular phones (or other electronic devices) for any purpose during school hours. Communication between students and parents/guardians needs to be made through the Main Office.

Device Usage Guidelines for Students & Parents/Guardians

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy provides computers, tablets, and other digital tools in order to expand student learning. Our goal is that all graduates of Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy will use digital tools productively, safely, and ethically. In order to balance freedom of use with security, Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy expects students, faculty, and families to follow the USE OF INTERNET, COMPUTER ACCESS AND ELECTRONIC MAIL located in the Appendix of this handbook.

Device Responsibilities:

- Students are responsible for damage to assigned devices including shattered screens, broken hinges, dropping the device, missing keys from the keyboard, spilled liquid, or any other physical harm to the device.
- Students may clean the device using only a soft, clean cloth. Using cleansers of any kind is prohibited.
- Cords and cables must be inserted into and removed carefully to prevent damage.
- Headphones should be worn when using devices at school.

Device Discipline:

- Students are prohibited from defacing equipment including, but not limited to, marking, painting, drawing or marring any surface or stitching on the case. Damage of this nature is equivalent to vandalism or property damage.
- If a device is damaged by a student through misuse or neglect, the student/parents will be responsible for the entire cost of repairs or replacement once a quote is received. Responsibility for repairs/replacement will be determined on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the school administration.
- All rules and guidelines are in effect before, during and after school hours.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Reflection

In accordance with state law (MN Statute 121A.10), the Pledge of Allegiance shall be recited each school day. Students will be taught the proper etiquette, display, and respect of the flag. Students or Staff who do not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reasons may elect to refrain from that participation. Students and school personnel must respect each person's right to make that choice and must not interfere with the recitation.

Section 5: Family Partnership & Involvement

Family Involvement

Parent/Guardians are welcome to visit their student's school by signing up at a scheduled time to visit accompanied by a member of the campus leadership team. The visit should be at a time, and of such a nature, as to present no interruption of the teaching/learning process.

Volunteering

We promote and encourage volunteerism at Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy to expand and enhance parental, community, civic and business involvement with schools while also ensuring appropriate levels of safety and security. Volunteerism takes two forms in our school:

1. Under ten hours week
2. Over ten hours a week

All prospective volunteers must complete the required [Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Volunteer Application Form](#) and satisfy the requirements of the applicant review process. Applicants must also complete the [Volunteer Agreement](#). Both of these forms may be accessed electronically with the links above or by contacting your school director.

Misrepresentation on any of the application forms or during the review process may result in immediate disqualification of a volunteer application. Any individual who has been convicted of any criminal offense shall be ineligible to be a volunteer, and any individual who has been convicted of an offense that requires him/her to appear on a sex offender registry in any jurisdiction shall be ineligible to serve as a volunteer.

Volunteer Fingerprinting

A fingerprint criminal background check **is not required** for the following prospective volunteers:

- A parent providing supervised volunteer service in their child's school or classroom for less than 10 hours/week
- Any individual providing volunteer service for less than 5 hours/week at a school where s/he does not have a child enrolled
- An individual providing incidental volunteer service with no ongoing individualized interaction with a student(s) including those who speak at a class/assembly, judge academic competitions, give musical performance, participate in the "Principal for a Day" program, job shadowing event or other one-time event provided where there is direct supervision of the activity/event by regular school employees
- A parent/guardian accompanying his/her child's class on a one-day field trip or another type of extracurricular activity that does not involve an overnight stay
- An individual providing volunteer service on projects/activities involving no or nominal contact with children (i.e. home-based volunteer activities, volunteers serving at the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Network office)

A fingerprint criminal background check **is required** for the following prospective volunteers:

- A parent/guardian providing volunteer service in their child's school or classroom for 10 or more hours/week;

- Any individual providing volunteer service for 5 or more hours/week at a school where she or he does not have a child enrolled;
- Any individual chaperoning an overnight school-sponsored trip, regardless of the hours/week that the volunteer serves (See also the Field Trip Chaperone Agreement);
- Any individual serving in a coaching capacity, regardless of the hours/week that the volunteer serves;
- Any individual serving as a student teacher or pre-service teacher, regardless of the hours/week that the volunteer serves ;
- Any individual serving as a One-on-One tutor or mentor, regardless of the hours/week that the volunteer serves;
- Any individual providing volunteer service with students when such service may occur in an unsupervised setting, regardless of the hours/week that the volunteer serves;

Parent Teacher Organization

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to join the school’s parent-teacher organization which is a parent-run group with the purpose of building community among school families, promoting parent involvement, and supporting the mission of the school. The parent-teacher organization is responsible for sponsoring school events/activities to promote a strong home and school connection. Membership is open to any family member of Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy students. School staff is also encouraged to participate. Meeting day/times are determined by the organization’s parent board and will be shared on the school’s calendar.

