



Ohio Connections Academy

SCHOOL HANDBOOK SUPPLEMENT

Last Revised: September 2025

This Supplement provides school-specific information in addition to the general policies documented in the Connections Academy Board Policy Manual. Because this Supplement does not constitute the full set of policies related to your Connections Academy school, please be sure to read both these documents. They may be updated during the year as needed. If there are any discrepancies between this Handbook Supplement and the Board Policy Manual, the policies in this Board Policy Manual supersede these policies and are the binding policies that should be followed.

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Table of Contents

2 School Mission and Overview	3
2.3 Non-discrimination Statement	3
3 School Organization and Roles	4
3.1 Roles and Responsibilities	4
3.2 Required Training for School Staff	5
3.3 School Information	6
3.4 School Schedule	7
3.5 Enrollment.....	8
3.6 Assessment	11
4 Attendance	11
4.1 Caretaker Responsibilities for Attendance.....	11
4.2 Marking and Verifying Attendance	12
Engagement Requirements	13
4.4 Truancy and Lack of Engagement	14
5 Grading and Student Evaluation	16
6 High School Programs and Policies	18
7 Services for Special Populations.....	44
7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligible Students	44
7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students	45
9 Community Events, Trips, and Activities	47
10 Conduct, Due Process, Grievance, and Communication.....	48
Dress Code.....	48
School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS)	48
OCA Restraint and Seclusion Policy	49
10.1 Drug-, Alcohol-, and Tobacco-Free Environment	49
10.2 Anti-Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy.....	50
10.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students	55
10.4 Academic Honesty	61
10.5 Dispute Resolution for Caretakers.....	62
10.6 Communication	63
External Video and Web Conferencing Services	64
11 Educational Materials Provided by the School	64
11.3 Use of the Internet	64
12. Parental Rights	68
Appendix I: Academic Prevention/Intervention Policy	70
Appendix II: OCA Relearning Policy	77
Appendix III: Attendance, Truancy, and Automatic Withdrawal Policy.....	78

2 School Mission and Overview

2.3 Non-discrimination Statement

Ohio Connections Academy Nondiscrimination Policy

Ohio Connections Academy is committed to a policy of educational equality. The school does not exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of ethnic group identification/ethnicity, marital status, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), religion, physical or mental disability, English proficiency, age, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups, or any other category protected by federal or state law in the admission to, participation in, or receipt of the services under any of Connections’ educational programs and activities.

This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Educational Amendment of 1972* (Title IX), Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504), the *Age Discrimination Act of 1975*, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)*, and *Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act*.

The following individuals are designated to coordinate compliance with these laws:

For School Employment-Related Matters as Outlined in the Services Agreement

Contact Information	
Coordinator	Sarah Savage – School Related Inquiries sarah.savage@pearson.com 855-330-4636

For School Related Matters Other than Employment:

Contact Information	
Title IX Coordinator	Tisha Rinker tirinker@oca.connectionsacademy.org 614-840-9401

Title VI & Title II ADA Coordinator	Cathleen Leichter cleichter@oca.connectionsacademy.org 513-486-9128
504 Coordinator	Rekha Manakkal rmanakkal@oca.connectionsacademy.org 614-840-9401
Student Matters	Dr. Katie Brechiesen kbrechiesen@oca.connectionsacademy.org 614-840-9401

***All staff can be reached via the main Ohio office phone number at (513) 234-4900.**

For further information on public and student rights and the responsibilities of public schools, please visit the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's [website](#).

Any student and/or caretaker may file a complaint in compliance with the school's grievance procedures.

For questions regarding the applicability of Title VII or Title IX, please contact:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Bldg.
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Toll Free Call Center: 800-421-3481
Fax: 202-453-6012

OCR@ed.gov

[OCR Complaint Assessment System](#)

[OCR Regional Office Locations](#)

[OCR Discrimination Complaint Form](#)

3 School Organization and Roles

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

A primary goal at Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) is encouraging parent involvement. Please click on the [link](#) to review the current version of OCA's Title I Parent and Foster Caregiver Involvement Policy developed as part of the Title I funding plan. Feedback is welcome; please send a WebMail message to the Parent Involvement Coordinator at any time.

3.2 Required Training for School Staff

Missing Child Policy

If any administrator is notified by school personnel that a missing child is attending OCA, the board or administrators will give notice of that fact to the Missing Children Clearinghouse and to the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the area where the missing child resides. For more information on this policy, refer to the Board approved Missing Children Policy in the Board Policy Manual.

OCA will provide informational materials to families through WebMail and parent meetings about matters regarding missing children.

Medical Alert Policy

OCA strongly encourages Caretakers to notify the school if a student has a serious illness or medical condition that could require the on-site administration of medicine or other environmental accommodations. A serious illness or medical condition could include, but is not limited to, asthma, diabetes, severe food or environmental allergies, seizure disorder and any other condition that could result in an emergency medical situation for the student. Additional information concerning students with diabetes can be found below.

If a student has a specific food allergy or requires an inhaler for asthma, it is important that the school is notified so that proper procedures can be followed to ensure the student's safety.

Upon notification of a seizure disorder, an Individualized Seizure Action Plan will be developed with the student, Caretaker, and relevant school staff. The plan will be based on recommendations/instructions from the treating physician/practitioner. The plan must specifically include a written request to have seizure disorder prescriptions administered to the student when required and a written statement from the treating medical professional providing information on each drug prescribed to the student. The plan will only be shared with staff that directly supervises or interacts with the student. An Individualized Seizure Action Plan is valid for one year and must be renewed at the start of each school year.

Notifying the school of chronic and/or serious medical conditions allows teachers, staff, and administrators to support students both physically and academically. Please note that any information shared with the school will remain confidential among school staff in compliance with state and federal privacy laws.

Once notified of any medical concern, the Caretaker will immediately be provided a form to specifically identify the condition and treatment protocol for the student and the school will work with the Caretaker in developing a protocol for the student.

*See Policy 310 Seizure Disorder Policy and Policy 305 Medication Policy

OCA Diabetes Policy

Ohio law requires OCA's governing board to ensure that each student enrolled in OCA who has diabetes receives appropriate and needed diabetes care in accordance with an order signed by the student's treating physician. OCA will inform a student's Caretaker no later than 14 days after receipt of an order signed by the treating physician of a student with diabetes that the student may be entitled to a Section 504 plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding the student's diabetes.

OCA school staff will comply with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's guidelines and the Ohio Revised Code. School staff receive training prior to the beginning of each school year or as needed (within 14 days after receipt by the school of an order signed by the treating physician of a student with diabetes). Upon completion of the training, the school, in a manner it determines appropriate, shall determine if each employee trained is competent to provide diabetes care.

No later than December 31st of each year, OCA's governing board shall report to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce: 1) the number of students with diabetes enrolled in the school during the previous school year; and 2) the number of errors associated with the administration of diabetes medication to students with diabetes during the previous school year.

*See Policy 305 Medication Policy

3.3 School Information

School Information	School Contact
School Phone Number	513-234-4900
School Fax Number	513-766-7982
School Address	130 E. Wilson Bridge Rd., Suite 25 Worthington, OH 43085
Additional Office Addresses & Phone Numbers	5181 Natorp Blvd., Suite 150 Mason, OH 45040 513-234-4900
School Hours	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., M-F
Technical and General Support	800-382-6010
School Superintendent	Marie Hanna

School Principals	Katie Brecheisen (K-12th Principal) Mindy Pyle (K-2 nd Assistant Principal) Angie Ferguson (3 rd – 5 th Assistant Principal) Allison Black (6th -8th Assistant Principal) Molly Heidenreich (9th-10th Assistant Principal) Jason Regnier (11th-12th Assistant Principal) Stephanie Nickles (Principal of Curriculum & Instruction)
Webmail	All staff and support services are located in the Education Management System's (Pearson Online Classroom, formally Connexus®) WebMail address book.
School Board of Directors	Refer to the school website for the most current contact information.

School Report Card

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce will annually prepare and make available a report card for OCA. OCA will provide the report card to families upon enrollment. The OCA report card can be found on the school's website.

3.4 School Schedule

2025-2026 School Year Calendar

Note: The School Status Legend below the calendar reflects the possible school statuses for each event. All events which show a status of School Open indicates they are school days for students. All events which show any other status indicates they are NOT school days for students. Please refer to the legend to determine whether teachers and/or administrator staff are available for each event according to its status.

Event	School Status	Date
Labor Day	School and Office Closed	September 1, 2025
<i>First Day of School (Students)</i>	School and Office Open	September 2, 2025
Staff Data Day	School and Office Open	October 15, 2025
Staff Work Day	Staff Work Day	October 31, 2025
Thanksgiving Break	School and Office Closed	November 26 - 28, 2025
Winter Break	School and Office Closed	December 22, 2025 - January 2, 2026
<i>Last School Day of First Semester</i>	School and Office Open	January 16, 2026
<i>First Semester Sections Close</i>	NA	January 19, 2026
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	School and Office Closed	January 19, 2026
Staff Work Day - No Students	Staff Work Day	January 20 - 21, 2026
<i>Second Semester Start Date</i>	School and Office Open	January 22, 2026
Presidents' Day	School and Office Closed	February 16, 2026
Staff Data Day	School and Office Open	February 25, 2026
Spring Break	School Closed/Office Open	March 23 - 26, 2026
	School and Office Closed	March 27, 2026
Staff Work Day	Staff Work Day	April 24, 2026
<i>Last Day of School (Seniors)</i>	School and Office Open	May 18, 2026
Memorial Day	School and Office Closed	May 25, 2026

<i>Last Day of School (Students)</i>	School and Office Open	May 29, 2026
School Closed - Additional Administrator/12 Month Employee Days: <i>November 26, 2025; December 22-24, 2025; January 2, 2026; February 16, 2026; March 27, 2026</i>		
School Status Legend:		
School Closed/Office Open = Students and Teachers are not in school but Admin are on duty		
School and Office Closed = No one is in school		
School and Office Open = Everyone is in school		
Staff Work Day = Students are not in school but Admin and Teachers are on duty		

Required Instructional Hours

A student who attends a full school year (169 days) must participate in a minimum of 920 hours of instruction. The OCA school day is set at 5.5 hours per day. A student who is enrolled less than a full school year is required to participate in 5.5 hours of instruction for every day on the school calendar that they are enrolled, beginning with date of enrollment, and continuing through the end of the school year, or the date of withdrawal. The required instructional hours will vary by student based upon enrollment and withdrawal dates. Note that these are the minimum hours required by the state and that students are responsible for mastering all material, which may require additional time.

All high school students are required to be enrolled full-time, which means being enrolled in a minimum of five courses each semester.

3.5 Enrollment

To enroll, parents/guardians must submit the following to the School:

- » Completed registration form
- » Student's birth certificate or passport
- » Student's current immunization record
- » Custody paperwork, if applicable, to be complete and contain all pages and signatures

Proof of Residency

Upon initial enrollment, and annually thereafter, one (1) of the following documents, in the parent's/guardian's name showing the current street address, must be provided to and verified by the School:

- » Completed registration form
- » Student's birth certificate
- » Photo identification of parent/guardian enrolling the student
- » Student's current immunization record
- » Custody paperwork, if applicable
- » **Proof of Residency/Address Verification** - one (1) of the following in the parent/guardian/student name, showing the complete address, and date:

- A deed, mortgage, lease, current home owner's or renter's insurance declaration page, or current real property tax bill;
- A utility bill or receipt of utility installation issued within ninety days of enrollment;
- A paycheck or paystub issued to the parent or student within ninety days of the date of enrollment that includes the address of the parent's or student's primary residence;
- The most current available bank statement issued to the parent or student that includes the address of the parent's or student's primary residence;
- Notifications from Social Security and/or Job and Family Services dated within thirty days.
- Notarized affirmation from parent(s) of current resident address.

Parents, guardians, or independent students aged 18 and over must ensure their correct home address is in Pearson Online Classroom and notify the School when a change in the location of the parent or student's primary residence occurs.

Failure to communicate with school staff and/or provide adequate proof of residency records in 30 days or later may result in temporary access to Caretaker and/or student accounts being disabled in Pearson Online Classroom to prompt a response from the Caretaker, or students being withdrawn from the School, except as otherwise prohibited by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or other relevant laws.

*Refer to Policy 204 Admission Enrollment Residency Policy for additional information.

Maximum Age to Enroll

The maximum enrollment age of a student is determined by state law. In Ohio, all students must be 21 or under on the first day of attendance at the School. Students are not permitted to attend OCA if they are 22 on their first day of attendance at OCA. Maximum age limits also apply to students who choose to re-enroll. For more information regarding the maximum enrollment age, please contact the School Counselor or administrator.

Kindergarten and First Grade Admission Policies

A kindergarten student may enroll in OCA if the student is five years of age before August 1. OCA may enroll a kindergarten student who turns five between August 1 and December 31 if the student qualifies through testing. The student will be required to take a proctored test in one of the OCA offices to determine if they qualify for early admission per the OCA Early Entrance policy. Requests for early admission must be submitted to OCA between June 1 and June 30 to be considered for admittance for the upcoming school year.

A first grade student may enroll in OCA if the student is six years of age before August 1 of the current school year. OCA may enroll a student in first grade if the student turns six between August 1 and December 31 if it is

in the best interest of the student. Students who have not completed kindergarten shall only be enrolled in first grade in compliance with the Early Entrance Policy.

*See Policy 223 Early Entrance Policy for additional information.

Vision and Hearing Screening Requirement for Kindergarten/First Grade

In accordance with Ohio law, OCA students enrolling in Kindergarten or First Grade for the first time are required to have screenings to detect developmental disorders. Each student must have their vision, hearing, speech and communications, and health or medical problems reviewed by their primary care physician before November 1. Caretakers may choose to opt out of the screenings and should submit a written statement to

OCA requesting to be exempt from the screenings. Failure to have the screening will not bar the student from enrollment.

Please contact the School Counselor if you need assistance finding a provider.

Enrollment after the Start of the School Year

The enrollment process must be completed by for students to enroll in the first semester of the school year.

The enrollment process must be completed by for K-11 students to enroll in the second semester of the school year. Enrollment is closed for cohort seniors two weeks after the first day of school.

High School Mid-Semester Transfers

High school students entering mid-semester submit official or unofficial transcripts, report cards, progress reports, and/or teacher notes from their previous school as part of the enrollment process. Connections Academy teachers review the student's work and progress up to that point in the semester and enter an equivalent grade in the Connections Academy Grade Book that represents the student's efforts at the previous school. That grade will be averaged in with the Connections Academy grades earned in the same semester. All high school students are required to be enrolled full-time, which means being enrolled in a minimum of five courses each semester.

Dual Enrollment in Other Schools

Because the school is a full-time program, students may not be concurrently enrolled in another K-12 public school on a full or part-time basis. However, students may be enrolled in College Credit Plus and Career

Technical programs while enrolled at OCA. OCA staff will review the college or career center course schedule to ensure, with a combination of OCA high school courses, that students remain full-time.

3.6 Assessment

Mandatory Testing Requirement

Ohio Connections Academy is a community school established under Chapter 3314 of the Ohio Revised Code. OCA is a public school, and students enrolled in and attending OCA are required to take proficiency tests and other examinations that are prescribed by law. In addition, there may be other requirements for students that are prescribed by law. Students who have been excused from the compulsory attendance law for the purpose of home education as defined by the Administrative Code, shall no longer be excused for that purpose upon their enrollment in a community school. For more information about this matter, contact school administration or the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

Participation in testing is required at Ohio Connections Academy. These tests are required for high school graduation. The school works diligently to provide safe and convenient locations for testing. Refusal to participate in state testing could lead to a withdrawal of the student.

More information about the administration of the state required tests will be posted by the School Principal once the school year is under way, including specific dates and locations. Learning Coaches are responsible for providing transportation to and from testing sites.

4 Attendance

4.1 Caretaker Responsibilities for Attendance

To meet attendance requirements and successfully complete lessons, students will need various levels of adult supervision as outlined for all grades in the Attendance section of the Connections Academy General Handbook. If the School suspects a student does not have adult supervision during the school day, Child Protective Services may be notified, and the School will commence an investigation to determine if the student is in a safe and secure setting and is receiving sufficient supervision to meet all attendance requirements. This investigation will consider the age and maturity level of the student, the location of the student during the school day, and may also require an in-person meeting at that location with school staff.

Students who have been excused from the compulsory attendance law for the purpose of home education as defined by the Administrative Code shall no longer be excused for that purpose upon their enrollment in a community school. For more information about this matter, contact school administration or the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

4.2 Marking and Verifying Attendance

Attendance at OCA includes instructional activities that students are expected to complete, participate in, and/or attend during any given school day, to include both classroom and non-classroom based activities. Examples of instructional activities include, but are not limited to, online time spent on Pearson Online Classroom, formally Connexus or other computer-based educational systems, offline activities directly related to course work/assignments (EX: homework, portfolios, artwork, physical activities, music, etc.), testing, and in-person and/or remote communication with school staff and/or service providers.

Student attendance is tracked in the student's "Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker", which is available to all students and Caretakers/Learning Coaches. The Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker is the official record of attendance and is customized to display the set of courses and activities (called "sections") relevant for each individual student. School work may be recorded within the sections of the Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker on any day of the school year that falls within the start and end dates of the school calendar, to include Saturdays, Sundays, school breaks, and holidays. Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker entries may be made from student and/or Caretaker/Learning Coach accounts.

Parents/Caretakers/Guardians/Students are required to enter the **full amount of time** a student works on educational activities into the most appropriate section listed on the student's Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker. It is important to enter time daily. Per Ohio law, student attendance may not exceed ten (10) hours per day. Per school policy, students may not accumulate more than 55 hours over the students required instructional hours to be used towards total attendance hours for the year.

Student attendance at OCA is tracked through the following methods:

1. Online Time spent working in Pearson Online Classroom
2. Other school time (both online and/or offline)

Time spent working online in Pearson Online Classroom is tracked automatically via a background process that utilizes an online timer to capture work completed within student's Pearson Online Classroom accounts. The online timer tracks time spent working directly within Pearson Online Classroom lessons, assessments, and LiveLessons. Families are asked to enter **all time worked by section**, (including all online and offline time) to validate time tracked by the system.

Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker Guidelines

- Hours entered in the Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker **must directly relate** to activities required by the student's curriculum and/or personalized learning plan and may be verified by the School. Any activity not directly related to the student's plan must be approved in advance by the homeroom teacher.
- Each student is required to complete 920 hours of instructional activity during a full school year,

including those students enrolled in Credit Flex, Career Technical programs, and College Credit Plus. The Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker has sections for logging time spent in these programs.

- Educational time must be entered daily.
- School staff will approve all time. The School will use internal tools to analyze and evaluate that student's required work/activities reasonably align with the hours reported. School staff may reduce recorded hours when actual work does not align with reported hours.
- Entries cannot be modified by Students/Caretakers/Learning Coaches after attendance hours have been marked as approved by school staff.
- Students are required to continue to attend school and complete school work through the end of the school year even after logging the required (or minimum) number of school hours.

Absences

Due to the flexible nature of Ohio Connections Academy, students can complete work outside of normal school hours, to include evenings, weekends, and holidays. OCA provides students with the opportunity to make up work for time spent away from school. Time missed on a school day may be offset by work completed in advance (up to 55 hours) or may be "made up" in a timeframe equivalent to the absences. Teachers should be notified when students will be absent on regular school days.

If a situation arises that will cause a student to miss scheduled school days (e.g., due to a health issue, family emergency, natural disaster), the school staff must be notified within 24 hours of the first missed day. The School may also require official documentation to support any situation resulting in three (3) or more consecutive days of missed school. Please reach out to the school for additional information.

If a student has too many hours missed at any point during the school year, that student may be subject to interventions per OCA's Attendance Policy.

Religious Expression Days

In accordance with the Religious Expression Days Act and Board approved Religious Expression Days Policy, students are allowed to be excused from school for up to three days per school year to observe religious expression. To have an absence considered excused for religious reasons, a written request must be submitted to the attendance department stating that the student is taking a religious expression day, and the date that this will occur.

Engagement Requirements

All students enrolled with OCA are required to maintain ongoing live contact (calls, LiveLessons, Testing) with their teachers. Failure to comply with OCA contact requirements may result in staff inability to verify attendance, mandatory in-person meetings, and/or removal from the program for non-compliance.

Students who have been identified as struggling in an academic area may receive notification(s) from their teacher(s) and/or administrator(s) that they are *required* to attend LiveLesson® sessions and/or participate in Supplemental Instructional Support Programs for certain courses. Students will be notified in advance of the time and day of the LiveLesson session(s) and expectations for attending and/or of the requirements for participating in supplemental programs. Non-compliance with required attendance at LiveLesson sessions and/or with required participation in assigned supplemental programs may result in removal from the program.

OCA may assign students who are not meeting program requirements to attend LIVE (Learning Independently while Visually Engaged) Class. Students will then be required to login to the LIVE Classroom and complete their lessons while being monitored via webcam by OCA Staff. If students are assigned to LIVE Class, they must attend to receive approved attendance credit for the day.

Students who receive supports and services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be assigned specific Intervention LiveLesson sessions based upon their IEP goals/objectives. The assigned, scheduled Intervention LiveLesson sessions are a requirement for students to attend and are not optional within our program. Please see your student's Intervention Specialist with questions regarding the required Intervention LiveLesson sessions.

Attendance Policy

For a student to remain enrolled at OCA, attendance of 90% of all required instructional hours must be logged current in the CAT, or the student must be considered on pace for on-time completion of all coursework. Teachers and administrators review system metrics (lesson and assessment completion rates, grades, course activities) weekly to determine whether students are on pace for on-time completion.

Students who fail to meet OCA's required attendance measures will be subject to attending truancy and engagement proceedings and are at risk of being withdrawn from the school due to truancy and/or lack of engagement. If a student is withdrawn from OCA, the student will be ineligible for enrollment in OCA for the remainder of the school year.

Pursuant to Ohio law, any student who fails to attend school for 72 consecutive hours per the school calendar must be withdrawn.

4.4 Truancy and Lack of Engagement

To maximize student learning, regular attendance and student engagement is required by state law. OCA offers a great deal of flexibility regarding how many hours students spend each day on schoolwork and on what days of the week they complete that work.

Due to this flexibility, OCA allows students to make up missed work. Caretakers are held legally responsible for

ensuring that their students are fully participating in school even if they have designated another individual as their student's Learning Coach. The information below is intended to help Caretakers understand how to keep their student in good standing with regards to attendance requirements and to ensure that caretakers understand the consequences of failure to mark attendance.

Caretakers must ensure that the following activities are taking place:

- The student completes assigned lessons and assessments on time, and with integrity.
- The student participates in educational activities for an appropriate number of hours each week, and attendance reflects an average of 27.5 hours of work per week.
- The student is available for regularly scheduled live contact with teachers.
- The student attends all assigned LiveLesson sessions
- The student can demonstrate that they are doing their own schoolwork.
- The student attends mandatory testing.
- The Caretaker/Learning Coach communicates with the homeroom teacher in advance if they need to deviate from the regular school calendar or needs approval for time spent on an educational activity that is outside the scope of the student's regular curriculum or learning plan.

OCA evaluates attendance hours against actual work completed and may reduce/remove the amount of a student's time recorded in the Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker to better reflect time spent on schoolwork. If, after attendance review, a student's verified work is less than two (2) hours per day, all time displayed in the Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker may be removed at the discretion of the School. Appeals regarding a reduction in attendance time may be made to the grade level Principal, whose decision is final.

Determination of Absent Time – Hours/Days Missed

Students are required to attend an average of 5.5 hours per day for each school calendar day in which they are enrolled at OCA. This sum of hours represents the students "required instructional hours". The student's "actual attendance hours" is the sum of all time recorded in the Pearson Online Classroom Activity Tracker. The number of hours absent/missed is the difference between actual attendance hours and required instructional hours. If the number of days absent is less than zero, then a student has actually "banked" more hours than the minimum hours required, and such time will be used to offset hours missed in future days. Students may accumulate a maximum of 55 banked hours at any given time.

OCA Truancy & Student Engagement Intervention Process

The OCA Truancy & Student Engagement Process consists of steps outlined below. Note that the determination of a student's "required instructional hours" is relative to the student's enrollment date with consideration to the school calendar. Good faith efforts by the School to contact Caretakers include the use of email, Webmail, US Postal Mail, and telephone/text.

Step 1: Attendance/Engagement Warning Notice

A student's parent, guardian, or caretaker will receive a written notice when attendance hours fall 30 or more hours short of the student's required instructional hours in any semester. At this step, the notification informs families of the consequences of continued truancy and/or failure to engage in schoolwork.

Step 2: Excessive Absences /Engagement Notice

A student's parent, guardian, or Caretaker will receive written notification when attendance hours fall 65 or more hours short of the student's required instructional hours for the student's enrollment period in the school year or if the student is not on pace for on-time completion. At this step, the family will be notified that interventions will be required if attendance and engagement continue to decline.

Step 3: Absence Intervention Plan or Academic Probation Plan Scheduling

At this point, a student is 72 or more hours short of the required instructional hours for the student's enrollment period in the school year or the student is still not on pace for on-time completion. An absence intervention meeting and/or academic probation hearing will be scheduled and held with the Caretaker/parent/guardian. The absence intervention plan and/or academic probation plan will clearly define the requirements and guidelines that must be followed for a student to remain in attendance at OCA. Failure to follow the AIP or APP will result in withdrawal of the student from OCA.

Step 4: Implementation and Monitoring of Intervention Plans School Personnel will monitor the student's progress against the Absence Intervention Plans and/or Academic Probation Plans. Students who fail to meet the terms of AIP and/or APPs will be withdrawn from OCA and will be provided with a list of alternative educational options. Within 48 hours of withdrawal, the student's resident district will be notified of the student's withdrawal from OCA.

Step 5: Juvenile Court Proceedings - Per state law, failure to enroll in another school within ten (10) days of withdrawal from OCA will result in juvenile court proceedings. In lieu of withdrawal, the school may choose to file truancy charges against a student who does not meet the terms of the AIP or APP.

*Refer to Policy 207 Attendance, Truancy, Automatic Withdrawal Policy for additional information.

5 Grading and Student Evaluation

National Honor Society

Students who are in good academic standing, have attended OCA for at least one semester, and meet other

eligibility requirements, may be eligible to join the National Honor Society. Please contact your school for more details.

Promotion Policy

A student shall be promoted to the next grade level for the following school year when they:

- Completes the course and any state-mandated requirements at the current grade;
- In the opinion of the School's professional staff, achieved the instructional objectives set for the current grade;
- Demonstrates sufficient proficiency to permit them to move ahead in the educational program of the next grade; and
- Demonstrates the degree of social, emotional, and physical maturation necessary for a successful learning experience in the next grade.

A student is prohibited from being promoted to the next grade level if the student has been absent without excuse for more than 10% of the required attendance days for the current school year and has failed two or more required curriculum subject areas in the current grade. A student may only be promoted under these circumstances if the Principal and the student's teachers of any failed subject areas agree that the student is academically prepared to be promoted.

While it is the School's practice to involve parents and guardians in the retention determination process, the Principal shall have the final authority to retain a student. Notice of retention shall be provided as is established for sending notice regarding a student academic process as listed in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Subject Acceleration

Per the Board-adopted Acceleration Policy, OCA staff, Learning Coaches/Caretakers, or students who believe they are academically and social-emotionally ready for subject acceleration may submit a Subject Acceleration Referral in the student's OCA Written Subject Acceleration Plan data view by completing Part A: Subject Acceleration Referral Form. Referrals are reviewed biweekly, and decisions are made by the OCA Acceleration Committee based on readiness, academic data, and team input to ensure appropriate placement and support.

Subject acceleration provides eligible students the opportunity to engage in advanced coursework in one or more subjects, helping them remain challenged and motivated while supporting their academic and social-emotional growth. Students demonstrating mastery beyond their current grade level may be considered for acceleration.

Students placed in accelerated coursework will participate in a transition period, during which academic performance, engagement, and readiness will be monitored to ensure continued success in the accelerated placement.

Questions about subject acceleration may be directed to the Principal of Curriculum and Instruction.

6 High School Programs and Policies

Promotion

The following credits are required to be promoted from one grade to the next:

Classification	Grade	Minimum # of Credits
Sophomore	10	5
Junior	11	10
Senior	12	15

At the time of a student’s enrollment, School Counselors will establish estimated grade levels based on preliminary information about previously earned credits. Student grade levels will be updated twice each year—once in the fall and again at the end of the school year. The automatic adjustments are based on the student’s earned and verified credits recorded in Pearson Online Classroom.

In certain situations, the School Counselor, in consultation with the student, Learning Coach, and/or school administrator, may adjust the student’s grade to match the student’s current academic needs most appropriately.

High School Units of Instruction

Ohio Connections Academy high school students in grades 9–12 are required to take a full yet manageable course load. A typical student is required to be enrolled in a minimum of 2 and one-half (2.5) units of instruction per semester, with a maximum allowable of eight (8) units per year.

Exceptions may be made with the superintendent’s approval for the following reasons:

1. A student has an IEP that stipulates specific course requirements.
2. A junior or senior student has special graduation requirements.
3. A student participates in the College Credit Plus program.
4. A student has a unique and/or unusual circumstance that requires a modification in the best interest of the education of the student.

Graduation and Diploma Requirements

To be eligible to graduate and receive a diploma from Ohio Connections Academy, a student must meet **all** the following requirements:

- » Be enrolled at OCA during the semester immediately prior to graduation, and **not** be enrolled full time in any other school.
- » Earn a minimum of 5 of the credits (or 10 courses) required for graduation at OCA, with at least 1.5 of these credits (or 3 courses) earned in the semester immediately prior to graduation.
- » Earn a total of 20 credits (in specific areas and subjects as outlined in this Supplement).*
- » Pass all state-mandated tests.
- » Meet any other additional graduation requirements required by the school or state.

**Credits earned at another Connections Academy school or schools may be included in this total, as these schools all use the same curriculum, technology, and instructional protocols as OCA.*

Students with IEPs are expected to meet the same graduation requirements as their general education peers. This approach ensures that all students are held to consistent academic standards, promoting equity and high expectations for every learner.

Honors Diploma

High School students can gain state recognition for exceeding Ohio's graduation requirement through the honors diploma. To meet honors diploma requirements, students challenge themselves by taking and succeeding at high-level coursework and in real-world experiences. Students may choose to pursue one of six honors diplomas. The links below details the requirements for each honors diploma as set by the [Ohio Department of Education & Workforce](#).

1. [Academic Honors Diploma](#)
2. [International Baccalaureate Honors Diploma](#)
3. [Career Tech Honors Diploma](#)
4. [STEM Honors Diploma](#)
5. [Arts Honors Diploma](#)*
6. [Social Science and Civic Engagement Honors Diploma](#)

*includes dance, drama/theatre, music, and visual art.

Students in the class of 2025 and earlier still have access to the [previous requirement](#) to earn an honors diploma. It is the responsibility of the family to notify their School Counselor if a student intends to pursue one of these honors diplomas.

Early Graduation

At the close of the second semester, the School Principal, School Counselor, and other staff will review each senior's records to ensure that these students have completed all graduation requirements. The Principal will then initiate the "withdrawal for graduation" process in Pearson Online Classroom for those students who have completed all requirements.

Students who have completed all graduation requirements at any time prior to the end of the second semester of their senior year may request early graduation by contacting the School Principal. The Principal and other appropriate school staff will then review the student's records to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met. If the Principal grants approval for early graduation, they will initiate the "withdrawal for graduation" process. This includes marking the student's transcript to indicate graduate status. Once the student has graduated, the student will no longer be enrolled in Connections Academy and will not have access to WebMail; graduates will continue to have access to Pearson Online Classroom.

Unofficial transcripts will be available to students via Pearson Online Classroom *as long as the student is enrolled in Connections Academy*, and official transcripts will be available at any time by contacting the School. Early graduates will receive their diplomas *at the end of the second semester*, when the rest of the graduating class receives their diplomas. Early graduates are welcome to join in all graduation activities offered by Connections Academy but must contact the School at least one month prior to the end of the second semester to indicate their wish to participate in the graduation activities.

Graduation Ceremony Attire

Students will wear traditional cap and gown to the high school graduation ceremony. A student who has fulfilled all graduation requirements and completed basic training from one (1) of the five (5) branches of the United States Military will be permitted to wear a dress uniform issued to the student by any active or reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard, and therefore should be worn in accordance with the regulations and requirements of the respective military branch.

Deferral of the High School Diploma Policy

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) specifies that a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) must be available to all students with disabilities who have not reached age 22 and who have not earned a standard diploma. If a student graduates with a special diploma, a certificate of completion, a special certificate of completion, or GED and has not reached age 22, the school district must make FAPE available to the student (at the student's option) until the student's 22nd birthday or until he or she earns a standard diploma, (whichever occurs first).

Eligible Students

Only a student whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires special education, transition planning, transition services or related services may defer receipt of their standard diploma. Deferral decisions must be documented on the child's IEP.

Only a student who is eligible to graduate with a standard diploma (met all graduation requirements as laid out by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and the school district), can defer.

Only students who have earned a standard diploma are eligible to walk in the spring graduation ceremony. If a graduation deferment is approved, the student will be welcome to participate in the spring graduation ceremony following the successful completion of their deferment requirements.

Once a student defers they must be enrolled in accelerated college credit instruction, industry certification courses that lead to college credit, a collegiate high school program, courses necessary to satisfy the Scholar designation requirements, Life Skills program, structured work-study, internship or pre-apprenticeship program to continue to receive FAPE (s. 1003.4282(10)(c), F.S.).

A structured work-study program is any program that is designed to prepare the student for employment.

Programs would normally include instruction in:

- basic employment competencies
- social skills
- job search skills

Timelines

The parent and student are required to inform the school in writing, no later than April 30 (or the last day of school in April), the year in which the student is expected to meet all graduation requirements, if the student plans to defer graduation.

If the district is not notified in writing, the student will be considered a student who has satisfied all graduation requirements and will be receiving their high school diploma. NOTE: failure to attend the graduation ceremony does NOT constitute deferral.

Failure to inform the district of deferment releases the school district of the obligation to provide FAPE.

Area Subject Requirements

Students Entering 9th Grade 2018-19 or after:

Area	Subject	# of Credits Earned
Language Arts	English	4.0
Mathematics	Algebra I	1.0
Mathematics	Geometry	1.0
Mathematics	Algebra II	1.0
Mathematics	Other Math (Other than Pre-Algebra)	1.0
Science	Life Science	1.0
Science	Physical Science	1.0
Science	Advanced Science	1.0
Social Studies	U.S. History	1.0
Social Studies	Government	1.0
Social Studies	Modern World History	1.0
Financial	Personal Finance **	0.5
Heath & PE	Heath	0.5
Heath & PE	Physical Education	0.5
Fine Arts	Fine Arts	1.0
Electives	*Any Other Approved	3.5

*Electives will be chosen from the following subject areas: foreign language, fine arts, business, career-technical education, family and consumer sciences, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, technology, agricultural education, English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies courses not otherwise required. The required electives may be taken from one of these subject areas or a combination of these subject areas.

Personal Finance fulfills the Financial Literacy component required by the state of Ohio.

If a student has previously satisfied a graduation requirement at a different accredited Ohio school with a course that earned fewer credits than required by OCA, the School Counselor may waive the requirement that the remaining credits be earned in that same course. The student still must meet the minimum total number of credits for graduation and the minimum number of credits for each subject area.

In addition to the twenty (20) credits required for graduation, Class of 2021 and 2022 OCA students must successfully complete one of the pathways below:

State Testing

A student must earn at least 18 points on seven end-of-course state tests with a minimum of four points in math, four points in English and six points across science and social studies. Each test score earns up to five graduation points. The End-of-course tests are in the following subject areas: Algebra I or Integrated Math I, Geometry or Integrated Math II, American Government and American History. Each test score earns you up to five graduation points.

Industry Credential and Workforce Readiness

A student must earn a minimum of 12 points by receiving a State Board of Education-approved, industry-recognized credential or group of credentials in a single career field and earn the required score on WorkKeys, a work-readiness test. The state of Ohio will pay for a student to take the WorkKeys test one time.

