

# Parent Handbook

## ***Mission Statement***

***Our Mission** is to provide our students an academically rigorous and well-rounded education, along with strong character development, that will enable them to prosper in future endeavors.*

<b>East Harlem</b> Amber Charter School 220 East 106 <sup>th</sup> Street New York, NY 10029	<b>Kingsbridge</b> Amber Charter School 3120 Corlear Avenue Bronx, NY 10463
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## **Letter from the Executive Director**

Welcome to the Amber community!

We are so excited to have your child and family join us in the adventure of building lifelong learners. As you get to know the staff and faculty members of Amber Charter School you will learn that they are committed to the mission and passionate about their work.

You have chosen Amber Charter School as the place where your most treasured possession, your child, will grow and learn. We hold your choice as a sacred trust. That trust is critical to the work we will do together in the coming years. As partners in the education of your child, we will work tirelessly to ensure that your child is academically prepared to excel and become a well-rounded individual with strong positive values as reflected in the Amber Way.

This is a fun, exciting, and important adventure we are on together. Thank you for choosing Amber to partner with on this adventure. This handbook will provide critical information regarding the Amber community and help you get to know us better. As always, if we can be of service, please don't hesitate to reach out to anyone in the Amber community. We are here to serve you and your child.

Let's start the adventure!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vasthi R. Acosta". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Dr. Vasthi R. Acosta

Executive Director

Amber Charter School

## Who we are

### Key Design Elements

Amber Charter School primarily serves students in kindergarten to fifth grade. As set forth in our mission statement; *the school aims to provide an academically rigorous and well-rounded education, along with strong character development, for our students by incorporating the following elements:*

Key design elements for the Lower School	Key design elements for the Middle School
Spanish as a Foreign Language	Offer a curriculum in the core subjects that is challenging, exploratory, integrative and relevant.
90 minutes of Literacy instruction a day	Offer enrichment in the arts, music, technology, and physical education
90 minutes of math instruction a day	Maintain a low student to teacher ratio
90 minutes of science instruction a week	Provide Advisory periods throughout 6-8 grades.
90 minutes of social studies instruction a week	Offer Spanish as a foreign language.
Enrichment instruction in any/all of the following: art, music, physical education, and technology	Offer the opportunity to graduate with two Regents exam completed. [Spanish; Algebra; Earth Science]
	Offer intramural sports [e.g. track; volleyball; softball; baseball; basketball; soccer]

### **Our Central Values**

- Amber values that we are human beings, acknowledging our strengths, and empowering each of us to build strong alliances among children, families, staff and the larger community.
- Amber respects the languages and cultures of our school's community and of all communities locally and globally.
- Amber is a safe place to engage in varied dialogue about our differences and similarities.
- Amber meets the needs of our student/family population through a curriculum that teaches from a pan-cultural perspective.
- Amber provides our children the opportunity to be more apt to learn through a creative learning environment using the arts as a means to integrate our children's culture in the school's curriculum.
- Amber's families, students and staff are committed to academic achievement, and the continuous re-assessment of the quality of our program.
- Amber is committed to creating an inclusive community in which members respect each other and support one another's effective participation in the school.

## **The Amber Way**

### **The Amber Way embraces:**

- o Achievement – Striving towards excellence in all we do.
- o Community – Serving the community who supports us.
- o Responsibility – Being accountable for our actions and thoughts.
- o Honesty – Making truth an important part of our lives.
- o Respect- Demonstrating respect for others and ourselves.

## **History**

Amber Charter School was founded in 2000 as the first Latino-led charter school in New York State by the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP), a community based organization. Our school is located in two neighborhoods, East Harlem which serves close to 500 students in grades K to 5, and Kingsbridge which opened in Fall 2016 in Washington Heights then moved to Kingsbridge in 2017 with plans to serve children for grades K-4.

Our classes average 23 students per class. In grades K-2 there is a teacher assistant with the lead teacher. In grades 3-5, there is a part-time academic tutor in the classroom with the lead teacher. Students participate in a core curriculum in literacy, mathematics, science and social studies. In addition, enrichment is offered in the visual arts, music, physical education and technology.

All students receive instruction in Spanish as a second language from kindergarten until they graduate in fifth grade. Special education services include counseling, speech, a special education teacher, and access to occupational and physical therapy off campus. An after school program is offered, as well as an afterschool tutoring program that helps struggling students reach grade level.

Amber has partnerships with El Museo del Barrio, Harlem Hospital, Legal Aid, Academy of Medicine, Fordham University, Lehman College, Teachers College, Bubble Eats, Columbia University, Settlement Health, GenerationOn, Hispanic Federation, Manhattan College, College of Mount St. Vincent, and many others. Amber is always looking to form partnerships to enhance the services provided to our families and students.

## **School Information**

### **Preparation for School**

Education is a partnership between the school and home. It is expected that each child come to school:

- ✓ Well rested
- ✓ On time
- ✓ Properly nourished
- ✓ Dressed in the required uniform
- ✓ With proper school supplies

An important part of preparing students for school is reading to them at home. Research shows that children who are read to at home become avid readers. We urge you to read or tell stories to your child for at least 15 minutes every day.

Please be sure your child's school materials are kept in good condition throughout the school year. Each child is expected to have a book bag large enough to protect and carry his/her books. **Backpacks with wheels are banned for safety.**

### **School Schedule**

The school day is from 8:10 am to 3:10 pm every day for all kindergarteners. For first through fifth grade students the school day is from 8:10 am to 3:10 pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, and on Tuesday the school day ends at 3:45 pm. Breakfast is served from 8:00 am to 8:10 am. All students not attending the after-school program must be picked up by 3:10 pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and 3:45 pm on Tuesday. For Kindergarten, students must be picked by 3:10 Monday through Friday. The school reserves the right to take children who are not picked up on time to the local police precinct.

### **Arrival & Dismissal Procedures**

#### **East Harlem**

#### **Arrival**

Amber Charter School opens at 7:30 am for all students. Students arriving between 7:30 am and 8:00 am are held in the library and supervised by a staff member.

At 8:00 am, the Kindergarten & First Grade Teaching Assistants come down to the library and escort students to their classroom for breakfast. At the same time, Second through Fifth Grade students are escorted downstairs to the multipurpose room for breakfast. Students who travel by DOE school buses arrive at 8:00 am and join the line of the grade they belong in. At 8:10 am teachers go to the multipurpose room to meet their class and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Dismissal

First through Fifth grade students are dismissed at 3:10 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursday, and Fridays and at 3:45 pm on Tuesdays. Kindergarten is dismissed at 3:10 pm every day. There are 5 groups of students during the dismissal process. They include:

- Students picked up by a family member
- Students who walk home alone
- Students who take the bus
- Students who attend the Amber Afterschool Program
- Students who attend an outside Afterschool Program

Each of these groups are dismissed differently depending on their destination and their grade. The chart below outlines how dismissal happens for each of the groups.

	K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Picked Up	Parent pick up in classroom	Parent pick up in Multipurpose Room				
Walk Alone	N/A			Picked up by staff member & escorted outside		
Bus Student	Picked up by staff member & escorted outside					
Amber Afterschool	Picked up by staff member & taken to proper afterschool room					
Outside Afterschool	Picked up by staff member & taken to Library					

Afterschool ends at 5:30 pm. At 5:25 pm, students are escorted to the multipurpose room where parents can pick them up.