MELA at Home

At Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, we teach our students “MELA” MELA integrates Social-Emotional Learning competencies into the school culture in order to support broad student growth and development. The PRIDE language is commonplace throughout each campus and each letter of PRIDE represents a characteristic of positive behavior that we hope to see. MELA stands for: M: Mindful, E: Empathetic, L: Learners A: Accountable.

Families can support MELA at home by engaging in conversation around the MELA characteristics and how their student(s) demonstrated MELA during the school day. To learn more about MELA, contact your School Principal.

Complaint Resolution Procedures

It is our commitment to work with families to resolve concerns at the campus and network levels. However, families may occasionally need to raise a problem or concern with campus staff or, in certain instances, file a complaint with the organization. In these rare instances, thank you in advance for following the steps that have been outlined below:

STEP 1: Check the Family Handbook

As an initial step, please refer to this Family - Student Handbook to see if your concern or issue is addressed before reaching out to campus-based staff.

STEP 2: Communicate with Campus-Based Staff

If you cannot find the answer in the Handbook, schedule an appointment via cell phone or email directly with the faculty or staff person with whom you need to share your concern. Please allow this individual 24 hours (during the school work week) to return your call or email.

STEP 3: Contact Campus-Based Leadership

If you need further assistance after talking with the teacher or staff member, please contact your child's Director via email or phone.

Appendix:

The following Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy policies and procedures are effective for the 2020-2021 school year and are supplemental to the Family/Student Handbook.

Appendix A: MELA WELLNESS POLICY ...Pages A -

Appendix B: MELA DISCIPLINE CODE ...Pages B -

Appendix C: PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS FOR DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES / IMPAIRMENTS ...Pages C -

Appendix D: Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy's (MELA) ANTI-BULLYING POLICY & ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ...Pages D -

Appendix E: MELA USE OF INTERNET, COMPUTER ACCESS AND ELECTRONIC MAIL ...Pages E -

Appendix F: NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA ...Pages F -

Appendix G: NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY...Pages G -

Appendix H: TITLE IX GRIEVANCE ...Pages H -

Appendix A: Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy's WELLNESS POLICY

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy (MELA) is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the SFA and it is recipient agencies that:

The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

- All students in grades PreK-6 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet at a minimum, the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in

meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

- To the maximum extent practicable, our school will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program, the National School Lunch Program, and the After School Snack Program.
- The school will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

MELA is committed to serving healthy meals for children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams trans fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer’s specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within MELA participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and any additional programs the individual schools may elect.

Meal Times and Scheduling

- will aim to provide students with at least 15 minutes to eat for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch.
- will aim to schedule meal periods at appropriate times.
- when feasible, will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

MELA will hire a Food Service Management Company to administer the school meal programs. As part of the food service management company’s responsibility to operate a food service program, they will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in school. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

The School will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

All a la carte items will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snack requirements.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. - Schools are encouraged to share successful healthy celebrations/activities through social media or school newsletters. A healthy celebrations list is provided for all campuses to share with their families.

II. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. MELA aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. The School will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise); links with school meal programs

Communications with Parents.

The school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The School will encourage *parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.*

III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

MELA will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided with equal opportunities to participate in physical education classes. MELA will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

Physical Activity and Punishment.

Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., physical education) as punishment.

Appendix B: MINNESOTA EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING ACADEMY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE

The Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy (“MELA”) expects all students to conduct themselves in a socially responsible manner. Disciplinary measures are used to maintain a safe and orderly school environment, which promotes MELA’ philosophy of providing a college preparatory education for all students.

The MELA Discipline Code applies to the actions of students during school hours, before and after school, while on school property, while wearing MELA attire at all MELA sponsored events, and when the actions affect the mission of MELA. Students may also be subject to discipline for serious acts of misconduct, which occur either off-campus or during non-school hours when the misconduct disrupts the safe and secure positive learning environment and poses a threat to the orderly education process at MELA.

Each discipline case will carry its own merit and will be adjudicated per the facts accompanying the case. MELA’ staff shall consider all mitigating circumstances prior to disciplinary action. Mitigating circumstances shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Age, health, maturity, and academic placement of a student
- Prior conduct
- The attitude of a student
- Cooperation of parents
- Willingness to make restitution
- Seriousness of offense
- Willingness to enroll in a student assistance program

In some cases, MELA, with parent/guardian consent, may deem screening and referrals for drug/alcohol counseling as a necessary component of the disciplinary action. Loss of privileges and community service may also be considered. Community service, with parent/guardian consent, may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Repairing or cleaning property damage as a result of the offense;
- Participating in landscaping, gardening or cleaning inside the building or of the school grounds;
- Participating in projects that beautify the school, surrounding property or the community;
- Providing services that improve the lives of community members.