College and Career Readiness Tests

A student must earn remediation-free scores in mathematics and English language arts on either the ACT or SAT. The Ohio Department of Higher Education and Workforce works with Ohio's universities to set the remediation-free scores for the ACT and SAT tests. Periodically, for a variety of reasons, these scores may be adjusted. For all high school juniors, the remediation-free scores set by Feb. 1 of their junior year will be used to meet their graduation requirement. Ohio Connections Academy offers the SAT to all 11th grade students during the spring of the junior year. The most up-to-date information regarding remediation-free scores can be found on the Department's graduation requirements webpage.

In addition to the twenty (20) credits required for graduation, OCA students Class of 2023 and beyond must successfully complete the following:

1. Course Completion

Students must earn a minimum total of 20 credits and take the required end-of-course assessments. These include English language arts II, algebra I (or integrated math I), geometry (or integrated math II), biology, American history, and American government.

2. Demonstrate Competency

Students can demonstrate competency by earning a passing score on Ohio's high school algebra I (or integrated math I) and English language arts II tests. Students who do not pass the test will be offered additional support and must retake the test at least once. For students who do not meet the competency score on these tests, the following four options are available:

Option 1. To demonstrate competency by Career Readiness, students must demonstrate two career-focused activities, at least one must be a foundational option. Demonstrate Readiness (Seals)

Foundational options:

1. Cumulative score of proficient on 3 or more WebXams.
2. Earn 12-points of industry credential.
3. Complete a registered pre-apprenticeship, an apprenticeship, or show evidence of acceptance into an approved apprenticeship.
4. State-issued license for a practice in a vocation

Option 2. To demonstrate competency through the College Credit Plus Program, students must earn credit in a non-remedial math or English course for the subject area not passed.

Option 3. To demonstrate competency through Military Enlistment, students must provide evidence of enlistment in a branch of the armed forces to demonstrate competency.

Option 4. To demonstrate competency using the ACT or SAT, students must obtain a remediation-free score in the math and/ or English subject area on the ACT or SAT. To demonstrate competency in English, a student must be remediation-free in the subjects of English and reading on the ACT or SAT.

3. Demonstrating Readiness:

Students must earn two diploma seals. One of the seals must be state defined to demonstrate academic, technical, and professional readiness for careers, college, the military or self-sustaining professions. The following are state system of diploma seals:

- OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal
- Honors Diploma Seal
- State Seal of Biliteracy
- Technology Seal
- Industry-Recognized Credential Seal
- Citizenship Seal
- College-Ready Seal
- Fine and Performing Arts Seal (locally defined)
- Military Enlistment Seal
- Student Engagement Seal (locally defined)
- Science Seal
- Community Service Seal (locally defined)

Industry Credential Policy

Industry Credential courses and programs are available to qualifying 12th grade students for the purpose of meeting competency or obtaining a state diploma seal to show readiness in meeting Ohio graduation requirements. **To participate in the industry credential courses at OCA or complete a community industry credential program students must meet with their assigned OCA counselor and complete the Industry Credential Agreement Data View** before the start of the semester or within two weeks of the first day of the semester.

OCA offers a variety of Industry Credential courses. Each course allows a student an opportunity to earn a credential. All coursework and exams are provided by a vendor outside of Ohio Connections Academy/Connexus. OCA does not have any bearing or control on the requirements of the industry credentials as they are set by the credentialing organizations.

Accommodations/modifications are not provided for coursework and may be limited or unavailable for testing. To learn more about each of these courses, view the Senior Only Credential Program handout. OCA will pay the initial cost of the coursework/program and any corresponding required testing to obtain credentialing in addition to providing an industry credential coach to enrolled students. The coach will assist students and caretakers, but all instruction will be delivered through the vendor utilizing their online learning platform. Each course varies in length, students will have the opportunity to earn 0.5 credits if 12 points of industry credentials are earned.

Students may also pursue an outside community program to obtain a 12 point industry credential or series of credentials within an identified Ohio Career Field totaling 12 points. If you have identified an industry credential outside of what OCA offers, and need financial assistance you can submit a request for OCA funding by completing the OCA Industry Credential Program DataView. Funding will be considered on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed. Depending on a student's location within the state of Ohio community program availability may be limited. These programs are not associated with OCA and are not eligible for credit.

Students pursuing an OCA Senior Only Credential Program or a community industry credentialing program must be approved (see requirements below) prior to enrolling in the coursework if seeking financial assistance with program costs. If a student fails to complete the coursework or finish the course/program the student/caretaker(s) will be responsible for reimbursing OCA for the associated cost. OCA will pay for approved initial industry credentialing exams if a student is unable to obtain credentialing after their first attempt the student/caretaker(s) will be financially responsible for additional attempts. Student/caretaker(s) are responsible for any additional associated cost beyond the coursework and/or exam fees such as background checks, supplies/equipment, transportation, etc.

A student must meet eligibility requirements to enroll in an OCA industry credential course or a community industry credentialing program. A student must be enrolled at Ohio Connections Academy as a current 12th grader and meet one of the following criteria.

- Has NOT met competency for ELA II and/or Algebra I after at least 2 attempts of testing.
- Has NOT earned a state diploma seal.

Students will be considered for enrollment based on the following criteria.

- Current/previous attendance.
- Current/previous teacher contact.

- Current/previous grades.
- Ohio State Test end-of-course test scores.

****Students enrolling in an OCA industry credential course must attend a mandatory meeting with the credentialing coach and caretaker within 2 weeks of enrolling. If a student and/or caretaker do not attend this mandatory meeting the student will be withdrawn from the course. Students are required to participate in coursework weekly, a student who fails to begin coursework within 2 weeks of enrollment, and/or does not complete coursework weekly will be withdrawn from the course. Any student who is dismissed from the industry credential course may not re-enroll in any industry credential course at OCA until the following term.**

Diploma Seals

A student must earn two diploma seals, at least one from the list of State Seal Options.

- State Seal Options:
 - » OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal
 - » Biliteracy Seal
 - » College Readiness Seal
 - » Honors Diploma Seal
 - » Science Seal
 - » Citizenship Seal
 - » Military Seal
 - » Technology Seal
 - » Industry Credential Seal
- Local Seal Options:
 - » Community Service Seal
 - » Student Engagement Seal
 - » Fine Arts Seal

Connections Academy uses a standard whereby one credit equals approximately 180 hours of instruction (sometimes referred to as Carnegie Units).

Students at Risk of Not Qualifying for a High School Diploma

Graduation Plans

OCA will work with students in grades 9-12 and their Caretaker(s) to develop a graduation plan to address their pathway for meeting OCA's graduation requirements. The plan will be reviewed and updated each school year until the student qualifies for a high school diploma.

If a student has an IEP, and the IEP contains goals similar to a graduation plan, OCA may use the IEP in place of the graduation plan.

Identifying At-Risk Students

OCA will use a combination of the following criteria to identify at-risk students:

- A student is not on grade level based on current earned credits
- A student is on grade level based on credits, but is not making adequate progress towards fulfilling their graduation plan, or
- A student has excessive absences or situations of excessive misconduct
- A student has not earned at least 684 on either the English II or Algebra End-of-Course Exams.

Each school year, the school will establish a plan for credit attainment and graduation based on applicable cohort requirements and options. Each semester the school will review credit attainment and progress toward the student's graduation plan and the student's progress toward credit attainment.

Engaged high school students are offered the opportunity to recover credits for high school courses which were previously failed. Students who are on track for participation and attendance may be able to do so during the school year. Returning high school students are also offered this opportunity over the summer.

Notification

Each school year, OCA will provide written documentation to Caretakers of each at-risk student, notifying them of the following:

- A statement informing them that their student is at risk of not qualifying for a diploma
- A description of the school's curriculum requirements / IEP and the applicable graduation pathway options as required by law
- A description of additional support services available to at-risk OCA students

Support Services

OCA will provide additional instructional and support services to those students who are at-risk of not qualifying for a high school diploma. Please reach out to the school for additional information on available support services.

If students do not meet the graduation requirements as outlined in this handbook, they will be ineligible to enroll in most state universities in Ohio without further coursework.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility

To be eligible for National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarships, students must meet certain academic and other requirements, including, but not limited to, taking NCAA-approved high school courses. Many of Connections Academy's core and elective courses are NCAA-approved; however, students interested in NCAA scholarships should contact their School Counselor to determine an appropriate course schedule that will help them meet NCAA requirements. Students should also visit the NCAA Eligibility Center for more

information.

Grades and Grade Point Averages

Semester and year-end GPA calculations will follow a four-point scale (below). Grade point averages will only include graded courses; pass/fail courses will not be averaged into a student's GPA. Grades for Honors courses are weighted with one-half (0.5) extra grade point. Grades for Advanced Placement (AP®) courses are weighted with one (1) extra grade point. College Credit Plus (CCP) courses in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Technology and World Languages are weighted with one (1) extra grade point.

Grade	Grade %	Passing?	Non-Weighted	Weighted (Honors)	Weighted (AP)
A+	98-100	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A	92-97	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A-	90-91	Yes	3.67	4.17	4.67
B+	88-89	Yes	3.33	3.83	4.33
B	82-87	Yes	3.00	3.50	4.00
B-	80-81	Yes	2.67	3.17	3.67
C+	78-79	Yes	2.33	2.83	3.33
C	72-77	Yes	2.00	2.50	3.00
C-	70-71	Yes	1.67	2.17	2.67
D+	68-69	Yes	1.33	1.83	2.33
D	62-67	Yes	1.00	1.50	2.00
D-	60-61	Yes	0.67	1.17	1.67
F	0-59	No	0.00	0.00	0.00

Class Rank

OCA will calculate the class rank for each high school student two times per year, shortly after the conclusion of each semester. Students who have not yet successfully completed any high school courses for credit directly from Connections Academy will be excluded from the class rank calculation.

For the purposes of calculating the class rank, the student's cumulative GPA will be used, which may include weighted grades for Honors or AP courses. Courses transferred in from other accredited institutions will also be included in the class rank if there is a grade assigned for that course.

The cumulative GPA is calculated to the hundredth of a point. Students whose class rank rounds off to the same hundredth of a point will be considered tied and will receive the same class rank. The ranking will compare students within the same grade level at the same school. The class rank is not included on the student's official high school transcript but is available for release upon written request.

Latin Honors at Graduation

OCA recognizes high academic achievement in its graduating class using the following Latin Honors system, similar to what is used at many colleges and universities, based on cumulative grade point average (GPA) at the conclusion of the 7th semester:

Summa Cum Laude ("With highest honor"): 4.0+

Magna Cum Laude ("With great honor"): 3.80-3.99

Cum Laude ("With honor"): 3.50-3.79

All students with a cumulative GPA of 4.1+ will also receive the title of Valedictorian.

Release of High School Records

Connections Academy will provide educational records, including official high school transcripts, class rank, test scores, and letters of recommendation to third parties such as post-secondary institutions, scholarship committees, and/or potential employers, only with prior written approval from the student's Caretakers, or from the student if they are aged 18 or older or an emancipated minor.

To ensure that application deadlines are successfully met, we require advance notice of at least **10 working days for requests to provide educational records** to students, Caretakers, and/or third parties. We require **30 days' notice for letters of recommendation**. Class rank is only calculated twice a year.

Requests for records should be made by submitting a completed *Authorization to Release Educational Records and Letters of Recommendation* form to the School Counselor. This form is available in the Virtual Library.

Prerequisites

Before registering for a course that has prerequisite requirements, students must first meet all those prerequisites. Prerequisites are listed by each course's overview in the course catalog.

Duplicate Course Work: Repeating a Course

Students may repeat a course to improve their grade. Only the higher of the two grades will be included in the GPA. Credit will be awarded only once, for the higher of the grades. Both courses and both grades will show on the transcript.

Schedule Changes

Students may request changes to their schedules within the first six weeks of enrollment or in the first six weeks of the semester. To add or drop a course, a Caretaker must make a request of the School Counselor. If a high school schedule change is made after the six-week mark, a withdraw pass (WP) or withdraw fail (WF) will appear on the high school transcript. WP/WF will not impact the grade point average (GPA).

Transcripts

Students will be able to access ongoing information about their courses through their online Grade Books within Pearson Online Classroom. To request an official copy of a transcript, families must submit their request via WebMail to the School Counselor for approval and processing. Official transcripts are generated at the school. Transcripts have official school signatures and a raised seal and are sent in a sealed envelope. Caretakers will be able to view a copy of the transcript through Pearson Online Classroom.

Credit from Other Schools

As part of the enrollment process, families submit their students' most recent report cards and/or transcripts. School Counselors analyze previously earned credits and determine which credits will transfer to the Connections Academy School. The School Counselor may require complete unofficial transcripts or complete end-of-year report cards before approving a student's grade level and course selection. Official transcripts are required within the first 30 days of school for final credit transfer approval and for final course approval. Upon graduation or withdrawal, the official Connections Academy transcript will display the credits earned at Connections Academy as well as any transfer credits.

Credit for Coursework Completed in a Non-standard School Program

Students may request to receive credit for courses completed in previous educational settings other than fully accredited schools, including home school, non-accredited public, private, alternative, or international schools.

There are three options for requesting and being granted credit by Connections Academy for coursework completed in a non-standard school program:

1. **Assessment:** The student takes and achieves a passing grade (D- or above) on the Connections Academy exam(s) associated with the course. This may be the midterm and final exam, or other proficiency exam as determined by the content area teacher. Alternatively, the student may take a state-approved standardized test. If the student achieves a score of "Proficient" or higher, they will be granted credit for that course. The test(s) must be taken in a school-approved proctored setting.
2. **Portfolio:** The student submits a portfolio documenting coursework, which may include:

- Samples of prior work
- List of texts used in prior courses
- Artwork
- Writing samples
- Report card from prior school/home school
- Student interview
- Other materials as requested by the School Counselor

The portfolio will be reviewed by each content area teacher. The content area teachers will make final decisions about credit(s) to be granted for the student's prior coursework.

For example, a student who shows sufficient evidence of having successfully completed Algebra I, Geometry, English 9 and 10, Earth Science, Biology, U.S. History, Government, and French I & II will be granted credit by each content area teacher for each of the courses documented and will be placed in Connections Academy at the grade level appropriate for the number of credits granted.

The School Counselor and/or Principal, along with the content area teachers review the student's portfolio. The content area teachers will be responsible for determining if the student is indeed proficient in the specific subject and whether credit is to be granted.

3. **Competency:** Based on a portfolio of materials similar to, but perhaps less comprehensive than that listed in #2, the subject area teacher makes a decision about where to place the student. After the student has completed one full semester at Connections Academy, the subject area teacher reviews the student's progress in the Connections Academy course(s). If the student earns a passing grade in the Connections Academy course that follows a course taken in a non-standard school, the School Counselor will award credit(s) for the course(s) taken in the non-standard school. This method of placement is only applicable to foreign language courses and certain other courses that occur in a clearly linear sequence.

Students may use any combination of the above-listed methods for requesting credit. For example, a student may choose option #1 for mathematics and science courses, #2 for humanities courses, and #3 for foreign language courses.

Credits for courses completed in a non-standard school program are granted as described above, but no grades are assigned. Students receiving credit will be given a grade of "Pass," which is not included in the calculation of the student's GPA. These credits are not entered into the student's records until the student has completed a full semester in Connections Academy.

High School Courses Taken in Middle School

Students may earn high school credit for high school-level courses taken during the middle school years. A middle school course for which high school credit is granted must cover the same content as the equivalent high school course and must be approved by the School Counselor in advance. Check with the School Counselor for more specific information.

Career Technical Student Policy

A student may attend a career center for a career technical program while being enrolled at OCA for academics. The student must contact the career technical center directly and follow the application process. If the student is accepted into the career technical program, OCA and the career technical center will work together to educate the student. Families will be responsible for their own transportation to the career technical center.

Ohio Connections Academy Career Technical Programs

Ohio Connections Academy offers three college prep career technical programs that are approved by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. To complete these programs, a student must take and pass 4 of the following courses, take state associated career technical exams for each course, participate in program student organization (BPA), and complete 250 hours of work-based learning in the field within the respective area:

Cyber Security

1. Cyber security 1
 2. Cyber security 2
 3. Cyber security 3
 4. Cyber security 4
- Capstone Course

Entrepreneurship

1. Principles of Business 1
 2. Principles of Business 2
 3. Entrepreneurship 3
 4. Entrepreneurship 4
- Capstone Course

Medical Office

1. Principles of Business 1
2. Principles of Business 2

- 3. Medical Office 3
- 4. Medical Office 4
- Capstone Course

A student may spread these courses out over their high school career beginning in the 9th grade, or take them together in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade.

By completing a career technical program, students may be eligible to take entry-level certification exams, and/or can potentially receive college credit if they take and pass ODE course associated career technical exams.

Ohio Connections Academy Career Tech Program Application & Acceptance Policy

To participate in an Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) Career Tech Program, all students must apply and be accepted. This policy outlines the application process, eligibility, acceptance, and program requirements.

Application Process

All complete applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed for acceptance into the program. Incomplete applications will be returned to the candidate for completion, it is the responsibility of the caretaker/student to answer all the questions on the application with accuracy.

Students can select up to two programs, designated as a first and second choice when completing the application. OCA will attempt to place as many students as possible in their first-choice program. Students will be placed in programs based on capacity and availability. Students will not be placed into their second-choice program unless the first-choice program is full.

Selection Process

Ohio Connections Academy does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes"), or any other legally protected category, in its enrollment of programs. To ensure fair and equitable access, student acceptance into programs will be determined by a lottery selection process. The lottery selection process will occur in April each school year.

To be considered for lottery eligibility, students must apply by the given deadline and should be at most (1) credit deficient in a core subject and must have earned their health and PE credit. The student must have also taken or be enrolled in the first course in the program by the time of application.

Once this selection process and acceptance decisions are completed, students will be notified via WebMail of their application status.

Program Acceptance

Once acceptance decisions are made, students will have 5 school days to accept or decline a spot in their offered program. If a student declines their placement offer, they may reapply the following year, or opt to add themselves to a program waitlist of their choice. If a student does not respond within 5 school days, they will be removed from the program acceptance list and added to a waitlist if in effect for a program. Students are encouraged to respond within 5 school days to ensure they secure their placement.

