



The Ethical Community
Charter School

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FAMILY HANDBOOK
2017-2018
SCHOOL YEAR



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Aftercare.....	Page 3
Arrival Policy	Page 3
Dismissal Policy.....	Page 3
Attendance Policy	Page 4
Avenues of Communication.....	Page10
Back-To-School Night	Page 10
Birthdays.....	Page 7
Board of Trustees.....	Page 10
Family and School Association.....	Page10
Field Trips	Page 6
Grievance Committee.....	Page 10
Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying	Page 9
Health and Safety.....	Page 7
Holidays.....	Page 7
Late Arrival Policy.....	Page 3
Lunch Program.....	Page 5
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	Page 10
School Life and Dress Grooming.....	Page 5
Security and Emergency School Closing.....	Page 5
Student Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy	Page 6
Student Discipline Policy	Page 8



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2017-2018

Arrival and Dismissal

Early Morning Drop-off 7:45 a.m.

School begins at 8:30 a.m. Students should arrive at 8:15 a.m.

Students are dismissed at 3:15 p.m.

Please be at the school on time to pick up your child.

Early Morning Program

(7:45 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.)

Parents must register and pay to participate in this program. Breakfast will be provided. If you are driving, you will need to find a legal parking space.

Late Arrival Policy

If your child/children arrives after 8:30 a.m., they **must** report to the main office for a late pass before going to class. After 8:30 a.m. please enter through the Broadway entrance.

Dismissal/Pickup

Please call or email our school secretary and cc your head teacher by 2:00 p.m. with any changes on bus or pick up routine for that particular day. If a person not specified on the pickup list will pick up your child, you must contact the office with the name of person. This person must show a recent ID at the time of pick up. Children may not use the telephone in the main office to make their own arrangements.

At 3:15 p.m. students will be dismissed on Giles Street or Broadway. Families are expected to pick up their children promptly at dismissal. If children are not picked up, they will be sent to aftercare and the parents will be billed accordingly.

Bus

TECCS staff will meet children arriving by bus in the morning and will dismiss bus students in the afternoon. The parent-organized Transportation Committee provides information and service.

Walkers

Middle School students are allowed to walk home and/or take public transportation upon dismissal only with a written letter from their parents authorizing them to do so. This letter must be provided to the school office.

Aftercare Program

We offer an after school program until 6:00 p.m. for all students. Please contact the Aftercare Supervisor for information. Families interested in this program must fill out an application and follow the required due dates. Each marking period, overdue payments will be recorded. Parents/guardian shall bear the cost of all expenses for this program. If payment is not current the parent/guardian will not be allowed to continue in the program and the parent/guardian will be responsible for the unpaid balance.



Aftercare Payment

Every month, you will pay one flat fee based on the number of days per week that your child is registered for aftercare. **Payment is due by the 10th of every month.** If we do not receive payment by the 15th of the month, your child will be removed from their aftercare classes and will be unable to return until payment is made. Invoices will still go home every month as a reminder.

If you pay for the first session (Sept-Jan) in full by September 16th, you will receive a 10% discount. For more details, please contact Ms. Kelli at kelli.callandriello@teccsjc.org

PAYMENT	
1 DAY PER WEEK	\$46.00
2 DAYS PER WEEK	\$92.00
3 DAYS PER WEEK	\$138.00
4 DAYS PER WEEK	\$184.00
5 DAYS PER WEEK	\$209.00

Aftercare Pick-ups

Dismissal is from 5:45pm through 6:00pm. At 6:05pm, you will be charged a **\$15.00 (per child)** late fee. At 6:10pm, you will be charged an additional **\$5.00 (per child)** for every five minutes thereafter. If your child is picked up after 6:05pm more than five times in one session, they will be removed from their classes and will not be able to attend aftercare until the next session.

Attendance Policy

A student must be in attendance 164 or more school days in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade/course to which he/she is assigned.

“Excused absence” is a student’s absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The student’s illness;
2. Requirements of a student’s individual health care plan;
3. A death or critical illness in the student’s immediate family, or others with permission of principal;
4. Quarantine;
5. Observance of the student’s religion on a day approved for that purpose by the State Board of Education;
6. The student’s suspension from school;
7. Requirements of the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan;
8. Alternate short or long-term accommodations for students with disabilities;
9. The student’s required attendance in court;
10. Interviews with an admissions officer of an educational institution;
11. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day.
12. Such good cause as may be acceptable to the principal.

Attendance need not always be within the school facilities. A student will be considered to be in attendance if he/she is present at any place where school is in session by authority of the board. The board shall consider each student assigned to a program of independent study, with parent/guardian permission, to be in regular attendance for that program, provided that he/she is under the guidance of a staff member so assigned, reports daily or weekly, as prescribed, to such staff member the place in which he/she is conducting his/her study, and regularly demonstrates progress toward the objectives of his/her course of study.

