

Riverside Leadership Academy Scholar/Family Handbook 2025 – 2026



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Dear RLA Families,

We are delighted to welcome you to the 2025–2026 school year and our second year of operation at Riverside Leadership Academy! Whether you're returning for another exciting year or joining us for the first time, we are honored that you've chosen to be part of our Pirate community and entrusted us with your child's education.

We are proud to now serve scholars in grades K–8 and to open the doors to our brand-new facility, designed to support high-quality learning, collaboration, and school culture. Our commitment to academic excellence remains deeply connected to our dedication to nurturing each scholar's social and emotional well-being. Together, we will continue to build a strong school community where all scholars are known, challenged, and celebrated.

At RLA, our innovative approach to education is grounded in Project-Based Learning (PBL). Through PBL, scholars develop creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration skills by engaging in meaningful, real-world projects. These projects connect learning to scholars' lives and communities, culminating in authentic presentations of learning—which we invite our families and community members to attend throughout the year.

Equally important is our focus on Social Emotional Learning (SEL). We believe that emotional health is essential to academic success. Our SEL framework, Responsive Classroom, is integrated into daily routines and instruction, helping scholars build empathy, resilience, and strong communication skills. We strive to foster a supportive, inclusive school culture where scholars feel empowered to grow both academically and personally.

Our passionate and dedicated educators are at the heart of this journey. At RLA, teachers serve as mentors and advocates, guiding scholars toward their full potential. Every scholar is supported by a Personal Adult Advocate (PAA)—a caring adult who serves as a consistent connection between the school, the scholar, and their family.

We also believe that family partnership is key to scholar success. We encourage active collaboration and open communication throughout the year. Whether it's attending student-led conferences, participating in school-wide events, or volunteering your time and talents, we want our families to know they are an essential part of our school community. As outlined in our parental involvement expectations, we don't just welcome family engagement—we expect it and look forward to working together to support every Pirate's journey.

As we embark on our second year, we are filled with excitement and gratitude. Riverside Leadership Academy is a place of curiosity, innovation, and connection, and we are confident that the year ahead will be filled with learning, discovery, and meaningful growth for every scholar.

We look forward to a wonderful year filled with growth, discovery, and joy.

Gratefully,

Siobhan Brewer
Executive Director

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RLA Mission

Through project based and leadership curriculums, Riverside Leadership Academy develops confident, community focused, future ready leaders. Scholars thrive from meaningful connections between families, school staff, and community members curated by involvement of all stakeholders.

Vision Statement

Riverside Leadership Academy provides a holistic and innovative approach to the growth and development of our future leaders.

RLA Core Values

- To lead from where you are
- To empower courage and confidence
- To honor individuality
- To encourage curiosity, ambition, and initiative
- To promote a culture of approachability, open communication, and support

RLA Core Programs

Project-Based Learning

Our school will incorporate Project Based Learning (PBL) as our primary pedagogical method, ensuring that scholars consistently engage in real-life, meaningful projects in all grade levels. Our teachers will facilitate daily project-based learning (PBL) experiences for scholars to enhance scholars' curiosity, creativity, and collaborative skills, and to provide authentic opportunities for learning and growth. These experiences, when paired with traditional methods of teaching, will provide a well-rounded, comprehensive approach to learning.

Responsive Classroom

RLA will use Responsive Classroom as our primary approach to teaching, creating a safe, joyful, and engaging school community. We will include the six principles of this approach in all facets of our daily rhythms and routines. These principles are as follows:

- Principle 1: Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.
- Principle 2: How we teach is as important as what we teach.
- Principle 3: Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- Principle 4: How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.
- Principle 5: What we know and believe about our scholars—individually, culturally, developmentally—informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those scholars.
- Principle 6: Partnering with families—knowing them and valuing their contributions—is as important as knowing the children we teach.

Expectations for the Responsive Classroom will be taught to staff through initial professional development and will be reviewed annually, will be taught to scholars through ongoing structured lessons and modeling, and will be posted throughout the building as visual reminders and cues for all.

RLA School Hours

The 2025-2026 school day begins at 7:50 am and ends at 3:10 pm. The main office hours are 7:15 am to 3:30 pm.

Scholars should arrive at school between 7:00-7:45 am to ensure that they are in class before they are marked tardy (after 7:50 am). Scholars who are arriving by car will be dropped off in the designated “carpool” area, where they will be greeted by staff and escorted into the building as needed. Scholars are expected to come into the building in an orderly manner and walk to class so that they can begin their day. Kindergarten parents will be allowed to park and walk their children into class for the first day of school only. After their first day, scholars will be expected to begin dropping off their children in the carpool line.

The carpool line will close at 7:45 am. After this time, scholars must be dropped off in the parking lot, not the carpool line.

After 7:50 am, scholars MUST be checked in by an adult.

Scholars who ride the bus in the mornings will enter the school through the designated “bus” area and will walk to class as well. Staff members and scholars who are assigned to “safety patrol” will be positioned throughout the school to help younger scholars as needed.

Transportation Changes

In addition to a phone call to the front office, parents or guardians are required to send in a written note with their child or communicate via email or Class Dojo if there is to be a change in their mode of transportation home for that day.

Without written documentation, the scholar may be sent home by their regular mode of transportation. Written documentation should include the following information:

- Student's full name
- Student's grade and teacher
- Date the change is occurring
- Mode of transportation that will be used that day (from _____ to _____). Please note that only scholars assigned to a bus route can ride a bus, due to limited seating.

Any transportation changes must be made by 2:15 pm on the day of the change. Notification must be communicated with a phone call to the office and written notice to the teacher or main office.

Entering the School

All visitors to the school must provide a valid photo identification. Visitors will be admitted to the waiting area in the front of the school building. Visitors to the school are required to wear a visitor pass while on the premises. Visitors are required to sign out in the main office and exit the building from the front of the school.

Early Checkout

Ensuring your child's presence throughout the school day is crucial to maintaining uninterrupted learning. Whenever possible, please schedule appointments outside of school hours. In cases where this is not feasible, early check-out may be necessary. For early check-outs, **please ensure that your child is checked out by 2:30 PM to minimize disruption to our dismissal process.** Parents arriving after this time will need to join the carpool line for pick-up. Early check-outs require signing out by a parent/guardian or a previously approved adult. Scholars will only be dismissed once a parent or approved adult is physically present in the building for pick-up.

Parents checking out their scholars early will wait for their scholars in the reception area in the front of the school. Valid photo identification is required to check scholars out of school.

Attendance Policy

All scholars must be fully enrolled and should attend school regularly. Riverside Leadership Academy does not accept partial enrollment. Regular attendance is the best way to ensure that scholars master the curriculum. Riverside Leadership Academy will make every effort to protect instructional time from interruption and we ask that, whenever possible, parents/guardians schedule appointments (doctor, dentist) after school hours. For record keeping purposes, a child is marked absent when he or she misses half of the school day.

Excused Absences (All absences not listed below are unexcused)

- **Illness or injury.** When the absence results from illness or injury, which prevents the scholar from being physically able to attend school. The Lead Administrator or designee may require an official note from a physician.
- **Quarantine.** When isolation of the scholar is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
- **Death in the immediate family.** When the absence results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the scholar. The immediate family of a scholar includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents and siblings.
- **Medical or dental appointments.** When the absence results from a medical or dental appointment of a scholar. A written excuse should be presented with a doctor's signature or stamp.
- **Court or administrative proceedings.** When the scholar is a party to or is under subpoena as a witness in the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal.
- **Religious observances.** When the scholar or the scholar's parent/guardian or custodian adheres to a religion whose tenets require, or suggest the observance of a religious event. The parent/guardian or custodian must seek prior approval of the Lead Administrator for such absences [and the approval should be granted unless the religious observance or the cumulative effect of religious observances is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the scholar].
- **Educational opportunity.** When the scholar obtains the Lead Administrator's prior approval of a valid education opportunity, such as travel or approved community experiences.
- **Military Deployment / Unification.** When the scholar is visiting with a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

Procedures for Notifying Riverside Leadership Academy about Absences

Absences must be documented and lawful in order to be considered excused. On the day of the absence(s), parents/guardians should provide written documentation to the main office stating the reason for the absence. This can include an email, doctor's note, or written note from the parent. A parent excuse note is only valid for two consecutive days; upon the third day of absence, a note from a doctor is required.

If a parent/guardian does not notify Riverside Leadership Academy the day of the absence, when the scholar returns to class, he or she must bring an explanatory note within three days. **If Riverside Leadership Academy does not receive the explanatory note within three days, the absence will be marked unexcused.** Messages through communication apps are not acceptable for excused absences.

Make-Up Work for Absences

Scholars are responsible for completing all missed work during absences. Unless extenuating circumstances warrant an extension, all missed assignments, quizzes, and tests must be made up within a specified timeframe. At the elementary level, teachers will collaborate with scholars and parents to ensure completion of missed work within this timeframe.

Generally, homework will not be assigned prior to pre-planned absences, such as trips. Scholars suspended from school will have the opportunity to make up missed work and tests.

In middle school, scholars are responsible for identifying missed assignments, quizzes, and tests and completing them within the specified timeframe. Additionally, any scholar with 20 or more absences in one or more classes during the school year may face grade failure.

Truancy (Recurrent unexcused absences)

If a scholar is truant, the first step will be a conference with the parents/guardians. Should this prove unsatisfactory, next steps include possible notification of appropriate legal authorities and/or possible recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion. Scholars absent more than 20 days may not be promoted and must meet with school administration to determine next steps, which could result in expulsion.

