

**DEMOCRACY PREP  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**SCHOLAR & FAMILY  
HANDBOOK**

**WELCOME TO THE DPPS TEAM AND FAMILY!**

**2022-2023**

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School

Harlem Prep Charter School

Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School

Bronx Prep Charter School

**Democracy Prep Public Schools**  
1767 Park Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10035

**[www.democracyprep.org](http://www.democracyprep.org)**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MESSAGE TO OUR FAMILIES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OUR SCHOOLS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OUR MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TEAM AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY CODE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BASIC OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AT OUR SCHOOLS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SCHOLAR EXPECTATIONS AND RIGHTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HEALTH POLICIES AND ATTENDANCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SCHOLAR LIFE</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>DREAM PRIVILEGES</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CODE OF CONDUCT</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>THE DREAM DOLLAR SYSTEM</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>VISITING OUR SCHOOLS</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: UNIFORM</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: BILL OF RIGHTS FOR DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE</b>	<b>51</b>

## MESSAGE TO OUR FAMILIES

Welcome to the Democracy Prep Public Schools family!

As is the case with any family, the Democracy Prep Public Schools network (“DPPS,” “Democracy Prep” or “Schools;” and the individual school your child attends- the “School”) needs a set of rules and guidelines to help us understand and get along with each other. The purpose of this Scholar and Family Handbook (the “Handbook”) is to ensure that we have consistent expectations across our Schools. It also aims at establishing the serious but inclusive tone and culture that Democracy Prep aims to accomplish in partnership with all families. The network Handbook may not answer all of your questions, but it should provide examples of Democracy Prep’s mission, procedures, expectations and guiding principles.

This Handbook replaces any prior years’ Handbooks, including those for other Democracy Prep elementary schools. As Democracy Prep always seeks to improve, we reserve the right to amend, modify or change the provisions of this Handbook. We will of course provide all scholars and families notice of any significant changes in the policies reflected in the following pages.

Please note that where we refer to “parents” in this Handbook, that term is meant to include both parents and legal guardians even where we do not specifically refer to guardians.

## OUR SCHOOLS

### **Democracy Prep Charter School**

Grades 6-8: 2230 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10037

Grades 9-12: 222 West 134<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10030

### **Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School**

Grades K-5: 2005 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10035

Grades 6-8: 207 West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10030

Grades 9-12: 212 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027

### **Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School**

Grades PK-3: 1529 Williamsbridge  
Bronx, NY 10461

Grades 6-8: 250 West 127<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027

Grades 9-12: 240 East 123<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10035

### **Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus**

Grades K-12: 1201 West Lake Mead  
Boulevard  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

### **Bronx Prep Charter School**

Grades K-2: 1529 Williamsbridge  
Bronx, NY 10461

Grades 6-12: 3872 3rd Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457

### **Harlem Prep Charter School**

Grades 3-5: 101-111 West 116th Street  
New York, NY 10026

Grades 6-8: 232 East 103<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10029

Grades 9-12: 240 East 123<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10035

### **Democracy Prep Baton Rouge Charter School**

Grades K-8 4055 Prescott Road  
Baton Rouge, LA 70805

### **Democracy Prep at the Stewart Campus**

Grades PK-8 1950 Rigsby Ave  
San Antonio, TX 78210

## OUR MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

### Our Mission

Democracy Prep educates *all* students regardless of citizenship or housing status, language, or disability.

The mission of Democracy Prep Public Schools is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

We will achieve our mission through:

- Rigorous and culturally responsive college-prep academics
- Frequent use of data and assessment
- More time to learn
- Targeted tutoring
- A respectful and structured School culture
- Exemplary teachers and teammates
- A commitment to equity and equitable outcomes for our scholars
- A commitment to reevaluating our policies periodically using an anti-racist lens

### Our Vision

Democracy Prep will provide a rigorous academic program focused on the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to master core academic subjects in preparation for success in college. Scholars will receive highly structured civic and leadership education, preparing them to be active citizens in our democratic society.

### Our Core Values: D.R.E.A.M.

**Discipline.** *We do our best or we do it again!* Our scholars, teachers, and staff understand that discipline is the key to success. We have clear rules and high expectations. We expect all adults and scholars in our community to meet these expectations so that our scholars can learn in a safe and orderly environment. Our teachers and staff continuously reinforce these expectations in order to empower our scholars to do what's best for their education and for our community, supporting our scholars as they build the internal discipline necessary to do the hard work that it takes to get them to and through college. Discipline means staying focused, following rules and instructions the first time they are issued, studying or reading every night, and establishing and adhering to personal routines that will lead to success.

**Respect.** *I'm nice to you, be nice to me.* Our community is built on mutual respect. Teachers respect scholars by expecting them to achieve great things and by treating them with dignity and fairness. Scholars respect all teachers and staff because they understand the importance of their education and the need to preserve precious learning time. Scholars respect each other because we are a team and family who work together to achieve our goals. Each member of our community treats every other member with respect in everything we do and say, creating a productive and supportive School environment that brings out the best in us all.

**Enthusiasm.** *Excited scholars, our school has them!* When you work hard, it is essential to find joy in your work. We believe in teaching children how to be joyful in their learning by approaching it with curiosity, gratitude, and spirit! We also believe in creating opportunities for children to earn the ability to play together as a team, because working hard creates enthusiasm. Enthusiasm means actively participating in every moment of the day, asking questions even when you are confused, adding juicy details in writing or



solving a math problem with several different strategies, walking with urgency to and from classes, taking a risk to try something difficult, keeping your head up even when faced with a challenge, and finding ways to show that you love what you do.

**Accountability.** *We tell the truth and take responsibility.* Accountability means fixing mistakes and taking responsibility. In order to work in a community with high expectations as well as high support, respectful conversations, and positive attitudes, scholars, teachers, and staff will hold each other accountable for our words, actions and decisions. Accountability means accepting the consequences of our decisions, accepting praise, being proud of accomplishments and hard work, acknowledging and apologizing for mistakes, changing hurtful behavior into supportive behavior, and letting an adult know if someone in our community is not upholding our values. Accountability shows that we are honest and responsible with ourselves and with each other and are therefore prepared to achieve our fullest potential.

**Maturity.** *When you act grown up, you'll be what you want to be.* Maturity is modeling compassion and perseverance in our School and our community. It is connecting our words and actions with positive or negative outcomes. To be mature means that you find ways to be kind to your team and family and peacefully solve problems with peers and adults – even toward the people that you may not know or like. Maturity means that you work hard and put forth 100% effort because your future is important to you.

## TEAM AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY CODE

### **Teachers, Administrators, and Staff**

We fully commit a healthy adult mindset with professional adult actions:

- We will work with parents and families to build a strong partnership between family and School in order to fulfill the Democracy Prep mission for each scholar.
- We will arrive at Democracy Prep each day at the time determined by our School principal and stay until the end of the work day, ensuring before we leave that our classrooms and lessons are prepared for our scholars' success on the following day.
- We will work effectively, efficiently, and intentionally in order for our scholars to achieve.
- We will dress professionally at all times in order to convey a seriousness of purpose and to create a learning environment characterized by maturity.
- We will make ourselves available to scholars and parents by phone and email (but always and only through a Democracy Prep phone number and Democracy Prep email address), and in person, and we will respond respectfully to any concerns they have.
- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.
- We will prepare engaging and rigorous lessons with meaningful homework assignments and frequent assessments.
- We will use data from assessments and assignments to make sure every scholar succeeds.
- We will fulfill all of our School-wide obligations — including upholding hallway expectations and performing necessary coverage duties — in order to foster a cohesive, unified team dynamic.
- We will provide individual and small group tutoring to ensure our scholars succeed.
- We will ensure that the School remains a safe and healthy environment despite COVID-19 or other health risks and will enforce School policies and protocols designed for this purpose.

*Failure to adhere to these commitments can lead to our removal from the DPPS Team and Family.*

## **Scholars**

I fully integrate into Democracy Prep, bringing my own cultural and distinctive richness and commit in the following ways:

- I will arrive to School each day, in full uniform, on time and ready to learn.
- I will wear the full Democracy Prep uniform to create a sense of unity, professionalism, and discipline at my School.
- I will remain at School until dismissal.
- I will complete my homework every evening and to the best of my ability.
- I will attend required tutoring sessions after school as assigned.
- I will attend Summer Academy in July if it is necessary for promotion or success.
- I will share reports of my academic and behavioral progress with my family whenever I am asked.
- I will abide by the rules contained in this DPPS Handbook.
- I will ask appropriately for clarification if I am confused about why something is important. I will remember that my teachers and my School want what is best for me.
- I will respect all health and safety rules relating to COVID-19 and other health threats and do my part to keep the School environment safe and minimize risks.
- I will use DISCIPLINE to complete my homework, prepare for assessments, arrive at School on time, and wear the proper uniform.
- I will act with RESPECT towards my peers, my teachers, all community members, and all School property.
- I will show ENTHUSIASM in all that I do – learning in class, participating in after-school activities, attending a field trip, or presenting in front of the School.
- I will show ACCOUNTABILITY by admitting when I have made a mistake and by not blaming other people for my actions.
- I will strive for MATURITY in my actions and thoughts, which means figuring out the right thing to do and doing it even when no one is watching.

*I am responsible for my own behavior and I will follow my teachers' directions to the best of my abilities.*

## **Families**

We fully commit to Democracy Prep in the following ways:

- We will work with School staff to build a strong partnership between family and Democracy Prep in order to fulfill the Democracy Prep mission for each scholar.
- Our family will ensure our scholar arrives at School on time or before the start of the scheduled school day Monday through Friday and for any required Saturday Academy.
- We will pick our scholar up on time each day.
- We will make arrangements so that our child can remain at Democracy Prep until they are dismissed.
- We will make arrangements so that our child can attend any and all required after school activities and provide documentation when necessary family affairs conflict with detention or School events.
- We will ensure our scholar takes part in Summer Academy if required or recommended to ensure their preparation for the next grade.
- We will check homework and behavior logs nightly and always support our child's learning in the best way we know how. We will reach out to the School if we need help meeting this expectation.
- We will review all communications from Democracy Prep and our child's teachers, check and assist with homework and review planners nightly, encourage our child to call their teachers for help when necessary, and make sure that our child reads every night.

- We will call our child's teachers when we have a concern about our child's academic or behavioral performance or progress.
- We will support the School's civic initiatives by being a registered voter (when eligible).
- We will make ourselves available to the School, attend as many School events as we are able, and be in close contact with our child's teachers.
- We will volunteer to support Democracy Prep when our schedules permit.
- We will provide the School with our most up-to-date contact information.
- We will allow our child to participate in field trips if they have earned them.
- We will ensure our child understands and follows the School's attendance, tardiness, and uniform policies.
- We will assume good intentions of Democracy Prep staff members, understanding that they, too, want what is best for our my child.
- We will collaborate with Democracy Prep in enforcing the School rules so as to protect the safety, interest, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.
- We will take necessary steps if our scholar is struggling socially, emotionally, or academically, including, but not limited to, sitting in our child's classroom, picking up our child in an emergency, and getting outside medical care or evaluations with the support of the School.
- We are committed to ensuring that the school environment remains safe despite COVID-19 and other health challenges by following school rules about health, safety and remote instruction as needed.

*By working with Democracy Prep, we are building a partnership that prepares our children for success in scholarship, citizenship, and humanity. Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause a reteaching of commitments, and if deemed necessary, appropriate age level consequences that may lead to the loss of various privileges at Democracy Prep for scholars.*

## BASIC OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AT OUR SCHOOLS

### Arrival and Dismissal

Arriving to School on time and dismissing from School when the day is complete are crucial to laying the foundation for academic success. Being on time also communicates important values. We expect all of our scholars to be punctual and believe that participating in the entire school day shows accountability, discipline, and respect. Scholars are always expected to arrive on time for School and for School events and must immediately enter the School building upon their arrival. A scholar will receive an appropriate consequence each time they are tardy. Repeated infractions will result in further consequences.

Please note that Democracy Prep teachers are not available after dismissal hours to supervise scholars. Please also note that the times below are subject to minor revision based on the individual School within NY.

Please note that the staggered schedule is to accommodate families having scholars at multiple DP elementary schools, and to ensure a bussing schedule can drop-off and pick-up scholars in a timely manner.

School	ARRIVAL	DISMISSAL
<b>BPES</b> <b>DPEES</b> <b>DPHE</b>	7:30-7:45 am	3:15 pm M-Th 12:45-1:00 pm F
<b>HPE</b>	7:50-8:05 am	3:35 pm M-Th 12:45-1:00 pm F

*Please note that scholars arriving late will not have time to eat a full breakfast and may not be provided with a breakfast by the School.*

### Dismissal Walk Waiver Policy:

- K-3rd grade scholars may NOT walk home on their own.
- K-3rd grade scholars may walk home with a sibling or other approved family member who is 9 years old or older (4th grade scholar or older).
- 4th and 5th grade scholars may walk home on their own as long as you have a signed walk waiver from a parent.