Each category of the offense listed below has a minimum and maximum disciplinary action associated with it and is proportionate to the offense. After considering the actual disciplinary violation and factors such as those listed above, MELA staff shall determine the disciplinary action within the minimum/maximum range to which the student shall be subjected.

CATEGORY I

These acts of misconduct include the following:

- Eating, drinking or chewing gum outside of the cafeteria
- Persistent tardiness to school or class
- Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or school building or premises
- Failing to abide by stated school rules or regulations
- Violating the dress code as outlined in MELA campus handbook

Students who commit any of these acts may be subject to one or more of the following behavioral response options, including, but not limited to: incentives for positive behavior, restorative conversations, teacher-student-parent conference, loss of privilege, temporary removal from classroom, problem-solving exercises, logical consequence, self-management plan, academic tutoring, behavior contract/behavior report card, meaningful work, as the result of a first offense and may, as a result of repeated violations and depending on the circumstances, be subject to the maximum penalty of a one-day, in-school suspension.

CATEGORY II

These acts of misconduct include the following student behaviors that disrupt the educational process at MELA:

- Repeated Category I violations
- Altering records and Forgery
- Use of intimidation, credible threats of violence, coercion, or persistent severe bullying (See Appendix A for MELA Anti-Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy)
- Repeated refusal to participate in classroom activities or complete academic assignments.
- Cheating, Plagiarism, or Copying others work or allowing others to copy work
- Violating the civil rights of others
- Defamation
- Violation of Discipline Agreement
- Persistent tardiness and /or absence from school or class
- Play fighting, threatening, bullying, and/or intimidating students
- Harassment or discrimination of others
- Acts that obstruct or interrupt the instructional process in the classroom
- Participation in acts designed to disrupt the classroom or school activities
- Repeated use of profane, vulgar or obscene words, gestures or other actions which disrupt the school environment
- Leaving the classroom and/or campus without permission
- Fighting or unwanted physical contact or threatening of any student or staff member
- Sexual harassment -Teen sexting: Minors * caught sending nude or indecent photos of other minors via cell phones or computers could get supervision or community service.
- Disregard for the stated school rules, instructions or directions of school personnel resulting in disruption to the educational process
- Failing to comply with school imposed consequences
- Repeated failure to follow stated school rules and procedures
- Gang references-hand signs, drawings, clothing, language or other common gang references
- Theft, loss or destruction of personal or school property that costs less than \$150.00

- Using, possessing, selling or transferring tobacco products, inclusive of vaporizers and e-cigarettes
- Truancy (Absence without permission, just cause and disregarding school's supportive services and resources provided)
- Violation of MELA Acceptable Use of Technology guidelines, including campus Wi-Fi
- Providing unauthorized visitors access to the building before, during or after school
- Unauthorized use of cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices

As a result of a first offense, students who commit any of these acts may be subject to one or more of the following behavioral response options, including, but not limited to: one in-school detention, work plan, skills building In-school suspension, peer conference/peer mediation, referral to behavioral health team, daily and/or weekly check in/check out, targeted social skills instruction, anger management group, mentoring, referral to counseling/social work services, and teacher-student-parent conference. Repeated violations, and/or depending on the circumstances, students may be subject to the maximum penalty of out-of-school suspension for 3 days or less and teacher-parent conference. Students may be subject to out-of-school suspension for 3 days or less when/if the student's continued presence in school would (1) pose a threat to the safety of other students, staff or members of the school community, or (2) disruption to the operation of the school.

CATEGORY III

These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors that seriously disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or on the school grounds. These acts of misconduct include the following:

- Repeated Category I & II violations
- Any act that endangers the safety of the other students, teachers or any school employee
- Assault on a student or any school employee (Assault is interpreted as an attempt to do bodily harm to a student or to any staff member)
- Use, possession, sale, or delivery of alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substances, contraband, drug paraphernalia or look-alike contraband/drugs, or use of any substance for the purpose of intoxication in or before school or a school-related function.
- Arson
- Creating a false fire alarm or making a threat to create a false fire alarm
- Sex Violations-Engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching
- Gambling
- Participating in gang activity or overt displays of gang affiliation-writings, drawings, representation, intimidation, recruitment
- Hazing
- Persistent or severe acts of sexual harassment – unwelcome sexual or gender-based conduct (either physical, verbal or electronic) and/or conduct of a sexual nature which is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or which creates a hostile or abusive school environment. Teen sexting: Minors * caught sending nude or indecent photos of other minors via cell phones or computers could get supervision or community service