Late-Arrival/Tardiness & Late Pick-up

We understand that unforeseen circumstances like doctor's appointments or traffic may sometimes cause tardiness. However, we kindly request parents to make every effort to ensure their children arrive on time and prepared for the day. Our morning meeting sets a positive tone for the day, and we encourage all scholars to participate. If you anticipate your child will be late, please notify their teacher as soon as possible so arrangements can be considered.

Tardiness disrupts instruction for the entire class, so scholars arriving late must sign in at the office. Excused tardies include scholar illness, medical or dental appointments, and family emergencies. All other tardies are considered unexcused.

Supervision is essential for scholar safety. Parents arriving after the designated carline time disrupt the afternoon schedule of teachers and staff. While emergency late pickups are understandable, frequent tardiness will result in consequences similar to tardies.

Consistent tardiness or early departures result in lost instructional time and may impact a scholar's academic performance. Should academic performance be affected, the scholar may have to repeat a grade or course.

The table below outlines the consequences for cumulative absences.

Number of Occurrence(s)	Action to be Taken
0-3	Attendance letter sent through Infinite Campus
4-6	Attendance letter sent through Infinite Campus
10-19	Required conference with the Attendance Committee that includes the School Counselor and MTSS Coordinator.
20+	Parent/guardian and scholar required to conference with an Administrator. Referral to the Executive Director may occur to determine next steps, which could result in expulsion.

Truancy may be filed with the local magistrate, per state mandate.
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Releasing Scholars from School

Parents/guardians are the only people allowed to take a scholar from school. Prior arrangements with the school administration, however, may allow for others to do so. If a parent or guardian would like their child to be released to another adult, the request must come to Riverside Leadership Academy main office in writing prior to school dismissal. Riverside Leadership Academy staff will not release a child to anyone other than the scholar's parent or guardian without written documentation from the scholar's parent/guardian.

Discipline for Attendance

Rewards and penalties in the form of grades shall not be used as attendance incentives. Riverside Leadership Academy can develop attendance incentives that do not involve grades to encourage attendance. Riverside Leadership Academy administration does reserve the right to apply discipline consequences for scholars who knowingly "skip" classes or leave campus without permission. This shall be considered a behavioral issue and disciplinary action shall be appropriate if the behavior is excessive.

Minimum Attendance Requirement

A scholar is absent from school for the purposes of this section when the scholar is not present for at least half of the school day, whether the absence is excused or unexcused. A scholar is absent from a class for the purposes of this section if the scholar misses more than half the class period, whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Absences resulting from participation in school-sponsored activities will not count against the minimum attendance requirement. This policy does not limit a staff member or Executive Director from imposing disciplinary sanctions for scholars who miss portions of the school day or a class without excuse.

Partial Attendance for Extracurricular and Special Event Participation

Scholars must be present at school for at least half of the school day in order to participate in any extracurricular activities. The same applies for special events. Scholars must be considered present the day of the special event or evening scholar activity to participate in the event.

Providing Support to Scholars with Excessive Absences

The Executive Director and school staff shall take appropriate action to help prevent excessive absences and provide counseling for scholars with a history of excessive absences. A scholar's parent/guardian must be notified of excessive absences, and the teacher and counselor shall then work with the scholar and family to analyze the causes and determine steps to eliminate the problem. School administration shall designate a school employee to assist parents or other caretakers and counselors with chronic cases of absenteeism.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absences and Tardies

An absence/tardiness with or without parental permission which does not come under one of the lawful absence/tardiness categories will be considered as unexcused. Examples: Hair appointment, oversleeping, car trouble, shopping, traffic, DMV etc. (reasons not limited to those listed above)

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather that will require a change in the school's operating hours, parents and staff will be notified by telephone through our automated notification system with Infinite Campus Messenger. For this system to be effective, it is extremely important for families to ensure that the school always has updated contact information on file. Our social media presence and local news stations will also share notifications from the school about these changes.

Inclement Weather Delay Schedules

Type of Delay	Schedule
Two-Hour Delay	Carpool begins at 9:25am; School day begins at 9:50 am
Three-Hour Delay	Carpool begins at 10:25am, School day begins at 10:50 am
Two-Hour Early Dismissal	School dismisses at 1:10 pm
Three-Hour Early Dismissal	School dismisses at 12:10 pm

Change of Contact Information

When moving to a new address or when getting a new phone number or email address, parents are asked to inform the school to ensure that updated information is readily available. Parents or guardians can update their contact information through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

2.007 Family/School Communications Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy's Board of Directors recognizes that parents/guardians, families, caregivers, schools, and the community share the responsibility for the education of our scholars. Creating positive home, school, and community partnerships is essential to carrying out this shared responsibility successfully. To promote high scholar performance, school administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians must work as knowledgeable partners and communicate effectively to promote scholar achievement. In order to encourage effective communication, the Board also encourages parents/guardians to participate in activities designed by school personnel to involve them, such as student-led conferences and presentations of learning.

Parent/Guardian Communication and Conferences

The Board encourages regular contact with parents/guardians by school personnel with notification of both positive and negative interactions with their scholars. Riverside Leadership Academy's administrators shall plan for periodic communications with parents/guardians annually. Student-led conferences are on the school calendar for the first three quarters of the school year. Parents are required to attend student-led conferences, which occur throughout the school day. Teachers will organize a sign-up for time slots for parents to attend the scholar conference with their scholar. These days are not instructional days, and scholars should only attend for the time slot the parent has selected.

Student-led conference dates for the 2025-2026 school year are:

Quarter 1: October 24, 2025

Quarter 2: January 16, 2026

Quarter 3: March 20, 2026

At the student-led conferences, scholars will review and reflect on their academic progress. Riverside Leadership Academy believes it is important for the scholar to take personal responsibility for his or her own education, when developmentally appropriate. At the conferences, teachers will be present to support the scholar and answer some questions; however, if the parent wishes to have a parent/teacher conference, it will need to be scheduled for a different date.

RLA expects that all staff will respond to parent/guardian emails or phone calls within two school days. Any electronic communication to groups of parents shall be done using the blind-copy function so as to protect the email addresses of parents/guardians. All email communications sent to parents/guardians or other staff must be done from their school email address.

School/Family Communication Processes

At the beginning of each school year (in grades K-8) scholars will be assigned to a staff member who will act as their Personal Adult Advocate (PAA). This PAA will be responsible for providing an initial positive contact with families, as well as ongoing support and communication as needed to keep families abreast of the scholar's progress, including areas of strength and opportunity. As scholars enter into the upper grades (9-12), their assigned advocate will act as their advisor.

Teachers at RLA will be expected to maintain their own classroom communication to give a glimpse into the class' daily schedule, learning targets, and units of focus for PBL. This website will also provide information needed for parents to communicate with their child's teacher, including email address and other platforms used, such as Class Dojo. Parents should allow 24-48 hours for teachers to respond to emailed messages on school days. In the event of an emergency or if an immediate response is needed, parents should contact the front office using the school's main number.

RLA will also maintain a school website and social media accounts to communicate with families about important information and/or upcoming events. A newsletter for parents, including important upcoming dates, will be shared with parents via email and other virtual communication outlets.

Annual Notifications

RLA Board Approved: September 10, 2025

The Executive Director or their designee shall effectively notify parents each year of the following:

- The Code of Conduct and school rules.
- The Student-Parent Grievance Procedure.
- Grading Practices.
- The manner in which school officials, in emergency situations during non-school hours, may be contacted.
- Procedural safeguards for parents/guardians of scholars with disabilities.
- That the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or age.
- A list of athletics and extracurricular activities available to scholars.
- Information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, including the causes, the symptoms, the vaccines, the manner in which diseases are spread, and places at which additional information and vaccinations may be obtained.
- For scholars in grades five through twelve, information about cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, and human papillomavirus, including the causes and symptoms of these diseases, the manner in which they are transmitted, the manner in which they may be prevented by vaccination, including the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination, and places where parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children.

Parental/Guardian Permission is required prior to the following:

- Administration of medications to scholars by employees of the school.
- Any release of scholar records that are not considered directory information unless the release is allowed or required by law.
- Off-campus trips.
- All decisions or actions as required by the IDEA with regard to providing special education (EC) or related services to children with disabilities.
- Certain health services, as required by law.
- A scholar's participation in programs or services providing information about the manner in which scholars may obtain contraceptives or abortion referral services.
- Disclosure of a scholar's free and reduced lunch eligibility status.

Any parent or legal guardian wishing to withhold consent for any of these program activities must do so in writing after receiving notice. Otherwise, consent for their scholar's participation in all programs or activities not opted out of are presumed.

Carpool Procedures

Carpool will begin at 7:00 am each morning. Families should pull into the right hand side of the carpool lane, forming lane 1, where they will wait until they come to a designated cone with an adult to drop off their child. If lane one becomes full, cars will be instructed to pull into the left hand side of lane 1, forming a second line. Families should ensure that scholars are ready to exit the vehicle as soon as they get to the cone, with all materials ready to go. Unless there are extenuating circumstances that have already been arranged with the front office staff, family members should not get out of their car during carpool to assist scholars. Once cars have dropped off their scholars, they should exit the property and follow the direction of school personnel/school resource officers.

In the afternoons, carpool will begin immediately after buses and vans have departed for their routes. Families will line up as they did in the morning, lining up in lane 1 (all the way to the right of the carpool lane). Families will receive carpool tags for their children the first week of school. These should be displayed on rearview mirrors so that the teacher calling scholars for carpool will be able to see which children to call. **Cars should move up as far as they can in the carpool line and ensure that scholars only enter their car when the car is completely stopped at a cone.** Cars should exit the property promptly and follow direction of school personnel/school resource officers.