### Early Dismissal:

- Scholars may only dismiss early if an approved parent/guardian comes to the School and signs them out in person in the main office.
- Scholars may NOT be dismissed early by phone or via a written note from a parent.

### Dismissal Window:

Parents may NOT pick up their child early from School in the 30-minute window leading up to dismissal as this is too taxing on the Operations Team at each School to orchestrate. It is of utmost importance that we ensure the safety of all of our scholars and that we know how each of our scholars are getting home, regardless of whether they are in Kindergarten or 10th grade. For these reasons, we cannot allow parents to pick up their children early when it is too close to the end of the school day. Instead, families should wait in the lobby area for their child or to wait outside at the dismissal gate until their children are dismissed at the regular dismissal time.



### **Out of School Suspensions:**

The above early dismissal policy applies to suspensions as well. This means for all scholars who have received an out-of-school suspension, an approved parent/guardian **MUST** come up to the School to pick up the scholar and sign them out. DREAM Coaches and School leadership will **NOT** release a scholar from the building with mere verbal consent by phone OR with written consent via email or text.

### **Transportation:**

Democracy Prep will help to ensure safe transportation as per New York State or New York City regulations. All requests or concerns regarding transportation must be submitted in writing to our Administrative Manager or Operations Manager. The School will provide busing for scholars to travel to/from School if required under an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”).

### **DROP-OFF at Democracy Prep:**

Doors open for scholars at 7:30am at BPES, DPEES, & DPHE, and at 7:50am at HPE. After 7:45am at BPES, DPEES, & DPHE and after 8:05am at HPE, scholars will be considered late. Please do not leave your child unattended outside the school prior to the beginning of the drop-off window.

### **PICK-UP at Democracy Prep:**

Regular dismissal Monday through Thursday is at 3:15pm at BPES, DPEES, & DPHE and at 3:35pm at HPE, and in the 12:45-1:00pm window at all NY elementary schools on Friday. Please arrive early so that scholars are dismissed on time, allowing teachers an opportunity to prepare for the next school day. All escorts picking up scholars must be on the approved escort list provided by the family prior to the school year, and ID will be checked the first time any escort picks up a scholar and may be checked thereafter. If you are picking up a scholar who is not yours, please make sure you are authorized to pick up that scholar. Siblings of scholars must be in at least the fourth grade to pick up siblings in grades PK-2.

### **BUS PICK-UP**

Parents must arrange for any child riding the bus to be picked up promptly at the stop. Parents who fail to pick up their child from the bus stop are putting their child in danger. Failure by a family to pick up their child at the bus stop will be considered neglect as defined later in this section of the Handbook and will, after collaborative attempts to resolve the issue, result in the notification of appropriate authorities.

### **CHANGES TO SCHOLAR TRANSPORTATION**

Please contact the School *at least one hour prior to dismissal* if you have made changes to your scholar’s transportation. The Receptionist will communicate any transportation changes to homeroom teachers.

### **School Closings**

Democracy Prep generally follows the same calendar for weather-related emergencies as the NYC Department of Education. Families will receive an automated call from the School notifying them of any weather-related closings.

### **Food and Meals**

Democracy Prep participates in the National School Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced-price lunches to eligible scholars. Applications and eligibility criteria are provided to all parents, and applications are required to be completed by all families every year.

A healthy breakfast and snack is available each day for DPPS scholars. Scholars must adhere to the School rules regarding appropriate time and place to eat any food items not provided by the School.

Lunch is available for scholars five days a week. Lunch choices may vary by School. Lunch is available for all scholars free of cost. However, families may still be required to complete free and reduced-price lunch eligibility paperwork in order to satisfy accountability requirements.

Parents are responsible for informing the School of any allergies that their scholars may have prior to the school year.

### Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is vital for the educational well-being of individual scholars and the Democracy Prep community. Parents and guardians are expected to ensure that their child attends School every day and are strongly discouraged from scheduling appointments for their children during the School hours. **If your child must be absent due to illness or an emergency, please contact the School with as much advance notice as possible, and no later than 7:30 a.m. on the day of the absence.** Arrangements should be made to pick up homework. In order for the absence to be verified, please afford the School as much advance notice as possible and also provide documentation within five (5) days of the absence explaining the nature of the sickness or emergency (e.g. a doctor's note or a detailed letter including the date(s) and reason for the absence).

Excessive undocumented absences (10 or more) in a year may lead to mandatory Summer Academy in order to secure promotion to the next grade, and may possibly result in retention. A record of all absences and absence notes will be maintained by the School and consulted if retention becomes a possibility.

Excessive absences, even when documented and verified, will result in parents and guardians being asked to meet with School officials. Democracy Prep also reserves the right to require scholars who have accumulated in excess of ten absences during the School year to make up all lost instructional time during Summer Academy irrespective of whether the absences are documented. Scholars who are absent will not receive DREAM Dollars for missed days.

### Attendance – Consequences for Absences

While scholars with superlative attendance records receive recognition for their discipline, accountability, and maturity, those who fail to meet expectations receive appropriate consequences.

**No Absences in a Trimester:** The scholar and family are congratulated and recognized for exceptional attendance and commitment to education.

**Three Absences in a Trimester:** Democracy Prep considers three absences in a single trimester a serious issue. When this occurs, the School reserves the right to notify the scholar's parent/guardian, and may require further steps such as family participation in formal attendance meetings and creation of shared attendance "action plans."

**Six Absences in a Year:** When a scholar accumulates six absences in a year, Democracy Prep reserves the right to call the scholar's parent/guardian to the School to meet with the social worker and/or School principal and/or Democracy Prep staff. At such a meeting, the team will discuss any barriers to attendance and to develop an attendance action plan.

**Ten or More Absences in a Year:** If a scholar is absent ten or more times in a year, the scholar may be considered a truant. When this occurs, the scholar is at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. The parent/guardian will be called to the School to meet with the social worker and School leadership. Any scholar with ten or more absences will be required to recover any lost instructional time during Summer Academy. Additionally, the School principal reserves the right to retain any scholar who misses ten or more

days of School. **Finally, a report may be filed with the New York City Administration for Children's Services or the New York State Office of Children and Family Services due to excessive absence from School.**

***Twenty Absences in a Year:*** If a scholar is absent twenty times in a year, the scholar may be considered a habitual truant. At this point, the School administration may file a written complaint with a relevant court or child services agency alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that their family has service needs. The Board of Trustees or its designee will submit an annual report to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services that reports the number of habitual truants at its School.

#### Attendance – Tardiness and Early Dismissal

Arriving to School on time and remaining for the full school day are key to each scholar's success — at School and in life. At Democracy Prep, learning begins the moment scholars walk in the door and continues to dismissal. Scholars who are late or leave before the close of the school day miss essential instruction, disrupt the learning of other scholars, and risk falling behind on our ambitious curriculum.

#### Definition of Tardiness

Our doors open at 7:30 a.m. each morning. Scholars must arrive between 7:30 and 7:45 a.m. Scholars arriving after 7:45 a.m. are considered tardy. In cases when a School bus arrives late, those scholars riding the bus are not considered tardy.

#### Consequences for Tardiness and Early Dismissals

The following is an outline of consequences for tardiness and early dismissals:

***No Tardies or Early Dismissals in a Trimester*** – The scholar and family are congratulated and recognized for being “on time” and for their commitment to education.

***Three Tardies or Early Dismissals in a Trimester*** – If a scholar arrives late or is released early three times in a Trimester, it is considered a serious issue. Should this occur, the School reserves the right to call the parent/guardian to discuss the problem and develop an action plan.

***Seven or More Tardies or Early Dismissals in a Year*** – Should excessive tardiness or early dismissals before the end of the School day occur, the School reserves the right to call the parent/guardian to the School to meet with a social worker, the Administrative Manager and/or School principal. At such a meeting, the team will discuss any barriers to on-time arrival and dismissal and develop an “On Time” plan, or — if such a plan is already in place — modify or reinforce the plan as needed.

Excessive tardiness and early dismissal mean lost instructional time and may place a scholar at risk of not being promoted to the next grade.

#### Educational Neglect

Habitual absence significantly harms a scholar's educational progress. Democracy Prep is required to file a report with the State Central Registrar when a parent or guardian fails to ensure their scholar's prompt and regular attendance in School or keeps a scholar out of School for impermissible reasons to the detriment of the scholar's education. Democracy Prep reserves the right to notify the appropriate authorities about parents who exhibit a pattern of leaving their scholar at School after dismissal.

#### Scholar Uniform

Uniforms create a sense of community, pride, unity and equity. Uniforms promote a sense of equality of dress within the building and eliminate distractions associated with clothing, while still allowing

opportunities that promote self-identity. Uniforms are also an accessible, low cost, and low maintenance option for scholars and families

The Democracy Prep uniform always includes the required shirt/pants/belt or jumper and socks/shoes. Shoes must be black. Belts must be solid black. Glasses must be worn by scholars who need glasses. Jewelry is limited to simple earrings and watches. Necklaces must be worn underneath the shirt. No bracelets or rings of any kind may be worn. We strongly advise not having fake fingernails or colored nail polish, and reserve the right to not allow scholars to enter class if such items cause a distraction to learning. For details regarding the required uniform, please see *Appendix A*.

In case an “accident” occurs for our youngest scholars, we strongly recommend families keep a spare pair of clean slacks and underwear in the child’s book bag. If a scholar needs to borrow a pair of slacks from the School, families are expected to clean and return the slacks within 48 hours.

### Scholar Supplies

Democracy Prep makes every effort to equip scholars with the supplies they need for the start of the year. In order to prepare scholars to complete nightly homework, **families should provide a non-distracting place to study and have the following supplies at home:**

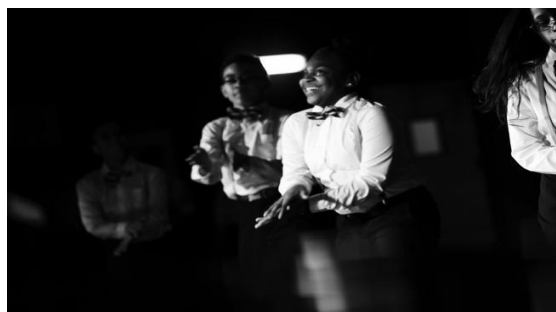
- paper
- pencils
- pencil sharpener
- eraser
- ruler
- crayons, markers and colored pencils
- highlighter
- glue sticks
- scissors
- protractor (grades 4 and 5)

Scholars may be asked to replace any supplies that become worn down or depleted throughout the year. Scholars must also maintain their binders, folders and other organizational supplies with high standards of neatness and cleanliness. Democracy Prep expects its scholars to show respect for their belongings, whether they were purchased by their family or by the School. Scholars are allowed to have rolling book bags, but for safety concerns, book bags may not be rolled inside the building.

Scholars must be prepared each day with the required supplies including homework and handouts, appropriate writing utensils, and independent reading books. Failure to be prepared with materials will result in appropriate consequences.

### Remote Learning Behavior Expectations

In order to continue to provide a structured learning environment, it is important for all scholars to continue to follow the Code of Conduct, even while the School is providing instruction in a remote or hybrid setting due to flare ups of COVID-19 or health concerns.



## SCHOLAR EXPECTATIONS AND RIGHTS

### Personal Belongings

Democracy Prep Public Schools are rigorous but joyful settings where community and belonging are valued. Personal belongings that distract from the safe and respectful environment are not permitted.

Examples of items not allowed in Democracy Prep schools include:

- gum (unless as a recognized academic or behavioral modification or support) and candy of any kind;
- permanent markers of any kind;
- real, toy, or model weapons including pocket knives, X-acto knives, box cutters, water guns, and pepper spray (note: this is not an exhaustive list)
- any illegal substance or inappropriate drug paraphernalia (including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, hookah pens, alcohol, or any other substance not mentioned directly here);
- toys including stuffed animals, dolls, fidget spinners or other toys not necessary for school work (unless as a recognized academic or behavioral modification or support);
- materials (e.g. songs, papers, lyrics, art, or notes) that contain inappropriate or offensive language, images or suggestions; and
- fireworks, sparklers, poppers, lighters, snappers, fountains, bottle rockets, and any other explosive devices.

Any of the items in the list above may be confiscated at the discretion of the School principal and not returned until a parent or guardian meets with School leadership. **Unless determined otherwise by the School principal, all confiscated electronics must be picked up by parent/guardian.**

**Note:** Cell phones, radios, iPods, Apple watches, portable gaming systems, smartwatches, and other non-instructional electronic devices must be turned off and put away before entering the School property, unless explicit permission has been given by the School principal. Any electronic equipment used without permission may be confiscated.

Scholars may bring cell phones to School for safety reasons, but phones may never be turned on or used in the School building without explicit permission and supervision from a staff team member. Some schools will use the Yondr system to maintain this expectation, while others may use an alternative system to do so. In either case, cell phones must be completely turned off and not used throughout the day without explicit permission by a DREAM Team member. Failure to comply with this expectation may result in confiscation or another consequence.