- Inappropriate sexual conduct, including unwelcome sexual contact, indecent exposure, transmitting sexually suggestive images through information technology devices, or other sexual activities which involve and do not involve the use of force
- Sex acts which include the use of force
- Mob Action-any student that participates, instigates, and/or follows a mob, to school and/or from school; participates in a large or disorderly group of students using force to cause injury to a person or property, or persisting in severe disruption after being directed to cease by school personnel or police
- Destruction of property
- Theft, loss or destruction of personal or school property that costs more than \$150.00
- Trespassing-entering MEA property when previously prohibited or remaining on campus grounds after receiving a request to depart
- A student who is determined to have brought one of the following objects to school, any school-sponsored activity or event or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year.
- Possession and/ or use of weapons, any object that is commonly used to inflict bodily harm, and/or an object that is used or intended to be used in a manner that may inflict bodily harm, even though its normal use is not as a weapon
- Possession of the following items: firearm, look-alike firearm, knife, brass knuckles or another knuckle weapon, billy club, etc., may subject a student to expulsion for at least 1 year, adjusted by a case by case basis Section 921 of Title 18 of the US Code or Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code of 2012.

The executive director or principal may suspend a student for a period not to exceed 10 school days or may expel a student for a definite period of time not to exceed 2 calendar years, as determined by a case by case basis if, (i) that a student has been determined to have made an explicit threat on an Internet website against a school employee, a student or any school-related personnel, (ii) the Internet website through which the threat was made is a site that was accessible within the school at the time the threat was made or available to third parties who worked or studied within the school grounds at the time the threat was made, and (iii) the threat could be reasonably interpreted as threatening to the safety and security of the threatened individual because of his or her duties or employment status or status as a student inside the school.

Students who commit any of these acts may be subject to one or more of the following behavioral response options, including, but not limited to: maximum of 10 days, out-of-school suspension, per violation, clinical services referral, referral to CPS Crisis Management, referral to DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services, referral to SASS (Screening Assessment & Support Services) Hotline, substance abuse treatment/prevention, peer conference/peer mediation, skills building In-school suspension, a student-teacher-parent conference and may, depending on the circumstances, be subject to the maximum penalty of expulsion. Students may be subject to out-of-school suspensions of longer than 3 days after appropriate and available disciplinary interventions have been exhausted and student's continued presence in school would (1) pose a threat to the safety of other students, staff or members of the school community, or (2) substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of the school.

- Students suspended out-of-school for longer than 4 days shall be provided with appropriate and available support services during the period of their suspension.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

When a student's misconduct results in the need to suspend, or expel the student, the following procedures shall be followed:

A. Suspension Not Exceeding Ten School Days: Students suspended for ten school days or less shall be afforded due process in the following manner:

- The school principal (director) school meets with the student to discuss, investigate, and assess the situation
- If a student is found to have violated the Code of Conduct in a manner that warrants suspension, the student's infraction will be logged in PowerSchool or appropriate Student Information System. The principal of the school determines the duration of the suspension and whether the suspension is served in-school or out-of-school
- The principal of the school shall immediately notify the student's parent or guardian of the situation and the disciplinary action with a full statement of specific misconduct, the rationale for the duration of suspension, and notice to parents of their right to review. Principal of the school shall be available for a follow-up conference with the family if requested.
- A behavioral contract containing specific behavior expectations may be drawn up and signed by the student, parent/guardian, and Principal during a re-engagement meeting. In developing a re-engagement plan, the principal of the school will consider ways to prevent future school suspensions, forms of restorative action and supportive intervention to aid in the student's academic success.
- The principal of the school will facilitate a re-engagement meeting of students who have suspended out-of-school, expelled, or returning from an alternative school setting.
- Students can make up work following their suspensions. Upon returning to school, it is the student's responsibility to make up work in a reasonable time proportional to their suspension.
- The School Board will be provided all information and summaries for suspensions and expulsions.
- For out-of-school suspensions for longer than 4 school days, the school will note in the suspension notice whether support services are to be provided during the period of suspension or whether it was determined that there are no such appropriate and available services.
- Within the suspension decision and expulsion decision, the school will document whether other interventions were attempted or whether it was determined that there were no other appropriate and available interventions.
- The student shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against him/her; an explanation of the basis for the accusation; and a chance to present his/her version of the incident, in writing, to the campus director (principal).
- If unsatisfied with the response of the campus director, the student and guardian may present his/her version of events to the executive director of the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy.
- A pupil who is suspended in excess of 20 school days may be immediately transferred to an alternative program.