“Unexcused absence” is a student’s absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in paragraph “Excused Absences” above. Absence is expressly not excused for any of the following purposes (this list is intended to be illustrative and is not all inclusive):

1. Family travel;
2. Performance of household or babysitting duties; and
3. Other daytime activities unrelated to the school program.



Security and Emergency School Closing

All parents, guests, and visitors must sign in at the office before visiting a classroom or taking a tour of the school.

Families will receive phone, text and email notifications through our Real Time Broadcast System on any changes of schedule or emergencies. If needed, hardcopy letters will be sent home about the change and information will be posted on the website. It is critical for parents to update their contact information in the Real Time Parent Portal with any changes in phone numbers or addresses.

School Safety and Security Plan

We collaborate with the NJ Department of Education and local law enforcement in updating the School Safety and Security Plan annually.

Lunch Program

We participate in the National School Lunch Program. We offer a variety of foods with nutritionally balanced menus. Our food management company, Maschio, will provide a chef on-site to prepare food daily. The state requires all students to fill out a lunch application whether or not the student will be participating in the school lunch program. Eligibility for the free and reduced lunch program will be determined based on the completed lunch applications. Parents not applying for free or reduced lunch are required to have an application on file, just simply fill out the child's name on the application and sign in the appropriate box. Credit towards the next month will be issued in the event of student illness or absence. Credit will not be issued for students who decide not to eat after ordering. It is important for parents to keep track of the days your child is eating school lunch.

Students may bring their lunches to school in lunch boxes or paper bags. We do not provide refrigeration or heating. Please include everything your child will need when the lunch is packed. The trading of lunch items among students is prohibited. Many children have serious allergies.

Carbonated beverages, candy, and other items containing large amounts of sugar are not nutritious and therefore are not permitted in school.

School Life Dress and Grooming

The purpose of this student dress code is to promote high standards of conduct and behavior among students, to instill a sense of personal pride, and to develop and maintain a wholesome learning environment that will contribute to academic achievement. The Board of Trustees acknowledges that proper dress and attire is an important part of the school program. The Board also recognizes that each student's mode of dress and grooming is an expression of personal style and individual preference. Students need to dress in clothes appropriate for work and play by following these guidelines:

1. Shoes must permit students to run and walk safely. Students may wear plain sneakers, shoes, or sandals that are flat and with a back.
2. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must fall below the student's fingers with his/her arms at his/her side.
3. Shirts must cover the body without falling off the shoulders or exposing the torso. No undergarments should be seen.
4. Clothing may not have words or images referring to violence, sex, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or profanity.
5. Hats, bandanas, and sunglasses may not be worn during school hours.

The FSA provide all new students with a TECCS T-shirt. This policy will be reviewed periodically.



Student Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy

Elementary (Grades K-5)

Upon entering the building in the morning, all phones and electronic devices must be turned off and stored in backpacks.

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Upon entering the building in the morning, all phones and electronic devices must be turned off and stored in lockers.

Electronic devices include but are not limited to cell phones, iPods, iPads, handheld video games (Nintendo DS, PS Vita, Nintendo Wii U, etc.) and any other type of mp3 player. Web-enabled watches (smartwatches) may be worn as accessories but may not be used during assessments or in a manner inconsistent with other school policies, including plagiarism and electronic recording policies. Teachers may request that students remove smartwatches at any time if the teacher determines they are being used in contradiction to classroom culture and / or school policies.

If a student's phone or any other personal electronic device is not in the student's backpack or locker, it will be confiscated by the teacher or staff member and sent to the main office. The following disciplinary actions will be implemented:

- First Offense: A parent/guardian will be contacted and the cell phone / personal electronic device will be returned at the end of the day.
- Second Offense: A parent/guardian will be contacted and is required to come in to the school office to pick up the phone / electronic device.
- Third Offense: The parent/guardian will be required to come in to the school office to pick up the phone/electronic device, and the student will meet with the administrative team during lunch / detention period to determine the appropriate action plan. Repeated unpermitted use of devices may constitute willful defiance, which can lead to one day of in-school suspension.

This policy applies throughout extended day care (or aftercare) as well, until 5:45 pm. If a student uses an electronic device during aftercare, without prior authorization from a school administrator, the school administrator or person in charge will confiscate the phone and return it at the end of the day.

Under no circumstances should a student use a mobile phone or other device to take picture or video of another student or staff member without consent. See full policy: Use of Electronic or Digital Recording Devices.

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones or personal electronic devices. Please call the main office if you need to leave a message for your child.