Bus Safety and Procedures

Riverside Leadership Academy offers bus transportation based on need followed by a first-come, first served basis. We utilize community bus stops by partnering with local businesses to pick up and drop off scholars in their parking lots.

Families should arrive at community bus stops a minimum of five minutes prior to the scheduled departure/drop-off time. Given the large area our school serves, buses may arrive up to 15 minutes after the scheduled departure/drop-off time, depending on traffic. Buses will not leave community stops prior to their designated departure time.

In the morning, when the bus arrives at community stops, parents/guardians should wait until the bus is at a complete stop and the doors are open before sending their scholars to board the bus. Younger scholars should be escorted to the bus, as parking lots are public spaces, and RLA is not responsible for other drivers in those spaces.

In the afternoon, parents/guardians, or their designee, should take the scholar's car tag to the bus to pick them up from the bus. This practice ensures that scholars are going home with the proper adult each day. If an adult is not present to pick up their scholar in the afternoon, the scholar will be transported back to campus, and an after school supervision fee may be charged. Repeated instances may result in loss of bus privilege.

Bus transportation is a privilege. To maintain this privilege, scholars should remain safe and orderly throughout the bus route, following all bus driver instructions. The privilege to ride the bus can be revoked at any time due to safety concerns.

School Meals

For the 2025-2026 school year, RLA will offer school lunches to be purchased through Infinite Campus. We will work with local restaurants to offer varying menus throughout the week. These restaurants will offer a la carte items that range from between 6-7 dollars. Families must order for the entire week, and ordering closes the Wednesday prior to the week ordering for. Meals will be delivered to the school individually packaged and labeled by local restaurants. Our lunch team will sort and distribute lunches. We LOVE parent volunteers to assist with lunch delivery!

Riverside Leadership Academy will offer a free- and reduced-lunch program for qualifying scholars. This income-based program is a credit program and will ensure that scholars from low socioeconomic households have access to hot meal options daily. Families who qualify for free and reduced lunch will be required to provide proper documentation of family income and household size within the first week of school. Those who do qualify will receive a credit of \$6.00 per day in Infinite campus. One lunch per scholar should be ordered daily. **Any ordering over the credit provided by the school will be the parent's responsibility to pay for.**

School/Family/Community Partnerships

At RLA, we believe that our greatest success is in our partnerships with families and community members. Parents are welcome to come into our school as visitors or volunteers, provided that they adhere to the campus Visitor Policy. We recognize that strong relationships between families and schools are necessary for scholar engagement and growth, and these relationships are best fostered through open communication, active family involvement, and commitment to the school's overall vision and mission.

As part of our school-wide commitment to celebrate the individuality of all of our Pirates, scholars will participate in projects at each grade level that will provide specific opportunities for family cultural elements to be shared. We embrace the diversity of our scholar population and encourage parents to reach out to teachers to collaborate on additional ways to share unique traditions and celebrations.

Our school will also actively seek out opportunities to partner with local community members and businesses, to find ongoing ways to enhance the learning experiences and environment for scholars, families, and staff. One opportunity that RLA will provide for family and community engagement is our designated Curriculum Nights and family events. RLA is committed to providing AT LEAST one of these events in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. Additional events sponsored by our exploratory teachers and/or Parent Teacher Organization will also be offered.

2.008 Campus Visitors Policy

All visitors at Riverside Leadership Academy must sign in at the front office. All visitors are required to wear a visitor badge while on campus. Once a visitor has checked in, they will be escorted to their destination. All visitors must abide by the policies set forth in the Riverside Leadership Academy Parent-Student handbook at all times.

Family members are welcome to join the scholar during lunch on designated days. The scholar's teacher will communicate the days of the week that are open for visitors during lunch. Visitors and volunteers should notify the teacher if they plan to visit during lunch so that the teacher can plan accordingly and/or let the visitor(s) know of any changes to the daily schedule.

In the event a parent/guardian requests to observe their scholar's class, the parent/guardian must make an appointment directly with the Executive Director or their designee to visit a class for this purpose. Unexpected visits are not allowed because they disrupt classroom instruction and routines.

2.006 Dress Code Policy

2.006 Dress Code Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy's Board of Directors created a dress code to help promote unity by encouraging a sense of belonging and pride in the school community. It also is designed to discourage bullying, victimization, and socio-economic discrimination. It reduces social pressure and peer conflicts and encourages scholars to concentrate more on their studies than on their wardrobe by creating a learning environment free of unnecessary distractions.

Any apparel that includes graphics or lettering that are vulgar, obscene, have profane language or that Riverside Leadership Academy Administration deems inappropriate, such as clothing that inappropriately exposes scholars' bodies, is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. If a scholar's dress or appearance violates the dress attire policy, it will result in a Class 1 infraction (see scholar discipline policy) and scholars may be required to change.

In all aspects of scholar dress, Riverside Leadership Academy Administration reserves the right to deem scholar apparel out of compliance and inappropriate. The school administrators shall exercise appropriate discretion in implementing this policy, including making reasonable accommodations to these rules for religious, cultural, or medical reasons.

I. TOPS

Tops are defined as shirts, sweatshirts, hooded sweatshirts, blouses, jackets, vests, and sweaters.

A. Permissible Tops include:

- Tops that have a primary color of gray, white, black, or blue
- Any official RLA school apparel, regardless of color including tops related to athletic teams, clubs, and other programs endorsed by Riverside Leadership Academy.
- Tops that have small brand logos such as those on the breast pocket of a polo or t-shirt

B. Prohibited Tops include:

- Tops in any color other than the permissible colors listed under Permissible Tops
- Tank tops, sleeveless tops, camisoles, or cut off shirts
- Tops that expose undergarments
- Tops with images, words, or lettering

All jackets, coats, pullovers and hoodies, worn in the school building, must meet the same standards of Permissible Tops as described above. If a scholar wears a jacket or coat that does not meet these requirements they must remove it once they enter the school building.

II. **BOTTOMS**

Bottoms are defined as shorts, pants, jeans, leggings, athletic pants/shorts, capris, skirts, and dresses.

A. Permissible Bottoms include:

- Bottoms that have a primary color of blue, gray, black, or khaki.
- Any official RLA school apparel, regardless of color including tops related to athletic teams, clubs, and other programs endorsed by Riverside Leadership Academy.
- Bottoms that have small brand logos such as those located on hips, hems, or pockets.
- Bottoms must cover the buttocks completely, ensuring that the garment provides full coverage when standing, sitting, or moving.

B. Prohibited Bottoms include:

- Bottoms with holes, rips, or excessive distress that exposes undergarments or scholars' bodies.
- Bottoms in any color other than the permissible colors listed under Permissible Bottoms
- Bottoms that expose undergarments or do not cover the buttocks completely when standing, sitting or moving
- Bottoms with images, words, or lettering

All bottoms must be worn at or above the waistline. Waistline is defined as in line with the scholar's navel. Scholars who wear bottoms that RLA administration deems inappropriate will be considered out of dress code.

III. **OTHER APPAREL**

A. Socks/Shoes

- For scholars in grades K-5, all shoes must have a back or heel strap. Flip flops and slides are NOT permitted.
- For scholars in grades 6-12, all shoes including flip flops and slides are permitted.
- Slippers/house shoes are prohibited for all scholars K-12.

B. Headgear & Sunglasses

- Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the school building.
- Hats, bandanas, & beanies are not to be worn inside the school building.
- Religious or culturally significant headgear including, but not limited to hijabs, yamakas, or headscarves are permitted inside the school building.

C. College Day Guidelines

Scholars may wear a permissible top with a College/University logo or lettering displayed on it.

D. Dress Down/Spirit Day Guidelines

- Scholars can dress outside of the primary color requirements and clothing should meet all other dress code requirements.
- Dress down days include project celebrations, athletic events, and other occasions as noted on the calendar and directed by school administrators, school leaders, or coaches.

5.004 Scholar Code of Conduct Policy

Policy Overview

At Riverside Leadership Academy, we believe that respect and responsibility are essential for a safe and thriving school community. This includes showing respect for yourself, others, and property, as well as practicing honesty, punctuality, reliability, and accountability in all situations. We recognize that positive scholar conduct is a shared responsibility of scholars, staff, parents/guardians, and community members. Together, we create a climate where everyone can succeed.

To support this, RLA integrates a social-emotional curriculum throughout the school day. This includes daily morning meetings, afternoon closing circles, and consistent use of Responsive Classroom practices and techniques. These routines help build relationships, strengthen community, and guide behavior in positive ways. Our goal is to encourage scholars through positive reinforcement and to help them grow in their sense of ethical responsibility, skills that will benefit them both in school and beyond.

Riverside Leadership Academy's expectations for scholar behavior are based on the following governing principles:

- Scholars will act with courtesy, consideration, tolerance, and patience in all interactions with others both at school and during school-sponsored activities.
- Scholars will treat school property and facilities with care and respect.
- Scholars will respect the property of others.
- Scholars will follow the Student Code of Conduct and act with honesty in both academic and social situations.
- Scholar behavior will reflect positively on Riverside Leadership Academy

Maintaining clear and consistent expectations for behavior is essential to the success of our school community. At RLA, discipline is not about punishment but about helping scholars learn to meet expectations and adjust to their environment. Our approach is responsive, never humiliating or embarrassing, with the goal of building self-discipline.