If a student is accepted to a program, they must remain no more than 1 credit deficient in a core subject area, due to the required coursework of the program. A student does not have additional time to make up for deficient credits. This places a student at risk of not graduating on time. For this reason, the OCA Administrative team will continue to monitor students' credit eligibility. The student and caretaker will be notified of the final placement decisions before the first day of school.

Waitlist Process

Waitlists are common for highly sought-after programs as these programs often reach capacity during the initial application and program placement process. Students on the waitlist will be placed if space becomes available. If space is available and a student is accepted from the waitlist, the student will be contacted and have 5 school days to respond.

Open Program Status

Programs that do not reach maximum capacity during the initial application process will have an Open Program Status. After the initial application and selection process any student may apply to the program until the program reaches capacity. This will allow any student who has met credit eligibility or missed the initial application deadline to apply on a first-come-first-serve placement for non-waitlisted programs.

High School Credit Requirements

To apply, students must not be more than one (1) credit deficient in core subject courses and have completed or be enrolled in the first course in the program pathway by the time of application. A student's end-of-year transcripts will be reviewed to determine credit eligibility. If credit requirements are not met this may revoke students' acceptance into a program.

Career Tech Program Requirements

Students who apply and accept a Career Tech Program placement must meet the requirements outlined by the state of Ohio and the federal government. Career Tech Programs' experiences, skill-based curriculum, and job opportunities are unique. These programs go above and beyond the general education requirements and require students to participate in additional activities.

Students who are accepted into a Career Tech Program will be expected to remain in the program while enrolled at OCA until program requirements are completed, whether one, two, or three years. Once placed, the student will not be permitted to change programs after acceptance unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances would be at the discretion of the OCA Administration. Each program is a multi-year commitment, students are expected to complete all 4 courses in the program.

Career Tech Programs are project-based courses built to provide students with replicated real-world experiences and develop the necessary skills for success in their program specialty area. Students are asked to demonstrate their skills through several portfolios embedded into the coursework, with a culminating portfolio submission at the end of the course. These courses may require more time and commitment from a student than a general elective course.

All Ohio Career Tech courses have a required Webxam end-of-course state exam. Students in a Career Tech Program are expected to take the assigned career tech exam(s) during in-person testing sessions. In-person testing does require the student to travel to an OCA sponsored testing site with available staff. Students will be required to retest for any given Webxam end-of-course exam where the student has not scored proficient or above.

Any student enrolled in an OCA Career Tech Program will affiliate with their respected Career Tech Student Organization (CTSO). OCA will cover the cost of affiliation for any student enrolled in the program. All students are expected to be members and participate in organizational activities. If accepted into an OCA Career Tech Program, students and caretakers agree to allow OCA to release a student's information (name, gender, grade, demographics, date of birth, etc.) for affiliation. Student organizations do not share youth personal information outside of their organization.

All Career Tech Program students are expected to complete 250 hours of work-based learning. The work-based learning experience may be completed during the OCA Work-Based Learning Capstone course or completed individually outside of an OCA class. All work-based learning experiences must be approved before a student can receive validated work-based learning hours. Caretakers/students are responsible for their work placements, though OCA staff will be available to support students in their job search process. Most opportunities will be in person as virtual placements are limited. Work-based learning allows students to enhance their in-demand industry skills in an authentic environment and continue to learn while also preparing for the workforce.

If a student is to exit a career tech program either by graduation, out-of-state relocation, or withdrawal it is the student's responsibility to provide their instructor with the most up-to-date contact information. This information will be utilized to contact the student for a follow-up survey 6 months after exiting the program. The survey is brief but required by the law of the school and program instructor.

Special Education & 504 Plans

If a student being served by an IEP or a Section 504 plan accepts admission to an OCA Career Tech Program, notification of acceptance will be sent to the caretaker, student, and intervention specialist/case manager. A meeting will be held before the student begins the program with the student's education team. The purpose of this meeting will be to consider appropriate services, accommodations, and support related to the accepted program. Additionally, a meeting may be scheduled for students to determine whether changes to their plans are necessary to support their enrollment in the program.

Work-Based Learning Policy

Work-based learning (WBL) is defined by federal law as *“sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that fosters in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.”*

Work-Based Learning at OCA is designed to provide meaningful, real-world experiences that boost students' academic and career readiness. It fosters collaboration among students, families, schools, and businesses to align these experiences with educational goals or career technical programs. This comprehensive approach ensures students acquire valuable insights and skills in their chosen career fields.

Students have several options for WBL, which can begin as early as the 9th grade. To meet Ohio's graduation requirements or fulfill a Career Tech program, a student must complete 250 hours of verified work experience. If a student is identified as a concentrator within a Career Tech program, their work experience hours must be aligned with their specific pathway. Hours completed before becoming a concentrator do not need to be associated with the Career Tech program. Students can participate in WBL opportunities during the school year as embedded coursework or independently outside the school year, such as during winter and summer breaks, provided arrangements are made beforehand. WBL should be aligned with the student's career tech program (if applicable) or their graduation plan.

Purpose: WBL experiences are conducted at work sites to provide students with authentic, real-world experiences. All work sites should offer regular interaction with employees and community members, reflecting the typical experience of that industry. These experiences are linked to academic, technical, and

professional skills, reinforcing classroom instruction for better comprehension. They are designed to help students explore careers, apply learned content, and build workplace skills.

Responsibilities: The student should be the primary leader and decision-maker of the experience. Students should engage with local businesses to discuss partnerships and arrange WBL experiences. School staff will assist students with identifying potential opportunities in their community upon request, ultimately the responsibility for WBL site identification and selection lies with the students and/or their caretakers. The mentor serves as a business affiliate who will help the student connect their learning to the workplace. They will supervise the student, verify WBL hours, and participate in the evaluation process. School personnel and business mentors work together to evaluate and supervise each experience as documented in the learning agreement.

Requirements:

1. **Deadlines:** A student interested in completing a WBL experience should notify their counselor before the semester or summer session begins to ensure a staff member is available to co-supervise the experience. Students enrolled in a work-based course at OCA must have a secured learning agreement by the add/drop deadline, or they will be removed from the course.
2. **Learning Agreements:** A learning agreement must be in place before students begin earning hours toward their WBL. These agreements are guided by the terms agreed upon by the business, the student, and OCA. OCA provides this agreement, which includes academic or career and technical standards, evaluation plans, student roles and responsibilities, experience details, and hour verification standards. To finalize the agreement, a meeting should be scheduled with the following individuals (not limited to) to discuss the experience and expectations: student, caretaker, business mentor, program instructor, and intervention specialist (if the student receives services). If a student receives special education services the learning agreement should align with, and not conflict with, the IEP. This agreement must include academic or career and technical standards, an evaluation plan, what the student will be learning or applying in the work environment, roles and responsibilities, experience details, and hour verification.
3. **Supervision and Evaluation:** The school, program instructor, and business mentor collaborate to evaluate and supervise the WBL experience, as documented in the learning agreement. An evaluation is required at a minimum once per experience or every 50 hours worked. At OCA, students enrolled in a WBL course must complete evaluations twice per semester. These evaluations ensure proper supervision, facilitate collaboration, and support student growth.

4. **Hour Verification:** Students must record activities and hours weekly, verified by their business mentor. Time spent on direct instruction and teacher-led activities cannot be counted towards WBL. This distinction ensures that time spent on direct instruction and teacher-led activities is separate from time dedicated to completing work tasks associated with a work-based learning experience. To fulfill Ohio's graduation requirements and/or a career tech program using work-based learning, students must complete 250 hours of verified work experience.

Students interested in completing a WBL experience should meet with their counselor to discuss appropriate requirements, responsibilities, procedures, and alignment with the student's graduation plan.

College Credit Plus

The following College Credit Plus ("CCP") policy has been adopted by the School's Board of Directors (the "School") to permit students in grades 7-12 the opportunity to earn college and high school credits at the same time by taking courses from Ohio colleges or universities. CCP is intended to provide expanded opportunities for appropriately qualified students to experience coursework at the college or university level.

Information

Each year, prior to February 1st, the School shall provide information regarding CCP to the students currently enrolled in the School in grades 6-11 and to their parents. A record should be kept of the communication to confirm compliance with State rules. The School shall provide information on the program on its website. The School shall schedule at least one informational session per school year to allow partnering colleges within thirty miles to meet with interested students. During the information session the School shall distribute this policy or in some other manner include information about the contents of this policy, including CCP Probation, CCP Dismissal, and procedures for appeals. The School shall utilize all forms developed by the chancellor and the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), if available. If the School wishes to modify the forms, the School shall request prior approval from DEW.

Grades and Courses

Grades awarded under CCP shall be awarded pursuant to the School's advanced classes procedures. The School shall develop two model course pathways, one fifteen-hour pathway and one thirty-hour pathway, and publish the pathways with the official list of course offerings. The courses listed in the pathways shall all apply upon successful completion to at least one degree or professional certification offered at the college. No participant shall be required to enroll only in the courses included in a model pathway; instead, the pathways shall serve as samples of the courses that a participant may take, if desired, to earn multiple credits toward a specified degree or certification.

Eligibility

The following criteria must be met to enroll in CCP.

1. By April 1st of each year for the upcoming full school year, or November 1st if the student intends to participate mid-year, a student or his/her parent must complete and submit the Intent to Participate Form to the School administration which signifies the student's intent to participate in the Program. If a student fails to provide the notice of intent, the student must obtain written consent from the School Leader. The School Leader shall notify the department of education and workforce of the student's intent to participate within ten (10) days of the date on which the student sought consent. If the School Leader does not give written consent, the student may appeal the decision to the School's governing authority. The governing authority shall hear the appeal and make a decision within thirty (30) days of the notification of the appeal. The decision of the governing authority is final.
2. The student shall apply to a public or a participating private college in accordance with the college's established admissions criteria and meet the established standards of admission.
3. The student must satisfy one of the following criteria to be eligible.
 - a. The student must be remediation-free in accordance with one of the assessments established under ORC 3345.061(F).
 - b. Meet an alternative remediation-free eligibility option, as defined by the chancellor of higher education, in consultation with the superintendent of public instruction.
 - c. Have participated in the program prior to September 30, 2021 and qualified to participate in the Program by scoring within one standard error of measurement below the remediation-free threshold for one of the assessments established under ORC 3345.061 (F) and had met the following:
 - i. The student has a cumulative high school grade point average of at least 3.0. If the student seeking to participate is a seventh or eighth grade student, the student must have an equivalent grade point average in the applicable grade level; or
 - ii. The student receives a recommendation from a school counselor, principal, or career-technical program advisor.
4. The student must select one of the two following options at the time of enrollment:

Option A: The student may elect to be responsible for payment of all tuition and other costs. The student selecting this option shall elect whether to receive only college credit or high school and college credit.

Option B: The student may elect to have the college reimbursed pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code. Upon the successful completion of a course, the student shall be awarded high school and college credit.

The student and the student's parent shall sign a form, provided by the School, stating they received the required counseling as listed in this policy

No student shall be prohibited from enrolling in the program if all criteria have been met.

Enrollment

A student may not enroll in courses to receive credit toward high school graduation for more than the equivalent of:

- A. four (4) academic school years, if the student so enrolls for the first time in grade nine;
- B. three (3) academic school years, if the student so enrolls for the first time in grade ten;
- C. two (2) academic school years, if the student so enrolls for the first time in grade eleven;
- D. one (1) academic school year, if the student so enrolls for the first time in grade twelve.

Counseling Services

Prior to participating in the program, the School shall provide counseling services to include the following:

- Program eligibility
- Process for granting credits
- Any necessary financial arrangements for tuition, textbooks, and fees
- Criteria for transportation aid
- Available support services
- Scheduling
- Possible consequences and benefits of participating, including
 - Consequences of failing or not completing a course, including the effect on the completion of graduation requirements and reimbursement
 - Effect of the grade on the student's grade point average
 - Benefits of successful completion, including the ability to reduce the overall costs of, and the amount of time required for, a college education
 - Information about CCP Probation and CCP Dismissal including procedures for appeals
 - College or University Academic Policies
- Academic and social responsibilities of the student and parents
- Information on and encouragement to use counseling services provided by the college
- Standard packet of information developed by the State

Reimbursement Due to Course Failure

If a student participating in the program does not attain a passing grade, the School may seek reimbursement from the student or student's parents for the amount of state aid paid to the college on behalf of the participant. The School may withhold grades and credits for high school courses taken until the reimbursement is provided.

Unless a student is expelled, the School shall not seek reimbursement from a student or a student's parents if the participant is identified as economically disadvantaged pursuant to rules adopted by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

Expulsion

A student who has been expelled by this School is ineligible to enroll in CCP during the period of expulsion. In accordance with Board policy, the Board may deny high school credit for postsecondary courses any portion of which are taken during the period of a student's expulsion. If the student has elected to receive credit for course(s) toward fulfilling graduation requirements as well as postsecondary credit, that election is

automatically revoked for all college courses in which the student enrolled during the college term in which the expulsion is imposed.

The School shall send a written notice of the expulsion to any college in which the student is enrolled at the time the expulsion is imposed. The notice shall indicate the date the expulsion is scheduled to expire and whether the School will be denying high school credit for courses taken during an expulsion. If the expulsion is extended, the School shall notify the college of the extension.

Underperforming Students

The rules regarding underperforming students apply only to students who participate in the CCP program under enrollment Option B herein (Section 3365.06 of the Revised Code - students seeking reimbursement to the college/university, not those students who are paying tuition).

An "Underperforming Student" is a student who meets at least one of these conditions:

1. Has a cumulative GPA of lower than a 2.0 in the college courses taken through the CCP program.
2. Withdraws from, or receives no credit for, two or more courses in the same term. (Withdrawing from a course occurs when the student dis-enrolls from a course after the census date and the secondary school is financially responsible for the tuition associated with the course.)

An "Ineligible Student" is a student who meets the definition of an underperforming student for two consecutive terms of enrollment.

CCP Probation

The School will place an Underperforming Student on CCP Probation. The School will promptly notify the student, the student's parent, and each college in which the student is enrolled. The School will advise the student and the student's parent on requirements for continuing in the program.

A student on CCP Probation may enroll in no more than one college course and the student may not enroll in a college course in the same subject in which the student earned a grade of D or F or for which the student received no credit. If the student has already registered for more than one course prior to being placed on CCP Probation, the student must request each college or university to dis-enroll the student from courses as required hereunder. The student may continue to be enrolled in one course, notifying the college of which course the student would like to remain enrolled. The college will confirm the course enrollment and all course dis-enrollments in the Pre-Term Notice of Admission (14 days prior to the semester start).

If the student fails to dis-enroll, the School will promptly notify the student and the student's parent that the student will be responsible for paying all tuition, fees, and textbooks costs. That student is also then considered an Ineligible Student and is dismissed from the CCP program in the next term.

If the student on CCP Probation takes one course and the grade raises the student's cumulative GPA to a 2.0 or higher, the student is removed from CCP Probation and may participate in the program without restrictions (unless the student becomes subject to probation again). If the grade does not raise the cumulative GPA to a 2.0 or higher, the School will dismiss the student from the CCP program.

CCP Dismissal

The School will dismiss an Ineligible Student from the CCP program and will promptly notify the student, the student's parent, and each college or university in which the student is enrolled. Any student on CCP Dismissal may not take any college courses through the program. If the student had already registered for college courses prior to being dismissed, the student will request each college to dis-enroll the student from the courses. The college will confirm all course dis-enrollments in the Pre-Term Notice of Admission (14 days prior to the semester start). If the student fails to dis-enroll, the School will promptly notify the student and the student's parent that the student will be responsible for paying all tuition, fees, and textbooks costs. The student will continue to be on CCP Dismissal for an additional term.

Dismissal and Prohibition Appeals

Within five (5) business days after being notified of the CCP Dismissal or the CCP Probation that prohibits the student from taking a course in the same subject, the student may appeal to the School superintendent or School governing authority the CCP dismissal or prohibition from taking a course in the same subject in which the student earned a grade of "D" or "F" or for which the student received no credit. To request an appeal, a student must provide a written explanation of why the student should be 1) removed from CCP Dismissal or 2) permitted to take a course in the same subject while on CCP Probation.

The School will promptly notify any college or university in which the student is enrolled that the student has requested an appeal.

The superintendent or School governing authority will review the written explanation and will consider the following:

- Completion of high school courses with an established grade point average
- Completion of tutoring, extra course assistance, as available
- Development of an individual pathway plan that includes high school graduation requirements and possible college courses
- Other factors demonstrating readiness
- Any extenuating circumstances separate from academic performance that may have affected the student's CCP status

The superintendent or School governing authority may do any of the following:

1. Allow the student to participate in the program without restrictions.
2. Allow the student to take a course in the same subject in which the student earned a grade of "D" or "F" or for which the student received no credit.
3. Allow the student to participate in the program on CCP Probation.
4. Maintain the student's status on CCP Dismissal from the program.

The superintendent or School governing authority will issue a decision on the student's appeal within ten (10) business days after the date the appeal is made. The decision of the superintendent or School governing authority is final.

The School will promptly notify any college or university in which the student is enrolled of the decision. If the decision is to continue the CCP Dismissal, the college or university will permit the student to withdraw from all courses without penalty and the secondary school will not be required to pay for those courses. If the superintendent or School governing authority to whom the appeal was directed fails to issue a decision within ten business days, the college or university will permit the student to withdraw from all courses for which the

student is not eligible without penalty. If the decision on the appeal is made after the college/university's no-fault withdrawal date, the School will pay for those courses.

Reinstatement after Dismissal

After one term of CCP dismissal, a student may request the School to allow the student to again participate in the CCP program. The School shall review the student's full high school and college academic record to determine the student's academic progress. The School shall continue the student's dismissal, place the student on CCP probation, or allow the student to participate in the program without restrictions in accordance with the appeal considerations under this policy. For purposes of Reinstatement, summer shall count as a term of dismissal from the program only if the student is enrolled in one or more high school courses during the summer.