## **Kingsbridge**

### Arrival

7:30 – 8:00 AM

- Doors open for students at 7:30 am. Students will be greeted by the security guard & the supervising adult. The Supervising Adult will escort students to the Star Room.
- Students will be seated at their assigned early arrival grade tables.
- The Supervising Adult will be stationed by the door to supervise incoming and seated students.

- Students are lined up by grade for breakfast at 7:50am.
- Students are escorted to their assigned breakfast tables (by class).
- Students will line up for breakfast and sit at their designated class table.

8:00 – 8:10 AM

- Drop off and students who take the bus arrive at 8:00 am to the Starroom.
- The bus matron will escort the bus students from the bus to the Star Room
- The security guard will direct students to the Star Room.
- Custodian is posted to support with this transition.
- Teaching Assistants arrive and supervise their assigned class tables.
- Breakfast Begins

8:10 – 8:15 AM

- Breakfast Ends at 8:10 am & Teachers Arrive
- Two to Three students who are in full uniform will be chosen to recite the Pledge of Allegiance  
At the conclusion of the pledge classes line-up to exit

**Dismissal**

First through Second grade students are dismissed at 3:10 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and at 3:45 pm on Tuesdays. Kindergarten is dismissed at 3:10 pm every day. There are 3 groups of students during the dismissal process. They include:

- Students picked up by a family member
- Students who take the bus [Busing will not be offered after 2017]
- Students who attend the Afterschool Program

Kindergarten to 4th Grade	
Picked Up	Parent pick up in classroom
Bus Student	Picked up by staff member & escorted outside
Afterschool	Picked up by staff member & taken to assigned afterschool room

## School Emergency Closings

In case of bad weather or possible school closings, please tune into WCBS 880 AM radio. Amber will follow NYC Board of Education closings. Amber Charter School's website will provide information when the school is closed. School Messenger will send a voicemail and email notice to parents/guardians in the event of a school closing.

## Attendance

Attendance is essential to your child's academic success. If your child is absent, a note signed by the parent/guardian stating the reason is required when they return to school. For medical absences, a doctor's note is required and will be filed in the student's record.

Students are responsible for any school work they have missed. Parents/guardians will contact the school to make arrangements to obtain missed assignments. Excessive absences may result in a child repeating a grade. A student's promotion may be considered in doubt if he/she has been absent 10 or more unexcused days during the school year. Extenuating circumstances will be considered. **Research has shown a direct relationship between the number of days absent and a student's academic success or failure.**

## Chronic Tardiness

Though school starts at 8:10 am, students can arrive to the school as early as 7:30 am. Students who arrive after 8:20 am are considered to be late. The school will keep track of instructional time lost. Students are considered chronically late when he/she approaches thirty instances of tardiness in one school year. See promotion policy for more details.

## Student Sign Out Procedure

We understand that emergencies may arise where it would require students to be picked up before the dismissal time. In this case, we ask parents to submit in writing a note or e-mail indicating the time of pick-up. This notification should be sent to the classroom teacher and the Dean of Students. Parents will be required to sign out their child at the front desk before the child is dismissed.

### **Student Sign In procedure**

All students who arrive late to school must sign in at the front desk in order for their attendance to be documented. Kindergarten families must walk their child to the front desk and sign them in. The parent is also responsible for checking in with the main office to submit any doctor's notes and ensure attendance has been recorded for the day.

### **Extended Illness**

Students who will be absent for an extended time are required to get missing classwork and homework from their teacher and are required to bring it back to school completed. A note from the doctor or hospital is required to be submitted to the main office on the first day the student returns to school.

### **Vacations/ Religious Holidays**

Amber Charter School follows the DOE calendar for Winter Break, Mid-Winter Break and Spring Break. In addition to the breaks, the following holidays are usually observed by Amber Charter School:

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur
- ColumbusDay
- Veteran'sDay
- Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial day

## Protocol for 911 calls

### Calls are made to 911 when:

Circumstance	Time frame
Physical injury/sickness requiring medical attention	As soon as identified
Violent outburst with potential of physical harm toward self or others	15 minutes and outburst has not abated
Missing child	15 minutes and child has not been found
Suicide ideation with plausible plan	After parent has been notified, and parent is uncooperative.

First administrator on scene makes the decision for call to be made and identifies person to make the call.

Parents will always be notified. Incident reports must be filed.

### Child Abuse & Neglect

All staff are considered Mandated Reporters, who are required by law to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the New York State Central Register (SCR) of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, also known as the Child Abuse Hotline. The law also assigns civil and criminal liability to those professionals who do not comply with their mandated reporter abilities.

Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment – or cause a report to be made – when, in their professional roles, they are presented with reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment. Please call 1-800- 342-3720.

### Anti-bullying Rules

All students are expected to follow the following:

1. We will not bully others and always treat each other with respect.
2. We will help students who are bullied.
3. We will include students who are left out.
4. If I or somebody else is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

## Uniforms

**UNIFORMS ARE MANDATORY.** Your child is expected to adhere to the following attire: Navy bottoms; light blue buttoned down shirt/blouse; navy sweater, a tie, navy or black socks and navy blue or black shoes. **Students who are not in school uniform pose a security threat to themselves.**

### Amber Uniform Requirements

WINTER: November to March	SPRING: September to October & April to June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Navy blue long pants</li> <li>● Navy blue skirt</li> <li>● Long sleeved light blue oxford buttoned down shirt/blouse with Amber logo embroidered on left hand side</li> <li>● Navy blue sweater with Amber logo embroidered on the left hand side</li> <li>● Navy blue or black socks</li> <li>● Navy blue or black shoes; sneakers</li> <li>● Navy blue tie</li> </ul> <p>Gym Uniform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Short sleeve light blue t-shirt with Amber logo silk screened on the left hand side</li> <li>● Navy sweatpants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Navy blue shorts/skirt/skort</li> <li>● Navy blue long pants</li> <li>● Short sleeved light blue oxford buttoned down shirt/blouse with Amber logo embroidered on left hand side</li> <li>● Navy blue or black socks</li> <li>● Navy blue or black shoes/sneakers</li> <li>● Navy blue tie</li> </ul> <p>Gym Uniform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Short sleeve light blue t-shirt with Amber logo silk screened on left hand side</li> <li>● Navy shorts or sweatpants.</li> </ul>

Not Uniform: \*Cargo pants, leggings, thermal shirts that can be seen under uniform, any shoe that **IS NOT** navy blue or black, hoodie jackets, any clothing item that conceals the Amber logo, any clothing item that is not the appropriate color, Navy blue jumpers.

## Jewelry

Students should not wear ornate or expensive jewelry to school. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen jewelry.

## Homework Policies

At Amber Charter School, homework is given to review and reinforce skills and lessons that were taught during the day or week. Particular assignments may remediate or extend learning based on students' needs. Homework helps the teachers and parents monitor students' progress and understanding of the subject matter. It also provides a sense of accomplishment for the student. **Parents support their child's learning when they ensure their child completes their homework daily.**

## Electronic Devices

Toys and electronic devices are not permitted in school at any time. All said items will be confiscated immediately. **The school is not responsible for electronic devices that are lost, stolen or broken.**

## Student Health

New York State law requires that each student entering kindergarten or a new school district in grades 1 – 12 have a certificate of immunization at the time of registration or not later than the first day of school. A review of student immunizations requirements and the proper supporting documents shall be completed for all new students.