B. Expulsion: Students suspended and/or expelled as a result of gross disobedience or misconduct shall be afforded due process in the following manner:

MELA will request that the student's parents or guardian appear before MELA's Board of Directors ("Board") or a hearing officer appointed by it. Such requests will be made by registered or certified mail and state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. In addition to the advanced written notice of the hearing, the student shall be afforded sufficient time to prepare for the hearing, the right to be represented by counsel, and the right to present evidence.

The expulsion hearing need not take the form of a judicial or quasi-judicial hearing. In no event shall a hearing be considered public. Further, at the discretion of the Board, the hearing may be closed to those individuals deemed advisable, except the student, the student's parents or guardians, the student's attorney, at least one school official, and the Board's attorney at all times. Witnesses shall be admitted to a closed hearing only to the extent necessary to testify. In order for another student to act as a witness, signed written consent of that student's guardian must be obtained prior to the meeting. The following procedures will be included in an expulsion hearing: school presents more than hearsay evidence to prove allegations, parents, and students are allowed to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses, and separation exists between staff member conducting the expulsion, hearing officer and decision-maker.

The Board/Board Designee or a hearing officer appointed by it, at such meeting shall state the reasons for dismissal and the date on which the expulsion is to become effective.

If a hearing officer is appointed by the board he shall report to the board a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting and the board may take such action thereon as it finds appropriate.

If the Board/Board Designee acts to expel a pupil, the written expulsion decision shall detail the specific reasons why removing the pupil from the learning environment is in the best interest of the school.

The expulsion decision shall also include a rationale as to the specific duration of the expulsion. An expelled pupil may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided by the Minnesota Department of Education.

If a general education student is expelled from MELA, the student may not return to campus for a definite period not to exceed 2 calendar years. The MELA Board/Board Designee may expel a student with disabilities for a definite period not to exceed 2 calendar years, as determined on a case by case basis. If a parent and/or student wish to appeal the expulsion from Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy, there are two options. First, the parent and/or student may appeal in writing by sending a letter to the MELA Board of Directors before the next regularly scheduled board meeting stating why the parent and/or student feel the expulsion decision should be overturned. The appeal letter must be received by the date given in the expulsion notice and should be addressed and sent to the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Charter School office at 119060 Zanzibar Ln N, Maple Grove, MN 55311 Second, the parent and/or student may request a meeting with the MELA Board Executive Committee on the day of

the next scheduled MELA Board meeting for appeal. If you plan to attend the appeal, please call (763) 205-4396 no less than 48 hours prior to the hearing to notify the staff of your attendance. The Board will discuss the student and expulsion decision during executive session and will notify the parent/student in writing of its decision.

Appendix C: PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS FOR DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/IMPAIRMENTS

School officials may suspend students with disabilities/impairments and cease educational services for a total of up to 10 consecutive or 10 cumulative school days in one school year without providing procedural safeguards. Additionally, if students with disabilities continue to participate in the general education curriculum, continue to receive their IEP or 504 Plan services, and continue to participate with non-disabled peers to the same extent as specified in IEPs or 504 Plans, in-school suspensions and lunch detentions do not count toward the 10-day limit. Federal regulations offer some flexibility in suspending students with disabilities more than 10 school days in the school year in certain circumstances. In order to determine whether the circumstances permit a suspension of more than 10 days per school year, consultation by the school with the Department of Procedural Safeguards and Parental Supports (773/553-1905) is necessary. Without such consultation and approval from the Department of Procedural Safeguards and Parental Supports, the 10-school day limit on out-of-school suspensions will continue to apply.

When school officials anticipate a referral for expulsion, the following apply:

1. School must provide written notice to the parent/guardian or surrogate parent of the request for an expulsion hearing and the date of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) meeting, which must be held within 10 school days of the date of the decision to request the expulsion hearing. The school must also provide parent/guardian/surrogate with a written copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.
2. The IEP or 504 Plan team must:
 - A. Determine whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability by reviewing all current and relevant information, including evaluation and diagnostic results, information from the parent/guardian, observations of the student, and the student's IEP or 504 Plan. The behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability if:
 - 1) The conduct in question was caused by the student's disability or has a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; and/or
 - 2) The conduct in question was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the student's IEP or 504 Plan.
 - B. Review, and revise if necessary, the student's existing behavior intervention plan or develop a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan (FBA/BIP) to address the misconduct. The behavior intervention plan (BIP) must address the misconduct for which the student is being disciplined.