### Scholar-Family Contact During the Day

Except in the case of an emergency, scholars will not be able to receive messages from parents or to transmit messages to parents during the School day. Scholars will only be given permission to use the School phone in cases of emergency or at the School's discretion.

### Search of Scholar Belongings

Democracy Prep must maintain a safe and orderly environment for all our scholars and staff. In order to do so, the School reserves the right to search any and all persons or belongings on School property for illicit material. Such searches can be either random or with reasonable suspicion and may include a scholar's person, backpack, pockets, lockers, cell phones, other belongings, etc.

### Book Borrowing at Democracy Prep Public Schools

Democracy Prep is extremely proud of how much our scholars love books. We are also proud of our book collections. In order for the collections to be maintained, they must be respected. Scholars must be accountable for any books they have borrowed and must return them in a timely manner and in the same condition as when borrowed. Damage to books may result in loss of book borrowing privileges, financial responsibility for the book, or community service.

#### Computer/Internet/Email Acceptable Use Policy

This policy outlines guidelines for responsible use of Democracy Prep's Information Technology, and is designed to protect Democracy Prep's information and scholars from the possible consequences of inappropriate use of Democracy Prep Information Technology. The term "Democracy Prep Information Technology" as used herein includes, but is not limited to, Democracy Prep computers (desktop and laptop), networks (wired and wireless), telecommunications devices (fixed and wireless), facsimile machines, photocopiers, printers, software, storage media (disks, CDs, USB drives), and other technologies that may be provided to Users by Democracy Prep for use in the course of a Democracy Prep education.

Democracy Prep Information Technology provides critical support to Democracy Prep and its scholars in the achievement of the Democracy Prep's mission, and all Users of Democracy Prep Information Technology are expected to use it responsibly and in compliance with Democracy Prep policies and applicable law.

The Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA") is a federal law enacted by Congress to address concerns about access to the Internet and other information. Under CIPA, schools must certify that they have certain Internet safety measures in place. These include measures to block or filter pictures that

1. are obscene,
2. contain child pornography, or
3. when computers with Internet access are used by minors, are harmful to minors.

Schools subject to CIPA must adopt a policy such as this to monitor online activities of minors and to address

1. access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web,
2. the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications,
3. unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online,
4. unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors, and
5. restricting minors' access to harmful materials.

Democracy Prep Public Schools complies with CIPA by deploying a Web content filtering which categorizes internet sites and sends updates to DPPS site-based hardware. A process is in place for changing the categorization of web sites to increase internet safety and security for our scholars. The following categorizations are currently in place:

- Obscenity and Pornography Filtering
- Accurate Web Filtering
- Filtering of Search Engine Images
- Online Activity Monitoring and Reporting

#### **Privacy and Monitoring**

Users should have no expectation of privacy while using Democracy Prep Information Technology. All communications sent, received, transmitted or stored on Democracy Prep Information Technology are the property of Democracy Prep. In order to implement the Democracy Prep information security program effectively and enforce Democracy Prep policies, Democracy Prep must have the ability to monitor the use

of Democracy Prep Information Technology. Democracy Prep may monitor any activity on Democracy Prep Information Technology and Users should use Democracy Prep Information Technology accordingly. Authorized Democracy Prep staff may disclose, monitor, access, review, copy, store, move, edit, delete, or otherwise manipulate any electronic information residing on Democracy Prep Information Technology as is necessary to allow for the proper functioning of Democracy Prep Information Technology, compliance with Democracy Prep policies and applicable law, or for any other appropriate purpose.

### **Prohibited Activity**

Democracy Prep Information Technology shall not be used to engage in illegal, threatening, discriminatory, defamatory, slanderous, obscene, or harassing activity, including, but not limited to, cyberbullying. “Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, text messaging device and personal digital assistant. Democracy Prep Information Technology may not be used to solicit for any reason, or for sending mass emails (“spamming”).

### **Intellectual Property and Licensing**

Users of Democracy Prep Information Technology must not infringe on intellectual property rights, copyrights, trademarks, or other licensing restrictions. Users must not illegally copy software, data, or other information without the express permission of its owner. Users who have questions about the licensing arrangement for any Democracy Prep Information Technology should direct questions to the Information Technology department.

### **Software Installation**

Only software approved by Democracy Prep may be installed on Democracy Prep Information Technology. Users who wish to have software installed on Democracy Prep Information Technology should direct requests to the Information Technology department and should not install any software on Democracy Prep Information Technology without express permission.

### **Malicious Code and Viruses**

Users may not knowingly create, execute, forward, or introduce any malicious computer code (e.g., viruses, Trojans, worms) into Democracy Prep Information Technology. Democracy Prep provides software tools that are designed to assist in the protection of Democracy Prep Information Technology from malicious code, but Users still must be alert and take appropriate steps to limit the risk of malicious code attacks. Users may not disable any anti-virus or any other security software. If a User suspects a malicious code attack, they should contact the Information Technology team immediately.

### **Use of E-mail and Instant Messaging Technology and Electronic Communications**

Electronic communications such as e-mail and instant messages (collectively, “Electronic Messaging”) must be treated carefully. These electronic messages can be misdirected or misinterpreted causing damage to Democracy Prep, its employees, students, and others. Democracy Prep e-mail and instant messaging technology do not provide data privacy while in transit over other, non-Democracy Prep networks. Users are not to use Electronic Messaging, other than those that are internal to Democracy Prep, to send or receive sensitive information that requires privacy protections.

Users should consider the following guidance when using Electronic Messaging:

- demonstrate the same respect when using Electronic Messaging as you use communicating verbally or in a more formal written document such as a memorandum or letter;
- do not forward chain or “spam” messages;

- keep personal messages to a minimum, and be mindful of the fact that even personal messages from Democracy Prep accounts may be viewed as statements authorized or made by or on behalf of Democracy Prep, particularly when Democracy Prep's name or a User's title appears in the message's return address or in its closing; and
- do not send hateful, angry, or otherwise inappropriate messages.

### **Protection of Credentials**

Users should exercise their best efforts to protect their Democracy Prep passwords from disclosure and prevent unauthorized access to Democracy Prep Information Technology. Accounts and passwords are for individual use only. Users may not share passwords or accounts with anyone else. Any activity on a User's account will be the responsibility of the User.

### **Enforcement**

Appropriate action may be taken against a User if it is found that the User violated this policy. Discipline may range in severity as provided elsewhere in this Student & Family Handbook. Further, if appropriate, a User's privileges regarding and access to Democracy Prep Information Technology may be revoked or limited without notice at the sole discretion of Democracy Prep.

### Internet Content Filtering Policy

#### *Undesirable Materials*

Democracy Prep will take all possible precautions to restrict access to undesirable materials including, but not limited to, installing content filtering software/hardware solutions on its network or using an Internet provider that uses content filtering software on its equipment to screen all Internet websites by URL and/or by keyword search. However, scholars must also accept responsibility for restricting their own access to these materials. Scholars who gain access to undesirable Internet materials must report these materials to their teacher immediately.

#### *Security*

Scholars must not allow others to use their network accounts. Designated School officials may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect files stored on School servers to be private.

**SCHOLARS SHOULD HAVE NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY IN ANYTHING THEY CREATE, STORE, SEND, RECEIVE, OR DISPLAY ON OR OVER DEMOCRACY PREP'S CIS, INCLUDING THEIR PERSONAL FILES OR ANY OF THEIR USE OF THESE SYSTEMS, OR WHILE PRESENT ON DEMOCRACY PREP GROUNDS.**

Democracy Prep reserves the right to access, view, record, check, receive, monitor, track, log, store, and otherwise inspect and utilize any or all Democracy Prep CIS, and to monitor and allocate filespace. Users of Democracy Prep's CIS who transmit or receive communications and information shall be deemed to have consented to having the content of any such communications accessed, viewed, recorded, checked, received, monitored, tracked, logged, stored, and otherwise inspected or utilized by Democracy Prep.

Passwords and message delete functions do not restrict Democracy Prep's ability or right to access such communications or information. Democracy Prep further reserves the right to allocate file server space as it deems appropriate.



### *Email*

Only School-approved email usage will be allowed on School premises. Scholars must receive explicit permission from their teacher to engage in any other email activity.

### *Downloading*

Downloading anything from the Internet without approval from a member of the DREAM Team is not allowed.

### Social Media Policy

When used inappropriately, social media can transform from a powerful educational tool that allows scholars to connect, communicate, and access a wealth of informational resources into the source of serious long-term consequences. College admissions officers and prospective employers will not hesitate to use any social media missteps — even those made when a scholar is quite young — when considering an individual's candidacy for admission or employment. For Democracy Prep scholars to succeed in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship in a hypercompetitive environment, it is imperative that they maintain digital footprints as impressive as their academic records of achievement.

In recognition of both the educational purpose that social media can serve and the necessity of certain restrictions, this policy is designed to foster the responsible and appropriate use of social media at Democracy Prep Public Schools. DPPS defines “social media” as “any method of communication in cyberspace.” For the purposes of this policy, this includes, but is not limited to, any website, program or application that involves Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, and the sharing or posting of photographs, pictures or videos and the rating or tagging of the same. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, the following examples: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wikipedia, Skype, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Bebo, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Musical.ly and other platforms not explicitly listed or yet to be invented.

This social media policy applies any time scholars are on School grounds, using School property, under the supervision of School authority, or using social media anywhere in a manner that endangers a scholar's or staff member's physical or emotional safety, security, or well-being and materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the School. Such activity may include, but is not limited to, threats, ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, drug or alcohol related content, content of a sexual nature, and content involving violence. Scholars are responsible for their own behavior when communicating with social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications that they transmit or post or are transmitted and posted on their accounts. Scholars may not disrupt the School's learning atmosphere, educational programs, or activities, and may not violate the rights of others. What would be considered inappropriate in the School or classroom is inappropriate online. This policy does not apply to a scholar's private use of social media that in no way involves or impacts upon Democracy Prep, staff, or other scholars, though Democracy Prep strongly encourages all scholars to make intelligent and safe choices when using social media, and we encourage families to monitor scholars appropriately at home when using social media.

Democracy Prep expressly reserves the right both to monitor scholar use of social media while present on Democracy Prep grounds, regardless of whether such use is done using Democracy Prep resources or the scholars own personal resources, and to monitor and inspect any device brought onto School grounds for compliance with this policy.

Social media may only be used with the explicit permission of a DREAM Team member and for educationally related purposes while on Democracy Prep grounds. Social media is not to be used, at any time when on School grounds or when participating in a School activity, to fraternize with any other

individual or to communicate non-educational messages or information. In accordance with Democracy Prep Public Schools Code of Conduct, scholars are prohibited from posting or publishing any insensitive or inappropriate information or content on any social media and from viewing any insensitive or inappropriate social media content. Should a scholar at any time post, publish, or view such social media content, they must notify a teacher or administrator immediately. Immediately reporting the posting, publishing or viewing of such inappropriate content will be given significant weight in considering the level of discipline issued.

***Scholars are prohibited from communicating with teachers, administrators, staff members, or contracted School workers via social media. The only permissible electronic method of email communication with a Democracy Prep employee or contractor is through emailing the teacher or administrator at their Democracy Prep email account.***

Scholars are prohibited from impersonating or assuming the identity of any other individual while using social media. Scholars are prohibited from posting or publishing any information about themselves or another individual that is confidential or of a private nature. This includes posting information such as last names, school names, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, private photographs or videos that were sent to them directly or via another Democracy Prep or non-Democracy Prep scholar, other contact information, or any other information a scholar might reasonably expect another individual to want to keep private. Scholars are responsible for whatever is posted from their individual account, so should never share personal log-in information.

Scholars are prohibited from using any device capable of capturing video, pictures, or audio to record or take pictures of any other individual without their express consent and permission. Scholars are not allowed to “tag” an individual in a picture or recording without their express consent and permission. Scholars must immediately comply with any request that infringing materials be removed from any social media platform.

Scholars should always be mindful of the fact that material posted or published online will be public for a very long time and may perhaps become a permanent part of their record. Scholars should be sensitive of others, should avoid posting or publishing anything distasteful, and should not post or publish anything they would not be willing to say to an individual in person.



## HEALTH POLICIES AND ATTENDANCE IMPLICATIONS

Scholars must be in attendance in order to achieve academic success. To that end, DPPS has strict policies regarding absences, late arrivals and early dismissals for appointments. Democracy Prep strongly encourages all doctors' appointments to be scheduled outside of School hours, as every late arrival, early dismissal, and absence will have a detrimental effect on a scholar's academic progress. If a scholar has a doctor's appointment for which they must leave the School early, the parent or guardian must notify the School with as much advance notice as possible (no less than 24 hours) and provide proper and adequate documentation to the School upon the scholar's return.

Scholars should not miss a full day of School for a doctor's appointment. **In the event that a doctor's appointment cannot be scheduled after School or on an early dismissal day, scholars should come to School prior to and following all appointments.** Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the Commitment to Excellence.