Each teacher and instructional team is responsible for managing scholar behavior in ways that are consistent with RLA's mission and board policies. Teachers are encouraged to use positive, creative, and constructive strategies to correct and redirect behavior, working to prevent repeated misbehavior and to limit the need for suspension.

Teachers and/or administration reserves the right to assign disciplinary measures outside the typical sequence of disciplinary actions when unique or aggravating factors are present. This includes but is not limited to consideration of factors such as the age and/or cognitive ability of the scholar committing the behavior at issue.

Failure to follow the instructions of school staff, or violations of RLA rules, policies, or procedures, will result in appropriate disciplinary measures, as outlined herein:

Definitions of Prohibited Behaviors

Level 1 Behaviors

Level 1 Behaviors are those behaviors that may distract others and/or disrupt the academic environment:

- Tardiness.
- Use of inappropriate language including, but not limited to, profanity and/or any obscene gestures,
- Inappropriate public displays of affection,
- Dress Code violations.
- Littering on school property.
- Repeatedly refusing to complete school assignments.
- Deliberately disrupting the normal educational process in the classroom.
- Failure to follow instructions of school staff.
- Violation of the Technology Use Agreement.
- Repeatedly neglecting to bring computer, notebook, pencil and/or other learning materials to class.
- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of any electronic device not associated with the educational process during normal school hours while on school property, including but not limited to use of a personal mobile telephone.

Level 2 Behaviors

Level 2 Behaviors are those behaviors that significantly distract others and/or significantly disrupt the academic environment:

- Repeatedly committing Level 1 behaviors.
- Failure to comply with Level 1 assigned disciplinary measures.
- Failure to attend an assigned class without a valid excuse, skipping school, or cutting classes.
- Lying to or deliberately deceiving a teacher or a staff member.
- Willfully leaving the classroom or school property without permission.
- Throwing objects in the classroom or on school property, with the exception of throwing objects at any scholar, staff member or adult which is classified as a Level 3 Behavior.
- Insubordination.
- Violations of the Honor Code such as cheating and/or plagiarism.
- Bullying/harassing behaviors as defined by Board policy 1.008, Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying.
- Use of Hate Speech, which may include but is not limited to offensive language targeting any individual(s) based upon based on characteristics like race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation
- Engaging in any Level 2 Behavior that is committed off of school property, while representing the school or while attending a school-related function.

Level 3 Behaviors

Level 3 Behaviors are those behaviors that cause significant disruption to the academic environment or cause harm to self or others. Level 3 behaviors may result in a short-term suspension (less than 10 days) either on-site or off-site:

- Creating or encouraging other scholars to join in a disturbance, so as to cause the disruption of normal school operations.
- Stealing or possessing stolen property, including items either belonging to a staff member, scholar, or any other person, or consists of school property.
- Defacing school, classroom, staff member, or scholar property.
- Making any type of threat, whether verbal, written, electronic, or physical, toward a scholar, staff member, or adult that expresses intent to cause harm or attack, either on school property or at a school-sponsored event.
- Fighting/inappropriate physical contact (Non-Sexual).
- Extreme or persistent incidents of bullying/harassment.
- Engaging in any Level 3 Behavior that is committed off of school property, while representing the school or while attending a school-related function.

Level 4 Behaviors

Riverside Leadership Academy scholars will be taught that level 4 behaviors cause extreme breaches in the security, growth, and development of our community. These breaches are often difficult to repair because they disrupt relationships and break down trust:

- Committing a combination of or repeated Level 1, Level 2, and/or Level 3 offenses.
- Trafficking, possessing and/or using tobacco/nicotine products on school property or at a school-sponsored event including the use or possession of electronic cigarettes or paraphernalia.
- Physically striking or attacking a scholar, staff member or adult whether as an individual act or with the assistance of others.
- Creating or encouraging other scholars to join in a disturbance, so as to cause the disruption of normal school operations.
- Possessing, selling, exchanging, distributing, attempting to purchase, using or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any substance purported to be an illegal drug, prescription medicine or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event. This includes distribution of or purposely taking more than the prescribed amount of medically necessary prescription medication.
- Engaging in any conduct that qualifies as hazing. For the purposes of this policy, hazing is any act that risks a student's physical or mental health in connection with joining or being part of a group. Examples include, but are not limited to, physical harm, forcing someone to consume substances, causing embarrassment or humiliation, or interfering with schoolwork.
- Any false report, and/or calling-in of a bomb threat, fire, active shooter, and/or similar emergent, life-threatening situation which requires the dispatch of first responders. This includes, but is not limited to, setting off the fire alarm without cause.
- Possession or use of explosives, fireworks, sparklers, smoke/stink bombs on school property or at a school-sponsored event.
- Engaging in any Level 4 Behavior that is committed off of school property, while representing the school or while attending a school-related function.
- Touching or conduct perceived as sexual and/or inappropriate in nature. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual activity and/or assault, and/or the taking of and distribution of sexual and/or inappropriate photographs of any scholar, staff member, or adult.
- Damage/destruction/vandalism/arson of or trespassing on school property, that rises to the level of conduct that may be subject to criminal charges.
- Possessing, handling, transferring or bringing a weapon or ammunition (including a toy weapon; example – toy gun, toy knife) on school property or at a school-sponsored event.*

**Any scholar who inadvertently possesses or finds a weapon or illegal substance or stolen property, which may subject the scholar to exclusion, may or may not be recommended for these sanctions if the scholar voluntarily surrenders the property to a school staff person prior to discovery by another person. This should be done as soon as the scholar realizes that he/she is in possession of the weapon, substance, or stolen property.*

The behaviors listed in our Student Code of Conduct are not to be construed as all-inclusive. The administration reserves the right to amend or add to these lists as unique situations arise.

Overview of Disciplinary Measures

Definitions of Potential Disciplinary Measures

- **Behavior Referral** - A behavior referral is a specific written record of the scholar's act of misconduct. It documents the date, nature of the offense, and the disciplinary action taken by the teacher, School Leader, and/or dean.
- **Behavior Support Plan (BSP)/Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** - A behavior support plan (BSP), also known as a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), is a written document that identifies the motivation for chronic misbehavior and what steps will be taken in order to help a scholar overcome inappropriate behavior. It will be signed by school administration and offered to the scholar and parent(s) for signature.
- **Behavior Contract** - A behavior contract is a written document that outlines specific behavior expectations, strategies for teaching the appropriate behavior(s), and disciplinary action(s) for a scholar.
- **Exclusion** - Permanent removal of the scholar from school, school activities and school property. A charter school scholar who has been excluded may return to his local educational agency pursuant to North Carolina law.
- **Expulsion** - Permanent termination of the scholar-school relationship. This applies only to scholars 14 years of age or older whose continued presence constitutes a clear threat to the safety of other scholars or school staff.
- **Long-Term Suspension** - Suspension from school, school activities and school property for more than ten (10) school days, but less than exclusion.
- **Short-Term Suspension** - Suspension from school, school activities and school property for a period of up to ten (10) school days.

Disciplinary Measures for Level 1 Behaviors

Disciplinary measures for committing Level 1 behaviors may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Verbal warning and restatement of expectations
- Parental/Guardian contact
- Appropriate behavior intervention as determined by the teacher based on that teacher's specific classroom management procedures

More than one disciplinary measure may be implemented and combined with any other disciplinary measure listed for Level 1 Behaviors.

Disciplinary Measures for Level 2 Behaviors

Additional disciplinary measures for committing Level 2 Behaviors include but are not limited to the following:

- Disciplinary Referral to Administration

- Behavior improvement agreements (contracts)
- Detention during lunch or before/after school

For any Level 2 Behavior committed, any of the above-listed disciplinary measures may be implemented and combined with any other disciplinary measure listed for Level 1 Behaviors or Level 2 Behaviors.

Disciplinary Measures for Level 3 Behaviors

Additional disciplinary measures for committing Level 3 Behaviors include but are not limited to the following:

- Exclusion from extracurricular activities
- In-school suspension
- Short-term out-of-school suspension (fewer than 10 days)

For any Level 3 Behavior committed, any of the above-listed disciplinary measures may be implemented and combined with any other disciplinary measure listed for Level 1 Behaviors, Level 2 Behaviors, or Level 3 Behaviors.

Disciplinary Measures for Level 4 Behaviors

Level 4 behaviors require that severe steps be taken to restore a sense of safety and trust. Disciplinary measures for committing Level 4 Behaviors include but are not limited to the following:

- Long-term suspension (10 days or more).
- Exclusion from Riverside Leadership Academy.
- Expulsion.

For any Level 4 Behavior committed, any of the above-listed disciplinary measures may be implemented and combined with any other disciplinary measure listed for Level 1 Behaviors, Level 2 Behaviors, or Level 3 Behaviors.

Level 4 Behaviors: Disciplinary Actions and Appeals

While Riverside Leadership Academy typically uses progressive discipline, some offenses are so serious that they warrant immediate suspension or longer-term disciplinary measures. Level 4 behaviors are the most serious and require strong action to restore safety and trust within the school community.