Before a child can be permitted to enter and attend school, parents or guardians must present documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or that their child has received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Parents may waive immunization in accordance with Public Health Law and exemptions to immunizations shall be granted if a licensed physician or nurse practitioner certifies such immunization may be detrimental to the student's health, or if the student's parent or guardian holds genuine and sincere beliefs, which may include religious beliefs, contrary to such immunization [see § 2164 (8) and (9) of the Public Health Law].

## School Illness

The health of our students is very important to us. Amber Charter School has a nurse provided by the Department of Health to be on site to assist with illnesses, injuries, and emergencies. When a student notifies a teacher that they are not feeling well, students are escorted to the nurse's office. The nurse will examine the child and notify parents of any findings. In the case of an injury that doesn't permit the student to walk to the nurse, the nurse will go to the student. Emergency services will be called for major illnesses or injuries. Below please find examples of minor and major emergencies.

Minor	Major
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cut/Scrape</li><li>- Stomach Ache</li><li>- Headache</li><li>- Dizzy spell</li><li>- Lice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Asthma attack</li><li>- Allergic Reactions</li><li>- Student Faints</li><li>- Student Falls</li><li>- Bleeding</li><li>- Broken bones</li></ul>

## **Medication**

Students who require medication during the school day must have a [504 Medical Form](#) completed and filed with the school nurse. Students must never be given medication to be self-administered in school. **Teachers will not administer and/or secure any medication.**

## **Emergency Form**

Your child's safety is our highest priority. It is crucial that the emergency information kept at the school is accurate. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to update the school anytime there is an address change or phone number change. In an emergency we need to be able to reach you or the persons you have identified to be contacted. Please make sure to notify us if any of your contact information changes.

## **Building Safety School Visitation**

Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit the school. To visit during the school day, arrangements should be made with your child's teacher and approved by an administrator. All visitors must sign in at the front desk and obtain a pass from the office so that maximum security is maintained for the students and the school community. Visitors will not be admitted to a classroom without a pass from the office.

For children's security, Amber enforces a strict no-visitation policy during outdoor recess. No adults are allowed to pick up children during recess.

## **Drills Conducted**

In order to ensure students know what to do in an emergency, Amber Charter School holds monthly drills to practice emergency skills and train students to stay safe should an emergency arise. The following drills are held throughout the year:

- Fire Drills
- Bus Safety Drills
- Lockdown Drills
- Evacuation Drills

## **School Offerings**

### **After School Program**

#### **East Harlem Afterschool Program**

Amber Charter School's Afterschool program is an in-house program which runs during the school year (September – June). There is a monthly fee of \$160 which is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month school is in session. Afterschool begins directly after dismissal and concludes at 5:30 pm with student pick-up until 6:00 pm. The afterschool program provides snack, homework help, project based learning, and enrichment sessions such as dance, cooking, and arts and crafts. Parents must attend an annual orientation in order to register their child. Students are accepted into the after-school program depending upon available space as on a first come first served basis. Space is limited.

#### **Kingsbridge Afterschool Program**

The Afterschool program for the Kingsbridge location is run by Manhattan College. An orientation meeting is held for interested families and announced via email and flyer.

### **Tutoring**

Amber Charter School offers qualified academic tutors for grades 3-5. The academic tutors work in partnership with the teachers to establish goals for each student and assist with small group instruction. Academic tutors lead small group activities for each tutoring session based on student's needs.

Academic tutors also supervise children during lunch and recess. The academic tutors at Amber Charter School are a part of the classroom community and serve as a necessary resource for the students and their academic needs.

### **Services for Special Education**

Amber Charter School offers Special Education Services to students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEP's). Amber offers counseling services, speech and language services, Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) and Occupational Therapy and Physical therapy.

### **Services for English Language Learners**

Amber Charter School follows the NYSED guidelines to identify English Language Learners [ELLs] and to identify the in-house services they are entitled. The program we offer for English language learners (ELL) is the Freestanding Standing English as a Second Language. The English as a Second Language (ESL) program at Amber Charter School delivers comprehensive instruction so that the identified students can attain the goals and outcomes as set forth in our Instructional Plan. At Amber our ESL program aims to increase English language skill (Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading) in order for our students to perform the equivalent to Native English speakers. We encourage taking risks and embracing challenges to inspire excellence and accountability.

Each Instructional member of our school plays an important role to promote language acquisition and achievement.

### **Summer Academic Enrichment Program**

The Summer Program is offered to all rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. The program's goal is to provide academic support and enrichment to students in preparation for the upcoming school year. The summer program runs for four weeks during the month of July.

### **Enrichment Activities**

Amber faculty and staff is so committed to the students' that many volunteer after work hours to run special enrichment programs. We are proud of their contributions and commitment to enriching the lives of Amber students. Some of the offerings they lead are:

- Pep Squad
- Amber Knights Basketball Team
- Honor Choir
- National Elementary Honor Society
- Student Council

### **Swimming**

Studies show that children who do not learn to swim before 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are more likely to be afraid of the water. We want our students to thrive in all areas of their life. Amber offers swimming lessons in the spring to all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Students must bring their swimsuits worn under their uniforms. Our staff accompanies them to the swimming pool and supervises the lessons. Licensed swim instructors, lifeguards, and their teachers monitor students and ensure safety in the pool.

## Field Trips

Educational and cultural field trips are an integral part of the curriculum. All students are expected to attend school trips unless your child's safety cannot be assured in which case parents/guardians will be asked to escort the child on the trip.

Parents are always invited to attend trips hosted by Amber. We encourage all students to attend so that they can experience different types of activities. Some trips require a monetary contribution while most are free of charge. All students must have permission slips signed in order to attend trips.

For trips in the neighborhood (park, library, etc.) a permission slip isn't needed as parents complete a neighborhood trip permission slip when they enroll in Amber Charter School.

## Physical Education

All children must participate in physical activities (indoor/outdoor) unless they are excused for medical reasons. Parents will be responsible for notifying the school in advance if any special arrangements are needed. **A doctor's note must be provided if a child is not allowed to exercise or go outside.** Students must wear the designated uniform for physical education classes which is navy blue sweatpants and a light blue t-shirt with Amber logo.

## Music –Carnegie Hall –Link Up

Music education is an integral part of the Amber experience. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students participate in the Carnegie Hall – Link up recorder program. This program gives students an opportunity to showcase playing the recorder at Carnegie Hall. The third graders learn to play the recorder during their weekly music class.

## Meals

Proper nutrition is a crucial element in the learning of a child. Studies show that students who eat breakfast are more engaged in school. We provide breakfast and lunch every day. In the beginning of the year, parents are asked to fill out a lunch form which determines the meal category for students. This is a critical form that allows Amber to provide school meals.

Breakfast is served daily for all students who wish to eat from 8:00 AM – 8:10 AM. Lunch is served between 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM on a scheduled time frame.

## Transportation

The Department of Transportation provides students of Amber Charter School with free transportation services. There are two different modes of transportation services. Below please find how the Department of Education determines eligibility for each mode of transportation:

	Distance Code A	Distance Code B	Distance Code C	Distance Code D
	<b>Less than 0.5 Mile</b>	0.5 mile or more, but less than 1 mile	1 mile or more, but less than 1.5 miles	1.5 miles or more
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Half Fare	School Bus or Full Fare		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>	Half Fare			
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:</b>	Half Fare			
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:</b>	Not Eligible	Half Fare	School Bus or Full Fare	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b>	Not Eligible	Half Fare		
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	Not Eligible	Half Fare		

### Yellow School Bus

Yellow school busing is provided through the Department of Education. Students who live between ½ mile and 5 miles from the school usually receive yellow busing. Amber Charter School employs bus matrons to ride all school buses assigned to Amber Students to ensure the safety of our students to and from school. Busing is **only** offered at Amber East Harlem.