If the student's behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, school officials may apply the code of conduct, taking into consideration the student's special education and disciplinary records. In no event,

however, may the student be suspended for more than 10 consecutive or cumulative school days in a school year without providing appropriate educational services.

If the student's behavior is a manifestation of the disability, a disciplinary change in placement (expulsion) cannot occur. Students with disabilities, even if expelled, must be provided with an appropriate education in an alternative educational setting.

All MDRs are subject to legal review by the Department of Procedural Safeguards and Parental Supports.

All procedural safeguards contained in the SCC and this Appendix are equally applicable to those students with 504 plans.

Appendix D: Anti-Bullying Policy for Students with Disabilities

Anti-Bullying Requirements According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, bullying of a student with a disability may result in denial of FAPE if as a result he/she is not receiving meaningful educational benefit from the special education and related services provided by the school. If a student with disabilities is the victim of bullying, an IEP or 504 Plan meeting should be scheduled to determine if the student's needs have changed as a result of the bullying. For example, if the student's disability affects social skills development or makes the student vulnerable to bullying, the IEP or 504 Plan team should consider whether the IEP or 504 Plan needs to be revised to include goals and/or accommodations to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying or whether a reevaluation is needed to make these determinations. The IEP or 504 Plan team should only consider an LRE or location change if the student cannot receive FAPE in the current setting. If the student who engaged in bullying behavior is a student with a disability, the school must convene the IEP or 504 Plan team to determine if a re-evaluation is warranted or additional supports and services are needed to address the inappropriate behavior. The team should also consider examining the environment in which the bullying occurred to determine if changes to the environment are warranted. For example, the IEP or 504 Plan team should consider an FBA/BIP for the student or review a current BIP and revise if necessary.

Appendix E: ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

This Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (“Policy”) sets forth the standards governing Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Charter School (MELA) authorized users’ access to local, state, national, and international sources of information through the Internet, the MELA network, and computer and electronic mail (“email”) access. This Policy sets forth the rules under which student users may continue their access to and use of these resources. This Policy promotes the ethical, legal, and school-related use of the Internet, MELA network, electronic mail, and computer access. This Policy is in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act.

Access to the Internet, MELA network, Wi-Fi and computer, and electronic mail access is a privilege that is provided to student users for educational purposes. These resources provide students with an effective means of communication and research and should be used in a manner that does not violate the MELA school Policy and regulations established by the MELA Board of Directors.

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Authorized Users: MELA provides computers and network capabilities to students for the purpose of enhancing instruction through technological resources. MELA uses filtering and blocking technology to protect against materials that are obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors. MELA may make Internet access to email available to students on the MELA networks as an educational resource. It is a general policy of MELA to promote the use of computers in a manner that is responsible, legal and appropriate. Student use of MELA network is a privilege. A student’s failure to adhere to the Policy will result in the revocation of the student’s access privileges. Should a student’s access privilege be revoked, there shall be no obligation on the part of MELA to provide a subsequent opportunity for access to the MELA network.

MELA uses filtering software to screen Internet sites for materials that are obscene, pornographic or harmful to minors. The Internet is a collection of thousands of worldwide networks and organizations that contain millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that many of these pages include offensive, sexually explicit, and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the Internet. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk and MELA is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded from users from the Internet. If a student gains access to inappropriate, obscene, pornographic and/or harmful material, MELA will not be liable. To minimize these risks, your use of the Internet, the MELA network, and computer and electronic mail is governed by this Policy. Student Users may apply for less restrictive access to the internet to conduct bona fide academic research under the supervision of a teacher or administrator.

II. USE OF INTERNET, COMPUTER ACCESS, AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Improper use of the Internet, Wi-Fi, computer access, and electronic mail is prohibited. Uses of the Internet computer access and electronic mail that are prohibited include the following:

- Use of the MELA network for, or in support of, any illegal purposes; this includes the retrieving or viewing of any sexually explicit materials, failing to use the Internet, computer access and email in a manner consistent with this Policy.

- Violation of any provisions which governs students' right to privacy and the confidential maintenance of certain information including, but not limited to, a student's grades and test scores
- Use of profanity, obscenity or language that is generally considered offensive or threatening to persons of a particular race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or to persons with disabilities
- "Reposting" or forwarding personal communications without the author's prior consent
- Copying commercial software in violation of state, federal or international copyright laws
- Using the MELA network for financial gain or for the transaction of any business or commercial activities
- Plagiarizing (claiming another person's writing as your own) any information gained on or through the MELA network or any other network provider
- Using the MELA network for political lobbying
- Intentionally disrupting the use of the MELA network for other users, including the disruptive use of any process, program, or tool for ascertaining passwords or engaging in "hacking" of any kind, including, but not limited to, the illegal or unlawful entry into an electronic system to gain secret information
- Disclosing, using or disseminating private or personal information of other students, staff or administrators
- Providing access to the MELA network to violate any provisions of the MELA Code of Conduct
- Using a modem to dial into an online service provider, Internet Service Provider (I.S.P) or connect through a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) while connected to the MELA network, as this poses a security risk to the MELA network

Using the MELA network for anything related to "cyber-bullying" Cyber-Bullying.