College and University Academic Policies

CCP students are subject to the college's and university's policies on academic probation and dismissal. Nothing in this policy regarding CCP Probation and CCP Dismissal alters, supersedes, or affects any college's or university's policies or procedures on academic probation or dismissal.

Withdraw of Children of Military Families

The school shall permit the children of military families that are participating in the program who must withdraw due to a permanent change of station order out of state to do either of the following:

- Complete participation in the course through the duration of the semester in an online format, if possible; or,
- Withdraw from the course without academic or financial penalty.

Transportation Reimbursement

If the school provides transportation for students in grades nine through twelve, a parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the community school and participating in the College Credit Plus program may apply to the governing authority for full or partial reimbursement of the necessary costs of transportation between the community school and the college. If the local residential district/s provide for transportation to students at the community school, parent/guardians must follow procedures for the resident district for reimbursement.

Credit for Other Experiences

Many students are involved in activities outside their school experiences, such as music, dance, and art lessons; foreign language instruction; and team sports. While Connections Academy recognizes the value of these activities, they cannot be used to earn high school credit.

Independent Study (Flex Credit)

Independent Study or Flex Credit is a school-approved, student-centered, alternative method of learning that allows a student to earn regular education course credit while working on a standards-based, curriculum-aligned, independent project. Students work independently under the supervision of a certified teacher, following a plan created jointly by the student, the Caretaker, and the teacher. Students who wish to earn credit

for an Independent Study project must complete an application and have the approval of both the teacher and School Counselor in advance. For additional information, refer to the board approved Credit Flexibility Policy.

State End-of-Course Exam Test Out Option

The school may choose to use the results of the state end-of-course (EOC) exam to satisfy, in full or in part, the criteria for testing-out of a course though the Credit Flex option. The course grade will be awarded based upon the score achieved on the corresponding exam as defined below. Students with a proficient EOC score in Geometry, Biology, United States History and American Government, and those with a competent score in Algebra I and ELA II/English 10 can take advantage of this option. Interested students or Caretakers must obtain prior approval for this option and should contact the School Counselor for more information.

Final Course Grade	Skill Level
A	Advanced and Competent
B	Accelerated and Competent
C	Proficient and Competent
	Basic and Competent

7 Services for Special Populations

7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligible Students

The Board of Directors has adopted the Ohio Model Special Education Policies and Procedures. The following is a summary of the standard practices at the school. For additional information, refer to the Ohio Model Special Education Policies and Procedures which supersede any conflicting information in this supplement.

Enrollment Requirements

At the time of enrollment, all Caretakers who indicate that their students have special needs are asked to submit a copy of the student’s most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Evaluation Team Report (ETR). It is important that the IEP and ETR are current and complete, and that all educational assessments and evaluation reports that support the IEP are also submitted.

All documents are reviewed by the Director and/or Assistant Director of Special Education, and if necessary, a member of the special education staff will contact the family to discuss specific student needs or to clarify the information.

The student's IEP annual date and ETR tri-annual review dates are noted, and once enrollment is complete, the team begins to schedule IEP meetings as required.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, or upon student enrollment, the special education team ensures that teachers have access to their students' IEPs and ETRs. The teachers are made aware of their student's unique learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations and/or modifications.

Conducting IEP/ETR Meetings

The special education team plans for and schedules all annual IEP reviews, tri-annual ETR reviews, and any other IEP-related meetings. They contact families to attempt to establish mutually beneficial meeting times. Although typically held virtually, there are times when team meetings will take place in face-to-face, mutually agreed upon locations. IEP and/or ETR meetings occur in compliance with all state and federal laws.

Related Services

Some students qualify to receive related services in accordance with their IEPs. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the Internet with real-time conferencing software. The IEP team ensures that the service is provided in compliance with the IEP. If the district determines that face-to-face services are required, the team will locate and secure the provider, and handle all contracting and financial issues.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches or Caretakers may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning, and they may believe there could be a need for special education assistance. If this is suspected, the teacher will first help the Learning Coach implement a series of program modifications. If those documented strategies fail, they will then refer the student to the school's Student Support Team (SST). This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations. They may even consult with a member of the special education team. If all the recommended strategies fail, the team (along with the Caretaker) will consider a referral to the school's special education team. Once the team receives the referral, they will begin the process of determining if the student needs a special education evaluation, an IEP, and, ultimately, special education services.

7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students

Enrollment Requirements

Caretakers seeking to enroll students with Section 504 plans are asked to submit a copy of the Section

504 plan to the school during the enrollment and academic placement process. When a student enters the school with a Section 504 plan developed by a prior school, the school will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with Section 504.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, the 504 Coordinator ensures that teachers have access to their student's 504 plans. The teachers are made aware of each student's unique learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations and/or modifications.

Students who have Section 504 plans will participate in the general education environment, with the use of supplementary aides and services, as outlined within their Section 504 plan. The general education teachers (with the support of the Section 504 Coordinator and/or special education staff) will implement the provisions of Section 504 plans. A case manager will be assigned to notify teachers about the accommodations/modifications and to assist with and monitor the implementation of the Section 504 plan. Teachers will also have access to information regarding their students' assigned accommodations and modifications on their home page.

Reevaluation

The school shall establish procedures for periodic reevaluations of students, consistent with the requirements of Section 504. Transitions from primary grades to intermediate grades, elementary school to middle school, and middle school to high school are often appropriate times to review and update a student's Section 504 plan. For students who enter the school with an existing Section 504 plan, the schedule for the reevaluation will be determined by the Section 504 Coordinator based on the following: how recently the plan was developed, the appropriateness of the plan for the virtual school setting, changes to the student's impairment, etc.

Section 504 Accommodations

According to their Section 504 plans, some students qualify for accommodations and modifications to their educational program. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the Internet with real-time conferencing software. The 504 Coordinator ensures that the service is provided in compliance with the student's Section 504 plan.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and may believe there could be a need for accommodations and modifications, supplemental aides and services as required under Section 504. If documented strategies fail, the student will be referred to the school's Student Support Team (SST). This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's

learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the special education team and/or Section 504 Committee.

If all the recommended strategies fail, the team (along with the Caretaker) will consider a referral to the school's special education team and/or Section 504 Committee. Once the team receives the referral, they will begin the process of determining if the student needs evaluations and a Section 504 plan.

Federal law requires Ohio Connections Academy to provide its students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. Ohio Connections Academy is committed to providing its students with equal access to its education program. We provide students with accessibility through resources tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support.

If your student needs assistance to fully participate in Ohio Connections Academy's education program, please contact Erin Fatafehi or Rekha Manakkal. You can also obtain 24-hour technical support by calling the Accessibility Hotline at 888-639-5960.

9 Community Events, Trips, and Activities

Students Driving to Sanctioned Events

The school highly recommends to Caretakers that students not be permitted to drive unaccompanied to Connections Academy sanctioned events ("event(s)"). Preferred options include having Caretakers or designated adults drive and supervise students, or having students use public transportation options.

However, we recognize that in certain circumstances students may need or wish to drive to an event without supervision from an adult. To be able to drive unaccompanied to a Connections Academy sanctioned event, students must meet the following guidelines:

- Must possess a valid driver's license.
- Must have access to a currently registered, inspected, and insured vehicle.
- Must be a student in good standing, with good attendance, and with no disciplinary actions noted in the student's file.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the student who attends an event without a Caretaker or designated adult to do the following:

- Document parental permission to drive to events for the current school year by submitting a completed and signed Connections Academy Sanctioned Event Student Driving and Attendance Authorization to the School (form available in the Caretaker's DataView).
- Obey all time schedules

- Obey all school rules including maintaining acceptable attendance and disciplinary standards. If a student arrives late, privileges may be revoked
- Adhere to school rules and procedures for events

Under no circumstances shall the School be responsible for students who make their own personal travel arrangements and/or are not accompanied by an adult. The conduct of unaccompanied student drivers at events will remain the responsibility of their parent/ legal guardians. If a student driving to or from an event is involved in an accident, Connections Academy will not be liable for any injuries or damage; all liability rests with the student, his/her parent/ legal guardians and/or any insurance maintained by the parents/ legal guardians and/or the student.

Under no circumstances shall students drive other students to an event. If a student nevertheless permits another student or students to ride with him/her, Connections Academy shall not be liable for any injuries or damage to any parties. The student, the student's parents/ legal guardians, and/or any insurance maintained by the parents/ legal guardians and/or the student, will be responsible for all injuries and/or any damage that may occur.

Even if parents/ legal guardians grant permission for a student to drive unaccompanied, it is important to note that driving a car to an event is a privilege for a student and not a right, and such privilege may still be denied or revoked by the School at any time. Safe driving practices must always be adhered to. Students who endanger other drivers, individuals, pedestrians, or property, and/or do not follow school rules and/or procedures for events, may have their permission to drive unaccompanied to school events revoked by the School. Furthermore, students may be reported to school authorities and, if warranted, may also be reported to the police for further action.

10 Conduct, Due Process, Grievance, and Communication

Dress Code

While participating in school activities, students and parents/Caretakers are responsible for ensuring their appearance, attire, and visible background (including others visible during LiveLessons) do not disrupt the learning environment nor threaten the health, welfare, and safety of the student and/or others in the school community.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to your School Leader.

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) empowers students' ability to apply the skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges. Through self-awareness, self-

management, and responsible decision making, students in all grade levels will have the tools necessary to accurately recognize their emotions, thoughts, and behavior, and in doing so embrace a growth mindset.

For additional information on PBIS, refer to the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports and Restraint and Seclusion Model Policy and Procedures as drafted by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and adopted by the Board of Directors.

OCA will focus on the following:

Self-Awareness is simply the ability to be aware of one's inner life – one's emotions, thoughts, behaviors, values, preferences, goals, strengths, challenges, attitudes, mindsets, and so forth – and how these elements impact behavior and choices.

Self-Management is the ability to navigate and shift in a healthy way one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to make decisions and reach goals that benefit oneself and others.

Responsible Decision Making is the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. Essentially, all aspects of a potential decision and its consequences must be considered before a choice is made.

Grade Band Goals were developed focusing on teaching students to be Responsible, Respectful, and Engaged.

Specific grade band goals are located on the school message board under the link, School House OCA.

OCA Restraint and Seclusion Policy

In the event an individual's behavior presents a threat of imminent harm to self or others, emergency personnel will be contacted and the use of approved nonviolent crisis intervention de-escalation techniques and strategies to maintain a safe environment will be implemented as provided in the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports and Restraint and Seclusion Model Policy and Procedures

10.1 Drug-, Alcohol-, and Tobacco-Free Environment

Connections Academy is a drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free environment. The use of controlled substances, alcohol, and/or tobacco is prohibited at all school events and activities, including, but not limited to, field trips, testing administrations, and graduation ceremonies. This applies to all members of the school community, including students and their families, teachers, staff, and visitors. If an OCA staff member suspects any violation of this policy, an investigation by OCA and/or the proper law enforcement or public agency may occur.

Refer to Policy #309 Tobacco Policy for additional information regarding the prohibition against tobacco use.

10.2 Anti-Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy

A safe and civil environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying are strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion. This policy details the School's prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (including Cyber-Bullying).

I. Definitions:

- A. "Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying" means:
 - 1. An intentional written, verbal, graphic, electronic, or physical act that a student or group of students has exhibited toward another student or school personnel (including volunteers or others serving the school), more than once, and the behavior:
 - a. Causes mental or physical harm to the victim; and
 - b. Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment
 - 2. Violence within a dating relationship
- B. By Electronic Means/Cyber-Bullying: Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying includes electronic acts, which mean an act committed through the use of phones, PDAs, computers, electronic notebooks, game systems, or any other electronic or communication devices. (Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying conducted through electronic devices is sometimes referred to as "Cyber-Bullying".)
- C. Location: Acts constituting Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying subject to this policy must occur to and from school, on school grounds, at school-sponsored or sanctioned activities, or in school transportation in order for the School to be reasonably able to monitor and discern the conduct pursuant to this policy. Cyber-Bullying, subject to this policy, may occur beyond those locations but is covered by this Policy and is strictly forbidden under this Policy.

II. Types of Conduct

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying can include many different behaviors including overt intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate another student or school personnel. Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- 1. Physical violence and/or attacks;
- 2. Threats, taunts and Intimidation through words and/or gestures;
- 3. Extortion, damage or stealing of money, property or possessions;
- 4. Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors;
- 5. Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear or suffering to the victim;
- 6. Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other web-based/online sites (also known as "Cyber Bullying"), such as the following:

- a. Posting slurs on websites or any form of social media;
- b. Sending or posting abusive or threatening instant messages, emails, texts or communications via social media;
- c. Using cameras or cameras on any devices to take private or embarrassing photographs of students and sending or posting them online or on any form of social media;
- d. Using websites or other electronic communication to circulate gossip and rumors to other students;
- e. Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to internet service providers.

III. Complaint Process – Reporting Prohibited Incidents

- A. Students, Parents/Guardians, or other individuals may report suspected Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying to any School personnel. The School Leader or his/her designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this Policy. School personnel who receive a complaint will promptly report or forward it to the School Leader or his/her designee for review and action.
- B. Oral reports of suspected prohibited behavior are considered official complaints in the same manner as a written complaint. School personnel who receive an oral complaint will promptly document the complaint in writing, and will promptly forward it to the School Leader for review and action.
- C. Both written and oral complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of Harassment, Intimidation, and/or Bullying, including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential witness.
- D. Anonymous Complaints: Individuals who make complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the School. The anonymous complaints will be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint; and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of Harassment, Intimidation and/or Bullying.
- E. False Complaints: It is a violation of this policy to knowingly report false allegations of Harassment, Intimidation, and/or Bullying. Persons found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to appropriate discipline.
- F. School personnel, volunteers, and students shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy if that person reports an incident in good faith and in compliance with the procedures set forth herein.

IV. School Personnel Responsibilities

- A. Teachers and Other School Personnel Responsibilities
 - 1. Teachers and other school personnel, who witness acts of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying, as defined above, will promptly notify the School Leader or his/her designee of the event observed by filing a written incident report concerning the events witnessed.

2. In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, school personnel are encouraged to address the issue of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying in other interactions with students. School personnel may find opportunities to educate students about Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying and help eliminate such prohibited behaviors through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior.
3. School personnel should intervene promptly where they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating, or intimidating another student/school personnel, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying.”

B. Administrator Responsibilities - Investigation and Documentation

1. The School Leader or his/her designee shall conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all complaints of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying. The School Leader or his/her designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation when the investigation is complete. Such report will include findings of fact and a determination of whether acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying were verified. When prohibited acts are verified, the School Leader or his/her designee shall also prepare a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements will be attached to the report. It is imperative that Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying be identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met because the designation of such prohibited incidents carry special statutory obligations. However, a determination that misconduct does not constitute Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying under this Policy, does not restrict the right of the School Leader to impose appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct.
2. When an individual reporting a complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint will be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining individual of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

V. Notification to Parents/Guardians

- A. Perpetrator: If after investigation, acts of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying by a specific student are verified, the School Leader or his/her designee will notify, in writing, the parent or guardian of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline will be included in such notification to the extent permitted by law.
- B. Victim: If after investigation, acts of Bullying against a specific student are verified, the School Leader or his/her designee will notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such findings. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy right, including those set forth in the R.C. § 3319.321 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 88 Stat. 571, 20 U.S.C. 1232q of the perpetrator of such Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.
- C. To the extent permitted by State and Federal privacy laws, parents or guardians of any student involved in a prohibited incident may have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident.

VI. Remedial Actions

- A. Verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying will result in action by the School Leader or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will cease.
- B. The School recognizes that acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in seriousness and impact on the targeted individual and school community. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying. Disciplinary and appropriate remedial actions for an individual who commits an act of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, suspension or expulsion.
- C. In determining appropriate action for each individual who commits an act of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (including a determination to engage in either non-disciplinary or disciplinary action, as described below), the School Leader will give the following factors full consideration:
 - 1. The degree of harm caused by the incident(s);
 - 2. The surrounding circumstances;
 - 3. The nature and severity of the behavior;
 - 4. The relationship between the parties involved; and
 - 5. Past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior.
- D. When verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of such behavior do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled regarding the definition of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying. Peer mediation may also be used, when appropriate.
- E. When acts of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, will not be the basis for disciplinary action.
- F. Suspension or Expulsion may be imposed, but only after the appropriate procedures have been conducted pursuant to the School's Suspension and Expulsion policy and applicable law. No disciplinary procedure will infringe on any student's rights under the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.
- G. The determination that conduct does not constitute Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying under this Policy, however, does not restrict the right of the School Leader or the Board or both to impose appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct.

VII. Prevention and Intervention Strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying, and direct intervention when such acts are verified, the School will consider potential strategies to protect victims from

additional Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying, and from retaliation following a report and to generally ameliorate the effects of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying. The following potential strategies, as well as other strategies, may be considered:

1. Supervising and disciplining offending students fairly and consistently;
2. Providing adult supervision during breaks, lunch time, bathroom breaks and in the hallways during times of transition;
3. Maintaining contact with parents and guardians of all involved parties;
4. Providing counseling for the victim if assessed that it is needed;
5. Informing school personnel of the incident and instructing them to monitor the victim and the offending party for indications of harassing, intimidating, and Bullying behavior; instructing personnel to intervene when prohibited behaviors are witnessed;
6. Checking with the victim regularly to ensure that there have been no incidents of Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying or retaliation from the offender(s).
7. Responding respectfully to complaints of suspected prohibited conduct.
8. Promoting open communication regarding Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying.
9. Providing professional development and community opportunities to educate and collaborate with school personnel, parents, and community members about addressing Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying.
10. Educating students regarding Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying.
11. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior.
12. Avoiding sex-role stereotypes. Modeling and promoting strategies that instruct student how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere. Use of peers to help ameliorate the effects of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying.

VIII. Semi-Annual Reporting Obligations

The School Leader will semi-annually provide the president of the School's Board of Directors a written summary of all reported incidents and post the summary on the School's Website, if one exists. The list will be limited to the number of verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events.

IX. Publication & Dissemination of Policy

- A. This policy shall be included in the student handbook and in the publication which sets forth the comprehensive rules, standards, and procedures regarding school conduct. The School will annually disseminate this Policy to School personnel, students, and parents.