### Medication While at School

Without written approval from the licensed healthcare practitioner and parental consent on the Medication Administration form, scholars are not permitted to self-administer medication. Parents must ensure that all medications are transferred into the custody of either the School nurse or a trained School employee along with an Authorization to Dispense Medication form. If a scholar requires medication of any kind, including both prescription and over-the-counter medication (such as, but not limited to: asthma inhalers, prescription drugs, insulin, Sudafed, Benadryl and generic equivalents, Tylenol and generic equivalents, Advil and generic equivalents, aspirin, stomach remedies):

- Parents must submit a Medication Administration form including authorization from a licensed healthcare practitioner.
- Prescription medications must be given to the nurse or to a trained School employee by a parent or responsible person in the original container with the prescription label.
- Over-the-counter medications must be given in the original sealed container or box. The School cannot accept partially used or opened over-the-counter medications.
- (Over the-counter medications can have adverse effects and are therefore subject to the same restrictions as prescription medications.)

If School personnel find any scholar in possession of medication, such medication shall be promptly delivered to the receptionist, and the scholar's parent will be contacted to retrieve it or transfer the medication to the custody of the nurse or trained School employee using the aforementioned process. The scholar may be subject to disciplinary action for being in possession of unauthorized medication.

Any student who is required to carry an emergency asthma inhaler, an epinephrine auto-injector, or insulin, glucagon or other diabetes supplies with them must provide:

- A Medication Administration form stating that the student needs to carry the inhaler, injector, or diabetes supplies with them and is permitted to self-administer if applicable; and
- A second inhaler, injector, or diabetes supplies to be kept in the nurse's office

### Immunization

State law where applicable requires that all children entering School must provide proof of immunization against DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis), IPV/OPV, MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Meningococcal Disease, and Varicella (chicken pox). These requirements can be waived only if a properly signed health exemption is filed with the School. All scholars must have on file proof of the required immunizations before they can be enrolled at a DPPS School. Failure to comply with immunization requirements may result in exclusion from School and missed school days.

## SCHOLAR LIFE

### Academic Program

The Democracy Prep Public Schools Core Curriculum includes:

- **LANGUAGE ARTS:** A robust language arts program that integrates reading, writing and foundational skills. Scholars will have opportunities to learn in a whole class and small group setting, while practicing the many integrated skills necessary to become strong readers, writers, and thinkers.
- **MATH:** More than an hour of Math each day focused on fluency and automaticity with math facts, problem solving, logic, and critical thinking.
- **SCIENCE:** Scholars will engage in a variety of hands-on, inquiry-based lessons that explore such topics as earth sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, and technology.
- **CIVICS/SOCIAL STUDIES:** Every scholar at Democracy Prep will study geography, government, and history's impact on our communities and our world.
- **SPECIALS:** Every DPPS Elementary Scholar participates in electives such as Music, Dance, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Physical Education on a regular basis.

### Our Instructional Model

Our success as a network of Schools lies partially in the clear and structured routines found in every Democracy Prep classroom. Our instructional model consists of measurable aims, direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice. Additionally, each class has regular and frequent assessments that measure each scholar's level of mastery with the content and skills.

### Homework

Homework is an important element of our model and is essential for academic success. Daily homework assignments give scholars an opportunity each night to practice the skills and content learned in class. Democracy Prep staff hold scholars to high levels of accountability with regards to homework, evaluate homework based on neatness and accuracy, and check homework completion each day. Homework MAY contribute to a scholar's final evaluation or report card. Parents must sign their scholars' homework logs and reading logs on a nightly basis.

At home, scholars must have a quiet place to complete homework and review class work. Democracy Prep staff members are available in person during regular School hours and via Democracy Prep email and cell phone up until 9 p.m. each evening to answer homework questions.

*Democracy Prep believes that the reward for hard work is an opportunity to be challenged even more. Scholars who show they are capable of excelling in one area will be challenged to excel in other areas.*

Scholars are accountable for completing all assigned work. A scholar's ability to make up work and receive credit may be conditioned on the documentation surrounding an absence. If a scholar is absent, their homework should be turned in the day the scholar returns. If the scholar fails to do the assignment it will be marked as incomplete. Scholars who are absent will receive the work they missed on the day that they return. This work must be completed in the next three days. Scholars who are suspended may come to School in full uniform to collect their homework to avoid late marks. Scholars should call the School ahead of time to ensure work is ready for them to pick up.

### Assessments

Democracy Prep prepares scholars to succeed on standardized tests required for promotion, high school graduation, and college entrance and success. Teachers monitor scholar progress using a variety of

teacher-created and standardized tools. Some of the assessments that we use include individual reading assessments, interim assessments, and regular quizzes and exams. To track scholar growth and mastery in specific content areas, DPPS administers state standards-aligned assessments at the beginning and end of each academic year. Scholars in third through fifth grade also take the New York State Math and English Language Arts exams.

### Town Hall

Once each week, Democracy Prep's School community comes together as a Team and Family to celebrate its accomplishments for the week. The purposes of Town Hall are to

- celebrate scholars' academic achievement;
- recognize individual scholar accomplishment;
- build community through performances, skits, songs and chants;
- bring parents, families, and members of the Democracy Prep community together to see what our scholars are learning and mastering each week; and
- build School identity and cohesiveness.

Parents are often welcome to attend Town Hall. Invitations and open dates will be provided to families.

### Promotion to the Next Grade

Democracy Prep has high promotional standards. It is not automatically assumed that a scholar will pass from one grade to the next: the scholar must earn promotion by demonstrating mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in their current grade level. A scholar's promotion may be in doubt if they are performing significantly below grade-level standards. Promotion decisions will be based on a scholar's course and exam grades, attendance, homework completion record, adherence to DREAM values, and other measures including teacher observations.

Criteria that also influence a scholar's prospective promotion include accumulating fewer than 10 absences during the school year and consistently adhering to the DREAM values and Democracy Prep behavior standards.

### Consequences for Not Meeting Promotional Criteria

Scholars who do not meet the criteria for promotion may be retained or required to attend Democracy Prep Summer Academy. At the conclusion of Summer Academy, a final decision for promotion will be made and communicated to the family by the School principal.

### Academic Support and Enrichment

Democracy Prep is committed to seeing substantial growth and achievement in every scholar. Therefore, Democracy Prep provides many opportunities for academic support and enrichment. These opportunities may include:

*After-school and Saturday Tutoring.* To improve their academic performance, any scholar may be required to attend tutoring or study sessions after school or on Saturdays at the discretion of School leadership and the classroom teachers. Saturday sessions allow for individualized, targeted instruction. All absences require prior notification and documentation. Failure to provide documentation will result in an appropriate consequence.

*Summer Academy.* Summer Academy is offered to scholars for additional academic support. To improve their academic performance, some scholars may be required to attend Summer Academy in order to be considered for promotion. Summer Academy will provide support in basic skills and may also address

content area gaps. All Summer Academy classes have the goal of closing the achievement gap and have the purpose of ensuring that scholars are performing at or above the expected level.

### Special Needs & English Language Learners

Democracy Prep provides special education services and services for English Language Learners (“ELL”) in accordance with state and federal special education laws and the regulations implementing those laws. The Academic Collaborative Team (“ACT”):

- Maintains all special education records in accordance with state and federal laws;
- Provides specialized instruction and related services in accordance with scholars’ Individual Education Programs, 504 plans, and other educational and behavior plans
- Evaluates and makes eligibility and continuing eligibility determinations in accordance with IDEA classifications;
- Schedules all annual IEP reviews;
- Organizes professional development for teaching staff; and
- Supports teachers in making appropriate curriculum and instruction modifications

Although Democracy Prep offers appropriate accommodations to scholars with disabilities and with language acquisition needs, we modify promotional criteria based on a scholar’s classification only in isolated circumstances.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

This Parent and Family Engagement Policy is available in Spanish and will also be made available in additional languages upon request as required by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) section 1116(b)(1).

This Parent and Family Engagement Policy is made available to all families through the distribution of the Handbook, which is also available on each Democracy Prep Public Schools network School’s website. The Parent and Family Engagement Policy is also made available to the local community through each School’s website as required by ESSA section 1116(b)(1).

Democracy Prep is committed to having families contribute to the academic success of their scholars. As such, we use a variety of methods of communication to report to parents on their children’s progress as required under ESSA section 1116(d)(1)(A) as well as to relay other information. Communication may include:

- Regular Progress Reports: A progress report that includes academic and behavioral updates as well as a brief overview of important School events. Scholars receive a progress report each week. Parents may also access Jupiter, our online grading platform, on their own. Parents may ask their child’s advisor to help them log onto Jupiter in order to view their child’s grades.
- Emailing Lists: Parents may receive email messages including electronic copies of letters, fliers, and forms as well as School and grade level announcements.
- School Website: Parents may access the School’s website for School announcements and event updates.
- Automated Phone System: Parents may receive a pre-recorded message from DPPS for the following reasons:
  - to issue School-wide reminders and updates, including weather-related School closings,
  - to alert families to a scholar’s absence or late arrival,

- to remind families of important documents requiring signatures,
- to inform families of meetings for parents or scholars, or
- to notify families that their scholars are late or have been assigned after-school detentions. Families will be notified by a staff member no later than 12 pm Monday-Friday if your scholar earns the same day after-school detention. This will allow families ample time to make any necessary changes to accommodate your scholar's after-school detention obligation.

### Annual Back to School Night

All families, including families of Title I students, are invited to and encouraged to attend the annual Back to School Night at their child's School. Back to School Night also serves as the Annual Title I Parent Meeting for each Democracy Prep school required under ESSA section 1116(c)(1). Parents and families will be informed at the Annual Title I Parent Meeting of their child's School's participation in Title I and of their rights to be involved in the child's education. Parents will be provided with information about federally funded school programs at the Annual Title I Parent Meeting/Back to School Night, including a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the School, the forms of academic assessment used to measure progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards, as required under ESSA section 1116(c)(4)(B). Parents and families will also be provided materials and training to help them work with their children to improve their children's achievement. Parents are invited to the Annual Title I Parent Meeting/Back to School Night via flyers sent home with students. Parents will have the opportunity to jointly develop the Parent and Family Engagement Policy with educators prior to each school year as required under ESSA section 1116(a)(1). The local education agency (the charter school) will conduct an annual evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy with the involvement of parents, and findings will be used to revise the policy accordingly.

### Phone Calls

Every member of the Democracy Prep DREAM team publishes their cell phone number at the beginning of the year. Scholars and parents are encouraged to call teachers. If a teacher does not return a message within 24 hours, the School principal should be informed. Abuse of the phone numbers of the DREAM team will result in the imposition of appropriate consequences.

### Opportunities for Family Involvement

Democracy Prep is a partnership made up of School leadership, teachers, scholars, and families. Although the job of making decisions about School policy belongs to School leadership, the superintendent, and the CEO, family involvement is not only welcome but also absolutely necessary for the success of the School. The Operations Managers (OMs) (or the equivalent position)—personnel who serve as the necessary link between families and the School—hold regular meetings with parents in order to involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs and all School programs; all families are welcome and encouraged to get involved. Additionally, we rely on our families to support our efforts for civic engagement through:

- Registering to vote (if eligible)
- Assisting with voter registration drives
- Joining scholars and the DREAM Team for primary and election day activities

The School will offer a flexible number of family engagement opportunities, and may provide home visits to families who are not able to engage with the School through School-based events.

Parents and families are invited to provide feedback and comments on the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, school programs, and the School improvement plan at various family engagement events. Meetings,

conferences, and family engagement events will provide regular opportunities for parents and families to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as is practicably possible, as required under ESSA section 1116(c)(4)(C). If the School improvement plan is not satisfactory to families, the School will submit any family comments on the plan when the School makes the plan available to the authorizer as required under ESSA section 1116 (c)(5).

As part of Democracy Prep Public Schools network-wide annual professional development programs, teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, School leadership, and other staff will be educated, in the value and utility of contributions of parents and families, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with families as equal partners, implement and coordinate family programs, and build ties between families and the School, as required under ESSA section 1116(e)(3).

To the extent feasible and appropriate, family engagement programs and activities will be coordinated with other Federal, State, and local programs operated by the School, as required under ESSA section 1116(e)(4).

Information related to School and parent/family programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to parents and families in a format such as flyers that the families can understand, as required under ESSA section 1116(e)(5). All information is translated into Spanish or any other language spoken by parents and families as needed through the use of interpreters.

#### Expectations for Families

Teachers may request mandatory family conferences with families of scholars who are in need of academic and behavioral support. All families are invited to schedule appointments or to stop by to connect with their scholars' teachers. As teachers and School leadership are extremely busy during the school day, family members who stop by without having scheduled an appointment are not guaranteed an opportunity to speak with a DREAM Team member immediately upon their arrival. To avoid this, we underscore the need to schedule an appointment.