A copy of this Policy will be made available on an annual basis, to all parents, students, and school employees either electronically or in school handbooks.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the curriculum and each class is expected to have a number of trips during the year. All parents should sign a release for walking trips in Jersey City before the school year begins. A permission slip must be signed for each trip involving transportation or your child will not be able to participate. Notices and permission slips will be sent home before each field trip. Please return these forms in a timely manner. Scholarships will be available for students who qualify. Rules of safety and behavioral expectations are discussed with students and adults before every field trip.



Holidays

One of our central strength is the diversity of our community. To protect and maintain this diversity, we do not celebrate religious holidays in the course of the school year, nor are holidays used to drive the curriculum. Religion and cultures may be appropriately explored as part of the curriculum and in response to children's questions. Children and parents are encouraged to share and discuss their particular customs, traditions, foods, and songs with the class and teachers.

Birthdays

Please do not distribute invitations to your child's out-of-school birthday party at school.

Due to many varied severe food allergies, in-class birthday celebrations will not involve food. TECCS recommends activities, from storytelling to a brief craft project. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's head teacher a week in advance of the intended date of the school birthday celebration to let them know to set aside 15 minutes to do an activity with the class. If a family member cannot be at school, please let your child's head teacher know and s/he can prepare an activity. Grades 5-8 will not have in-class birthday celebrations.

Food

- Students must bring a snack from home for snack time.
- Head teachers will notify parents in advance of any food planned to be served in the classroom for special celebrations.
- Teachers and parents will remind students never to share food, in the classroom, on the bus, or in the cafeteria.

Health and Safety

• **Immunization Records/Health Forms**

Each child must be immunized in accordance with state requirements for children enrolled in a New Jersey school. According to New Jersey State Law, each child must also have an annual physical examination on file with the school nurse.

• **Sick or Injured Children**

A parent will receive a call from the school if the nurse, teacher, or office staff thinks there is a need. It is imperative, therefore, that parents provide phone numbers to call in case of emergency and that these numbers are kept up-to-date. A child who is not well enough to go outdoors is not well enough to attend school. Outside recess is an important part of our daily schedule. All children should arrive to school dressed appropriately for the weather. On cold days, we recommend hats, gloves and layering.

• **Medication**

Student medication (including homeopathic medicine) may not be kept in the classroom or in student lunch boxes or backpacks. If a prescription medication or non-prescription medicine (such as Tylenol) needs to be administered in school, a physician's order is needed. These forms are available in the office.

• **Absence Due to Illness**

If a child is absent for more than 3 consecutive days, a doctor's note must be brought to school on the child's return. We understand the difficulty for working parents. Nonetheless, to ensure a healthy recovery and prevent the spread of illness to other children and staff, it is important for your child to remain home until he/she has recovered.

• **When to Keep Children at Home**

For the health of the TECCS community, children should remain home when they are ill. Below, please find reasons to keep your child home from school.

1. A fever of 100.2 ° F or above. (They must remain fever- free without Tylenol, Motrin etc. for at least 24 hours before returning to school)
2. Yellow or greenish nasal discharge
3. Severe, persistent, wet- sounding cough
4. Diarrhea or vomiting (They should be symptom- free for 24 hours before returning to school)
5. An eye(s) that is red with drainage, or discharge



6. Lice

If your child becomes ill in school or comes to school ill, he/she will be sent home. The office will contact parents.

- **Accident Insurance**

Our school is covered under Bollinger, a Student Accident Insurance Policy. Please contact the School Business Administrator for details.

- **Custody Issues**

Please inform us, in writing, of any special arrangements or restrictions pertaining to the custody of your child.

- **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

It is the school's responsibility to report any sign of abuse or neglect to the Child Protection and Permanency, CP&P, (formerly Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)). But if you have reason to suspect child abuse, please report that to the Principal.

Student Discipline Policy

We recognize the following goals for learning:

- To maintain safe, orderly, and drug-free schools.
- To learn and work in a school that has clear discipline codes with fair and consistent consequences for misconduct.
- To treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- To learn and work in a school and classrooms that have clearly stated and rigorous academic standards.
- To be supported by parents, the community, public officials, and businesses in our efforts to uphold high standards of conduct and achievement.

Ongoing Activities Ensure a Positive Environment:

- Practicing and implementing Ethics Education on a daily basis.
- Educating students on behavior expectations throughout the day.
- Building professional relationships and making personal connections with students and families.
- Outlining clear academic guidelines.

At TECCS, our discipline policy is based on the creation of self-control and respect for the community. The staff may refer students who display chronic behavioral concerns to the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Committee. These referrals will be in strict accordance with due process regulations. TECCS staff is responsible for and will have authority over all students. Staff members will use lawful means to control the disorderly conduct of students in situations and locations within the jurisdiction of TECCS. The policy on the use of physical force will fully comply with New Jersey state law and Department of Education policy. Except in instances of self-protection or in instances when physical restraint is necessary to protect the students or others from injury, the use of physical force on students is prohibited. Disciplinary actions involving violations of the state law (NJ 18A: 37-22.1) or of the Code of Conduct will be referred by professional staff and teachers to the principal. For extremely serious infractions, the principal, following the guidelines of the state law 18A:37-2.3 may recommend to the Board of Trustees the suspension or expulsion of the student.