- B. To ensure school personnel are prepared to prevent and effectively intervene with incidents of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying, the School has incorporated the information about this Policy into its employee training materials.
- C. Students will be provided with age-appropriate information on the recognition and prevention of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying, and their rights and responsibilities under this and other School policies, procedures and rules.

IX. Sexual Harassment

- A. Sexual Harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:
 - 1. Conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the School on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct. (quid pro quo)
 - 2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, and pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the School's education program or activity.
 - 3. Sexual assault as defined in the Clery Act 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), dating violence 34 U.S.C. 12291 (a)(10), domestic violence 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or stalking as defined in the Violence Against Women Act 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).
- B. Complaints of Sexual Harassment. Procedures for filing and the investigation of allegations of sexual harassment are addressed in compliance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 regulations.

For further information on Sexual Harassment see the School's Title IX Non-Discrimination Policy & Grievance Procedures.

10.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students

Students enrolled in Connections Academy are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of the School, and Caretakers are expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students maintain this conduct. Student codes of conduct are set forth in this Supplement. School students are also guaranteed due process of law as required by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Discipline Measures

There are three levels of disciplinary measures utilized by the School: 1) Warning, 2) Suspension, and 3) Expulsion. Each level has associated conduct breach definitions and corresponding disciplinary actions that may occur.

1. Warning

Students who receive warnings from the School will have a conference (via phone or in person) with their

Caretaker(s) and the school administrator(s), and the incident will be formally documented in writing and will become part of the student's permanent record. The student will not have a disruption in schooling and will not be removed from the class (Pearson Online Classroom).

Warnings are issued when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct, but not as serious as those listed under the Suspension and/or Expulsion categories in this Supplement.

2. Suspension *

All Suspensions will be in compliance with the Board approves Suspension and Expulsion Policy.

When a student is suspended, they are temporarily removed from class (Pearson Online Classroom) or a school-sponsored program or activity. The length of the suspension is determined by the school administrator (up to 10 days at a time). The suspension will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

During a period of suspension as defined by the School Principal, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of Pearson Online Classroom is restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or all of Pearson Online Classroom may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to Pearson Online Classroom and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with their schoolwork during the suspension. A student who has been suspended will have an opportunity to complete any missed classroom assignments due to the suspension and will receive at least partial credit for completed assignments.

Violations that may lead to suspension include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct:

- » *Academic Integrity Violation (includes cheating on assignments as well as plagiarism):* A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another person's work, and representing it as their own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation. In addition, plagiarism consists of using another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as their own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). Academic Integrity violations include, but are not limited to: copying material from a book without attribution or when not allowable for assessments or assignments, copying and pasting information from the Internet without attribution or when not allowable for assessments or assignments, submitting work for which you are unable to showcase an understanding of or an explanation of what was submitted, substituting another's work for your own, and getting family or friends to help with coursework when not allowable per course expectations (for example, on course assessments that are required to be completed independent of any assistance)
- » *Abusive conduct:* A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the

presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.

- » *Bullying*: A student who repeatedly engages in negative actions (physical, verbal, or written) against another student in an attempt to exercise control over them.
- » *Intimidation*: A student who engages in behavior intentionally meant to cause another person to fear harm or injury, be frightened into submission or compliance, or to feel a sense of inferiority.
- » *Harassment*: A student who demonstrates verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the School's programs that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment, 2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance, or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.
- » *Vandalism*: A student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances, the School reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agencies.
- » *Theft and robbery*: A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the School of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances, the School reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.
- » *Sexual harassment*: A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances, including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.
- » *Violence within a dating relationship*: A student who attempts to maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, emotional, and/or mental abuse.
- » *Weapons**: Evidence that a student is in possession of a weapon at any in-person school event (including, but not limited to, state testing, field trips, graduation, etc.) may result in the student's immediate removal from the school setting, as well as other disciplinary actions, including expulsion and possible permanent exclusion from re-enrollment in the School, consistent with board policy and state law, and may also lead to the filing of criminal charges if appropriate.
- » *Violation of acceptable use policy*: Students who violate the acceptable use policy in one form or another are open to disciplinary action, including suspension. This would include signing on as Caretakers.
- » Repeated violation of any disciplinary issues.

*Students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade will not be suspended unless they commit the following violations: possession of a firearm/knife, or they commit a criminal offense resulting in serious physical harm to others or school property, or while attending a school program or activity (e.g., field trips), including interscholastic competitions and/or extracurricular events.

Weapons include conventional objects such as firearms*, pellet guns, knives****, or club-type implements. A weapon may also include any toy or look-alike object that is presented as a real weapon or reacted to as a

real weapon, or an object converted from its original use to an object used to threaten or injure another. This includes, but is not limited to, padlocks, pens, pencils, chairs, jewelry, etc.

***Firearm has the same meaning provided in the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, which defined a firearm as any weapon (including a starter's gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, including the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any firearm muffler or silencer, or any destructive device. A firearm also includes an unloaded firearm and any firearm that is inoperable but that can readily be rendered operable. If the definition of a firearm as provided by the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 changes, then the definition set forth in this Supplement shall automatically change to conform to it. For the purposes of this Supplement, firearm includes any antique firearm otherwise exempted from the above-referenced definition.

**** A knife is defined as a cutting instrument consisting of a sharp blade or edge, not to include scissors, wire cutters, or other similar tools determined by the School Leader to be necessary in the school setting at a particular building or grade level, if used only for the necessary purpose.

3. Expulsion

All expulsions will be done in compliance with the Board approved Suspension and Expulsion Policy.

When a student is expelled, they are separated from the School for disciplinary reasons for an extended period of time, or permanently. The expulsion will be documented in writing and will become part of the student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others; possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives; criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

For those students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the disciplinary procedures required by the IDEA will be followed. In the event a student has disabilities under both Section 504 and the IDEA, both policies shall be followed in determining appropriate disciplinary actions.

Due Process for Students

The following actions will be conducted by the school, per each of the disciplinary measures as outlined below:

Suspension (no more than 10 days)

An informal hearing will be convened with the student, Caretaker, School Principal, and other staff members as appropriate. The School Principal will inform the student and Caretaker of the allegations and provide an explanation of the evidence that supports the allegations. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present their version of the occurrence. If the School Principal determines that the incident(s) justifies suspension, written notice will be provided to the student and their Caretaker. The student will be provided all due process as required by law.

Expulsion

If the School Principal determines that a student's conduct may warrant expulsion, the School Principal will provide written notice to the Caretaker of the student of their determination and the student's right to a hearing no earlier than three nor later than five school days after the notice is given/.

Such notice shall include (1) the date, time, and location of the hearing; (2) a description of the incident(s) that is the subject of the hearing; (3) notice that the student and/or Caretaker have a right to review the student's school records prior to the hearing; and (4) a description of the hearing process and explanation of the consequences of an expulsion. At this hearing, the allegations and supporting evidence will be reviewed. The student shall have the right to present their version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses, and be represented by counsel. After the hearing, the School Principal will make a recommendation for or against expulsion to the School's Board. Once the board rules on the expulsion, the School Principal and/or the board will provide notification of the board's decision and discipline determination to the student and Caretaker. The decision of the board is final.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

Consistent with policy, to the extent the principal may order removal of a student without disabilities, the principal may remove a student with a disability, but not for more than ten (10) school days.

After a student with a disability has been removed from the student's current placement for ten school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal, the School must provide services.

If a student is removed for a period of time exceeding ten school days and the behavior was not determined to be a manifestation of the disability, the student must continue to receive educational services and provide as appropriate a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications.

Change in Placement

The School will notify the parent of the removal decision that constitutes a change in placement for a student with a disability and provide the parent with a copy of the notice of procedural safeguards on the same day as the date of the removal decision.

A change in placement will occur when

- a removal is for more than ten (10) consecutive school days; or
- a series of removals constitute a pattern because;
 - the removals cumulate to more than ten (10) school days in a school year,
 - the behavior of the student is substantially similar to prior incidents, and
 - other factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

Manifestation Determination

Within ten school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability due to a violation of the code of student conduct, the School, parent, and relevant members of the IEP team must review all relevant information in the student's file to determine:

1. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability; OR
2. If the conduct was a direct result of the School's failure to implement the IEP.

If either of these two conditions are found to exist, the conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the disability.

If the IEP team and other qualified personnel determine that the student's behavior was not related to the disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to students without disabilities may be applied to the student in the same manner in which they would be applied to students without disabilities.

If the IEP team determines that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the disability, the School must either:

1. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavioral intervention plan or,
2. If the behavioral plan has already been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan and the implementation plan and modify them if necessary.

The student must return to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

School personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five school days without regard to whether the behavior is a manifestation of the disability if the student:

1. Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to a school function;
2. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
3. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another while at School, on school premises, or at a school function.

Students removed under this section must continue to receive services and receive a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services.

Appeals Regarding Students with Disabilities

If a parent disagrees with any decision regarding placement or the manifestation determination decision made by the IEP team, the parent may request a hearing. Whenever a hearing is requested, the School will comply with the procedures for an expedited due process hearing.

10.4 Academic Honesty

Cheating and/or Plagiarism

Connections Academy requires the original work of all students, and in so doing, prohibits plagiarism of the work of others, or any other manner of submitting work that is not representative of the true work of the student. Students shall be expected to properly cite the origin of work that is not their own. If work content, other than commonly known facts, is not properly cited, attributed, or credited, the work may be determined to be plagiarism. If work content is taken from other sources when these sources are not allowed to be utilized (e.g., during an assessment), this conduct will be deemed a violation of academic integrity.

Academic Integrity violations include, but are not limited to: copying material from a book without attribution or when not allowable for assessments or assignments, copying and pasting information from the Internet without attribution or when not allowable for assessments or assignments, submitting work for which you are unable to showcase an understanding of or an explanation of what was submitted, substituting another's work for your own, and getting family or friends to help with coursework when not allowable per course expectations (for example, on course assessments that are required to be completed independent of any assistance)

First Offense

The first time a student is determined to have violated the school's Academic Integrity Policy the student will receive a warning. The school will contact the student to explain the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered a violation. The student will be required to resubmit the question/assignment with original work. Middle and high school students will receive a zero for the submitted assignment and will be required to resubmit the entire assessment for which a violation is found, per the course correction policy for the course the violation originates from. If the student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a permanent zero for that question/assignment. The student may also be enrolled in an Academic Integrity course at this violation, dependent on grade level. This course must be completed in a satisfactory manner within a few days from enrollment in the section.

Second Offense

When a student earns a second Academic Integrity violation, they will be required to redo the question/assignment but can only receive up to half credit. Middle and high school students will receive a zero for the original submitted assignment and will be required to resubmit the entire assessment for which a violation is found, per the course correction policy for the course the violation originates from, to have the opportunity to receive up to half credit. If the student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a permanent zero for that question (elementary grades) /assignment (middle school and high school). The student may also be enrolled in an Academic Integrity course at this violation, dependent on grade level. This course must be completed in a satisfactory manner within a few days from enrollment in the section.

Third Offense

The third time a student earns an Academic Integrity violation, they will receive a zero and will not have the opportunity to redo the question/assignment. Middle and high school students and Learning Coaches will also be required to attend a meeting with their grade level administration. Failure to actively participate in the meeting may result in withdrawal from Ohio Connections Academy. Additional offenses after this violation will result in a determination to withdraw the student.

10.5 Dispute Resolution for Caretakers

The School is committed to ensuring Caretaker satisfaction and takes its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to the student very seriously. These school responsibilities are set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) and the School Handbooks and include such things as: contacting the family regularly, delivering educational materials and equipment, and providing accessible support.

The School will also ensure that the family and student adhere to their responsibilities stated in the PLCA and the School Handbooks, and when necessary, will discipline, disenroll a student, invoice, refer to collections, or take legal action against the family for a breach of the agreement or a school policy. Reasons for such disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, failure to attend mandatory testing events, failure to return materials, or disputing the materials and equipment policy, such as invoices for computer damage.

Caretaker Remedies

If a Caretaker has concerns with the School's action or performance on any of the above-defined school responsibilities or disciplinary actions, they have the following remedies available:

Addressing Issues

For routine issues or for a first attempt at redress, contact the teacher via phone or WebMail.

For more serious issues and/or to address lack of resolution of the issue at the lower level, a detailed dispute resolution procedure has been set forth below. All proceedings will be conducted in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts.

Dispute-Resolution Process

1. The Caretaker with the concern must, in writing, report the dissatisfaction and submit it to the student's teacher (or other appropriate Connections Academy staff member, as necessary). All parties involved must be appropriately defined, and the problem must be clearly outlined.
2. The recipient of the concern must review the issue with their supervisor and respond to the Caretaker within three (3) school days.
3. If the original recipient did not resolve the concern, the Caretaker should request a meeting with the recipient's supervisor. The supervisor should investigate the matter and schedule a meeting with the Caretaker, the student, if necessary, and any other staff member, if necessary, within five (5) school days.
4. If either party does not resolve this concern, the Caretaker should then request a meeting with the superintendent. The superintendent will investigate the matter and schedule a meeting within five (5) school days.
5. If the dispute remains unsolved, the Caretaker should then request a conference with the Academic Success Partner, formally Director of Schools. The Director will investigate the matter and schedule a conference within five (5) school days.

If the School has not been able to address the Caretaker's concern through the dispute resolution process set out above, or if there has not been a prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint prohibited by any other state or federal law or regulation, the Caretaker can contact the parent representative of the School's Board of Directors, the school district, or the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce for further recourse.

10.6 Communication

Student and Staff Communications

All educational and/or school related communications with teachers, School Leaders, or any school staff member are required to be conducted via the approved tools and platforms provided by Connections Academy. All communications must be appropriate and remain educationally relevant.

External Video and Web Conferencing Services

OCA may use external video and web conferencing services and tools (e.g. Zoom) in addition to the Education Management System. When using external communication services and/or tools, students must comply with the expectations provided by their teacher, school policies and the Honor Code.

11 Educational Materials Provided by the School

Technology Provided by Connections Academy

Consult the [Hardware and Connectivity](#) section of the school website to find out what technology is provided by the school.

Use of Personal Equipment and Software

This Connections Academy School provides families with the necessary equipment and software needed for students and Learning Coaches to do their day-to-day schoolwork. A printer is not needed in order to participate in the program and so is not provided by the School.

Because of this, there is no technology hardship scholarship program available to families in this school. Families are not required to have additional personal access to equipment and software, but may use their own equipment and software if they meet the [minimum system requirements](#) detailed on the school website and in the Connections Academy General Handbook.*

If a family waives the Connections Academy–supplied computer equipment in favor of using their own equipment, but subsequently decides they would like to have Connections Academy provide them with computer equipment, they may contact their homeroom teacher to request the equipment. It will be supplied to them within 30 days.

** Please reference the FCC Household Broadband Guide to determine the minimum bandwidth needed based on your student's environment. <https://www.fcc.gov/research-reports/guides/household-broadband-guide>*

11.3 Use of the Internet

Internet Subsidy

Each family will receive a subsidy for their Internet use, unless the family elects to waive the subsidy payment. The subsidy is awarded on a per-family basis, not a per-student basis, and is paid via debit card. The subsidy will be equal to \$16.95 a month but will be paid out three times during the year through a third-party vendor contracted through Connections Education LLC. Therefore, each debit card amount will be \$50.85. In order for the household to receive the Internet subsidy, the following information is provided to the third-party vendor contracted to issue the debit cards: the name of the individual to whom the subsidy is being awarded, and the mailing address of the person to whom the subsidy is being awarded. No other information will be provided to

such third-party vendors. The debit cards will be sent according to the approximate schedule listed below.

Debit Card Issuing Schedule

Debit Card Number	Approximate Cut Off Date for Debit Card Disbursement	Month Debit Card is Issued	Months the Debit Card Covers
1	November 15	December	September, October, November
2	February 15	March	December, January, February
3	May 15	June	March, April, May

Internet Safety Policy

The use of technology and computer resources at the School is a revocable privilege. Users who fail to abide by this policy may be ineligible to use the School's computer facilities and may be subject to additional disciplinary action.

The School reserves the right to monitor and log technology use, to monitor file server space utilization by users, and examine specific network usage.

Students are expected to use the technology available at the School in a manner appropriate to the School's academic and moral goals. Technology includes, but is not limited to, cellular telephones, beepers, pagers, radios, CD/MP3/DVD players, video recorders, video games, personal data devices, computers, other hardware, electronic devices, software, Internet, e-mail, artificial intelligence (AI) and all other similar networks and devices. Obscene, pornographic, threatening, or other inappropriate use of Technology, including, but not limited to, AI, e-mail, instant messaging, web pages, and the use of hardware and/or software which disrupts or interferes with the safety and welfare of the School community, is prohibited, even if such uses take place after or off School property.

It is the policy of the School to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications. Inappropriate material includes visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity and damage to school resources; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Unacceptable uses of Technology/Internet include but are not limited to:

1. Violating the conditions of federal and Ohio law dealing with students and employees' rights to privacy. Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files; copying other people's work or attempting to intrude onto other people's files; using other users' e-mail addresses and passwords.
2. Using profanity, obscenity or other language which may be offensive to another user; sending messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin or physical attributes via the Internet or Technology; bullying, insulting, intimidating, or attacking others; transmitting any material in violation of federal or state law. This behavior is punishable both on and off campus.
3. Obtaining, viewing, downloading, transmitting, disseminating or otherwise gaining access to profanity, obscenity, abusive, pornographic, and/ or impolite language or materials, accessing materials in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. A good rule to follow is to never view, send or access materials that you would not want your instructors and parents to see. Should a student encounter any inappropriate materials by accident, he/she should report it to their instructors immediately.
4. Violating copyright laws by illegally downloading or installing music, any commercial software, shareware, or freeware. You are required to strictly comply with all licensing agreements relating to any software. All copyright laws must be respected.
5. Plagiarizing works through the Internet or other Technology. Plagiarism is taking ideas of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user.
6. Use of AI in a manner that violates any portion of this policy or the academic integrity policies of the School and/or classroom policies. This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Cheating: Students may not use AI tools for tests, assignments, or examinations in a manner which may be considered cheating. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of AI tools that complete and/or write the assignment for the student. Students must have teacher permission prior to using AI for any test, assignment, or examination.
 - b. Disruption: Students may not use any AI tools that may disrupt the classroom experience, for example chatbots.
 - c. Misrepresentation: Students may not use AI tools to impersonate school staff or create fake profiles for use in the school setting.
 - d. Privacy: Students may not use AI to monitor others via the application or to invade the privacy of others.
7. Damaging Technology devices, computers, computer systems or computer networks (for example, by the creation, introduction or spreading of computer viruses, physically abusing hardware, altering source codes or software settings, etc.).
8. Using the Technology or the Internet for commercial purposes or activities, which is defined as offering or providing goods or services or purchasing goods or services for personal use, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. any activity that requires an exchange of money and/or credit card numbers;
 - b. any activity that requires entry into an area of service for which the School will be charged a fee;

- c. any purchase or sale of any kind; and
 - d. any use for product advertisement or political lobbying.
9. Intentionally seeking information on, obtaining copies of, or modifying files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users.
 10. Malicious uses of technology through hate mail, harassment, profanity, vulgar statements, or discriminating remarks.
 11. Neither the Internet nor any other Technology may be used for any purpose which is illegal or against the School's policies or contrary to the School's mission or best interests.