Democracy Prep families commit to partnering with the School to:

- reinforce Democracy Prep academic and behavior standards, but share strategies that help your scholar at home
  - o check or ask about homework nightly for completion
  - o help with homework
  - o call teachers with concerns
  - o read and sign all notices sent home by the School
  - o read and respond to family communications when necessary.
  - o respond promptly to disciplinary and academic calls
  - o attend School-wide events as they are targeted for the larger community
  - o pick up report cards and attend trimester conferences

#### Gift Giving

Outside of Teacher Appreciation Week, Democracy Prep discourages parents from giving gifts to individual teachers unless they receive prior approval from the School principal. In lieu of a gift, a handwritten note from a scholar is a more appropriate and powerful way to show appreciation and gratitude. Parents wishing to give to the School should see the School principal for creative ways to show appreciation.

#### Contact Information

At the beginning of the school year, Democracy Prep collects family contact information, including address, parent/guardian phone numbers and emails, and names and phone numbers for additional emergency



contacts. It is important for the School to maintain accurate contact information on file in the case of an emergency and to provide the parent with regular updates regarding the scholars' academic and behavioral performance. It is up to the parent to notify the School immediately if there is a change in contact information.

### Birthdays

The Democracy Prep community celebrates birthdays enthusiastically at Town Hall. Out of fairness to all of our scholars and our desire to ensure an academic environment free of distraction, we ask that parents refrain from visiting scholars on their birthdays and from bringing gifts, balloons and, in light of potential allergies, food for the class. Scholars are required to be in uniform on their birthday.

Through regular conferences, phone calls, and emails, teachers and School leadership shall provide assistance to parents and families in understanding such topics as the challenging State academic standards, State and local assessments, how to monitor a child's progress, and how to work with educators to improve the achievement of their children, as required under ESSA section 1116(e)(1).

### Procedures for Resolution of Parent/Guardian Concerns

Democracy Prep Public Schools is committed to maintaining a strong partnership and ongoing dialogue between its teachers, staff, scholars, and families. If you have a concern about a School policy, academic grade, suspension or discipline decision, or anything else, we welcome your input and encourage you to contact the appropriate staff member at the School. We are committed to addressing the concerns of our families and seeking a resolution that first and foremost benefits the academic development of your child toward success in the college of their choice.

*Informal Complaint Process.* If a parent or guardian has a concern or disagreement about a classroom event, curricular or disciplinary decision, or other academic issue, they should first contact the teacher to attempt to resolve the disagreement through *informal* discussion. If the concern is not adequately resolved, the parent or guardian should request a further meeting. The teacher will contact the School principal and schedule the follow-up conversation. All Democracy Prep staff members are expected to respond to a parent/guardian complaint. Every effort will be made to respond to a parent/guardian complaint as quickly as possible.

*Formal Complaint Process.* If the informal complaint process fails to produce a satisfactory resolution, or if the matter concerns an alleged violation of the School's charter or of applicable law, a parent or guardian may initiate a formal complaint by submitting a letter in writing to the School principal outlining, in detail, the events, policies, or decisions at issue. The School Principal will promptly conduct a thorough investigation into the matter and issue a response in writing detailing his or her findings and recommendations within 30 (thirty) days of receiving the complaint. If the parent or guardian is still not satisfied, he or she may appeal the School principal's determination to the Democracy Prep Public Schools superintendent who will review the matter and respond to the parent or guardian with their determination within 10 (ten) days of receiving the complaint.

*Board of Trustees.* If the parent or guardian remains unsatisfied with the superintendent's determination, the parent or guardian may write to the Board of Trustees to request a review. A designated Board committee will schedule a meeting, at which time the parent will have an opportunity to address his or her concerns. The committee will issue a report on its findings to the Board prior to the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, and the Board will respond to the parent or guardian at that time and may or may not take action as appropriate based on the committee's recommendations.

*Authorizer.* If, after the Board of Trustees responds to the complaint, the parent or guardian believes that the Board has not adequately addressed a complaint that alleges a violation of the School's charter or applicable

law, the parent or guardian may present the complaint to the School's authorizer, which may investigate and respond. The authorizer has the power and duty to take remedial action as appropriate.

Contact Information for  
Authorizer:  
SUNY CSI  
Grievance Desk  
Charter Schools Institute  
41 State St., Suite 700  
Albany, NY 12207  
[charters@suny.edu](mailto:charters@suny.edu)  
518.433.8277 (ext. 2045)



If still not satisfied, the person making the complaint may appeal the matter to the New York State Board of Regents, whose determination shall be final. All complaints brought to the Board of Regents concerning charter schools must be submitted in writing to the State Education Department's Charter School Office, either via mail at: Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Room 5N Mezz, Albany, NY 12234, or via email to: [charterschools@nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@nysed.gov).

## DREAM PRIVILEGES

Although everyone at Democracy Prep works hard for the sake of going to college and changing the world, we also believe that hard work should pay off in opportunities to have fun and enjoy life! Scholars who exhibit the DREAM values every day and who have earned DREAM Dollars will have the opportunity to redeem those dollars through amazing celebrations, trips, college visits, and other fun experiences.

### In-school privileges may include:

- Lunch incentives
- Special DREAM activities
- Classroom celebrations
- Special field trips

### Extended opportunities may include:

- College Tours
- End-of-trimester and end-of-the-year trips

These opportunities encourage our scholars to continue working hard, both on their academics and their behavior. Scholars who regularly live the DREAM values will earn these great opportunities. More importantly, scholars who regularly show DREAM values are learning and practicing the behaviors that will lead to our scholars being responsible citizen scholars, living a life of active citizenship, and place them on the path to the college of their choice.



## CODE OF CONDUCT

Democracy Prep is committed to providing a safe and structured School culture in which scholars can improve their academic achievement. Scholars whose conduct does not meet the School community's clearly defined standards for reasonable and acceptable behavior will not be permitted to disrupt the education of others. Therefore, every misbehavior will result in an appropriate action by the adult to diagnose the scholar's need in the moment, in order to better support and help the scholar to be successful. If the scholar requires additional support, appropriate next steps will be taken. In some cases, consequences will be determined. This is the basis of our scholar Code of Conduct. Supports and appropriate consequences may vary based on the age and grade level of the scholar, the severity of the incident and the frequency with which the incident takes place.

### DEMOCRACY PREP CODE OF CONDUCT:

#### 1. Disrupting the School Environment

**1.1 Arriving late to School or class:** Scholar tardiness disrupts class, inconveniences others, and often results in academic difficulties. Scholars may not be late to School or class.

**1.2 Choosing NOT to attend required School, School functions or School support:** Scholars are required to attend all academic and enrichment classes, assigned consequences, and assigned support opportunities. Scholars are not permitted to leave the building without permission.

**1.3 Misbehaving on the way to or from School:** Our scholars, while in uniform, are our ambassadors to the community and should embody the DREAM values of Democracy Prep. Scholars may not misbehave while traveling to or from School or while engaged in School-sponsored activities, such as field trips or

after-school activities. Misbehavior includes, but is not limited to, using inappropriate language, making excessive noise, touching other scholars, being disrespectful to others, and instigating, encouraging, recording, or promoting others to fight and/or engage in criminal or otherwise inappropriate behavior. Scholars who misbehave on the way to or from School may have to be escorted by a parent or guardian to and from School depending on the severity of the situation, in addition to other consequences or requested support.

**1.4 Access to the Building:** Scholars are not permitted to block access to any room or part of the School building. Scholars may not leave the building through any exits except those officially marked.

**1.5 Leaving the Building Without Permission:** Once a scholar has arrived on campus, they may not leave campus without permission.

**1.6 Violating the Dress Code:** Scholars must be in proper uniform. Only designated clothing items are allowed to be worn in School and must be worn appropriately (according to the School's Dress Code). Parents or guardians may be required to pick up children who are not properly dressed for School or to bring the missing Dress Code item to the School. Scholars will not be permitted to return home to retrieve the necessary items.

**1.7 Gum, Food, and Beverages:** Scholars may not chew or carry gum at any time at Democracy Prep (unless as a recognized academic or behavioral modification or support). Scholars may not eat or drink at unauthorized times or places at Democracy Prep.

**1.8 Hallway Behavior:** Scholars may not disrupt the instructional environment while in the hallway. As a result, hallways at Democracy Prep Schools are silent.

**1.9 Disrupting Class and Preventing Teaching:** Democracy Prep can fulfill its mission only if classrooms are safe and teaching is uninterrupted. Scholars may not intentionally disrupt class with any misbehaviors that distract the teacher or other scholars.

**1.10 Arriving to Class Unprepared:** When class begins, scholars must be prepared and have all necessary materials (books, pencils, portfolio, paper, etc.).

**1.11 Entering or Leaving Classrooms Without Permission:** Scholars may not enter a classroom without permission, nor may they leave a classroom without having obtained a pass. Scholars must report to locations as directed by staff and remain in a designated location.

**1.12 Failing to Complete Homework:** Completing homework is essential to the success of individual scholars and the classroom community. Scholars are expected to complete all of their homework assignments on time.

**1.13 Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Others' Work:** Cheating or copying the work of others (or allowing other scholars to copy work) is unacceptable. This includes any and all talking during exams irrespective of whether the chatter is in reference to the exam. In addition to other disciplinary consequences, both the scholar who copied and the scholar who allowed the copying will receive zeros on the assignment. This offense may result in long-term suspension or expulsion.

**1.14 Failing to Submit a Required Signature:** Scholars are required to secure the signature of a parent/guardian on homework, class assignments and forms when requested by any School staff member.

**1.15 Forgery:** Scholars may not forge a signature.

**1.16 Using Objects as Projectiles:** Scholars may not throw or kick objects inappropriately in School.

**1.17 Lying to a Staff Member:** Honesty is an essential element of personal character and is necessary for the School to support the DREAM values. Scholars are not permitted to lie or attempt to conceal the truth.

**1.18 Being Disrespectful to a Staff Member:** A School cannot function properly if scholars are permitted to be disrespectful towards adults. For that reason, scholars may not be disrespectful towards a staff member or any other adult associated with the School. Disrespect may include, but is not limited to directing the use of foul language at an adult, name calling, or engaging in unwanted or inappropriate communication.

- 1.19 Ignoring or Refusing to Follow a Staff Member's Directions:** Scholars are expected to follow the directions of any staff member the first time and respond in a respectful manner. Ignoring, delaying, or refusing to respond to a staff member's directive is considered an act of defiance and a form of disrespect.
- 1.20 Being Disrespectful to a Scholar:** If scholars do not feel physically and emotionally safe in School, teaching and learning are made more difficult. Therefore, scholars may not be disrespectful toward other scholars. Disrespect may include, but is not limited to directing the use of foul language at another scholar, name calling, or engaging in unwanted or inappropriate communication. Participating in the exchange, posting, or commenting related to another scholar via social media that causes a disruption to the learning environment can be considered bullying or intimidation.
- 1.21 Possession of Inappropriate Property:** Scholars cannot possess any electronic music or game devices in School other than as permitted above. Scholars may not possess any printed images, text, or lyrics that are vulgar, profane, or sexually explicit, or any other items inappropriate for School.
- 1.22 Gambling:** Scholars may not bet money or wager anything on the outcome of a game, contest, or other event.
- 1.23 Filming and Distribution of Media Depicting Code of Conduct Violations:** Scholars may not take, share, or post photographs, pictures, or videos depicting a violation of this Code of Conduct.
- 1.24 Violation of the Computer/Email/Internet Acceptable Use Policy:** Scholars may not violate the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy set forth in this Handbook.

## 2. Physical or Verbal Harm, Inappropriate Touching, and/or Threats

- 2.1 Causing Bodily Harm:** Scholars may not cause physical injury to a scholar, School employee, or another person. Scholars are not permitted to harm or attempt to harm a scholar, School employee, or another person with or without a weapon or dangerous object.
- 2.2 Intending to Cause Physical Injury:** Scholars may not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way that could reasonably cause physical injury to any scholar, School employee, or other members of the community.
- 2.3 Fighting, Unwanted Physical Contact, or Verbal Altercation:** Scholars may not fight with other scholars from Democracy Prep or persons not enrolled at the School. Harassing, pushing, touching, or any form of unwanted physical contact is not tolerated regardless of the cause of the disturbance. Scholars may not engage in verbal altercations, including but not limited to insults, yelling, or words that are reasonably likely to incite a verbal or physical confrontation.
- 2.4 Play-fighting and Threatening:** Play-fighting and/or the use of threats harm the safety of the community. Scholars may not play-fight and/or threaten others playfully or with the intent of intimidating a staff member or scholars.
- 2.5 Setting off False Alarms or Making a Threat:** Scholars may not intentionally set off a false alarm or make a destructive threat.
- 2.6 Engaging in Sexual Activity or Inappropriate Touching:** A scholar may not engage in sexual activity or inappropriate touching of another scholar or themselves in the School building or on the way to and from School.