- **Authority and Short-Term Suspension:** The Executive Director may suspend a scholar for up to ten (10) school days at a time (short-term suspension). There is no appeal process for suspensions of ten school (10) days or fewer.
- **Long-Term Suspension, Exclusion:** For certain Level 4 offenses, the Executive Director may recommend a long-term suspension (10 school days or more) or exclusion from school. These decisions require written notice to the parties involved and a hearing if requested. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Board Chair will appoint a hearing committee.
- **Board Appeals Process:** Appeals of long-term suspension or exclusion decisions must be submitted in writing to the Board Chair within five (5) school days of the decision. A Hearing Committee of three or more Board members, appointed by the Board Chair, will review the appeal and conduct an investigation and hearing within thirty (30) days of the requested appeal. After reviewing the evidence and hearing from all parties, the Hearing

Committee will offer a recommendation for action to the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The Board of Directors may confirm, overturn, or modify the decision. The Board's decision will be provided in writing and is final.**

***Please refer to **Policy 1.006 Scholar/Parent/Guardian Grievance Policy** for more information about the grievance and appeals process.*

Bullying or Harassing Behavior

See RLA Guidance: 1.008 Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy - RLA

Rights for Scholars with Disabilities

See RLA Guidance: 5.007 Discipline for Exceptional Children's Scholars – RLA

PARENT/GUARDIAN/SCHOLAR GRIEVANCES

Purpose

Riverside Leadership Academy is committed to providing a fair, consistent, and timely process for addressing complaints and grievances from scholars and parents/guardians, in accordance with North Carolina charter school laws and regulations.

Whenever possible, RLA encourages parents/guardians to first address concerns directly with the appropriate school employee by setting up an informal meeting to discuss the matter. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the formal grievance procedure outlined in this policy will apply.

Definitions

- **Grievance:** A formal, written complaint filed by a scholar or parent/guardian alleging that a specific decision, action, or inaction by school personnel has adversely affected the grievant. A grievance may include, but is not limited to:
 - Alleged violations, misapplications, or misinterpretations of state or federal law, board policy, or administrative procedure;
 - Allegations that a decision or action by a school employee is unfair, discriminatory, or not in the best interest of a student.
- **Grievant:** Any scholar or parent/guardian who files a grievance.
- **Respondent:** The person or entity against whom the grievance is filed.
- **School Day and/or School Events:** Any day when school is in session according to the official school calendar, including any sanctioned school-sponsored events.

Informal Resolution

Before filing a formal grievance, the grievant is strongly encouraged to seek resolution by first addressing the concern directly with the individual(s) involved. Many concerns related to the classroom, teacher, or school can be appropriately resolved at this level through open, respectful communication with the teacher or Dean of School.

If, after meeting with the Dean of School, the issue still meets the definition of a grievance and remains unresolved, the parent/guardian/scholar may proceed with the Formal Grievance Process as outlined in this policy.

Scholar/Parent/Guardian Formal Grievance Process

Riverside Leadership Academy emphasizes informal communication whenever possible; however, if a grievance cannot be resolved through this process, the formal procedures will apply. Failure of the grievant to comply with the timelines outlined in this policy will result in denial of the grievance or appeal. Failure of school administration to comply with these timelines will result in an automatic right of appeal to the next level.

Step 1:

1. The student, parent, or guardian should notify the staff member/teacher of their concern within **five (5) days** of the incident. This may be done through an email, phone call, or conference. The issue should not proceed to the next step without first attempting direct communication. If the scholar, parent, or guardian does not feel comfortable addressing the staff member directly, they may contact school administration instead.
2. If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the grievant must submit a formal written grievance to the **Dean of School** within **ten (10) school days** of the event or action giving rise to the concern.
 - The written grievance must include:
 - The grievant's name and contact information
 - Date of submission
 - A detailed description of the grievance, including dates, times, and specific facts
 - Names of any witnesses
 - Reference to any relevant policies, laws, or regulations
 - Description of prior attempts at resolution
 - The specific remedy or action requested
3. The Dean of School shall acknowledge receipt of the grievance within three (3) school days.
4. The Dean of School shall investigate the grievance, which may include meetings with the grievant, respondent, and any witnesses.
5. The Dean of School shall provide a written decision within ten (10) school days of receiving the grievance, unless additional time is necessary and communicated to the grievant.
 - If a grievance concerns a Dean of School, the written grievance must be submitted directly to the **Executive Director**. In this case, the Executive Director will assume the responsibilities normally carried out by the Dean of School, and the grievance will proceed through the same process outlined in this policy.
 - If a grievance concerns the Executive Director, the written grievance must be submitted directly to the **Board Chairperson**. In this case, the Board Chairperson will assume the responsibilities normally carried

out by the Executive Director and the grievance will proceed through the same process outlined in this policy.

Step 2:

1. If the grievant is not satisfied with the Dean of School's decision, the grievant may appeal to the Executive Director within five (5) school days of receiving the Dean of School's decision.
2. The appeal must be in writing and include:
 - a. A copy of the original grievance
 - b. A copy of the Dean of School's decision
 - c. A statement explaining why the grievant disagrees with the Dean of School's decision
3. The Executive Director shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal within three (3) school days.
4. The Executive Director shall investigate the grievance, which may include meetings with the grievant, respondent, and any witnesses.
5. The Executive Director shall provide a written decision within ten (10) school days of receiving the grievance, unless additional time is necessary and communicated to the grievant.

Step 3:

1. If the grievant is not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, the grievant may appeal to the Board of Directors within five (5) school days of receiving the Executive Director's decision.
2. The appeal must be in writing and include:
 - A copy of the original grievance
 - A copy of the Executive Director's decision
 - A statement explaining why the grievant disagrees with the Executive Director's decision
3. The Board Chair shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal within three (3) school days.
4. The Executive Director will provide the Board with all objective data and findings from the investigation.
5. The Board will then schedule a hearing within ten (10) school days of receiving the appeal, and the Board chair will designate a committee to conduct an appeal hearing within thirty (30) days of receiving the written appeal.
 - The appeal hearing will include a committee of at least three Board members, and all parties will have the opportunity to present their case.
 - The designated committee will review the grievance record and may, at its discretion, hear additional information from the grievant, respondent, or other relevant parties.
6. After hearing testimonies and reviewing all evidence, the designated committee will present their recommended determination of the appeal to the full Board at the next scheduled Board meeting in a closed session. The Board may confirm, overturn, or modify the committee's recommended determination of the appeal.
7. The Board will issue a written decision within ten (10) school days of the meeting where the grievance was considered. This decision is final, except in cases involving:
 - An alleged violation of state or federal law,
 - An alleged violation of the school's charter agreement with the NC State Board of Education, or
 - An alleged violation of the school's bylaws.

Personal Belongings and Cell Phones

At RLA, we are committed to the emotional and physical safety of all scholars. In support of this, we will hold our scholars to a high standard regarding cell phone possession and use.

At this time, scholars grade kindergarten through third grade should not have a personal cell phone device on campus. Scholars in fourth grade through seventh grade may have personal cell phone devices only if they adhere to the classroom teachers' specific expectations for these devices. Cell phones should be powered off and remain in backpacks or in a designated area as indicated by the classroom teacher.

Scholars are expected to ensure that their personal belongings are secure while on school property. RLA will not be held liable for scholars' personal belongings. Parents and guardians who allow for personal devices on campus must sign agreement that states that RLA is not responsible for securing personal belongings and devices, and that scholars who do not adhere to the outlined expectations of this policy and their classroom teachers' expectations lose the privilege, and devices may be confiscated by school administration until they can be picked up parents or guardians.

2.009 Grading Systems Policy

The policy of the Board of Directors is to strive for a consistent and just evaluation of each scholar at Riverside Leadership Academy. To ensure the effectiveness of this policy, the Board of Directors endorses the following beliefs and best practices:

- Student grades should reflect academic achievement
- While attendance and behavior may influence a scholar's learning, they should be reported separately, and not a factor in the scholar's grade
- Teachers should compare each scholar's performance against pre-set standards, not against the performance of other scholars.

- For missing work, teachers should provide reasonable opportunities to complete make-up assignment(s) in order to demonstrate the targeted learning
- Teachers should provide scholars and their parents/guardians with a clear explanation of their grading practices including the weighting of formative and summative assessments and rubrics as appropriate.
- All assessments and assignments, including teacher-made tests should be designed to assess scholar achievement accurately and aligned with the North Carolina Essential Standards and the Riverside Leadership Academy Charter.

Grading Scale

Kindergarten – Fifth Grade scholars will not receive traditional letter grades on their report cards. However, they will receive a Standards Based Report Card. A Standards Based approach allows parents and scholars to understand Riverside Leadership Academy's educational program as well as strategies to support scholar success. Traditional grades often measure many different factors - how well scholars do in comparison to their classmates and/or how well behaved they are in class. Standards based evaluations measure how well an individual scholar is doing in relation to grade level standards and skills, not the work of other scholars. Teachers use the results of the on-going assessments to determine a scholar's present level of performance and relation to the mastery of grade level content. The report cards will provide meaningful and relevant information, detailing each scholar's social/emotional and academic development.

In a Standard Based Report Card, grades reflect four levels of performance. They are:

- 4 - Exceeds grade level expectations with consistency and accuracy;
- 3 - Meets grade level expectations with consistency and accuracy;
- 2 – Making progress/developing- indicates the scholar is approaching and occasionally meets the standards for the current grade level; and
- 1 – Concern - indicates the scholar has not yet met minimum level standards.

Sixth - Twelfth Grade Letter and/or numerical grades will be given; the grading scale shall be as follows:

- A = 90-100 Excellent
- B = 80-89 Above Average
- C = 70-79 Average
- D = 60-69 Proficient
- F = 0-59 Not Proficient

Grading Parameters

Scholars earn grades based on material outlined in the North Carolina Essential Standards. Scholars' grades will reflect their actual performance in the course. Percentage grades will be used on report cards, cumulative folders, and transcripts.