All users are expected to be responsible, courteous and thoughtful when using Technology and the Internet. Common sense should prevail. The use of the School computer network system should be in support of education and research, consistent with the educational mission or objectives of the School and in accordance with federal law, Ohio law and the Student Code of Conduct.

Students have no expectation of privacy with respect to the use of Technology, the Internet, intranet, e-mail or other technology-based communication methods. Maintenance and monitoring of the School network system may lead to the discovery that a student has or is violating School policy or the law. Violations of School policy, the Student Code of Conduct or the law may result in severe penalties, up to and including expulsion.

The School makes no warranties of any kind; either expressed or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the School technology system will be error-free or without defect. The School will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data, interruptions of service, or computer viruses. The School is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the School system. The School will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the authorized use of the system.

User Acknowledgement

The user also acknowledges and agrees that he/she is solely responsible for the use of his/her accounts, passwords, and/or access privileges, and that misuse of such may result in appropriate disciplinary actions (including but not limited to suspension or expulsion), loss of access privileges, and /or appropriate legal action.

The user must also know and further agrees that:

1. Should the user transfer a file, shareware, or software that infects the technology resources with a virus and causes damage, the user will be liable for any and all repair costs.
2. The user will be liable to pay the cost or fee of any file, shareware, or software transferred or downloaded, whether intentional or accidental.
3. Should the user intentionally destroy information of equipment that causes damage to technology resources, the user(s) will be liable for any and all costs.

In accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (“CIPA”), the School has placed a filter on its Internet access as one step to help protect its users from intentionally or unintentionally viewing inappropriate material. The School blocks the categories that are determined to be potentially inappropriate, including visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, and harmful to minors. However, families must be aware that some material accessible via the Internet contains illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive language and/or images. While the goal of the School is to use Internet resources to achieve educational goals, there is always a risk of students accessing other materials. Parents should be aware of these risks.

By signing the Parent/Student Contract Page at the end of the Parent/Student Handbook, the parent and student agree:

- To abide by all School policies relating to the use of technology, including the use of AI.
- To release all School employees from any and all claims of any nature arising from the use or inability to use the technology.
- That the use of technology is a privilege.
- That the use of the technology will be monitored and there is no expectation of privacy in any use of the technology.

12. Parental Rights

Annual Parental Notification – Ohio Parents’ Bill of Rights

In accordance with Ohio House Bill 8 (“Parent’s Bill of Rights”) and School policy, the School must annually provide parents or guardians with information about parents’ rights regarding their child’s education, well-being, and school policies. This annual notification is being provided to ensure parents are fully informed and involved.

The School offers the following physical, mental, and behavioral health care services:

The School is authorized by law to employ health care service professionals and to provide certain services – among them, diabetes care, conducting hearing and vision tests, testing for tuberculosis (if required by the Board of Health), screening for newly enrolling kindergarten or first grade students, dyslexia screenings, medication administration, concussion assessments, seizure action planning, threat assessments, counseling

to any victim of sexual harassment or sexually related conduct, counseling for habitually absent students, and any other services required by a student's Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan.

Other options are available for your child to receive physical, mental, and behavioral health services. You can see your primary health care provider. Programs, including a public health clinic, are also offered by the County Health Department.

To facilitate parental involvement and decision-making, parents have the option to withhold consent or decline any service offered by the School. Consenting to any services does not waive the right to access their child's educational or health records or to be notified about a change in their child's services or monitoring as required by law. Parents must notify the School in writing if they choose to withhold consent.

****Notice and consent does not apply to emergency situations, first aid, other unanticipated minor health care services, or health care services provided pursuant to a student's IEP or 504 Plan.**

Appendix I: Academic Prevention/Intervention Policy

In accordance with Section 3313.6012 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of the School adopts this Academic Prevention/Intervention Policy in order to address prevention and intervention services within the School.

ASSESSMENTS

The School shall assess student achievement and needs in all program areas in compliance with State law, the rules adopted by the State Board of Education and the Community School Contract. The purpose of such assessments will be to determine the progress of students and to assist in attaining student performance objectives and educational achievement goals of the School.

STATE-REQUIRED TESTS

The School shall administer all State-mandated tests to students at the times designated by the State Board of Education. “Achievement tests” for purpose of this Policy are defined as those aligned with the Ohio academic content standards and model curriculum, designed to measure a student’s level of skill in a specific subject area that is expected at the end of a designated grade and/or is required as part of the Ohio graduation requirement.

“Diagnostic assessments” for purposes of this Policy are defined as those aligned with Ohio academic content standards and model curriculum, designed to measure student comprehension of academic content and mastery of related skills for a relevant subject area at each grade level. The School will administer diagnostic assessments pursuant to Section 3301.0715 of the Revised Code.

All statewide tests shall be administered in accordance with Rules 3301-13-01 and according to procedures outlined in 3301-13-02 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

In addition to achievement tests and diagnostic assessments, staff members will assess the academic achievement and learning needs of each student. Procedures for such assessments may include, but are not limited to, teacher observation techniques, cumulative student records, and/or student performance data collected through standard testing programs.

Any student receiving special education services may be excused from taking any particular test required if the individualized education program (“IEP”) developed for the student excuses the student from taking that test and instead specifies that an alternative assessment method be used. The Alternative Assessment for a Student with Disability (“AASWD”) is approved by the Department of Education and Workforce to evaluate the performance of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom regular assessments, even with accommodations, are not appropriate. In general, the IEP shall not excuse the student from taking a test unless no reasonable accommodation can be made to enable the student to take the test. In that case, the school shall use AASWD to test students needing an alternate form of assessment.

The School shall not use any student’s failure to attain a specified score on any State-mandated test as a factor in any decision to deny the student promotion to a higher grade level, except as provided by law.

INTERVENTION SERVICES

In accordance with this Policy, the School shall provide prevention/intervention services in pertinent subject areas to students who score below the proficient level on a reading, writing, mathematics, social studies or science achievement test and/or who do not demonstrate academic performance at their grade level based on the results of a diagnostic assessment. Intervention services will be commensurate with the student’s test performance in each such test area including prevention, intervention, or remediation. Such prevention, intervention or remediation programs may include, but is not limited to, remedial program content, one-on-one teacher/student interaction, computer-assisted remedial course material, student-specific tutoring intervention and/or small group interaction.

During the school year following the year in which the tests prescribed by R.C. 3301.0710(A)(1) are administered to any student, the School shall provide appropriate intervention services, commensurate with the student's test performance, including any intensive prevention, intervention, or remediation required under R.C. 3301.0711, 3301.0715, 3313.608 or R.C. 3313.6012, in any skill in which the student failed to demonstrate at least a score of proficient level on an achievement test.

For each student required to be offered intervention services, the School may involve the student's parent or guardian and classroom teacher in developing the intervention strategy, and shall offer to the parent or guardian the opportunity to be involved in the intervention services.

THIRD GRADE READING GUARANTEE

If applicable to the grade levels served by the School, the School shall administer the required achievement tests, perform remediation and retain students as set forth in the School's Third Grade Reading Guarantee Policy.

PROCEDURES FOR THE REGULAR COLLECTION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

The School shall develop procedures for the regular collection of student performance data; a plan for the design of classroom-based intervention services to meet the instructional needs of individual students as determined by the results of diagnostic assessments; and procedures for using student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention services and, if necessary, to modify such services.

The School shall keep records for each student including the following:

- A. A unique State student identification code or a student data verification code as required in accordance with R.C. 3301.0714(D)(2);
- B. A list or designation of which tests are required and which tests are not required;
- C. A list or designation of which tests, required or not required, are taken and which are not taken at each test administration period;
- D. Score for each test taken;
- E. Whether each student attained the requisite performance standard designated for each required test;
- F. What if any tests must still be taken;
- G. Whether or not intervention must be provided; and
- H. For each test required for graduation, the date passed must be recorded on the student's transcript. No information shall be on the student's transcript for a test not passed. When a student who has taken State-mandated tests in one (1) school leaves that school to enroll in another school, the school previously attended shall provide, immediately upon request by a school official from the enrolling school, all applicable records set forth above.

PROCEDURES FOR USING STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTION SERVICES AND, IF NECESSARY, TO MODIFY SUCH SERVICES.

The School shall utilize diagnostic and performance assessments that are nationally-normed and aligned with State-standards to measure student performance data. Data will be collected to determine student performance in reading, math, language arts and life sciences and the effectiveness of intervention services.

The student performance will be measured after each diagnostic and performance assessments and compared with previous assessments to determine gains in each relevant subject category. Intervention and remediation programs may include by way of illustration, one-on-one tutoring, computer-assisted remedial curriculum, small group intervention and/or one-on-one student/teacher interaction will be employed. Subsequent diagnostic and performance assessments will be employed after implementation of intervention and remediation programs to determine efficacy and effectiveness of such programs.

This policy shall be reviewed annually.

A. Third Grade Reading Guarantee

Third Grade Reading Guarantee Policy

Ohio law requires that each school annually assess reading skills for students in kindergarten, first, second and third grades. The assessment shall be completed by the thirtieth day of September for students in grades one through three and by the twentieth day of instruction of the current school year for students in kindergarten. Each student's classroom teacher will be involved in the assessment, and identification of students reading below grade level.

The School shall provide intervention services to students whose assessments show that they are failing to make satisfactory progress toward attaining the academic standards for their grade level.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

“On-track: means any student who is reading at grade level for the previous academic year standard expectations.

“Not on-track” means any student who is not reading at grade level based on the previous academic year standard expectations.

Assessment of Reading Skills

Diagnostic assessments in reading, as approved by the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), shall be given by September 30th of each year for students in grades one through three. For kindergarten students, the kindergarten readiness assessment may be administered not earlier than four (4) weeks prior to the start of school and not later than the twentieth day of instruction. For students enrolled in first, second, and third grade, the diagnostic assessments in reading shall be administered at least once annually.

The School shall administer each applicable diagnostic assessment to any student who transfers into the School who did not take a diagnostic assessment at the previous school during the current school year. The diagnostic assessment(s) shall be administered within thirty (30) days of transfer. The School shall administer the same reading diagnostic it administered to other students for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. The KRA-R is the only exception to this because schools cannot administer the KRA-R after the first 20 instructional days of the school year. If the School cannot determine whether the student has been administered an approved reading diagnostic in the current school year, the School shall administer a reading diagnostic to the student.

After the administration of any diagnostic assessment, the School shall provide to the student's parent a copy of the student's completed diagnostic assessment, the results of such assessment, and any other accompanying documents used during the administration of the assessment. The preceding documents and information shall be included in any reading improvement and monitoring plan(s) developed with respect to the

student. The School shall also submit to DEW the results of the diagnostic assessments administered pursuant to this section.

Diagnostic assessment results shall be translated to DEW's definitions of "on track" and "not on track". The School shall make the final determination regarding whether a student is "on track" or "not on track".

Not on Track

If the diagnostic assessment shows that a student is "not on track" (reading below grade level), the School will notify the parent, in writing as soon as possible of the following:

1. Notice that their child is not reading on grade level;
2. A description of current services provided to the student;
3. A description of proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that will be provided to the student that are designed to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency;
4. Notice that the statutorily prescribed assessment is not the sole determinant of promotion and that additional evaluations and assessments are available to the student to assist in knowing when a student is reading at or above grade level and ready for promotion;
5. A statement that connects the child's proficiency level in reading to long-term outcomes of success related to proficiency in reading; and
6. Notice that the student will be retained in the third grade if s/he does not attain a score in the statutorily prescribed level on the third grade English Language arts assessment, unless the student is exempt as permitted by law.

For each student identified to be "not on track", the School shall:

1. Administer any necessary informal or formal diagnostic assessments to determine the instructional needs of the student;
2. Immediately provide reading instruction and/or intervention using research-based reading strategies that have been shown to be successful in improving reading among low-performing readers and are targeted at the student's identified reading deficiencies; and
3. Develop a RIMP within 60 days of receiving the student's diagnostic results.

Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan

The reading improvement and monitoring plan developed for students identified as "not on track" shall include:

1. Identification of the student's specific reading deficiency;
2. A description of proposed supplemental instructional services and support that will be provided to the student to remediate the identified reading deficiencies;
3. Opportunities for the student's parent/guardian to be involved in the instructional services;
4. A process to monitor the implementation of the student's instructional services;
5. A reading curriculum during regular school hours that assists students to read at grade level, provides scientifically based and reliable assessments, and provides initial and ongoing analysis of each student's reading progress; and
6. A statement that unless the student attains the appropriate level of reading competency by the end of Grade 3, the student may be retained in third grade.
7. High-dosage tutoring opportunities aligned with the student's classroom instruction through either a state-approved vendor or locally approved opportunity that aligns with high-dosage tutoring best practices. High-dosage tutoring must include additional instruction time either:
 - Three days per week, or
 - At least 50 hours over 36 weeks.
8. Intervention services must be aligned to the science of reading.

9. The School must continue to provide the RIMP until the student is reading proficiently at their current grade level.

Promotion/Retention

Students scoring below the promotion score on Ohio's grade 3 English language arts test must be retained in grade 3, except for the following students:

1. A student who is an English learner enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than three full school years and with fewer than three years of instruction in an English as a second language program.
2. A student whose IEP specifically exempts the student from retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.
3. A student who demonstrates competency on an alternative assessment for reading approved by the Department.
4. A student whose IEP shows the student received intensive remediation in reading for two years and the student previously was retained in any of grades kindergarten through 3.
5. A student who received intensive remediation in reading for two years and previously was retained in any of grades kindergarten through 3.*
6. A student whose parent or guardian, in consultation with the student's reading teacher and principal, has requested that the student be promoted to grade 4 regardless of the student's score on Ohio's State Test for grade 3 English language arts.

* Students promoted under exemptions 5 & 6 must continue to receive intensive reading instruction in grade 4. This instruction shall include an altered instructional day that includes specialized, diagnostic information and specific, research-based reading strategies for the student that have been successful in improving reading among low-performing readers.

Instruction and Intervention

The School must use evidence-based reading intervention programs from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's approved list of high-quality instruction materials which are aligned with the science of reading.

If a student is retained by the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, the student must be provided intense remediation services until s/he is able to read at grade level. The remediation services must include intense interventions and consist of at least ninety (90) minutes of reading instruction daily. Students will be provided 4th grade instruction in any specific academic field in which the student has demonstrated appropriate proficiency.

Intensive remediation services shall be targeted to the student's identified reading deficiency. Interventions for students who have been retained may include:

1. small group instruction;
2. reduced student-teacher ratios;
3. more frequent progress monitoring;
4. tutoring or mentoring;
5. transition classes containing third and fourth grade students;
6. summer reading camp; or
7. extended school day, week, or year.

Services From Outside Providers

The School shall provide the option for students to receive reading intervention services from one or more providers other than the School. The School has the sole authority to select outside service providers.

Mid-year Promotion

A student retained in 3rd grade will be given the opportunity to be promoted mid-year to 4th grade if the student demonstrates proficiency in reading and will have achieved a passing score on the required state test and/or state approved vendor assessment. The School will determine if the student has demonstrated proficiency of the academic content consistent with the month of the promotion to fourth grade as provide in the school's curriculum in the following ways:

- The student will demonstrate proficiency in reading and will have achieved a passing score on the required state mandated test and/or state approved vendor assessment.
- A School team including the student's teacher, the school administrator and the receiving teacher will review the student's progress and determine the appropriateness of mid-year promotion.
- Curriculum based assessment in content areas of social studies, science, and math.
- Benchmark assessment in the area of math to determine if the student is commensurate with the appropriate month placement of the next grade level
- Benchmark assessment in the area of English Language Arts to determine if the student is commensurate with the appropriate month placement to the next grade level

If a student is mid-year promoted according to this policy, the school will provide the following:

- Regular progress monitoring to determine progress in the content standards
- Formative assessment to drive differentiated instruction that will meet student learning needs
- Report to parent regarding progress in the content standards

Teacher Qualifications

A student who has been retained or is on a reading improvement plan shall be assigned a teacher with at least one year of teaching experience and have at least *one* of the following qualifications required in law:

- Holds a reading endorsement on the teacher's license;
- Completed a master's degree with a major in reading or literacy;
- Earned a passing score on a rigorous test of principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction (The only test that satisfies this qualification is the Praxis 5205);
- Has an educator license issued on or after July 1, 2017, in early childhood (preK-3), middle childhood (4-9) education or K-12 Intervention Specialists (Early Childhood, Mild/Moderate, Moderate/Intensive, Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, or Gifted); or
- Holds a license issued by the Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology under Chapter 4753 of the Ohio Revised Code and a professional pupil services license as a school speech-pathologist issued by the State Board of Education.

First-year teachers: A teacher who does not have at least one year of teaching experience may serve as the teacher of record as long as the teacher holds one of the aforementioned qualifications and is assigned a mentor who meets the qualifications. A first-year teacher's Resident Educator mentor may serve in this role if the mentor meets the teacher qualifications above.