"Cyber-bullying" means using information and communication technologies to bully. "Cyber-Bullying" is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not be limited to, email messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

- Deliberately threatens, harasses, intimidates a student, a school employee or any personnel; or
- Places a student, a school employee or any school-related personnel in reasonable fear of harm to a student, a school employee or any school-related personnel or damage to the student, a school employee or any school-related personnel property; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school
- Reporting Procedure and Investigation: Any student, school employee or any school-related personnel who believes he/she has or is being subjected to cyberbullying, as well as any person who has reason to believe a pupil or school staff member has knowledge or reason to believe another student, school employee or any school-related personnel is being subjected to or has been subjected to cyber-bullying shall immediately make a report to the Building Principal or designee.

- The Building Principal or designee shall investigate all reports of such conduct. If the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was not committed, the Building Principal or designee will inform the affected parties of the investigation results.

Social Media/Chat Room Guidelines for Students

- Be transparent. Your honesty, or dishonesty, will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. Identify yourself by using your real name.
- Be judicious. Make sure that you are not sharing confidential information concerning its staff, students or parents.
- Write what you know. Ensure that you write and post about your area of expertise. If you are unfamiliar with a subject matter, do the research before commenting.
- Perception is the reality. In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional can be blurred. Just by identifying yourself as a MELA student, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the district. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with the district's professional standards.
- Your responsibility: What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social media on behalf of MELA is not a right but an opportunity, so please treat it seriously and with respect. Be careful and considerate when dealing with others.
- Take responsibility. If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and make your corrections quickly.
- Press pause. If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, then don't. Take a break and come back to it later. Ultimately, what you publish is yours and so is the responsibility.
- Other training opportunities on internet practices will be given throughout the school year.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

The privilege of using the MELA network is free to students of MELA. The student to whom an account on the MELA network is issued is responsible, always, for its proper use. A responsible Student User of the MELA network:

- May keep a free account on the MELA network as long as he or she is a student in MELA
- May use the Internet to research assigned classroom projects
- May use the Internet to send email to other users of the MELA network and to people around the globe
- May use the Internet to explore other computer systems
- Does not give his or her password to another person
- Understands that none of his or her communications and information accessible through the MELA network is considered private or confidential and MELA reserves the right to access all user accounts, at any time, including student email
- Understands the Policy before logging on
- Understands that if the Policy is violated, the student's account on the MELA network will be revoked
- Understands that if he or she is removed from MELA' network by a school faculty member that he or she has the right to appeal the removal within thirty- (30) days, in writing, to the Director of the school; the MELA Director's decision shall be final

- Understands that if he or she is removed from the MELA network, there shall be no obligation to provide a subsequent opportunity to access the MELA network

IV. PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR USE OF MELA NETWORK

Prior to the activation of a student's account on the MELA network, the parent or guardian of the student must provide written authorization (located on the first page of the community handbook).

V. STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND INTERNET TEST

All students to whom an account on the MELA network has been assigned shall sign a form acknowledging the requirements of the Policy on student acceptable use and verifying his or her successful completion of the MELA Network Student Internet Orientation.

VI. WAIVER OF PRIVACY, MONITORING, ENFORCEMENT

Users do not have a personal privacy interest in anything created, received or stored on the Internet, MELA network, or electronic mail systems, as these systems are neither secure nor private.

Users expressly waive any right to privacy in anything created, stored, and or received while using MELA computer equipment or Internet access. Users consent to allow MELA personnel to access and review all materials created, stored, sent or received by the User through any of the MELA network or Internet connections.

MELA has the right to monitor and log all aspects of its computer system including, but not limited to, monitoring the Internet, MELA network, and electronic mail use to ensure that these resources are being used for educational and school-related purposes, consistent with this Policy.

When a faculty member determines that a student has made an inappropriate use of computer equipment or the Internet the faculty member may remove the student from the MELA network. The student may appeal the decision to the Director of MELA within 30 days of the revocation.