### Student MetroCards

Amber Charter School distributes student MetroCards to eligible students twice during the year. Student MetroCards are only to be used by the student to whom it was issued. MetroCards are good for travel to and from school between 5:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. only on days the school is in session. Student MetroCards are valid for three trips each school day.

If a MetroCard is lost, stolen or damaged, it should be reported to the main office immediately. The main office will report the missing or damaged card and help the student get a replacement.

## School Communication

### Modes of communication:

- ✓ Web: [www.ambercharter.org](http://www.ambercharter.org)
- ✓ Email address: teacher's first initial, last name followed by@ambercharter.org
- ✓ Telephone East Harlem: (212) 534-9667 Fax: (212) 534-6225
- ✓ Telephone Kingsbridge: (646) 802-1140 Fax: (212) 2988360
- ✓ Letter: All written notes should be addressed to the proper personnel. Verbal messages relayed by children will not be accepted.

## Monthly Newsletter

Parent's monthly newsletter is sent home the first week of each month. The packet includes the following:

- A letter from the Principal
- Meals calendar (breakfast & lunch)
- Monthly School Activities
- Super readers calendar
- Home & School Connection article

## School Messenger

The School will also send out robo calls, emails, and text messages to families to provide pertinent information.

## School Policies

### Admission Policy

Admission is by a lottery. The lottery will be held during the first week of April every year. Students will be placed on a waiting list if there are no slots available at the time of the lottery. The waiting list is valid for the academic school year. Priority is given to siblings of accepted students in the school and students living in community school district #4 and #10. **A child entering kindergarten must be five years of age by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the same year.**

### Sibling Preference Policy

In the admission of an incoming kindergartener, first or second grade student preference in acceptance to the school will be considered if:

- student is a sibling of an already attending Amber student; or
- student is a sibling of a student about to graduate from Amber [application received while sibling is still enrolled at Amber]; and
- has submitted a complete application; and
- birth date is before December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Final determination for preference will be made by the Executive Director.

Once a student has been selected, parents must attend an orientation and pre-registration in order to complete the admission process.

Amber provides the following Special Education services to students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP): speech therapy; counseling, Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), and Occupational Therapy (OT)/ Physical Therapy (PT) off-site.

The following documentation is required:

- ✓ Birth certificate
- ✓ Proof of address
- ✓ Up-to-date immunization booklet.
- ✓ Physical examination record which must be completed and returned.

**No child will be permitted to attend school without complete documentation.**

## **Promotion Policy Guidelines**

*The following criteria will be taken into consideration regarding promotional decisions.*

### **Report Card**

A student must score an average of a level 3 or higher in all of the core subjects combined, namely, Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies, by the third trimester to be promoted.

If this criterion is not met, the following criteria will be taken into consideration regarding promotional decisions.

### **Terra Nova Assessment**

A student must score on the Reading or Math Terra Nova Assessment at .8 of their present grade in the Grade Equivalent Score to be promoted.

### **Students with an IEP**

Student must meet the promotional criteria as outlined in their IEP. Absent such criteria, school administration will take into consideration other academic and social/emotional factors to determine whether to promote a student.

### **English Language Learners**

The student is deemed ready to succeed in the next grade with ESL support services.

AND

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

Having more than **TEN** unexcused absences negatively contributes to a decision to promote a child. Note, three unexcused tardies equal one absence.

***All final decisions regarding promotion will be determined by the Principal.***

**Revised June 10, 2015.**

## **School Volunteers**

School volunteers are an important aspect of Amber community life. We recommend that parents volunteer at least 2 hours in the school year to Amber. Parent volunteers in the classrooms must attend a training session and be fingerprinted.

### **Parent Involvement Policy Required Parent Participation**

- An orientation and pre-registration
- Primary Language Interview (entering kindergarten students)
- Back to School Night
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Child Study Conferences
- Suspension Conferences
- Other meetings as needed

Amber staff is always willing to meet with parents when meetings are scheduled in advance.

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHT TO PRIVACY ACT (FERPA— BUCKLEY AMENDMENT)**

Federal law guarantees you the right to access to your child's records, to correct and/or comment on the contents of the records, and to be assured that records are only viewed by those who have a legitimate need. For the details of the law's provisions, you may ask for a copy of the FERPA Buckley Amendment at the school. You may also access it through an internet search for "Buckley Amendment."

### **Parent Involvement Policy / Title I**

Amber Charter School's Local Education Agency (LEA) and Title I School Parent Involvement Policy, and Amber's Parent Compact, have been developed in response to No Child Left Behind requirements. Title I is a federal program which makes additional resources available to help assure that all children succeed academically.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and facilitate involvement by parents of students participating in Title I programs. The policy shall provide the framework for organized, systematic, ongoing, informed and timely parental involvement in relation to decisions about the Title I services within Amber. Below is the policy of Amber acting as both, Local Education Agency and Title I school.

### **Parental Policy Involvement**

LEA-level Parent Involvement Policy Component:

The partnership between home and school will be supported by:

1. Amber's development of an infrastructure to continually assess, plan and implement strategies that build the partnership.
  - 1.1 A school-wide committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to guide overall program efforts and serve as a home-school partnership network.
  - 1.2 Coordination of activities through the staff development system in areas of teacher in-service, assessment of teaching strengths, and communication with parents toward the creation of the best possible learning experience of each child.
2. Self-study of parental involvement practices by teams of parents, teachers and director using the following seven basic principles considered essential to home-school partnerships.
  - 2.1 Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful and friendly.
  - 2.2 Communications with parents are frequent, clear and two-way.
  - 2.3 Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children's school learning and behavior.
  - 2.4 Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and to share the decision making.
  - 2.5 The school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families.
  - 2.6 The school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community.
  - 2.7 The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available.

**School-Level Involvement Policy Component:**

Amber Charter School invites parental participation in the following ways:

- Title I in conjunction with the Parents Association, will schedule an annual meeting to inform parents of their school's participation in the program. It will be scheduled at the beginning of each school year. The administration will also send out letters to parents informing them of the date and location of the meeting, and will post this information on the school website. This meeting usually held during Back to School Night
- If deemed necessary by the Family Council, Amber will offer multiple meetings such as morning and evening so as to include as many parents as possible.
- The Parents Association will hold regular meetings in accordance with its by-laws. These meetings will regularly address the joint planning review and, improvement of Title I programs.
- One parent will be elected yearly to the Board of Trustees for each school location.
- All newly-enrolled parents will participate in Primary Language Record interviews. At these interviews, parents will be provided with information about Title I services;
- All parents will participate in Back to school night, and annual parent orientation. At these events, parents will be provided with information about Title I services.

**Amber will provide parents of participating children:**

- Timely information about Title I programs. Title I services will keep parents updated about the types of services their children are being provided, the planned duration of service, and the goals of the services;

- The school performance profile required under section 1116 (a)(3); This compact summarizes key responsibilities of school and home.
- The child’s individual student assessment results, including and interpretation of such results. Title I services will provide these results and will go over the interpretation with the parent at a scheduled meeting;
- A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. Parents will receive this information at Primary Language Record interviews, the annual Title I meeting, the curriculum night, and the orientation for parents at the beginning of every school year;
- Title I services will schedule parent meetings as requested.