## 3. Possession or Use of Firearms, Weapons, and/or Dangerous Objects

- 3.1 Possession or Use of a Firearm:** Scholars may not possess or use a firearm.
- 3.2 Possession or Use of a Mock Firearm:** Scholars may not possess or use mock firearms.
- 3.3 Using or Possessing a Weapon or Dangerous Object:** Scholars are not allowed to bring a weapon of any sort to School, use any object in a dangerous or threatening manner, or have an actual weapon or mock weapon on them or their property.
- 3.4 Arson:** Scholars may not set a fire or possess any form of fire-making material, including lighters, matches etc.

#### 4. Possession, Use or Distribution of Controlled Substances, Alcohol, or Tobacco

**4.1 Using or Possessing Drugs or Alcohol:** Scholars may not use, be under the influence, or possess any non-prescribed controlled substance, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. Prescribed and over-the-counter drugs must be delivered to the Nurse or trained School employee by a parent or responsible person with a doctor-signed Authorization to Dispense Medication Form. Scholars may not be in possession of prescribed or over-the-counter drugs.

**4.2 Selling, Possessing, or Transferring Drugs or Alcohol:** Scholars may not sell, distribute, or possess with intent to sell or distribute prescribed or non-prescribed controlled substances.

**4.3 Selling, Possessing, or Transferring Tobacco Products:** Scholars may not sell, distribute, or possess with intent to sell or distribute cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or other tobacco products.

**4.4 Selling or Possessing Mock Controlled Substances, Alcohol or Tobacco:** Scholars may not sell, distribute or possess mock controlled substances, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia.

#### 5. Harassment and Violation of Civil Rights

**5.1 Violating the Civil Rights of Others:** Scholars may not violate the civil rights of others—the fundamental rights of freedom and equality that belong to everyone.

**5.2 Harassment:** Scholars may not make unwanted sexual advances towards or commit sexual harassment of any member of the School community. Harassment or intimidation of any members of the School community on the basis of their racial or ethnic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability is not permitted.

**5.3 Abusive or Profane Language or Treatment:** Scholars may not use abusive, threatening, vulgar, coarse, or degrading language (including racial epithets or sexist or homophobic remarks) in speech or in writing.

**5.4 Bullying and Intimidation:** Scholars may not physically, verbally (through speech or writing), or through technology and/or social media intimidate or bully or attempt to intimidate or bully any member of the School community.

#### 6. Theft or Vandalism

**6.1 Theft, Loss or Destruction of Personal or School Property:** Scholars may not steal, lose, or damage property belonging to someone else or to the School.

**6.2 Mistreatment or Inappropriate Use of School Technology or School Property:** Scholars must treat computers, printers, and other technology with care. Democracy Prep does not tolerate attempts to access the School's files or other inappropriate uses of technology or the Internet. Scholars do not have the right to use School computers to access chat rooms or non-Democracy Prep emails or to access web sites or files that contain profanity, sexually explicit language or pictures, excessively violent themes, and/or other material inappropriate for minors. Scholars are prohibited from using School telephones without permission. In the event of an emergency, scholars may be allowed to use the School telephones, but only at the discretion of School staff members. Staff members will always be the first to reach out to parents and guardians in the event of an emergency or to inform the parent/guardian of an urgent matter. Scholars must not mistreat other School property including but not limited to text and reading books. Writing or marking on any desks or School property is strictly prohibited.

**7. Gang-Related Activity:** Scholars may not engage in any gang-related activity, which shall be defined as any act(s) that promotes gangs or gang-related activities including, but not limited to, (1) communicating either verbally or non-verbally (hand signs, gestures, handshakes, drawings, etc.), to convey membership or affiliation with a gang; (2) defacing School or personal property with gang-related graffiti, symbols or slogans; (3) requiring payment of protection, insurance, or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang-related activity; and (4) soliciting others for gang membership

8. Failure to Comply with School-Imposed Consequences: Scholars must comply with School-imposed consequences. In order for the School to maintain high expectations and a safe and respectful School environment — two vital parts of our School culture — scholars must comply with all consequences assigned including any suspension or disciplinary action.

9. Repeated Violations of the Code of Conduct: As outlined below, repeated violations may result in consequences of greater severity or length at the discretion of the School principal or in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent. Repeated inability to adhere to the School's rules may result in the scholar's removal from the Democracy Prep community.



## THE DREAM DOLLAR SYSTEM

Democracy Prep establishes and maintains a scholar and teacher community that is efficient and orderly, warm and productive. The DREAM Dollar system is one way that our staff, families and scholars can measure their success in internalizing the School’s DREAM values. The DREAM Dollar system is a merit-based system in which scholars are “paid” DREAM Dollars each day they arrive to School on-time, in full uniform, in possession of the necessary materials, and prepared to demonstrate DREAM values. Scholars who go above and beyond the School’s expectations may also earn additional positive DREAM Dollars. When scholars fall short of the expectations established through the supports rendered and eventual Tiered Behavior Management System (the Code of Conduct), they lose a certain amount of DREAM Dollars as a consequence.



The DREAM Dollar system is adapted appropriately based on the emotional and intellectual development of the child. The expectation is that our scholars are participating appropriately in our community and contributing to our joyous, efficient, welcoming, productive, warm, community-based environment. DREAM Dollars are introduced in Kindergarten; each year thereafter, the concept of DREAM Dollars as a measure of behavioral self-management and support, adapted to the grade-level growth and

development trajectory of our scholars.. For example, as scholars develop the ability to manage their own engagement in a classroom setting, scholars are held accountable for remaining engaged in a lesson and asking and answering questions. As scholars grow older, expectations for engagement may change. Below is a list of specific behaviors that may be expected from Democracy Prep scholars, depending on their grade level.

***Please note that this data will be evaluated frequently to celebrate scholars who are excelling and to support those that are struggling.***

DREAM Value	Expectations
<b>Discipline</b>	Dig in and work hard even when it’s tough.
	Remain focused during instructional and independent work time.
	Adhere to a consistent study and reading schedule at home.
<b>Respect</b>	Be respectful with your body language, tone, and proximity when engaging with staff and peers.
	Be kind with your words and your actions.
<b>Enthusiasm</b>	Take academic risks during class, raise your hand regularly, and contribute constructively to whole-class debates and discussions.
	Move with urgency from place to place and from task to task.
<b>Accountability</b>	Apologize and take responsibility for mistakes that you might make.
	Come prepared and organized with all of your materials needed for class each School day.
<b>Maturity</b>	When no one is looking, still behave as if all of your teachers and family were in the room watching and listening to you.



## PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS

At Democracy Prep Public Schools, we are committed to serving all scholars while simultaneously protecting the strong culture that makes our academic gains possible. All scholars are taught the DREAM values and are held accountable to them throughout the year. As stated above in the general Code of Conduct, misbehaviors at Democracy Prep result in appropriate supports and consequences. If unsafe and harmful behaviors persist, or if scholars have not adequately had their needs met, more robust supports, and potential consequence may be put in place. Supports and potential consequences vary based on the grade level of the scholar, the severity of the action, and the frequency of the incident. Such consequences may include:

Such consequences may include:

- Removal of School privileges (including School trips, in-school privileges, etc.);
- Detention;
- School/community service;
- In-school suspension;
- Short-term out-of-school suspension;
- Long-term out-of-school suspension; and
- Removal (expulsion) from the School community.

To preserve valuable instructional time, Democracy Prep strives to keep our scholars in School and in classrooms. However, when a scholar's actions are detracting from the ability of other scholars to learn in a safe, productive environment, it may be necessary to remove the scholar from the classroom and, in the most severe cases, removal (expulsion) from the School community. If a scholar's consequence involves being picked up by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult, and escorted home early or suspended for any period of time, a parent or guardian may be asked to meet with a School administrator regarding the scholar's behavior prior to his or her return to School.

Please note that suspended scholars who are sent to School notwithstanding the consequences outlined in their suspension letters will receive escalating consequences for violating Section 8 of the Code of Conduct (Failure to Comply with School-Imposed Consequences).

### Tiered Behavior Responses

While Democracy Prep strives to implement our behavior system consistently, we also recognize that some scholars' needs may be best met through customized behavior plans. We also seek to tailor consequences to the severity and frequency of the undesirable behavior and the scholar's individual circumstances. Both the severity of consequences and the scope and depth of structured, proactive support provided by the DREAM Team to scholars struggling to meet behavioral expectations will increase commensurate with the severity and frequency of the violations. As the consequences become more severe, we will notify and seek the involvement of families to help design and implement response plans. Democracy Prep's response to behaviors will escalate as negative behaviors escalate, with the most serious infractions of the Code of Conduct receiving the most serious consequences. Violence directed to other scholars or staff will lead to the most serious consequences.

All scholars facing out-of-school suspension are entitled to due process. For a short-term out-of-school suspension (i.e., a suspension for ten days or less), the scholar will, prior to the suspension, be told by the principal or School leadership the basis for the suspension, the evidence supporting the consequence, and will be able to give his or her side of the story, before any suspension is imposed. For a suspension longer than ten days, a scholar will have the opportunity to present evidence to School leadership in a more formal

hearing, is entitled to be represented by counsel, will be provided the evidence supporting the suspension, and will be given the opportunity to confront the evidence against the scholar and to present evidence as well, before any suspension is imposed. In severe situations, the scholar may be removed from the School immediately if a danger to others and/or the School environment. In appropriate circumstances the scholar may also be referred to law enforcement authorities.

The most serious consequence, applied only in extraordinary circumstances, will be expulsion from Democracy Prep. A scholar facing expulsion along with his or her parents or guardians will be afforded all due process protections required under applicable laws and regulations, including a full and fair hearing.

### Being Proactive

It is the School's job to connect the dots for scholars and families on exactly why we work so hard and why we hold high expectations for every scholar. This messaging must come through

- New scholar enrollment;
- Family Orientations;
- Prep Academy;
- Coffee and Conversations;
- Official School notifications; and
- Ongoing informal communication and meetings with staff, scholars, and families.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Parent meetings upon request

### Alternative Instruction

DPPS provides scholars with alternative instruction if and when they are suspended or expelled (until enrolled in another school, or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first). During the period of their removal or suspension, scholars will not be provided with alternative instruction, which includes, but is not limited to, classwork and homework assignments. Such instruction may be provided remotely, depending on the circumstances. Additionally, scholars will be permitted to take any citywide or state examinations that are administered during the suspension period for which no make up examination is permitted by the testing authority, as well as to make up School examinations that may affect their academic records. Arrangements will be made between the School and each individual family for the delivery of services, pick up/delivery of work, and the making-up of any missed assignments and classroom instructional support. All alternative instructional materials will permit the scholar to make adequate academic progress and must be completed satisfactorily before the scholar to return to School.

Alternative instruction will provide the scholar with an opportunity to continue to earn academic credit and will meet the individual needs of the scholar. All Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") mandates must be followed for scholars with disabilities during alternative instruction. In determining the alternative instruction for a scholar with a disability and for a scholar who has a Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 plan ("504 Accommodation Plan"), consideration will be given to the scholar's individualized education program IEP and behavioral intervention plan, or 504 Accommodation Plan.

### Due Process Protections

Democracy Prep holds all scholars to high expectations. Scholars with an identified disability as documented by an IEP or 504 Plan are provided with all required accommodations. This includes accommodations that address social, emotional, and behavioral concerns.

Scholars with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other scholars, and are afforded due process protections under the provisions of the IDEA and its implementing regulations. A scholar with a

disability may be entitled to disciplinary measures that align with his/her needs as outlined in an IEP, 504 plan, and/or determinations from an MDR. Scholars for whom an IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with the standard School policy. Re-entry meetings may occur when a scholar is removed from the environment for a severe or repetitious unproductive behavior.

When a scholar with an IEP has been removed from School for either 10 consecutive days or for more than 10 cumulative school days in a school year based on conduct that forms a pattern of removal and results in a change in placement as determined by the School, he or she is entitled to a prompt review of the causal relationship between his or her disability and the behavior that precipitated the School's disciplinary action. The MDR ("Manifestation Determination Review") is led by the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE") through a Committee on Special Education ("CSE") and is designed to determine whether (1) the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the scholar's disability; or (2) the conduct in question was the direct result of the School's failure to implement the IEP. The MDR team will consist of School officials, the scholar's parent or guardian, and relevant members of the multidisciplinary team. Parents or guardians will receive written notification prior to any manifestation team meeting. This notification will inform the parent or guardian of (1) the purpose of the meeting, (2) the names of the individuals expected to attend, and (3) his or her right to have relevant members of the multidisciplinary team participate at the parent or guardian's request.

The MDR will include a review of all relevant information in the scholar's file including their IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent or guardian. If the manifestation team determines that the scholar's conduct was a manifestation of their disability, the multidisciplinary team will (1) conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan; and (2) return the scholar to the placement from which the scholar was removed, unless the parent or guardian and the School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan. If the MDR team determines the conduct in question was the direct result of the School's failure to implement the IEP, the School will take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies. Lastly, if the scholar's conduct is ruled not to have been a manifestation of their disability, School personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to scholars with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to scholars without disabilities.

