



Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy

Purpose

South Carolina Bridge Connections Academy ("SCBCA") is committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, and effective educational environment that supports student achievement while protecting the rights of students. This policy is adopted pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(B)(19)(2026) and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-60(F)(14), which requires charter schools to establish student rights and responsibilities, attendance procedures, behavior and discipline standards, and a reasonable hearing procedure, including notice and a hearing before the Board of Directors prior to the expulsion of a student.

The SCBCA Supplemental Handbook contains additional information regarding student rights and responsibilities, attendance expectations, standards of conduct, disciplinary procedures, due process rights, and other requirements applicable to students and families. This policy is intended to establish the overarching framework governing these matters. More specific procedures, expectations, and operational requirements are set forth in the SCBCA Supplemental Handbook. To the extent consistent with applicable law and this policy, such provisions are incorporated herein by reference.

I. Student Rights

1. **The right to a quality public education**, including access to instruction, curricular materials, and educational programming without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or other protected characteristic.
2. **The right to attend the school without discrimination**, consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the South Carolina Constitution.
3. **The right to due process of law** with respect to suspension, expulsion, unreasonable searches and seizures, and administrative decisions that a student believes injure the student's rights.
4. **The right to freedom of inquiry and expression**, subject to reasonable time, place, and manner limitations necessary to maintain an orderly educational environment.

5. **The right to reasonable privacy**, including in the student's person, records, and personal effects, subject to lawful search and seizure standards applicable to public schools.
6. **The right to present grievances** through the school's established grievance procedures without fear of reprisal.
7. **The right to be informed of school rules**, including behavior expectations, discipline standards, and consequences of misconduct.
8. **The right to protection from bullying, harassment, and discrimination**, including sexual harassment, in accordance with the South Carolina Safe School Climate Act and applicable federal law.
9. **The right to accommodations** consistent with any Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan, or applicable disability law.

II. Student Responsibilities

1. **Attend school** as required by state law.
2. **Devote their best efforts** to academic work and school activities.
3. **Respect the rights, safety, and dignity of others**, including other students, teachers, staff, administrators, contractors, volunteers, and visitors.
4. **Refrain from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and retaliation** against others.
5. **Observe reasonable rules** established by the Board, the Head of School, teachers, and administrators governing conduct, dress, attendance, and academic integrity.
6. **Respect the property** of the school, other students, employees, and visitors.
7. **Exercise expression responsibly**, without materially or substantially disrupting the educational environment or infringing on others' rights.
8. **Attend classes prepared** to participate and learn.
9. **Comply with directives** issued by the school's authorized staff.
10. **Follow the procedures** in this policy and the Student Handbook when raising concerns or complaints.

III. Attendance

Regular attendance and active participation are essential to student success. Students are expected to attend and participate in all instructional activities in accordance with applicable law, School requirements, and program expectations. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their students regularly engage in instruction, complete assigned coursework, participate in required educational activities, communicate with School staff as needed, and comply with all attendance requirements.

The School monitors student attendance and participation and may identify absences as excused or unexcused in accordance with applicable law and School procedures. Students who fail to meet attendance requirements will be subject to interventions, attendance improvement measures, truancy prevention efforts, and other actions authorized by law.

When a student demonstrates a pattern of unlawful absences or is identified as at risk for truancy, the School will implement appropriate interventions designed to support improved attendance, identify barriers to participation, and promote compliance with compulsory attendance requirements. The School will comply with all applicable legal requirements regarding attendance monitoring, truancy intervention, documentation, referrals, and related proceedings.

Additional attendance requirements, instructional hour expectations, excused and unexcused absence criteria, truancy procedures, and attendance-related responsibilities are set forth in the SCBCA Supplemental Handbook and other applicable School policies and procedures.

IV. Behavior, Discipline, and Due Process

Students are expected to comply with all School rules, policies, and behavioral expectations. The School utilizes a progressive system of discipline designed to promote a safe, orderly, and effective learning environment. Disciplinary measures may include warnings, suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate corrective actions based on the nature and severity of the misconduct.

Student misconduct may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to academic dishonesty, bullying, harassment, abusive or disruptive conduct, violations of technology or acceptable use requirements, attendance-related violations, threats to the safety of students or staff, or other violations of School policies.

Students are entitled to due process in connection with disciplinary actions. Prior to a short-term suspension, the student will be informed of the alleged misconduct and provided an opportunity to respond. Prior to expulsion, the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be provided written notice and an opportunity for a hearing before the Board of Directors as described in this policy.

Students with disabilities shall be afforded all disciplinary protections and procedural safeguards required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other applicable laws.

Additional student conduct expectations, prohibited behaviors, disciplinary offenses, disciplinary consequences, suspension and expulsion procedures, due process rights, and procedures applicable to students with disabilities are set forth in SCBCA's Supplemental Handbook and other applicable School policies and procedures.

V. Formal Expulsion Hearing

If the School Leader determines that a student's conduct may warrant expulsion, the School Leader will provide written notice to the Caretaker of the student of their determination and the student's right to a hearing. Such notice shall include (1) date, time and location of hearing; (2) 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; (4) 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. The School Leader will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors regarding long-term suspension, expulsion or an alternative, and the Board, through the School Leader, will provide notification to the student and Caretaker of the Board's decision and discipline determination. The decision of the Board is final.

Prior to imposing a disciplinary removal, suspension, expulsion, or other change in placement that triggers additional procedural protections, the School will follow all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and their implementing regulations, including any required manifestation determination review or other due process procedures.