The following grading parameters are in place for the 2024-2025 school year and will be followed by all Riverside Leadership Academy's applicable grade levels:

- **Make-up Work** – When a scholar is absent, the scholar has 3 school days to turn in missed work upon returning to school. The day the scholar returns to school is Day 1 of the 3 days.
- **Late Work** – Teachers shall have autonomy to develop a late work policy within their grade level teams. Before each school year the grade level teams will determine their late work policy and communicate it to their scholar's parents/guardians. When determining their policy, teachers shall consider how the policy effectively helps them assess scholar comprehension of the curriculum and not scholar behaviors. Riverside Leadership Academy's administration must approve any late work policy before it is implemented.
- Teachers will have autonomy when determining grade categories weights/percentages. (classwork, homework, Tests, etc.) Teachers will communicate these weights/percentages with Riverside Leadership Academy's administration and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.
- When completing team/group assignments, scholars shall not be penalized for the incomplete work of others. In some situations, the scholar could receive a group grade and an individual grade. Teachers will determine whether they assign a group and individual grade.
- The final grade may include tests, quizzes, projects, group/team work, labs, research papers, homework, class participation, classwork, etc.

Homework Expectations

Homework will be given at times, though it should be a minimal amount and shall be used solely to enhance the classroom learning experience and connect families to scholars' learning. Research supports additional practice whenever this practice is brief, has clear purpose, and is relevant to the scholar's individual educational needs. Teachers should also be considerate of families' schedules outside of school hours and collect homework at the end of each week, allowing for parents to work with their children on assignments when their schedules allow.

In lower grades (K-5), homework may include daily reading (may be recorded on a nightly log), brief practice of math skills, or completion of incomplete class assignments. At times, scholars may be asked to complete activities as an extension to class projects.

In upper grades (6-7), homework may be assigned at the teacher's discretion, but must adhere to the school's overall philosophy, assigned as a brief, relevant practice with clear purpose. Most homework assignments should be carryover work that needs to be completed from the school day.

Major projects should be completed mostly in school, but may require some work outside of class. This occurrence should be an exception.

2.010 Report Cards

Teachers shall keep parents/guardians informed of scholar progress at school. Each family will receive a report card for their scholar at the end of each 9-week grading period. The report card will include each scholar's grade in all of the courses they are enrolled in based on the 10-point grading scale. The report may also include teacher comments. In addition to the report card that is sent home, additional information may need to be sent to the parent/guardian or individual conferences may need to be scheduled.

Kindergarten - Fifth Grade: scholars will receive a Standards-Based Report Card. Please see the Riverside Leadership Academy Grading Policy for more information regarding the Standards Based Report Card.

Report cards shall include the number of days absent and the number of days tardy.

Each scholar receiving exceptional children's services will receive an assessment of the scholar's progress toward goals on the scholar's Individual Education Plan (IEP) at the end of each grading period, including whether the scholar is likely to reach IEP goals by the end of the school year. The scholar's IEP shall state how the scholar's parent/guardian will receive this assessment.

Progress Reports

Parental/Guardian communication of scholar progress is essential in providing quality instruction. Teachers will communicate each scholar's progress and identify areas of concern. All parents/guardians will receive communication regarding the progress of each scholar between report cards, regardless of the level of progress.

Interim Progress Reports Schedule

Interim progress reports shall be distributed to each scholar according to a schedule determined by Riverside Leadership Academy's administration.

Interim Progress Reports to Scholars with Disabilities

Each parent/guardian of a scholar receiving exceptional children's services will receive an assessment of the scholar's progress toward goals on the scholar's Individual Education Plan whenever the scholar receives a formal progress report under this policy. The scholar's IEP shall state how the parent/guardian will receive such assessments.

2.003 Retention and Promotion Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy's Executive Director has the authority to promote and to retain scholars based upon the standards set by the Board of Directors and by the State Board of Education. Scholars are required to meet promotion standards that include demonstrated grade level proficiency on local assessments, standardized tests, report cards, and scholar work. In order to be promoted to the next grade level, scholars in all grades should be proficient in reading and mathematics, which may be demonstrated through North Carolina End-of-Grade tests, school assessments, scholar portfolio of work, and report card grades. A promotion decision should not be made solely on the basis of a state assessment.

The Executive Director shall consider the following criteria when making decisions regarding scholar promotions:

1. Satisfactory performance on all relevant state End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments
2. Passing final grades in core academic classes
3. Satisfactory performance on PBL project content and presentations
4. Satisfactory classroom performance on all teacher-initiated standards and criteria for advancement and promotion in core academic classes
5. Daily Attendance records

Scholars With Disabilities

To the extent possible, scholars with disabilities shall be held to the same promotion standards as all other scholars. However, for scholars with IEPs who take alternative assessments in lieu of the EOG or the EOC tests in their respective grades and/or high school courses, promotion decisions shall be based on criteria as recommended by the IEP team. Such decisions may or may not be tied to passing or failing course grades and/or other promotion requirements.

All intervention strategies and other opportunities, benefits, and resources that are made available to scholars without disabilities shall be made available to scholars with disabilities who are subject to these promotion standards. Such opportunities must be in addition to the special education services provided to scholars with disabilities.

Each IEP team, with the scholar's parent(s) or guardian(s) as members (and the scholar himself as member, where appropriate) shall work together to determine the appropriate course of study for that scholar.

Retention

If a scholar appears likely to be retained, then the parent/guardian of the scholar shall receive at least two (2) notices. The first notice may be a conference; the second notice must be in writing and must be provided by the end of the third quarter. The Executive Director's office must provide in writing an official notice of retention to the parent/guardian by the last day of school.

Pursuant to state law, third graders who fail to achieve reading proficiency may not be promoted unless a statutory exception applies. Parents/Guardians of impacted scholars will be informed of the law's application. Any parent who wishes to learn more about this law and its application should contact their scholar's third grade teacher, the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Culture, or the Executive Director.

5.000 Student Records Policy

Policy Overview

All scholar records shall be up-to-date and shall be maintained with appropriate measures of security and confidentiality. Riverside Leadership Academy abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) with regard to the procedures for inspection, review and disclosure of scholar records as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 C.F.R. Part 99. Records protected by this policy include any recorded information directly related to a scholar and maintained by

Riverside Leadership Academy. Student records do not include the records of school personnel that are in the sole possession of the maker and which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the person who made the record.

The official record shall contain, as a minimum, adequate identification data including date of birth, attendance data, grading and promotion data, and such other factual information as may be deemed appropriate by the Riverside Leadership Academy Board. The official record of each scholar enrolled at Riverside Leadership Academy shall be permanently maintained in the files until after the scholar graduates, or should have graduated, from high school.

Student official record will also contain any notice and notice of any suspension of more than 10 days (long-term suspension) or exclusion and the conduct for which the scholar was suspended or excluded.

Each scholar's official record also shall include notice of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed pursuant to G.S. 115C-390.7 through G.S. 115C-390.11 and the conduct for which the scholar was suspended or expelled.

The Executive Director or designee shall expunge from the record the notice of suspension or expulsion if the following criteria are met:

- The scholar graduates from high school or is not suspended or excluded during a two year period following the scholar's return to school after the suspension or exclusion;
- The Executive Director determines that maintenance of the record is no longer required to maintain safe and orderly schools; and,
- The Executive Director determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the scholar.

The Executive Director shall expunge a notice of long-term suspension or exclusion from the scholar's record if all of the above criteria are met and a request for expungement is made by a parent, legal guardian, custodian, scholar who is at least 16 years old or scholar who is emancipated. Additional rights of parents and eligible scholars concerning a scholar's special education records are explained in the Handbook on Parents' Rights and the North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities.

Riverside Leadership Academy will adhere to all federal laws relating to maintaining scholar files. The following information regarding The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) comes from the US Department of Education website (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>).

Student Record Request and Withdrawal

North Carolina Public Schools, along with Riverside Leadership Academy, use an electronic scholar database. Once a scholar is registered to attend another school, a request is sent to Riverside Leadership Academy, and records are released to the school. Once we receive a scholar record request, the scholar is dropped from our enrollment.

Access to Student Records

The natural parents/legal guardians of a scholar, or an individual acting as parent in the absence of a parent or legal guardian, have the right to review the contents of the child's scholar record.

Scholars 18-years of age or older or who are married (emancipated scholars) have the right to review their own school records. The parent/guardian of an emancipated scholar may examine the scholar's records if the child is classified as a dependent of the parent/guardian under federal income tax regulations.

When a child's parents are separated or divorced, the records will be open to both parents unless a current court order specifying otherwise is provided to school officials. A copy of any court order restricting a parent's access to a scholar's files shall be included with the scholar's cumulative record and shall be followed by all school personnel.

FERPA

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 scholar education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the scholar when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Scholars to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible scholars."

Parents and eligible scholars have the right to inspect and review the scholar's education records maintained by the school. Riverside Leadership Academy is not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible scholars to review the records. Riverside Leadership Academy may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible scholars have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If Riverside Leadership Academy decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible scholar then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible scholar has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, Riverside Leadership Academy must have written permission from the parent or eligible scholar in order to release any information from a scholar's education record. However, FERPA allows Riverside Leadership Academy to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a scholar is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a scholar;
- 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.

Riverside Leadership Academy may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a scholar's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. If a parent/guardian would

prefer that Riverside Leadership Academy not release directory information about their scholar, they must inform the Executive Director in writing.

Riverside Leadership Academy employees, contractors and volunteers are exposed to confidential information daily. Information concerning scholars and their families should be treated as confidential information, including personally identifiable information from scholars' education records. The Riverside Leadership Academy staff with access to this information do not have the right to give this information to anyone who does not have a legitimate professional reason for access. Teachers or other staff members can be held liable for the individual release of information. Staff members are not permitted to discuss information about their scholars in open areas or where parents or other scholars have access. Anything said in meetings discussing scholars is considered confidential.