## VISITING OUR SCHOOLS

Democracy Prep always welcomes and encourages visitors, both from within and outside of our School community, to observe our scholars and DREAM Team members in action. However, in order to assure the safety and well-being of all scholars and staff, all visitors — including parents and guardians — are required to report to the receptionist. Visitors may be required to have a visitor's pass once they have checked in with the Receptionist. Any visitor who does not report to the receptionist, or is found in the building without authorization and a visitor's pass, will be asked to leave immediately, and the authorities will be called if the request is not heeded.

Democracy Prep maintains an open-door policy with our parents and families, provided they are not a distraction to the learning environment. Family members who are over 18 are welcome to come and observe classes and School operation on non-testing days. Parents and family members are also welcome to request meetings with any member of the DREAM Team. Meetings will be scheduled at the DREAM Team member's earliest possible convenience. If requests for a meeting are not met, family members should report the concern to the School principal.

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the receptionist either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact scholars in their classrooms, or attempt to withdraw scholars from the building without notifying and receiving permission from the School.

It is important to note that during any periods of COVID-19-related health and safety challenges, visitors may not be permitted at the school. The school will communicate with you about any such limitations.

### Disruptive Visitors & Restricted Access

Democracy Prep works hard to maintain a safe and orderly environment for teachers and scholars. To that end, the School reserves the right to restrict visitors (including family members of scholars and staff) who do not display the DREAM values of the larger community while on School grounds, including during drop-off and pick-up. Examples of disruptive visitors include those who raise their voice, use profanity, threaten scholars or staff or scholars' family members, or are physically or verbally aggressive in any way.

If a visitor's access must be restricted due to inappropriate behavior of any kind, they will receive a letter outlining the offenses that led the restricted access and will be notified as to proper procedures for contact and communication with both staff and their scholar while on Democracy Prep property. If a visitor continues to disrupt the learning environment after having received a restricted access letter, Democracy Prep will pursue further measures including notification of law enforcement agencies.



## MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Nondiscrimination

Democracy Prep does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974, or on the basis of any other legally protected category. In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to Democracy Prep on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement, or on the basis of any other legally protected category. No person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges or access to the courses of study offered by Democracy Prep on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation, or on the basis of any

other legally protected category. Finally, pregnant scholars are allowed to remain in regular education classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant scholars throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave .

### Harassment

Democracy Prep is committed to maintaining a School environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, or on the basis of any other legally protected category. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, scholars, vendors and other individuals at School or at School-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited.

Democracy Prep requires all employees and scholars to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, scholars and all members of the School community.

### Sexual Harassment

Scholars have a right to learn in an environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that is so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it interferes with a scholar's educational experience. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include:

- 1) verbal or physical sexual advances;
- 2) pressure for sexual activity;
- 3) conditioning an educational aid, benefit, or service on a scholar's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- 4) sexual jokes or pictures;
- 5) comments regarding physical characteristics;
- 6) suggesting or demanding sexual involvement;
- 7) inappropriate touching, pinching, patting, or brushing against; and
- 8) dating violence, domestic violence or stalking.

### Complaint Procedure and Investigation

#### 1. Reporting an Incident of Sexual Harassment or Retaliation

It is the express policy of Democracy Prep to encourage those who have experienced sexual harassment to report such claims. Any scholar who believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment by any employee, agent, or scholar of Democracy Prep should report the incident to their Title IX Coordinator Alexa Gonzalez at 347-514-4540, via email at [agonzalez@democracyprep.org](mailto:agonzalez@democracyprep.org), via mail at 1767 Park Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10035, or via fax at 646-829-9635. Scholars who believe that they have witnessed unlawful sexual harassment should report the incident and the names of the persons involved to their Title IX Coordinator and/or School principal. Confidentiality will be maintained, and no retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of good faith reporting of sexual harassment.

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, Democracy Prep strongly urges the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken.

The availability of this complaint procedure does not preclude scholars who believe they are being subjected to discriminating or harassing conduct from promptly advising the offender that their behavior is unwelcome and requesting that it be discontinued.

#### 2. Evidentiary Standard

The respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct. Democracy Prep uses the clear and convincing evidence standard in investigations of complaints alleging sexual harassment and any related violations. This means that the investigation determines whether the allegations are highly and substantially more likely to be true than untrue.

### 3. Supportive Measures

Democracy Prep offers a wide range of supportive measures for scholars and employees. Supportive measures are free individualized services offered as appropriate to the reporting and responding parties involved in an alleged incident of sexual harassment. Supportive measures include counseling, extensions of deadlines, modification of work/class schedules, and mutual restrictions on contact.

A scholar may request to receive supportive measures even if they do not choose to participate in the School's complaint resolution process. Requests for supportive measures in connection with an incident of sexual harassment should be made to the Title IX Coordinator. Democracy Prep will grant such supportive measures, provided they are reasonable and available. The Title IX Coordinator may also initiate supportive measures to immediately respond to the situation.

### 4. Time Frame for Investigation and Resolution

While the time frame to resolve a reported incident may vary from case to case, depending on the specific facts and circumstances, it is expected that in most cases complaints will be resolved within 30 days. If the process takes longer than 30 days, both the complainant and respondent will be notified in writing.

### 5. Initial Assessment of Sexual Harassment Allegations

Once a complaint or notice of any allegation of sexual harassment is received, the Title IX Coordinator will make an initial assessment of the reported information and respond to any immediate health or safety concerns raised by the report. Complainant and respondent will receive written notice within 10 days of a reported allegation. Each party will have 10 days to respond in writing.

### 6. Investigation

Democracy Prep will thoroughly, promptly, and impartially investigate any reported allegations of sexual harassment or retaliation. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have relevant knowledge. No information protected by a legal privilege can be used during an investigation unless an individual voluntarily waives it. Democracy Prep will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigatory process to the extent practicable and as permitted by law.

Upon investigation, a complaint *must* be dismissed under Title IX if:

- (1) the alleged conduct does not meet the requirements for sexual harassment;
- (2) the complaint alleges conduct that did not occur in the School's education program or activity; or
- (3) the alleged conduct did not occur in the United States.

Democracy Prep will also investigate, and address complaints based on harassment taking place on Democracy Prep international trips pursuant to other statutes and its Code of Conduct.

A complaint *may* be dismissed under Title IX if:

- (1) Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Democracy Prep; or
- (2) Specific circumstances prevent the School from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination about the allegation(s).

### 7. Notice of Outcome

The complainant and respondent will receive simultaneous written notice of the outcome of the investigation.

### 8. Responsive Action

Misconduct constituting sexual harassment or retaliation will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Dishonesty during an investigation or making a false complaint, in bad faith, also constitutes actionable misconduct. Responsive actions for misconduct may include, for example, referral to counseling, monitoring of the offender and/or disciplinary action such as warning or reprimand, suspension, or removal from the School community.

### 9. Appeal

Both the respondent and complainant may request a prompt review of the outcome of the investigation. A party may seek an appeal under the following circumstances:

1. After a mandatory or discretionary dismissal;
2. A procedural irregularity affected the outcome of the matter;
3. New evidence has been discovered that was not reasonably available at the time of the determination; or
4. A conflict of interest on the part of the Title IX Coordinator, an investigator who compiled the evidence, or a decision-maker, and the conflict of interest affected the outcome of the case

A request to appeal the outcome of an investigation may be made in writing to the Title IX Coordinator, providing the basis for that request and any evidence to support the request. Upon receipt, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the other party of the request and provide the other party with 7 days to respond, including the submission of evidence if desired. After considering the parties' written statements, the decision-maker on appeal will issue a written decision and send it to the parties simultaneously.

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### Public Documents / Freedom of Information Law

Democracy Prep fully complies with the New York Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL"). Any requests for School records or information from the School must be in writing and submitted to the School principal. Within five business days of receipt of a written request, the School, depending on the requested information, will respond by:

- Making the information available at the School itself during normal business hours to the person requesting it;
- Denying the request in writing; or
- Providing a written acknowledgment of receipt of the request that supplies an approximate date for when the request will be granted or denied.

If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, they may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the School principal. Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, the School, within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, will fully explain the reasons for further denial or provide access to the record(s) sought. The School will also forward a copy of the appeal, as well as its ultimate determination, to the

Committee on Open Government. If further denied, the person requesting information may further appeal through an Article 78 proceeding.

The School may deny access to requested records if:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- Such records are trade secrets and which, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of a commercial enterprise;
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law §87(2)(e);
- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- Such records are computer access codes; and/or
- Such records are internal materials which are not statistical or factual tabulations of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, a final policy, nor external audits.

The School may charge a copying fee for each page requested to be copied. The fee can be no more than the fee allowed by state law. Types of records held by the School may include:

- Student Health Records
- Student Immunization Records
- Student Medical Records
- Safety Records
- School SAVE Plan
- Reports of Fire Department Inspections
- School Contracts
- Management Contract Records
- Outside Contract Records
- Personnel Files
- Fingerprint Clearance Records
- Certification Records

#### Education Records and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act)

Federal and state laws provide parents or guardians and eligible scholars (those who are age 18 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to their education records. Copies of the regulations detailing these rights are available from the Administrative Manager. The following is a general overview:

Confidential Records include grades, evaluations, disciplinary actions, and health records. Release of scholar records generally requires written consent of the parent or eligible scholar. However, the regulations provide certain exceptions. For example, staff members and employees of the district have access to records as needed to perform their duties. Scholar records will also be sent to Schools as required by New York law and regulation. *Please note that at Democracy Prep scholar work and results are prominently displayed in classrooms and in the community as part of our educational program.*

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funding under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents and guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when



they reach the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are “eligible students.”

In accordance with FERPA law, parents, guardians, or students over 18 years of age have the right to inspect and review the student’s education records maintained by the School within 45 days of the day that Democracy Prep receives a request for access. Requests for education records should be made in writing to the Operations Manager and specify which records the parent or eligible scholar wishes to inspect. The Operations Manager will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible scholar of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Parents or students over 18 years of age have the right to request that the School correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record, the parent, guardian, or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. The issue will first be heard by the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of Democracy Prep Public Schools or the CEO’s designee. If the parent, guardian, or eligible student is still not satisfied with the decision of the CEO or the CEO’s designee, a hearing with the board of trustees or a designated subcommittee of the board may be requested. The decision of the board of trustees or its designated subcommittee is final.

The School may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. Any parent who does not want such directory information included should contact the School’s Operations Manager.

This listing in the Handbook serves as the School’s annual notification of parents and eligible students of their rights under FERPA.

Generally, the School must have written permission from the parent, guardian, or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, the School may disclose education records without prior written consent as permitted by FERPA, including the FERPA exception for disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School official is a person employed by the School in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research or support staff position; a contractor, consultant, or other outside service provider retained to provide various institutional services and functions under contract; or a person serving on any school board, committee, or council. A School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibilities on behalf of the School.

In addition, the School may disclose education records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the School;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and

State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Parents and eligible scholars have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA or its notification requirements. The name and the address of the office that administers FERPA is:

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

### McKinney-Vento Information

Each campus has a designated staff person who understands and is able to carry out the mandated duties of serving as the McKinney-Vento Liaison on behalf of students experiencing housing instability. The name and contact information of the McKinney-Vento liaison and the rights of students in temporary housing can be found on each School's website and are also posted in the main office of each School.

DPPS Schools ensure the immediate enrollment and full participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness even when they do not have the documents normally needed for enrollment (e.g. proof of immunizations, proof of residency, birth certificate, school records, etc.), including students with IEPs. DPPS Schools also ensures the continued enrollment of students who become homeless, including those students who are temporarily residing outside of the boundaries of a school's district of location. Administrative Managers ensure that students experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied homeless youth, are immediately enrolled, even if they are missing records.

Transportation is promptly provided (within 3 days) for homeless students for the duration of homelessness, including to students who are temporarily housed outside of the boundaries of the School's district of location. Transportation is provided up to 50 miles each way. Transportation is provided for students who are homeless to participate in after-school activities and summer school if the lack of transportation poses a barrier.

Transportation is also provided to maintain the enrollment of children in foster care, when in their best interest, for the duration of the time in foster care.

### Board Meetings

Pursuant to the Open Meetings laws, all meetings of the School's Board of Trustees are open to the public. A schedule of all meetings, including date, time and location will be posted in a prominent space at the School and on the School's website.

### Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

Democracy Prep is committed to maintaining a School environment free of harassment, bullying, taunting, intimidation, and discrimination. Accordingly, Democracy Prep provides education to scholars, training to employees, and reporting to the New York State Education Department in accordance with the requirements set forth in New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). Democracy Prep prohibits retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports or assists in the investigation of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination. The School social worker serves as the School's mandated DASA Coordinator. Contact information is available at [democracyprep.org](http://democracyprep.org).

### Respect for All

All students have the right to attend schools that are safe, secure, and peaceful environments. Democracy Prep recognizes that discrimination, such as harassment, hazing and bullying, are detrimental to student learning and achievement. These behaviors interfere with the mission of the school to educate its students and disrupt the operation of the school. Such behavior affects not only the students who are its targets but also those individuals who participate and witness such acts.