### **Technical Assistance and Support**

To help parents plan and implement parent involvement activities support is provided by:

1. Principal
2. Parent Liaison
3. Title One Reading Specialist
4. Guidance Counselors
5. Classroom Teachers

### **Technical Assistance will include:**

6. Assistance in parent outreach through mail and telephone and email;
7. Preparing and translating parent involvement announcements and pamphlets;
8. Staff participation as presenters at Family Council events;
9. Joint planning of parent activities and support in preparing parent information such as reading lists, parent guides, and partial-immersion brochures;
10. Assistance in making available electronic equipment for events;
11. Individual teacher meetings with parents on instructional support (homework).

### **Annual Evaluation of Parent Involvement Policy**

Amber will ensure the policy is up-to-date and effectively addresses the changing needs of the school community. The school administration will discuss ways to identify strategies for overcoming barriers to parent participation and to increase parent participation. Policy revisions will be based on the evaluation and will be incorporated into the Parent Involvement Policy. The Executive Director will be responsible for the implementation of the Policy and of revisions.

**The Parent Involvement Policy has been developed in conjunction with the Family Council.**

### **Amber Charter School Parent/Guardian Compact**

Amber Charter School believes that school-home collaboration is essential to the achievement of its mission and objective. Amber recognizes parents as a child’s primary educator and role model. It welcomes parents as active and respected partners in school life and key participants in the school community

## **What Parents/Guardians Should Expect from Amber Charter School:**

Parents should expect Amber Charter School to fulfill its Charter and to meet the goals and measurable objectives outlined in its Accountability Plan. These goals are:

- All students at Amber Charter School will become proficient readers and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of English-language reading skills;
- All students at Amber Charter School will become proficient in math and will make strong yearly progress toward the mastery of mathematics skills.
- All Amber Charter School students will develop proficiency in one or more of the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts;
- Parents will be active participants in their children's education, school decision-making and evaluation;
- Amber Charter School will maintain strong enrollment and strong parent interest;
- Amber Charter School will make sound decisions and effective, responsible use of financial resources to maximize student learning;
- The Board will play an active role in governing and bringing resources to Amber Charter School;
- Faculty and staff will be fully engaged partners in the development of the school and their own professional development.

These goals, the measurable objectives for each goal, and how Amber works to meet them, are described in Amber's Charter, Accountability Plan, and annual Accountability Report, as well as in the Parent Handbook. All parents receive copies of the Parent Handbook and will be provided with copies of the Charter, Accountability Plan and Accountability Reports on request.

## **What Amber Charter School Expects from Parents and Guardians:**

- Parents/guardians will support their children's education to the best of their ability;
- Parents/guardians will read and/or tell stories to their children at least 20 minutes per night, as the single most important way parents can help their children.
- Parents/guardians will be familiar with and committed to supporting Amber Charter School's mission and goals as described in this Compact;
- Parents/guardians will read and be familiar with the Parent Handbook;

- Parents/guardians will support the school discipline code.
- Parents/guardians will keep the emergency contact information card accurate and up-to-date;
- Parents/guardians will return registration, health, medical, and school-meals forms promptly;
- Parents/guardians of newly-enrolled children will participate in Primary Language Record interviews;
- Parents/guardians will maintain a high attendance rate for children and work with the school staff to overcome obstacles to regular attendance;
- Parents/guardians will assure that children arrive on time, well-rested, and dressed appropriately each day;
- Parents/guardians will assure that children are well-nourished and get good breakfasts at home or participate in the school breakfast and lunch program;
- Parents/guardians will maintain close contact with director and teachers to support their child's education, attending activities such as orientation, curriculum night, parent-teacher conferences, and, as needed or desired, individual meetings;
- Parents/guardians will work with the school to build children's self-respect, respect for others, and appreciation of their own and others' cultures;
- Parents/guardians will work with the school to help children develop skills in the peaceful resolution of disputes;
- Parents/guardians will volunteer time and skills to help the school to the greatest extent they can;
- Parents/guardians will play an active role in the Family Council.

## **Discipline Policy**

### **Essential Components of the Discipline Policy**

Discipline policies exist to enable the school to function effectively without disruption and to help strengthen the integration of students into the overall school community. The focus is on behaviors that are helpful and constructive for the community and to reduce/eliminate behaviors that weaken the community. This helps us to live in a community where everyone is respected and feels safe emotionally and physically.

Administrators, school staff and students will use self-discipline to develop a positive, safe, healthy and

successful school environment. Therefore, everyone is responsible for respecting and implementing the aforementioned common understandings.

Discipline procedures at Amber are designed to help the student to:

1. Function creatively and effectively,
2. Promote self-responsibility and accountability,
3. Participate actively in the school and global community,
4. Engage in the teaching and learning process,
5. Involve their families as responsible and accountable members.

**It is essential that** we establish an on-going staff-student relationship based on trust and respect.

**It is essential that** self-responsibility and accountability be promoted by maximizing student involvement in making decisions and resolving problems. Students will be involved in the analysis of an incident and in the discussion of appropriate consequences (if necessary).

**It is essential that** students and parents are accountable for student learning by completing homework assignments and school projects, having excellent attendance and arriving to school on time.

**It is essential that** parents/guardians participate and support school discipline policies.

### **Amber School Behavior Agreement**

A behavior agreement ensures that there is consistent and equitable treatment of all students. It is important that all members of a school community know the disciplinary measures that can be taken when any student misbehaves or substantially disrupts a classroom. However, it should be noted that inappropriate behavior may be symptomatic of a more serious problem that a student is experiencing. It is, therefore, important that members of our school community be sensitive to issues that may be impacting upon the behavior of student and utilize services provided by support staff, i.e. counselors, guidance and/or social workers to support this student. To this end, Amber has created a Child Study Team for this purpose. This team, comprised of school personnel, will develop behavior plans and explore techniques that can be used to address a student's behavioral problems. These plans and techniques will be discussed with the student and his/her parent or guardian. If, at any time, school personnel suspect that student difficulties may be the result of a disability which may require special education services, the parent will be notified and the student may be referred for further evaluation to the Kennedy Center and/or Committee on Special Education.

Amber staff will implement the Behavior Agreement with very clear consequences for children and families. The agreement delineates clearly articulated expectations and consequences for what occurs when this agreement is violated. The Behavior Agreement covers the very important categories of:

- **Behavior Card System**
- **Uniform**
- **Homework**
- **Absences and tardiness**
- **Safety of self and others**
- **Respect of Property**

### **Behavior Card System Kinder- 4<sup>th</sup> grade**

The school has implemented a mandatory behavior card discipline system across the grades in all classrooms. It is our expectation that, as per Amber's Mission statement (to enable all students to become fully educated, creative adults), this behavior card system will help our students to develop self- discipline and respect.

The cards are organized into colors that range from green to blue to yellow to red.

- Green: If a student remains on green, he/she is behaving in an appropriate manner.
- Blue: If a student moves to blue, he/she will be asked to self-check and may have a timeout.
- Yellow: If a student moves to yellow, he/she will have a more severe consequence and maybe removed from class and be required to fill out a think sheet.
- Red: If a student moves to red, his/her parent will be contacted.

This system enables both teachers and students to monitor behavior and self-check. In any event, parents will be kept abreast of behavior infraction

### **5th Grade Behavioral Plan**

5<sup>th</sup> grade students are considered the school's upperclassmen and are the leaders of the school. With this position comes more responsibility and a greater sense of pride. We are invested in educating the whole child 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers work in conjunction with the Dean of Students to develop a discipline plan geared towards the specific needs of the students. The individual plans include positive reinforcements filled with incentives that will allow your child to build self-motivating skills that they can utilize for years to come.