N.J.S.A 18A:37-2 cites as causes for suspension or expulsion of pupils.

- a. Continued a willful disobedience;
- b. Open defiance of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over him;
- c. Conduct of such character as to constitute a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other pupils;
- d. Physical assault upon another pupil;
- e. Taking, or attempting to take, personal property or money from another pupil, or from his presence, by means of force or fear;
- f. Willfully causing, or attempting to cause, substantial damage to school property;



- g. Participation in an unauthorized occupancy by any group of pupils or others of any part of the school, and failure to leave the school promptly after having been directed to do so by the person(s) in charge of the facility;
- h. Incitement which is intended to and does result in unauthorized occupation by any group of pupils or others in the school;
- i. Incitement which is intended to and does result in truancy by other pupils;
- j. Knowing possession or knowing consumption of alcoholic beverages or controlled dangerous substances on school premises, or being under the influence of intoxicating liquor or controlled dangerous substances which on school premises; and
- k. Assault by a student on a teacher, administrator, Board member, or other employee acting in the performance of his/her duties will result in immediate suspension from school. Due process proceedings will follow pursuant to 18A:37-2.1.

Pursuant to 18A: 37-8, any student who is convicted or adjudicated delinquent for possession of a firearm or a crime while armed with a firearm or found knowingly in possession of a firearm on school property, on a school bus, or at a bus school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the school's regular education program. Due process proceedings will follow. "TECCS retains discretion to discipline students for causes not explicitly specified in this Handbook."

In-school suspension: Though students will continue to receive instruction, staff will place them in a location designated by the Principal with adult supervision.

Suspension: Where deemed necessary, students will be suspended from school for one to five days, depending on the severity of the infraction. School administrators will notify the parents in advance and they will be required to meet with the Principal before their child can return to school.

Expulsion: If the Principal determines that all other options have been exhausted without the desired effect, or that law mandates the expulsion, a hearing will be arranged with the Board Chair, the School Administrator, the parents and the student. The hearing could result in a recommendation to the Board for student expulsion. The Board has the authority for expulsion decisions; subject to appeal to the State Commissioner of Education. Suspended students will be allowed to return to the classroom, while expelled students will not. Disciplinary actions will have no bearing on the student's academic standing, except in cases of academic dishonesty. Educationally handicapped pupils are subject to the same disciplinary procedures as non-handicapped pupils if the problem behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability.

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

The board expects all students to treat each other with civility and respect and not to engage in behavior that is disruptive or violent. This type of behavior interferes with a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Therefore, the school will not tolerate acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying against any student in accordance with board policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or off school grounds in accordance with law that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:



- A. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or mentally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or mental harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- B. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- C. Creates a hostile educational environment by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional hard to the student.

"Electronic communication" means a communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus.

Family and School Association

We welcome and support parent involvement and open communication.

Volunteering is a rewarding way to be involved in the educational life of your children; your children--and the school--will benefit. Please contact your FSA class parent to volunteer. FSA meetings are publicized and held regularly at the school. All parents and guardians are invited to attend.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees meets monthly for the management of the business, property, and affairs of the school per New Jersey Law. Parents are represented on the Board of Trustees and all parents are invited to attend the meetings, which are open to the public. Public notice of meetings is given on the school website, www.teccsjc.org and posted in the building entrances. All minutes are posted on the website.

Avenues of Communication

We value an open and honest dialogue between parents and the school. It is school policy to address concerns on an individual basis. Please speak to your child's teacher first, then the Principal.

Grievance Committee

We recognize the important roles that parents and teachers play as partners in upholding the school communication between not only parents and teachers but also the Principal, administrative staff, and the Board of Trustees. The Board has instituted a fair and efficient process by which internal grievances can be resolved amicably and consistent with law. If a Board employee, trustee, or parent/guardian has a complaint or dispute with any Board policy or the actions of a School Employee or Board Trustee ("grievance"), it should be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution proceedings set forth in TECCS Grievance Policy (found on the school web site), and as mandated by state law.

Back-to-School Night and Parent-Teacher Conferences

In the fall of each year, parents are invited for Back-to-School Night to learn about the classroom routines and the curriculum for their children's classes. Please regard this as a "required meeting" – the best time to get an overview of the plans and expectations for the year. This is also an opportunity to meet the parents of your child's classmates. Teachers contact parents on an ongoing basis to discuss student progress. However, in the fall and spring parent-teacher conferences are scheduled. Please make every effort to attend these meetings, as well.