Bullying in schools has historically included actions shown to be motivated by a pupil's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability, gender, gender identity and expression, weight, or other distinguishing personal characteristics, or based on association with any person identified in any of the above categories.

Democracy Prep prohibits all forms of discrimination, such as harassment, hazing and bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events. Discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying that takes place at locations outside of school grounds which can be reasonably expected to materially and substantially interfere with the operation of the school or impinge on the rights of other students are prohibited, and may be subject to disciplinary consequences.

### Definitions

#### *Bullying*

Bullying is understood to be a hostile activity that harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. To facilitate implementation of this policy and to provide meaningful guidance and prevent behaviors from rising to a violation of law, this policy will use the term bullying (which is usually subsumed under the term "harassment") to describe a range of misbehaviors such as harassment, hazing, intimidation or discrimination. Bullying is an unwanted aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

#### *Discrimination*

Discrimination is the act of denying rights, benefits, justice, equitable treatment or access to facilities available to all others, to an individual or group of people because of the group, class or category to which that person belongs (as enumerated in the Definitions section, under Harassment, below).

#### *Hazing*

Hazing is an induction, initiation or membership process involving harassment which produces public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule or creates a situation where public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule is likely to occur.

#### *Harassment*

Harassment has been defined in various ways in federal and state law and regulation. The School recognizes that these definitions are important standards, but our goal is to prevent misbehavior from escalating in order to promote a positive school environment. The Dignity for All Students Act (§§10-18 of Education Law) defines harassment as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his/her physical safety. The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived:

- race,
- color,
- weight,
- national origin,

- ethnic group,
- religion,
- religious practice,
- disability,
- sex,
- sexual orientation, or
- gender (including gender identity and expression)

In some instances, bullying or harassment may constitute a violation of an individual's civil rights.

### *Prevention*

Staff members and students will be sensitized, through professional development and instruction (when possible), to the warning signs of bullying, as well as to their responsibility to become actively involved in the prevention of bullying before overt acts occur.

Each school will have a Dignity for All Students Act Coordinator. The DASA coordinator is thoroughly trained in human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (which includes a person's actual or perceived sex, and gender identity and expression), and sex. The DASA Coordinator will coordinate dissemination of information on anti-bullying, implement strategies to prevent bullying, and enforce this policy. In addition, the DASA Coordinator will be responsible for receiving reports of observed or suspected acts of bullying, investigating, remedying, and tracking those allegations.

### *Intervention*

Intervention by adults and bystanders is an important step in preventing escalation and resolving issues at the earliest stages. Intervention should emphasize education and skill-building. Successful intervention may involve remediation. Remedial responses to bullying and harassment include measures designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior and protect the target. Remediation may be targeted to the individual(s) involved in the bullying behavior or environmental approaches.

In addition, intervention will focus upon the safety of the target. Staff is expected, when aware of bullying, to either refer the student to designated resources for assistance, or to intervene in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

### *Provisions for Students Who Don't Feel Safe at School*

Democracy Prep acknowledges that, notwithstanding actions taken by staff, intervention may require a specific coordinated approach if the child does not feel safe at school. Students who do not feel safe at school are limited in their capacity to learn and reach their academic potential. Staff, when aware of bullying, should determine if accommodations are needed to help ensure the safety of the student and bring this to the attention of the Principal. The Principal, or other appropriate staff, the student and the student's parent will work together to define and implement any needed accommodations.

The School recognizes that the accommodations that enhance student safety must be weighed against the potential to further stigmatize the targeted student. Therefore, each case will be handled individually, and the student, parent/guardian, and school administration will collaborate to establish safety provisions that best meet the needs of the targeted student. Follow-up discussion and/or meetings will be scheduled, as needed, to ensure that safety concerns have been adequately addressed and to determine when and if accommodations need to be changed or discontinued.

### *Training*

Democracy Prep recognizes that in order to implement an effective bullying prevention and intervention program, professional development is needed. A school leader and/or appointed staff member will incorporate training to support this program in new teacher orientation and the annual professional development plan, as needed. Training opportunities will be provided for all staff, including but not limited to staff that have contact with students. The DASA Coordinator will be trained in accordance with state requirements and will continue their professional development so as to successfully support this policy and program. The purpose of training is to make school employees aware of the *effects* of harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, and discrimination on students, and that training will address the *social patterns* of harassment, bullying, and discrimination; the *identification and mitigation* of harassment, bullying, and discrimination; and *strategies for effectively addressing* problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in educational settings.

### *Reporting and Investigation*

Each report will be investigated, and each investigation will be completed promptly. Although it can be difficult to step forward, the school cannot effectively address bullying if incidents are not reported. Students who have been bullied, parents whose children have been bullied or other students or staff who observe bullying behavior are required to make a verbal and/or written complaint to any school personnel. At all times, complaints will be documented, tracked and handled in accordance with the regulations and procedures accompanying the school's Family Handbook and/ or Employee Handbook. If a staff person is unsure of the reporting procedure, he/she is expected to inquire about how to proceed by speaking with their supervisor. All incidents of bullying will be reported to the New York State Education Department on at least an annual basis, so that the state can evaluate the school's performance under the policy. Such incidents may be included in the Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) system, as applicable. There shall be a duty for all school personnel to report any incidents of student-to-student and staff-to-student bullying that they observe to the DASA Coordinator and other administrator who supervises their employment. In addition, there shall be a further duty for all school personnel to report any incidents of student-to-student and staff-to-student bullying of which they are made aware to the DASA coordinator, no later than one day after they witness the conduct or receive the report. The results of the investigation shall be reported back to both the target and the accused in accordance with the accompanying regulation. If either of the parties disagrees with the results of the investigation, they can appeal the findings in accordance with the regulations that accompany this policy.

### *Disciplinary Consequences/Remediation*

While the focus of this policy is on prevention, bullying acts may still occur. In these cases, offenders will be given the clear message that their actions are wrong and the behavior must improve. Student offenders will receive in-school guidance in making positive choices in their relationships with others. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration as applicable. If the behavior rises to the level of criminal activity, law enforcement will be contacted. Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors, and must be consistent with the school's Behavior Policy.

### *Non-Retaliation*

All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law, as well as the school's policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

### *False Claims*

Anyone making false claims of harassment or bullying will be subject to disciplinary action as defined by this policy.

### *Dissemination, Monitoring, Review, and Reporting*

This policy, or a plain language summary, shall be published in family and employee handbooks. A bullying complaint form is available in the family handbook or upon request to the DASA Coordinator. The school will ensure that reporting of information to the public will be in a manner that complies with student privacy rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the school's Data Privacy and Security Policy.

To read the full Dignity for All Students Act, please visit <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>.

If a parent has a concern about an incident of bullying involving their child, they are encouraged to contact their child's classroom teacher and the school's DASA coordinator. DASA coordinator information can be obtained at the school's main office.

### Transfers Within Democracy Prep

In extreme circumstances, scholars may be eligible to transfer to another Democracy Prep school. Transfer requests must be made in writing to the School principal and will be reviewed by the DPPS Superintendent.

### Human Services

Below are several emergency telephone numbers that may be useful to parents/guardians and students:

#### New York Numbers

Child Abuse Care Line	1-800-872-2288
Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-621-HOPE
Drug Dependence Hotline	311 or 1-800-LIFENET
Mental Health Hotline	311 or 1-800-LIFENET
Police/Fire Emergency	911
NYC Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Rape Crisis Hotline	1-800-621-HOPE
Runaway Hotline	1-888-83R-OOTS
Suicide Prevention	1-800-273-TALK

## APPENDIX A: UNIFORM

At Democracy Prep, uniforms promote a sense of community, belonging, and school pride. They also promote a sense of equality of dress within the building and eliminate distractions associated with clothing, while still allowing opportunities that promote self-identity.

### **The Democracy Prep Elementary School Uniform**

1. Navy blue polo shirt with DPPS logo (short- or long-sleeved)
2. Gray slacks, slack shorts, skirt, or skort
  - a) Slacks/slack shorts/skirts may not have pockets anywhere on the leg (no carpenter or cargo pants).
  - b) Slacks/slack shorts/skirts may not have any visible logos.
  - c) Slacks/slack shorts/skirts may not be made of jean or corduroy material or have metal studs.
  - d) Slacks/slack shorts/skirts may not be too loose or too tight.
  - e) Slacks/slack shorts/skirts must be worn at or above the hip line.
  - f) Slack shorts/skirts should be worn during appropriate weather.  
Alternative: Plaid jumper with DPPS logo (as sold by our official uniform store)
3. Shoes of any color
  - a) Footwear must flat-sole, close-toe, and close-heel. High heels, open-foot, slippers, sandals, clog-style Crocs, boots above the mid-calf not allowed.
4. Socks or tights of any color may be worn.
5. DPPS-branded outerwear, such as a sweater, cardigan, or sweatshirt with DPPS logo, may be worn over a uniform, but is not required.
6. Undershirts must be solid and one of the following colors: white, navy blue, light blue, black, or gray.
7. All hair colors and designs/shavings are permitted, with the exception of known gang affiliations or vulgarity.

The Democracy Prep uniform NEVER includes tattoos, fake tattoos, any sort of visible writing on the skin, fanny packs, hats, kerchiefs, bandanas, hairnets, other head coverings which do not have a religious or cultural purpose, or outer garments such as hoodies or sweatshirts not earned as DPPS swag.

### **The Democracy Prep Elementary School Gym Uniform**

1. Navy or gray t-shirt or sweatshirt with DPPS logo
2. Solid navy or gray sweatpants or gym shorts
  - a) Shorts must be no more than two inches above the knee.
  - b) Shorts should be worn during appropriate weather.
3. Any color athletic sneakers

The DPPS gym uniform must be worn each day a scholar has PE class, and may optionally be worn on any other day in place of the standard uniform.

Scholars may not change out of their uniform after school or at any time while still in the school building without permission from a DREAM Team member.

## APPENDIX B: BILL OF RIGHTS FOR DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Pursuant to New York State Education Law §2-d, parents, legal guardians and persons in parental relation to a student are entitled to certain rights with regard to their child's personally identifiable information, as defined by Education Law §2-d. This document contains a summary of such rights.

1. A student's personally identifiable information cannot be sold or released for any commercial purposes.
2. Parents have the right to inspect and review the complete contents of their child's educational records maintained by Democracy Prep.
3. State and Federal Laws protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information, and safeguards associated with industry standards and best practices, including, but not limited to, encryption, firewalls, and password protection must be in place when data is stored or transferred.
4. A complete list of all student data elements collected by New York State is available for review at the following website:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/documentation/NYSEDstudentData.xlsx>

The list may also be made available by writing to:

Office of Information & Reporting Services  
New York State Education Department  
Room 863 EBA  
89 Washington Avenue Albany, NY 12234

5. Parents have the right to have complaints about possible breaches of student data addressed. Complaints should be directed to:

Danielle Tschirhart  
Chief Operating Officer  
1767 Park Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10035  
Phone: 929-436-5020  
Email: [danielle.tschirhart@democracyprep.org](mailto:danielle.tschirhart@democracyprep.org)

Complaints to the State Education Department should be directed in writing to the Chief Privacy Officer, New York State Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12234. Complaints may also be directed to the Chief Privacy Officer via email at [CPO@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:CPO@mail.nysed.gov).

### Supplemental Information Regarding Third-Party Contractors

In the course of complying with its obligations under the law and providing educational services to scholars, Democracy Prep has entered into agreements with certain third-party contractors. Pursuant to such agreements, third-party contractors may have access to "student data" and/or "teacher or principal data," as those terms are defined by law.

Each contract that Democracy enters into with a third-party contractor where the third-party contractor receives student data, teacher data, or principal data will include the following information:

- (1) The exclusive purposes for which the student data or teacher or principal data will be used;



- (2) How the third-party contractor will ensure that the subcontractors, persons or entities that the third-party contractor will share the student data or teacher or principal data with, if any, will abide by data protection and security requirements;
- (3) When the agreement expires and what happens to the student data or teacher or principal data upon expiration of the agreement;
- (4) If and how a parent, student, eligible student, teacher or principal may challenge the accuracy of the student data or teacher or principal data that is collected; and
- (5) Where the student data or teacher or principal data will be stored (described in such a manner as to protect data security), and the security protections taken to ensure such data will be protected, including whether such data will be encrypted.

An overview of Education Law 2-D may be found at:

<http://www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/student-data-privacy-public-forums-2018>



## COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

I fully understand and agree to the expectations, standards, and policies set forth in this Handbook and agree to demonstrate my commitment to my education by adhering to the DREAM values in the manner outlined above. I recognize that failure to abide by these standards and policies will result in the imposition of appropriate consequences as described throughout this Handbook. I acknowledge that I am responsible for my own behavior, and I pledge to follow directions issued by my teachers and School leadership. Democracy Prep Public Schools are schools of choice. I understand that my parents or guardians are free to remove me at any time.

Scholar: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_