A scholar's name should not be placed in the subject box of an email. Their names should also be treated as confidential. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the scholar when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Scholars to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible scholars."

If parents/guardians have questions regarding FERPA or have received a request for educational records, they should contact the Executive Director. See FERPA: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

2.000 School Calendar Policy

The Board of Directors of Riverside Leadership Academy delegates the responsibility of developing, and maintaining the annual school-year calendar to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall recommend and the Board shall approve a school calendar by March 15th before the start of each school year and may present a calendar adoption for 2 consecutive years. The calendar shall include a minimum of 1025 instructional hours and shall include provision for inclement weather and teacher workdays. Riverside Leadership Academy will also adhere to GS 115C 84.2 and will close on Veterans Day or the day in which Veterans Day is observed each year.

In order to make informed and reasonable decisions regarding the school calendar, the Executive Director and Board of Directors may or may not seek the input of the Riverside Leadership Academy staff members, scholars, and parent organizations.

Parent's Bill of Rights Compliance Policies

THESE POLICIES WILL BE POSTED AND AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE.

Riverside Leadership Academy believes that parent and family involvement must be aggressively pursued and supported by our communities, in homes, schools/colleges/universities, neighborhoods, businesses, faith congregations, organizations, and government entities by working together in a mutually collaborative effort. As such, the Board is committed to developing policies to involve parents in schools and their child's education effectively. N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.20(b)(3).

All parents/families and educators must prioritize family involvement in education; thus, the Board commits to providing support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement.

Improved scholar achievement must be the equally shared responsibility and the goal of parents, teachers, the school system, and the community. Thus, the Board commits to seeing that each school has effective volunteer programs to address scholar needs and commits to utilizing schools to assist scholars and families in connecting with community resources.

The Board commits that it will impact scholar achievement significantly by improving the quality and quantity of parent/family involvement. Consequently, the Board will provide guidance, support, cooperation, and the necessary funding to enable parents to become active partners in education.

A. Parent Rights

A parent has the right to the following:

- (1) To direct the education and care of their child.
- (2) To direct the child's upbringing and moral or religious training.
- (3) To enroll their child in a public or nonpublic school and in any school choice options available to the parent for which the child is otherwise eligible by law to comply with compulsory attendance laws, as provided in Part 1 of Article 26 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes.
- (4) To access and review all education records, as authorized by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, relating to their child.
- (5) To make health care decisions for their child, unless otherwise provided by law, including Article 1A of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.
- (6) To access and review all medical records of their child, as authorized by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), P.L. 104-191, as amended, except as follows:
 - a. If an authorized investigator requests that information not be released to a parent because the parent is the subject of an investigation of either of the following:
 - A crime committed against the child under Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.
 - An abuse and neglect complaint under Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.

- b. When otherwise prohibited by law.
- (2) To prohibit the creation, sharing, or storage of a biometric scan of their child without the parent's prior written consent, except as authorized pursuant to a court order or otherwise required by law, including G.S. 7B-2102 and G.S. 7B-2201.
- (3) To prohibit the creation, sharing, or storage of their child's blood or deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) without the parent's prior written consent, except as authorized pursuant to a court order or otherwise required by law, including G.S. 7B-2201.
- (4) To prohibit the creation by the State of a video or voice recording of their child without the parent's prior written consent, except a recording made in the following circumstances:
 - a. During or as part of a court proceeding.
 - b. As part of an investigation under Chapter 7B or Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.
 - c. When the recording will be used solely for any of the following purposes:
 - A safety demonstration, including one related to security and discipline on educational property.
 - An academic or extracurricular activity.
 - Classroom instruction.
 - Photo identification cards.
 - Security or surveillance of buildings, grounds, or school transportation.
- (5) To be promptly notified if an employee of the State suspects that a criminal offense has been committed against their child, unless the incident has first been reported to law enforcement or the county child welfare agency, and notification of the parent would impede the investigation.

B. Limitations on the right to parent:

- (1) The requirements of this Article do not authorize a parent to do any of the following:
 - a. Engage in unlawful conduct.
 - b. Abuse or neglect of the child, as defined in Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.
- (2) The requirements of this Article do not prohibit the following:
 - a. A State official or employee from acting in their official capacity within the reasonable and prudent scope of their authority.
 - b. A court of competent jurisdiction from acting in its official capacity within the reasonable and prudent scope of its authority or issuing an order otherwise permitted by law.

C. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.25, the School shall display on its website the following parental legal rights regarding their child's education:

- (1) The right to consent or withhold consent for participation in reproductive health and safety education programs, consistent with the requirements of G.S. 115C-81.30. The School will provide parents with a consent form prior to such programming.
- (2) The right to seek a medical or religious exemption from immunization requirements, consistent with the requirements of G.S.130A-156 and G.S. 130A-157. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (3) The right to review statewide standardized assessment results as part of the State report card. The School will provide such information following such assessments.
- (4) The right to request an evaluation of their child for an academically or intellectually gifted program or for identification as a child with a disability, as provided in Article 9 of this Chapter. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (5) The right to inspect and purchase public school unit textbooks and other supplementary instructional materials, as provided in Part 3 of Article 8 of this Chapter. Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials and Library Materials.
- (6) The right to access information relating to the unit's policies for promotion or retention, including high school graduation requirements. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (7) The right to receive scholar report cards on a regular basis that clearly depict and grade the scholar's academic performance in each class or course, the scholar's conduct, and the scholar's attendance. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (8) The right to access information relating to the State public education system, State standards, report card requirements, attendance requirements, and textbook requirements. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information as well as the Department of Public Instruction.
- (9) The right to participate in parent-teacher organizations. This information will be provided directly from the parent-teacher organization.
- (10) The right to opt into certain data collection for their child, as provided in Part 5 of this Article and Article 29 of this Chapter. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information
- (11) The right for scholars to participate in protected scholar information surveys only with parental consent, as provided in Part 5 of this Article. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (12) The right to review all available records of materials their child has borrowed from a school library. Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, and Library Materials.

D. Parent Guide for Student Achievement Pursuant to 115C-76.30.

The Parent Guide to Student Achievement is an effort by the State Board of Education (“SBE”). The SBE’s Guide will be posted on the School’s website once it has been provided by the State Board of

Education and going forward at the beginning of each school year. The SBE's Guide will be in writing, understandable to scholars and parents, and discussed at the beginning of the school year during Open House, Back to School events, or in any forum designated by the School. The SBE Guide shall meet the requirements set forth in N.C.G.S. 115C-76.30.

E. The School's Guide for Student Achievement Pursuant to 115C-76.30.

- (1) The School has chosen to comply with these provisions by ensuring the following information is in the Student Handbook available on this School's website:
 - a. Requirements for scholars to be promoted to the next grade.
 - b. School entry requirements, including required immunizations and the recommended immunization schedule.
 - c. Ways for parents to do the following:
 - Strengthen their child's academic progress, especially in reading, as provided in Part 1A of Article 8 of this Chapter.
 - Strengthen their child's citizenship, especially social skills, and respect for others.
 - Strengthen their child's realization of high expectations and setting lifelong learning goals.
 - Enhance communication between the school and the home.
- (2) The School has chosen to comply with 115C-76.30, making the following information available through its website; the Student Handbook found on the School's website; School and classroom communications (hard copy or via email); communications from the School's PTO; as well as through any other medium appropriate to communicate in an understandable way with parents and scholars:
 - a. Services available for parents and their children, such as family literacy services; mentoring, tutoring, and other academic reinforcement programs; college planning, academic advisement, and scholar counseling services; and after-school programs.
 - b. Opportunities for parental participation, such as parenting classes, adult education, school advisory councils, and school volunteer programs.
 - c. Opportunities for parents to learn about rigorous academic programs that may be available for their child, such as honors programs, Career and College Promise and other dual enrollment opportunities, advanced placement, Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses, International Baccalaureate, North Carolina Virtual High School courses, and accelerated access to postsecondary education.
 - d. Educational choices available to parents, including each type of public-school unit available to residents of the county in which the child lives and nonpublic school options, educational choice options offered within the public school unit, and scholarship grant programs under Part 2A of Article 39 and Article 41 of this Chapter.

- e. Rights of scholars who have been identified as scholars with disabilities, as provided in Article 9 of this Chapter.
- f. Contact information for school and unit offices.
- g. Resources for information on the importance of scholar health and other available resources for parents, including the following information on available immunizations and vaccinations:
 - A recommended immunization schedule in accordance with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.
 - Information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, as required by G.S. 115C-375.4.

F Efforts to Increase Parent Involvement Pursuant to § 115C-76.35.

The School shall, in consultation with parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners, develop and adopt policies to promote parental involvement and empowerment. The School will use existing committees, communication mediums, and structures to engage in the consultation requirement set forth in § 115C-76.35 and/or may create new avenues to comply with this provision. Opportunities and information will be available on the School’s website and/or in community and/or school communications. The School will ensure policies provide for parental choices as set forth in SB49, establish parental responsibilities, and provide for parental involvement, which shall include the following:

- (1) Providing links to parents for community services.
- (2) Establishing opportunities for parental involvement in developing, implementing, and evaluating family involvement programs.
- (3) Establish opportunities for parents to participate in school advisory councils, volunteer programs, and other activities.