VII. Student Technology Rules Contract

School Year 2019-2020

Rules for using the Internet and email help everyone. By following the rules, everyone can use the Internet, computers and other related hardware to learn more about the world and communicate with others. Only students who follow these rules may use the Internet, computers and other related hardware and telecommunication tools. Using the above listed tools are a responsibility and a privilege, not a right.

Teachers may view any student communication at any time in order to support the student's development as a responsible citizen.

Students are responsible for thoughtful, considerate behavior on computers as they are for their general classroom behavior.

DO

- ★ Access educational material with teacher permission.
- ★ Send appropriate messages and pictures with teacher permission.
- ★ Use polite language on-line and be kind to others.
- ★ Protect computers, computer systems or computer networks.
- ★ Follow copyright laws.
- ★ Treat all hardware with great care.
- ★ Use your own identity, work, mail, files and folders with teacher permission.
- ★ Protect limited technology-related resources.
- ★ Keep personal information private.

DO NOT

- ❖ Access non-educational material or use the network for personal purposes.
- ❖ Send or display offensive messages or pictures.
- ❖ Use obscene or inappropriate language.
- ❖ Harass, insult, or attack others.
- ❖ Damage computers, computer systems, or computer networks.
- ❖ Break copyright laws.
- ❖ Treat hardware carelessly or roughly.
- ❖ Misrepresent yourself or trespass in and/or modify user's folders, mail, work, or other files.
- ❖ Waste limited resources.
- ❖ Give out personal information.

Teachers and Directors with support and guidance from the Technology Specialist will decide on the educational value of any electronic material. They will determine the proper action to take with students who do not follow these rules.

MELA Chromebooks Replacement Cost Estimates

- Motherboard: \$29.99 ea
- LCD Screen: \$43.99 ea
- Upper Case/Keyboard: \$19.99 ea
- Display Hinge: \$24.99 ea
- Battery: \$25.99 ea
- Bottom Cover: \$24.99 ea
- Chromebook Replacement: \$250.00 ea

****STUDENTS FAMILY WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DAMAGED TECHNOLOGY****

MELA'S STUDENT TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE

I, _____, have read the Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Technology Rules Contract for Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy (MELA). I understand that I am to follow all policies and regulations set forth in this agreement. When I accept I agree to follow these rules and to use the Internet, computers, and other related hardware in a responsible way to further my education. I understand that if there is repair or replacement cost, I am responsible for all costs.

Student Print Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

MELA'S PARENT TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE

I, _____, have read the Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Technology Rules Contract for Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy (MELA), and understand we are to cooperate with the school on all policies and regulations pertaining to technology and all equipment. I understand all repair and replacement cost are solely my responsibility. Stolen or lost computers cost are included in this replacement cost policy.

Parent Print Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: Notification of Rights under FERPA

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

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students can initiate a request by writing a message to the Director [or appropriate school official] identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Director will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request an amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate. If a parent or eligible student believes a record is inaccurate, an amendment can be requested by writing a message to the School's Director [or appropriate school official] clearly identifying the part of the record they want to be changed, specifying why it is inaccurate. Following a review of the request, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

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

**Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901**

Appendix G: Non-Discriminatory Policy

Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy shall comply with all federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination. Specifically, it is the policy of Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Board of Directors that no person, on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, parental status, marital status, sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, emotional disability, or learning disability shall be discriminated against, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any education program or activity.

Appendix H: Title IX Grievance Procedure

Any student or employee of Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy who believes he or she has been discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded for participation in any school-sponsored education program or activity on the basis of sex shall attempt promptly to resolve the situation by (1) discussion with the building Director, or in the case of a student, or the individual's immediate supervisor, in the case of an employee. (2) If the complaint is not resolved under step 1, the complainant may file a written complaint with Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy' Chief Compliance Officer, who, for the 2020-2021 Academic Year is:

Danielle Fields,
9060 Zanzibar Ln N, Maple Grove, MN 55311
Tel: (763) 205-4396
Fax: (763) 999-6988
E-mail: dfields@melaschool.org

The complainant shall provide a copy given to the school director or supervisor involved. The Chief Compliance Officer shall arrange a meeting with parties involved to review the complaint within ten (10) days after the meeting(s).

If the complaint is not resolved under step 2 the complainant may file an appeal in writing with the secretary of the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Board of Directors, indicating the nature of the disagreement.

A hearing panel consisting of not less than three (3) members of the Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Board of Directors shall consider the complaint at the earliest date the hearing panel can meet as a body, at which time the complainant shall address the hearing panel in public or closed session as appropriate and lawful, concerning the complaint.

The hearing panel consisting of at least three (3) members Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy Board of Directors shall within thirty (30) calendar days after the hearing provide the complainant with a written statement of its decision, and (or) action taken.