- In continuing a positive school community, we expect the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to lead by example therefore; we will not tolerate behaviors such as:
- Repeated disruption(s) of class instruction (including specials)
- Inappropriate verbal altercations (i.e. Bullying, gossiping, etc.)
- Physical altercations (i.e. Fighting)
- Refusal of daily academic activities/lessons
- Not being academically prepared with the necessary tools to complete activities/lessons

More serious and repeated refusal to follow directions will be addressed by the Dean of Students. It is essential that we all work together to make sure your child is working to their full potential and feels comfortable and safe here at Amber.

### **Short Term Suspension**

A short-term suspension refers to an in-school removal or out-of-school removal of a student for disciplinary reasons for a period of ten or fewer days. A student who has committed any of the infractions listed below may be subject minimally to a short-term suspension, unless the Principal or designee determines that an exception should be made based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. The Principal reserves the right to adjust the punishment for each infraction per his or her judgment.

### **Disciplinary Infractions**

- Attempt to assault any student or staff member;
- Vandalize school property causing minor damage;
- Endanger the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force that reasonably places the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury;
- Engage in conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity or endanger or threaten to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Engage in insubordination
- Fail to complete assignments, carry out directions, or comply with disciplinary sanctions;
- Cheat on quizzes, exams, or commit plagiarism;
- Used forged notes or excuses;
- Steal, or attempt to steal, or possess property known by the student to be stolen;
- Commit extortion;
- Engage in gambling;
- Abuse school property or equipment;
- Use obscene or abusive language or gestures;
- Engage in acts of verbal or physical sexual harassment;
- Make a false bomb threat or pull a false emergency alarm;
- Possess tobacco or alcohol;
- Commit any other act which school officials reasonably conclude disrupts the learning environment of the school;
- Repeatedly commit minor behavioral infractions which, in aggregate, may be considered an infraction subject to formal disciplinary action.

### **Procedures and Due Process for Short Term Suspension**

The Principal or designee may impose a short-term suspension, and shall follow due process procedures consistent with federal case law pursuant to *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565). Before imposing a short term suspension, or other, less serious discipline, the Principal shall provide notice to inform the student of the

charges against him or her, and if the student denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence against the student. A chance to present the student's version of events shall also be provided.

Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal or designee shall notify the parents or guardian in writing that the student may be suspended from school. Written notice of the decision to impose suspension shall be provided within 24 hours. Notification also shall be provided by telephone and in writing. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an informal conference with the Principal or designee. Such notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parents or guardian. The parents or guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to have the Principal or designee ask questions of the complaining witnesses. Such notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place prior to the suspension of the student unless the student's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, in which case the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension as is reasonably practicable.

The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the School's complaint process.

### **Long Term Suspension/Expulsion**

A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than five days. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons. A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below may be subject minimally to a long-term suspension or expulsion, unless the Principal or designee determines that an exception should be made based on the circumstance of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. Such a student may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures outlined elsewhere in this document including a referral to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

#### **Disciplinary Infractions**

- Possess, use, attempt to use, or transfer of any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, teargas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student in school;
- Commit, or attempt to commit arson on school property;
- Assault any other student or staff member;
- Intentionally cause physical injury to another person, except when student's actions are reasonably necessary to protect him or herself from injury;
- Vandalize school property causing major damage;
- Commit any act which could constitute a crime or is a more egregious infraction described under "short-term suspension", which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a long-term suspension.

A student who commits any of the acts previously described as causes for short term-suspension may,

instead or in addition, be subject to a long-term suspension at the Principal's or designee's discretion only if the student has committed the act at least three times in the academic year.

### **Procedures and Due Process for Long Term Suspension**

The Principal may impose a long-term suspension. Such a suspension may be imposed only after the student has been found guilty at a formal suspension hearing. In extreme circumstances, the Principal may expel the student from school. Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension, the Principal shall verbally inform the student that he or she is being suspended and is being considered for a long-term suspension (or expulsion) and state the reasons for such actions. The Principal also shall immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 24 hours of suspension at the last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents which resulted in the suspension and shall indicate that a formal hearing will be held on the matter which may result in a long-term suspension (or expulsion). The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s). At the formal hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

If the Principal initiates the suspension proceeding, he or she shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the Principal may accept or reject all or part of it. The Principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion may be challenged by the parent or guardian through an appeal process to the Board of Trustees of the Education Corporation the details of which shall be determined. NOTE: In any instance where the Principal is directly involved in the instance(s) at issue for a suspension or expulsion, the Principal shall appoint a designee to handle any investigation, hearing and determination.

### **Expulsion**

After a child's third suspension, the student's parent or guardian may be required to come to school and to sit with the student in his or her classroom(s). Upon a student's fourth suspension in one year, the student may be referred to the Amber Board of Trustees for an expulsion hearing.

Expulsion requires Board approval. Violation of any of the following three infractions will be grounds for immediate action by the Board of Trustees and could result in expulsion:

1. Students may not sell, distribute, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
2. Students may not possess and/or use firearms, dangerous weapons or other instruments;
3. Four or more suspensions in one year.

## **Firearm Violations**

Federal and New York law require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). “Weapon,” as used in this law means a “firearm,” as defined by 18 USC § 921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214 effectuates this federal law.) The Principal shall refer a student under the age of sixteen who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act except a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42). The Principal shall refer any pupil sixteen years of age or older or a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42), who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

## **Provision of Instruction during Removal**

The School will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been suspended or removed to help that child progress in the school’s general curriculum. For a student who has been suspended, alternative instruction will be provided to the extent required by applicable law. For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in the same manner as a suspended student until the student enrolls in another school for a reasonable period thereafter or until the end of the school year.

Alternative instruction will be provided to students suspended or expelled in a way that best suits the needs of the student. Instruction for such students shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress, and shall provide them the opportunity to complete the assignments, learn the curriculum and participate in assessments. Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the child’s home, a contracted facility (e.g., in the school district of location), or a suspension room or other room at the school. During any removal for drug or weapon offenses, additional services shall include strategies designed to prevent such behavior from recurring. Instruction will be provided by one or more of the following individuals who shall be certified or qualified in accordance with § 2854(3)(a-1) of the Education Law and the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act: the student’s teacher(s), aides or trained volunteers, individuals within a contracted facility, and/or a tutor hired for this purpose.

## **Student Records**

The School will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. The School will comply with NYSED’s VADIR data collection requirements and disciplinary data and submit that information to NYSED by required deadlines.

## **Disciplinary Policy for Students with Disabilities**

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the School shall implement the following disciplinary policy procedures with respect students with disabilities. [A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.527(b)—that a disability exists may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions.] The School shall comply with sections 300.519- 300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

If a student violates the School’s discipline code and is being considered for a suspension or removal, the School must ensure the following due process protections are provided to the student and to the student’s parent(s) in addition to those set forth in the regular education discipline code. For suspensions of five school days or less, the student’s parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice, and a follow up telephone call if possible, within 24 hours of the incident leading up to the suspension which describes the basis for the suspension and explains that the parent or guardian has the right to request an informal conference with the Principal and appropriate staff to discuss the incident and question any complaining witness against the student. For suspensions in excess of five consecutive school days, the student’s parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice which indicates that the district proposes to suspend the student from school in excess of five consecutive school days, describes the basis for the proposed suspension, explains that the student has an opportunity for a fair hearing conducted by the Principal or his or her designee at which the student will have a right to question any witnesses accusing him/her of committing the misconduct charge and to present witnesses on his/her behalf. Where possible, notification must also be provided by telephone. In addition, the School will work with CSE to provide alternative education to the student during the suspension as set forth below, including any special services required by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared by the student’s Committee on Special Education (CSE) of their district of residence. Final determination on a suspension or removal of a student, following due process, shall be made by the Principal.