Assigned teacher (teacher of record): The teacher to whom a student is assigned is the "teacher of record." The classroom teacher is the primary teacher responsible for the student's reading instruction and spends the most time with that student. The assigned teacher must maintain the necessary qualifications outlined by law and is responsible for assigning the student a reading grade. The teacher of record is responsible for the

reading growth of the student. The student's progress will be reported on that teacher's student growth measure.

A teacher may provide any services required by the Third Grade Reading Guarantee in place of the student's assigned teacher but must:

- Meet the teacher qualification requirements;
- Have the service approved by the teacher of record and school principal; and
- Document the assignment in the student's RIMP.

Reporting Requirements

All assessment results and determinations shall be compiled and maintained by the School or its designee. The School, itself or through its designee, shall comply with all reporting requirements of Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

Appendix II: OCA Relearning Policy

Purpose and Guidelines for Grades K-12

Purpose

1. Provide consistency to families, students, and staff
2. Promote the mindset that academic growth is obtainable
3. Allow for students' grades to be positively affected because of their demonstrated academic growth
4. Allow for multiple avenues to showcase relearning, where appropriate (corrections and retesting)

Guidelines

Corrections:

- Allowed for portfolios and tests. Test corrections are implemented when retesting is not available in a course and/or for a particular test. Only one correction submission is allowable for each individual test and portfolio.
- Course, department, and/or grade band discretion if quizzes and/or multiple-choice questions on tests are allowable for correction purposes. Department and/or grade band will determine if half or full credit will be awarded.
- Correction submission timeline not to exceed two weeks after the original test or portfolio is graded. Corrections will not be possible after the last day of each semester.

Retesting:

- If retesting is available in the course, only one opportunity for retesting is permissible for each test.
- Timeline for completing the retest may not exceed two weeks after initial test is graded. Retesting will not be possible after the last day of each semester.
- Availability, additional guidelines (including criteria to be met prior to completing a retest), and format to be determined by department and/or grade band.

For additional details for each course, please refer to your section Message Boards and teacher communications. This policy only applies to work completed within the curriculum. The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce dictates retesting policies for any required state tests.

Appendix III: Attendance, Truancy, and Automatic Withdrawal Policy

(Including Excessive & Habitual Absences and Interventions)

Attendance/participation in school is key to achievement. Parents/guardians are encouraged to partner with the School to ensure student engagement.

I. Minimum Hours

Students are expected to participate in 920 hours of learning opportunities/instructional activities each school year.

II. Disenrollment for 30 or More Hours of Unexcused Absences in a Semester

Instructional Activities:

For purposes of this policy "instructional activities" means the following classroom-based or non-classroom-based activities that a student is expected to complete, participate in, or attend during any given school day:

- (1) Online logins to curriculum or programs;
- (2) Offline activities;
- (3) Completed assignments within a particular program, curriculum, or class;
- (4) Testing;
- (5) Face-to-face communications or meetings with school staff or service providers;
- (6) Telephone or video conferences with school staff or service providers;
- (7) Other documented communication with school staff or service providers related to school curriculum or programs.

In Attendance:

A student is considered in attendance when the student satisfies either of these conditions:

- (a) The student participates in at least ninety per cent (90%) of the hours of instructional activities offered by the School in that school year; or
- (b) The student is on pace for on-time completion of any course in which the student is enrolled. The determination of "on pace for on-time completion" for purposes of this policy will be determined by the Superintendent at the outset of the school year.

Absent:

If a student is not considered in attendance as defined by this policy, the student shall be considered absent for those hours of instructional activities offered by the School in that school year in which the student does not participate.

Reporting to Parent:

In the event that a student has thirty (30) or more hours of unexcused absences in any semester, the School shall submit a written report to the student's parent, guardian, or custodian. Such written report may be communicated solely electronically.

Disenrollment for Lack of Participation in Instructional Activities:

If after the student's parent, guardian, or custodian receives such written report of thirty or more hours of unexcused absences, the student continues to fail to comply with this policy's attendance requirements and any other absence interventions, the School may disenroll the student.

If the School disenrolls a student for thirty (30) or more hours of unexcused absences in any semester, the student is not eligible to re-enroll in the School for the remainder of the school year in which the student was disenrolled.

Upon such disenrollment the School will:

- (1) Provide the student's parent, guardian, or custodian with a list of alternative educational options available to the student;
- (2) Within forty-eight (48) hours of the student's disenrollment, notify the student's resident school district in writing of the disenrollment.

III. Absence Intervention

The School will follow the below absence intervention strategies pursuant to Ohio's attendance laws for any student not disenrolled for thirty (30) or more hours of unexcused absences in any semester.

Excessive Absences

A student shall be considered excessively absent when the student is absent (with a non-medical excuse or without legitimate excuse) 38 or more hours in one school month or 65 or more hours in one school year.

When a student is excessively absent the School within seven days of the triggering absence will notify the student's parents in writing of the student's absences. The School will develop a truancy intervention plan which may include any applicable appropriate interventions contained in this policy.

Habitually Truant

A student shall be considered habitually truant when the student is absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 hours or more in one school month, or 72 hours or more in a school year.

When a student is habitually truant:

1. Within seven days of the triggering absence:
 - a. The Superintendent, Principal, or Chief Administrator shall establish an absence intervention team. The team should be based on the needs of each individual student, but the team shall include at a minimum two representatives from the School, one of whom knows the student, and the student's parent/guardian/custodian/designee/guardian ad litem ("parent"). The team may also include a school psychologist, counselor, social worker, or representative of a public or nonprofit agency designed to assist students and their families in reducing absences.
 - b. The School shall make three meaningful good faith attempts to secure participation on the team by the student's parent/guardian/custodian/designee/guardian ad litem ("parent"). If the student's parent responds to any of those attempts, but is unable to participate for any reason, the School

shall inform the parent of the parent's right to participate through a designee. If 7 school days elapse and the student's parent, fails to respond to the attempts to secure participation, the School shall do both of the following:

- i. Investigate whether the failure to respond triggers mandatory reporting to the public children services agency for the county in which the child resides in the manner described in section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code; and
 - ii. Develop an intervention plan for the student notwithstanding the absence of the child's parent.
2. Within 10 days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to the selected absence intervention team.
3. Within 14 days after the assignment of the team, the School will develop an absence intervention plan for that student in an effort to reduce or eliminate further absences. Within 7 days after developing the plan, the School shall make reasonable efforts to provide written notice of the plan to the student's parent/guardian.
4. If the student does not make progress on the plan within 61 days or continues to be excessively absent, the School will file a complaint in the juvenile court.
5. In the event that a student becomes habitually truant within 21 school days prior to the last day of instruction of a school year, the School may, in its discretion, assign one School official to work with the student's parent/guardian/custodian/designee/guardian ad litem to develop an absence intervention plan during the summer. If the School selects this method, the plan shall be implemented not later than 7 days prior to the first day of instruction of the next school year. In the alternative, the School may toll the time periods to accommodate for the summer months and reconvene the absence intervention process upon the first day of instruction of the next school year.

Interventions

Each intervention plan shall be tailored to the individual needs of the student.

However, each plan for a habitually truant student **shall** include:

- A statement that the School will file a complaint not later than 61 days after the date the plan was implemented if the student has refused to participate in, or failed to make satisfactory progress on, the intervention plan or an alternative to adjudication under ORC 3321.191(C)(2)(b)

Intervention plans may include, but are not limited to, the following interventions as are applicable and best suited to individual student needs:

1. Counseling
2. Requesting or requiring a parent, guardian, or other person having care of the student to attend parental involvement programs, including programs adopted under section 3313.472 or 3313.663 of the Ohio Revised Code
3. Requesting or requiring a parent, guardian, or other person having care of the student to attend truancy prevention mediation programs

4. Taking legal action under section 2919.222, 3321.20, or 3321.38 of the Ohio Revised Code
5. Seeking juvenile court involvement to have a student informally enrolled in an alternative to adjudication. (If the School chooses to have students informally enrolled in an alternative to adjudication, the School shall develop a written policy regarding the use of and selection process for offering alternatives to adjudication to ensure fairness.)

Reporting

The School shall report as soon as practical to the Ohio Department of Education: when a notice of excessive absence is submitted to a parent; when a student meets the definition of habitually truant; when a student has been adjudicated an unruly child for being a habitual truant violates the court order regarding that adjudication; when an absence intervention plan has been implemented.

If the student is violating a court order regarding the student's adjudication as an unruly child for being habitually truant, the Board hereby authorizes the school's administrator or his/her designee to inform the student and parent/guardian of the violation and to notify the juvenile court.

The School may take legal action against the parent/guardian pursuant to ORC 3321.20 or ORC 3321.38 if a student is not attending school.

IV. Automatic Withdrawal by School

In accordance with Ohio Revised Code 3314.03, a student will be automatically withdrawn from the School if the student without a legitimate excuse fails to participate in seventy-two consecutive hours of the learning opportunities offered to the student.

V. Withdrawal by Student

When a student of compulsory school age withdraws from school, the School shall ascertain the reason for the withdrawal. If the reason for the withdrawal is for a reason other than a change in residence and is not enrolled in another program to obtain a diploma or its equivalent, the School shall so notify the registrar of motor vehicles and the juvenile judge of the county in which the School is located. Notification to the registrar shall be given in the manner the registrar by rule requires and a notification to the juvenile judge shall be given in writing. Each notification shall be given within two weeks after the withdrawal and failure to enroll in and attend a diploma program or its equivalent.

VI. No Disciplinary Suspension or Expulsion Solely for Absences

No student shall be suspended or expelled based solely on the number of absences; rather, the School will be proactive in engaging students.

Appendix IV: Title IX Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures

The School shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, disability or age in its programs and activities and will provide equal access to all individuals.

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendment Acts of 1972, no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program, activity, or employment on the basis of sex.

Complaints of sexual harassment will be addressed in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the U.S. Department of Education's regulations related thereto.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- IX. An employee of the School conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the School on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct. (quid pro quo)
- X. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, and pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the School's education program or activity.
- XI. Sexual assault as defined in the Clery Act 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), dating violence 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), domestic violence 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or stalking as defined in the Violence Against Women Act 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

Title IX Coordinator

The School's Title IX Coordinator shall coordinate the School's efforts to comply with Title IX responsibilities. For any reports or inquiries regarding Title IX concerns, contact the designated Title IX Coordinator as follows:

Tisha Rinker
130 E. Wilson Bridge Rd. Suite 25 Worthington, Ohio 43085
614-840-9401
Trinker@oca.connectionsacademy.org

Notification

The School shall provide notification of non-discrimination and the name and contact information of the Title IX Coordinator on the School website and in handbooks and shall make the same available to all applicants for admission and/or employment, students, parents/guardians of students, employees and any unions, if applicable.

Definitions:

"Complainant" is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. Any person, as well as the Complainant, may report sexual harassment. While parents and guardians do not become Complainants, parents and guardians do have the rights to act on behalf of minor children (including by filing Formal Complaints) in Title IX matters.

"Respondent" is an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

“Informal Complaint” is any notification, regardless of method, alleging sexual harassment that is not signed by either a Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator.

“Formal Complaint” is a complaint filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a Respondent and requesting that the School investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the School with which the Formal Complaint is filed. A Formal Complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a Complainant or a party during a grievance process, and must comply with requirements for Title IX personnel to be free from conflicts and bias.

“Supportive Measures” are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, or deter sexual harassment. The School shall provide non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, free of charge to the Complainant or the Respondent before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint, as well as, instances where no Formal Complaint has been filed (“Supportive Measures”). These Supportive Measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School’s education programs and sanctioned events and activities. Supportive Measures are designed to protect the safety of all parties, the education environment, and ultimately deter sexual harassment.

Supportive Measures may include:

- Counseling
- Deadline extensions or other course related adjustments
- Modification of class schedules
- Restricted contact between parties

Supportive measures provided to the Complainant and/or Respondent will remain confidential to the extent that confidentiality would not impair the ability of the School to provide such measures. Effective implementation of Supportive Measures is the responsibility of the Title IX Coordinator.

Grievance Reporting

At any time any student, parent/guardian, current or prospective employee, or other individual may report any incidences of sex discrimination or sexual harassment whether the individual has experienced, observed, and/or is aware of the incidence of sex discrimination or sexual harassment. Reports may also be anonymous. However, Formal Complaints can only be filed by the Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator.

Initial Response and Investigation

1. Promptly upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, Informal Complaint, or actual knowledge of an alleged incident, the Title IX Coordinator shall contact the Complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures and consider the Complainant’s wishes with respect to the use of such supportive measures, inform the Complainant of the availability of supportive measures regardless of filing a Formal Complaint, and explain the process for filing a complaint. If a Formal Complaint has not been filed, the Title IX Coordinator shall offer the opportunity to file a Formal Complaint.

Depending on circumstances and the age of the student, the parent/guardian or school personnel may be permitted to submit the Formal Complaint on the student's behalf. If the student is a minor, the Title IX Coordinator should consider whether a child abuse report should be completed in accordance with the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy.

2. Within seven days of the filing of a Formal Complaint, the School will initiate a formal investigation conducted by a designated investigator. All investigations will be conducted in a thorough, impartial and in a confidential manner as reasonably possible. The investigator shall complete the following:

Provide written notice of allegations and facts to all parties. This notice shall include: notification that the presumption is that the accused did not engage in any prohibited conduct, all parties are entitled to an advisor, all parties can request to inspect and review evidence, a copy of the code of conduct, the opportunity to engage in informal resolution, the range of remedies and disciplinary sanctions, the standard of evidence, and the right to appeal.

3. The burden of gathering evidence and the burden of proof is the School's, not the parties. The investigator shall communicate with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information, including but not limited to the Complainant and Respondent. The School will not use, rely on, or seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege. The investigator shall objectively evaluate all relevant evidence and make credibility determinations as necessary and not based on an individual's status as Complainant, Respondent, or witness. The investigator will provide all parties a copy of the evidence gathered and allow ten (10) days for all parties to review and provide comments. All parties shall be provided the opportunity to submit questions to any party or witness.

4. Within five days after the completion of the review of evidence, the investigator shall prepare a formal report summarizing relevant information and provide a copy of the report to all parties. All parties shall be provided ten (10) days to review and provide comments on the investigative report.

Resolution, Hearing, and Standard of Review

The School will designate a final decision-maker. The decision-maker cannot be the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator.

The School may decide to hold a hearing if the School determines a hearing to be appropriate, but a hearing is not required. With or without a hearing, after the School has sent the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party.

Questions and evidence relating to the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual history are not considered relevant to the final determination. The exceptions to this rule are if the pertinent information proves that someone other than the Respondent committed the alleged sexual harassment, or if the evidence offered relates to specific incidents and prove consent between the Complainant and Respondent.

The decision-maker shall use preponderance of the evidence as the standard of review when reviewing evidence. Under preponderance of evidence, the burden of proof is met when the fact finder finds that there is a greater than fifty percent chance the claim is true.

Dismissal

If the allegations in a Formal Complaint do not meet the definition of sexual harassment or did not occur in the School's education program or activity against a person in the United States, the School must dismiss such allegations. However, even if dismissed for purposes of Title IX, the School may still address the allegations in any manner the School deems appropriate under the School's Code of Conduct

The School may, in its discretion, dismiss a Formal Complaint or allegations therein if the Complainant informs the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant desires to withdraw the Formal Complaint or allegations therein, if the Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the School, or if specific circumstances prevent the School from gathering sufficient evidence to reach a determination. The School will give the parties written notice of a dismissal (mandatory or discretionary) and the reasons for the dismissal. The School may, in its discretion, consolidate formal complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts.

Final Determination

The decision-maker shall issue a written determination within five days from the completion of the questions and answers from all parties or after the hearing was held. The written determination shall be sent simultaneously to the parties and shall include the following:

1. Identification of the allegations
2. A description of all procedural steps
3. A listing of findings of facts that support the determination
4. Determination of the responsibility, including rationale, any disciplinary sanctions, and remedies
5. A listing of all appeal procedures

Disciplinary Sanctions

The potential sanctions and remedies may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Support services that may include no contact orders, academic accommodations, health and mental health services, disability services, confidential counseling, or training.
2. Verbal or written warnings
3. Altered schedules to eliminate interaction opportunities
4. Exclusions from certain school activities
5. Access to recorded class sessions in lieu of live participation
6. Suspension or expulsion

Appeal Procedures

Within thirty days of receiving the final determination, any party may appeal the final determination regarding responsibility based on the following:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome,
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination of responsibility was made and the new evidence could affect the outcome, or
3. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome.

Upon receipt of a written appeal request, the Title IX Coordinator shall:

1. Notify all parties in writing;
2. Provide all parties the opportunity to submit a written statement in support of opposition of the appeal;
3. Identify a new, impartial decision-maker to review the original and any newly submitted evidence; and
4. Issue a written decision to all parties within twenty school days.

Informal Resolution

Once a Formal Complaint is filed the School may choose to offer and facilitate information resolution options. These may include mediation or restorative justice. Both parties must provide voluntary, informed written consent to proceed with informal resolution. At any time during the informal resolution, either party may choose to withdraw from informal resolution.

The School will not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to a formal investigation and adjudication of Formal Complaints of sexual harassment. At any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the Formal Complaint.

Informal resolution cannot be used if the Complainant is a student and the Respondent is an employee.

Retaliation

Retaliation (intimidating, threatening, coercing, or discriminating) against an individual for filing a complaint or cooperating or refusing to cooperate in an investigation or hearing is prohibited.

Charging an individual with code of conduct violations that do not involve sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or Formal Complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX constitutes retaliation.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the School's grievance procedures.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation.

Charging an individual with a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a Title IX grievance proceeding does not constitute retaliation; however, a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a bad faith materially false statement.

Time Frames

The time frames in these procedures are included to provide reasonable promptness. Unless otherwise prohibited by law or regulations, the School will make allowance for short-term, good cause delays or extensions of the time frames.

Confidentiality

The School will keep confidential the identity of Complainants, Respondents, and witnesses, except as may be permitted by FERPA, as required by law, or as necessary to carry out a Title IX proceeding.

Training

The School will ensure that the applicable Title IX personnel will be trained on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of the School's education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.