The School shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Students for whom the IEP includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to the infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the CSE of the student’s district of residence for consideration of a change in the guidelines.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student’s district of residence for reconsideration of the student’s educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student’s district of residence prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement. In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary

problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement.

The School shall work with the district to ensure that the CSE of the student's district of residence meets within 7 days of notification of any of the following: (1) The commission of an infraction by a student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the maximum allowable number of days; (2) The commission of any infraction resulting from the student's disability; (3) The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student has previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infraction been committed by a non-disabled student, the Principal would seek to impose a suspension in excess of 10 days.

Also, the School will ensure that when the suspension or removal of a student with a disability will constitute a disciplinary change of placement, the CSE will be immediately notified so that the CSE can meet its required obligations to:

- 1) Convene a CSE meeting within 10 school days to make a manifestation determination.
- 2) Convene a CSE meeting within 10 business days to develop a plan to conduct a functional behavioral assessment or review an existing functional behavioral assessment or behavioral intervention plan.
- 3) Provide the student's parent with a copy of their procedural due process rights.
- 4) Work closely with the CSE of the students' district of residence in determining education services or the interim alternative educational setting consistent with the FAPE requirements.

#### **Provision of Services during Removal**

Those students removed for a period fewer than ten days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of his or her suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make up assignments or tests missed as a result of such suspension. The School also shall provide additional alternative instruction with the reasonable promptness and by appropriate means to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, and computer instruction.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals equals ten or more school days during the school year, but does not constitute a change in placement, services must be provided to the extent determined necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

During any removal for drug or weapon offenses [pursuant to 34 CFR §300.520(a)(2)] services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence. The school will place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate and mandated by 34 CFR §300.520(a)(2).

During any subsequent removal that does constitute a change in placement, but where the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the services must be provided to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP.

The CSE of the student's district of residence will make the service determination.

### **CSE Meetings**

Meetings of the CSE of the student's district of residence to either develop a behavioral assessment plan or, if the child has one, to review such plan are required when: (1) the child is first removed from his or her current placement for more than ten school days in a school year; and (2) when commencing a removal which constitutes a change in placement. The student's special education teacher (or coordinator) and the general classroom teacher will attend all meetings regarding the student initiated by the CSE from the student's home district.

Subsequently, if other removals occur which do not constitute a change in placement, the School will work with the CSE of the student's district of residence to review the child's assessment plan and its implementation to determine if modifications are necessary. If one or more members of the CSE of the student's district of residence believe that modifications are needed, then the CSE is expected to meet to modify the plan and/or its implementation.

### **Due Process**

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten school days after the date on which such decision is made, the CSE of the student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, then the child may be disciplined in the same manner as a child without a disability, except as provided in 34 CFR §300.121(d), which relates to the provision of services to students with disabilities during periods of removal.

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

**If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination resulting from a disciplinary action relating to weapons or drugs, the child shall remain in any interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the School agree otherwise.**

Revised: June, 2014.

## **Amber Charter School Complaint Policy**

Revised: October 12, 2016

Any individual or group may bring a complaint to the Board of Trustees (“Board”) of the Amber Charter School (“School”) alleging a violation of the provisions of Article 56 of the education law (i.e. the New York State Charter Schools Act), the School’s charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the School.

The complaint will be presented to the Board in written form. The Board may be contacted at the School’s address, 220 East 106<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10029. Attn: Board Secretary.

The Board shall respond at or prior to the next public meeting of the Board. Every effort will be made to respectfully address the matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group who presented the complaint. The Board, as necessary, shall direct the Executive Director to act upon the complaint and report to the Board. The Board shall render a determination in writing, as necessary.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the Board, the individual or group determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the complaint to the State University Trustees through the Charter Schools Institute, which shall investigate and respond. Their address is SUNY Charter Schools Institute, SUNY Plaza, 353 Broadway, Albany, NY 12246.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the Charter Schools Institute, the individual or group determines that the Charter Schools Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the case to the Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. Their address is 89 Washington Avenue, Albany NY 12234.

The Charter Schools Institute and the Board of Regents have the power and the duty to take remedial action as appropriate.

Complaints other than those alleging a violation of the provisions of Article 56 of the education law, the School’s charter, or any other provision of law may be directed, in writing, to the Principal who will respond to them within ten (10) business days.

If the complainant is unsatisfied with this resolution, he/she may present the complaint to the Executive Director, who will investigate and respond.

Sashemani Elliott, East Harlem Principal  
220 East 106<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10029  
Tel: 212-534-9667 ext.155  
Email:[selliott@ambercharter.org](mailto:selliott@ambercharter.org)

Veronica Almedina, Kingsbridge Principal  
3120 Corlear Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10463  
Tel: 646-802-1140 ext. 309  
Email: [valmedina@ambercharter.org](mailto:valmedina@ambercharter.org)

**Transfer Policy**  
**TRANSFER REQUEST FORM**

**Amber Charter School Transfer Policy**

Parents of current Amber Charter School students are eligible to transfer, between Amber Charter School East Harlem and Amber Charter School Kingsbridge, by completing and sending a Transfer Request Form to the Principal at any time during the school year before the month of March. Requests are reviewed and a determination will be communicated in writing to the parent within fourteen (14) business days from receipt of the Request. The Principal maintains complete discretion in determining whether to grant the Request. Among the factors considered are whether: a) the location has the grade requested, b) there is space in the desired grade, c) denying the Request will cause an undue hardship on the parent, and d) granting the Request will cause an undue hardship on the School.

**Process:**

1. Submit request by March 31<sup>st</sup>.
2. Parent will be informed of decision by April 28<sup>th</sup>.
3. If transfer granted, parent must accept by May 5<sup>th</sup>.

-----  
Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I request that my child be transferred from:

[check one]  East Harlem to Kingsbridge for the next school year

[check one]  Kingsbridge to East Harlem for the next school year

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETED BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Date Request Received: \_\_\_\_\_

School Personnel Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Decision Made:  Approved  Denied Date

Parent Informed: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Response:  Accepted  Declined

Date Parent responded: \_\_\_\_\_

## Internet Safety, Network Usage and Cell Phone Policy for Students

Amber Charter School (hereinafter referred to as “Amber Charter”) grants students (hereinafter referred to as “users”) access to the Internet and to its computer network.

It is the policy of Amber Charter 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; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

### Definitions

Key terms are as defined in the Children’s Internet Protection Act<sup>1</sup>. A summary of the Children’s Internet Protection Act can be accessed by going to <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>

### Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be used to block or filter Internet or other forms of electronic communications or access to inappropriate information.

Students, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, shall be prevented from using inappropriate sites and blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or to any material deemed harmful to minors.

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<sup>1</sup> CIPA definitions of terms:

**Technology Protection Measure:** The term “technology protection measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

1. *Obscene*, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code;
2. *Child Pornography*, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code; or
3. *Harmful to minors*.

**Minor:** A minor, as defined by the FCC, is anyone under the age of 17.

**Harmful to Minors:** The term “harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file or other visual depiction that:

1. Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion;
2. Depicts, describes or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
3. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value as to minors.

**Sexual Act; Sexual Contact:** The terms “sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

### **Inappropriate Internet and Network Usage**

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Amber Charter's online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate internet and network usage includes:

1. Unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities;and
2. Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

### **Supervision and Monitoring of Students**

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the Amber Charter School staff to supervise and monitor Student's usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet protection Act.

### **Violations**

The following are activities that directly violate Amber Charter's Student Internet Safety and Network Usage Policy:

1. Using, transmitting, receiving or seeking inappropriate, offensive, vulgar, suggestive, obscene, abusive, harassing, belligerent, threatening, defamatory or misleading language and materials.
2. Using network resources to transmit messages of ethnic, sexual-preference or gender-related slurs or jokes.
3. Jeopardizing security and access to the company's network or other Internet networks by disclosing or sharing passwords or impersonating others.
4. Accessing or attempting to access controversial or offensive materials.
5. Engaging in Cyber-Bulling as defined below.

### **Noncompliance**

Use of the computer network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Violation of this policy, at minimum, will cause the Student's access to the network and the Internet to be terminated.

### **Cyber-Bullying**

Cyber-Bullying defined for this policy is an aggressive behavior directed at another person using various

communication technologies such as e-mails, instant messaging, texting, or sending images via cell phones, sending abusive videos, blogs, postings or comments on social media sites, virtual worlds, web pages, and/or chat rooms. For all practical purposes, aggressive behavior encompasses the intent or action to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, and/or embarrass the victim for any period. Cyber-bullying may also be referred to as online social cruelty and/or electronic bullying.

### **Training and Guidelines for Teachers**

Training, guidelines and lesson plans will be provided by School Counselors and implemented by a Technology Specialist or Classroom Teacher (where applicable) to students in grades K-5 who utilize internet or network resources as part of their curriculum. Sample of lessons or actual lesson and handouts may be utilized from online resources such as OnGuardOnline.gov<sup>2</sup> and/or CommonSenseMedia.org<sup>3</sup> whenever necessary. Each teacher completing a lesson in Internet Safety and Digital Citizenship Education will complete a Teacher Verification Document as proof of compliance for USAC SLD E-Rate funding.

### **Noncompliance**

Students who are identified as engaging in cyber-bullying shall be subject to discipline. At a minimum a Student may lose access to the network and the Internet indefinitely. Such acts will also be reported to the Student's parents and a Student may be subject to suspension or expulsion.

### **Cell Phone Use**

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to school. Teachers are authorized to create a usage policy for their individual classrooms to ensure the optimum atmosphere for learning. Accordingly, Students may be asked to turn in cell phones and PDAs for safe keeping by a Teacher at the start of a class period. The Teacher will return the cell phone and PDA at the end of the class period.

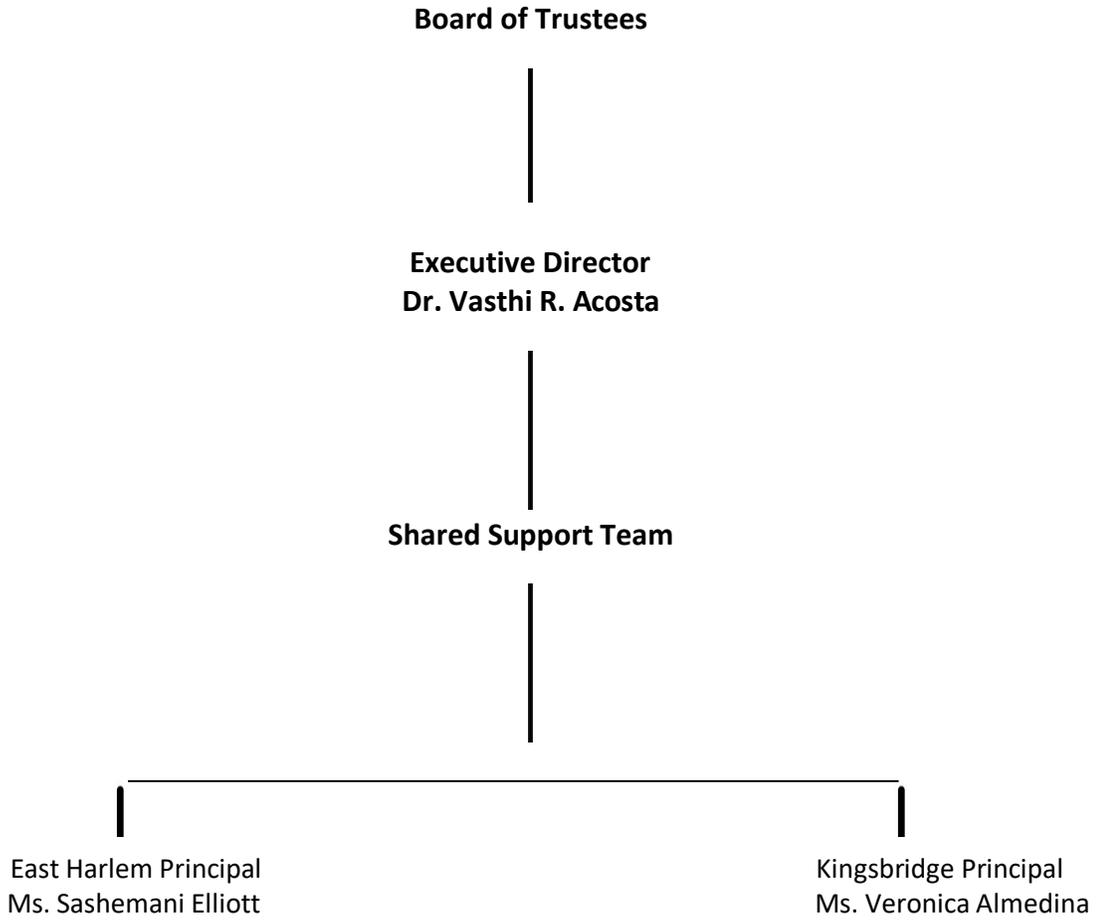
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<sup>2</sup>Common Sense Media is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation providing information to children and families in the world of media and technology. <http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/erate>

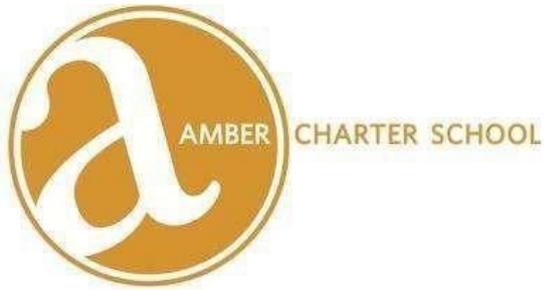
<sup>3</sup>OnGuardOnline.gov is the federal government's website to help children and families to be safe, secure and responsible online.

# Organization Chart

## Amber Charter School



## Sign Receipt Form



I acknowledge that:

I have received a copy of Amber Charter School Parent Handbook and Behavior Agreement: Discipline Policies and Procedures. I recognize and accept my responsibility to read and become familiar with its contents. I acknowledge that it is designed to provide general information on Amber's policies and procedures. I also understand that Amber Charter School reserves the right to add, delete, or modify the contents of the Parent Handbook and Behavior Agreement, at any time and for any reason.

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Student Name (Print)

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Parent Name (Print)

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Parent's Signature

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Date