G. The School has established policies to do all the following:

- (1) Provide for parental participation in their child's education to improve parent and teacher cooperation in areas such as homework, school attendance, and discipline that aligns with the parent guide for scholar achievement required by G.S. 115C-76.30. ***Please consult the School's website and Student Handbook on the School's website.***
- (2) Effectively communicate to parents the way textbooks are used to implement the school's curricular objectives. ***Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Material, and Library Materials; the School's website; and the Student Handbook on the School's website.***

- (3) Establish a procedure for parents to learn about their child's course of study and the source of any supplementary instructional materials. This procedure shall include the process for parents to inspect and review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classroom. The policy shall be available for in-person review by parents at the school site and publicly available on the school's website. For this section, a textbook is defined in G.S. 115C-85, and supplementary instructional materials include supplementary textbooks, periodicals, audiovisual materials, and other supplementary materials used for instructional purposes. ***Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, and Library Materials.***
- (4) Establish a means for parents to object to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials. ***Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, and Library Materials.***
- (5) Establish a process for parents to review materials for and to consent or withhold consent for participation in reproductive health and safety education programs consistent with the requirements of G.S. 115C-81.30. The School already provides such review, notice, and consent requirements and will continue to follow our current procedures. ***Please consult the Student Handbook available on the School's website for further information.***
- (6) Establish a process for parents to learn about the nature and purpose of clubs and activities offered at their child's school, including both curricular and extracurricular activities. Such information will be provided through School and/or classroom communications. ***Please also consult the Student Handbook available on the School's website.***

H. Further Compliance

- (1) The qualifications of teachers, including licensure status, will be made available to parents at the beginning of each school year and updated from time to time as needed. This information will include teacher degrees, licensure status, and any other information necessary to comply with §115C-76.30(1)(d).
- (2) Our School is a school of choice. Parents have other educational choices available to them, including traditional district schools, non-public schools (religious and secular), other charter schools, and home schools. Information on scholarship programs is available at [Opportunity Scholarship - NCSEAA \(https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/opportunity/\)](https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/opportunity/)

I. Student Health Notifications Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.45

- (1) The School does not prohibit school employees from notifying a parent about their child's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring.

- (2) The School does not encourage or have the effect of encouraging a child to withhold from that child's parent information about their mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring.
- (3) School personnel shall not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in critical decisions affecting a scholar's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being except where a reasonably prudent person would believe that notification would result in the child becoming an abused juvenile or neglected juvenile, as those terms are defined in G.S. 7B-101 or jeopardize the scholar's safety.
- (4) Notifications:
 - a. At the beginning of each school year ,the school nurse will notify parents about each healthcare service offered at the school and provide information on how parents can consent to such service. The school nurse or school counselor will notify parents of changes, prior to or contemporaneous with changes, in service or monitoring related to their child's mental, emotional, or physical health or wellbeing and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for that child. (§115C-78.45)
 - b. The school nurse or school counselor shall notify parents of kindergarten through grade three scholars of any scholar well-being questionnaire or health screening form prior to administration and shall provide information on how parents can consent to such questionnaire or health screening.
 - c. The Executive Director or her designee shall provide notice of a change prior to any changes in the name of a pronoun used for a scholar in school records or by school personnel except where a reasonably prudent person would believe that notification would result in the child becoming an abused juvenile or neglected juvenile, as those terms are defined in G.S. 7B-101 or jeopardize the scholar's safety.
 - d. The School's policy and procedure for parents to exercise the parental remedies provided by G.S.§ 115.C-76.60 is set forth in this policy, **Entitled Parental Remedies.**

J. **Timelines for parental requests for information under § 115C-76.40.**

- (1) This information parents have a right to access under this SB49 has been made accessible to parents as set forth in this policy. Parents are encouraged to review this policy and the policies referenced herein before making a request for information under § 115C-76.40.
- (2) A parent of a child enrolled at our School may request in writing from a teacher or administrator any of the information the parent has the right to access, as provided in this Part. The request must be made via email sent to mainoffice@riversideleadershipacademy.org and addressed to the teacher or administrator, Within 10 business days, the teacher or administrator shall either (i) provide the requested information to the parent or (ii) provide an extension notice to the

parent that, due to the volume or complexity of the request, the information will be provided no later than 20 business days from the date of the parental request.

- (3) If the teacher or administrator: (i) denies or fails to respond to the request for information within 10 business days or (ii) fails to provide information within 20 business days following an extension notice as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the parent may request in writing any of the information the parent has the right to access, as provided in this Part, from the Executive Director along with a statement specifying the time frame of the denial or failure to provide information by the principal.
- (4) If the Executive Director denies or does not respond to the request for information within 10 business days, the parent may appeal the denial or lack of response to the governing body of the public school unit no later than 20 business days from the date of the request to the Board of Directors, as provided in subsection (2) of this section. The Board shall place the parents' appeal on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled board meeting occurring more than three business days after submission of the appeal. During that meeting, the Board shall make a decision regarding the appeal. The Board's decision under this section is final and is not subject to judicial review.

K. Student support services training § 115C-76.50.

Student support services training developed or provided by the School to the school personnel shall adhere to scholar services guidelines, standards, and frameworks established by the Department of Public Instruction.

L. Parental rights to opt-in to protected information surveys § 115C-76.65

(1) Definitions:

- a. Adult scholar – An enrolled scholar who is 18 or older or an emancipated minor.
- b. Protected information survey – A survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning any of the following:
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the scholar or the scholar's parents.
 - Mental or psychological problems of the scholar or the scholar's family.
 - Sex behavior or attitudes.
 - Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
 - Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships.
 - Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
 - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the scholar or scholar's parents.

- Income other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.
- (2) The School shall make the following available to parents and adult scholars at least 10 days prior to administration of a protected information survey. The public school unit shall provide opportunities for review of the following both electronically and in person:
 - a. The process for providing consent to participation in the protected information survey.
 - b. The full text of the protected information survey.
 - (3) No scholar shall be permitted to participate in a protected information survey without the parent or the adult scholar's prior written or electronic consent.
 - (4) The requirements of this provision are in addition to the rights provided to parents and scholars under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, which are set forth in the Student Handbook available on the School's website.

M. Procedures and Remedies for Parent Concerns

This provision sets forth procedures and remedies required by § 115C-76.60. A parent has the right to notify the principal about concerns under this policy pursuant to § 115C-76.60. The School's procedures and remedies for parental concerns are as follows:

- (1) The parent shall submit in writing a detailed description of their concern to the School via email at mainoffice@riversideleadershipacademy.org. Such description shall clearly state the SB49 procedure or practice of concern. For a concern to be covered by this Section, it must be a concern about the School's procedure or practice under SB49.
- (2) Within seven business days of receiving the concern, the Executive Director or her designee shall either:
 - a. Resolve the concern and notify the parent of the resolution, or
 - b. Develop a plan for resolution and notify the parent of the plan to resolve the concern within 30 days of receiving written notification of the concern from the parent, or
 - c. Notify the parent of why the concern cannot be resolved.
- (3) If the concern is not resolved within 30 days, a parent may do one of the following:
 - a. Notify the State Board of Education and request a Parental Concern hearing, or
 - b. Bring an action against the school as provided in Article 26 of Chapter 1 of the North Carolina General Statutes for a declaratory judgment that the unit's procedure or practice violates N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.45, § 115C-76.50, or § 115C-76.55.
- (4) The court may award injunctive relief to a parent and shall award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to a parent awarded injunctive relief.

N. Reporting requirements under § 115C-76.70

- (1) The School shall report annually by September 15 the following information to the State Board of Education in a format designated by the State Board:
 - a. The most current version of the policies and procedures adopted as required by this Article, with any modifications of the policy or procedure from the prior year's submission clearly delineated.
 - b. The following information from the prior school year:
 - The number of appeals to the governing body under G.S. 115C-76.40 and the percentage of appeals decided in favor of the parent and in favor of the administration in the prior school year.
 - The number of statements provided to parents as required by G.S. 115C-76.60(a).
 - The number of parental concern hearings involving the public school unit as provided in G.S. 115C-76.60(b)(1).
 - The number of actions brought against the public school unit as provided in G.S. 115C-76.60(b)(2) and the number of declaratory judgments entered against the public school unit.

O. School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Material, and Library Materials.

- (1) **Compliance with SB49.** In compliance with SB49, this policy serves to communicate understandably and effectively the manner in which textbooks are used to implement the school's curricular objectives. In addition, this policy establishes a procedure for parents to learn about their child's course of study and the source of any supplementary instructional materials. Our procedure includes the process for parents to inspect and review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classroom. Finally, this policy also establishes a means for parents to object to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials consistent with the requirements of N.C.G.S. 115C-9
- (2) **Parent Participation.** Parent participation in their child's education is important and encouraged. We strongly encourage parents and teachers to cooperate regarding homework, school attendance, and discipline. Information and ways parents can help their children and encourage cooperation with their child's teacher are included in our Student Handbook as well

as the following: our scholar/family handbook, teacher/parent communication, monthly newsletters, and student-led conferences and presentations of learning.

- (3) **Charter School exemptions.** A charter school is exempt from statutes and rules applicable to a local board of education or local school administrative unit. As such, the School determines its own curriculum and textbooks and is not bound by the laws governing local boards of education and local school administrative units. The School has the sole authority to select and procure curriculum, textbooks, supplementary instructional materials, and library materials. Further, the School has the sole authority to determine if the materials are related to and within the curriculum's limits and when the materials may be presented to scholars during the school day. In general, supplementary books and other instructional materials shall neither displace nor be used to the exclusion of basic textbooks where the School has selected textbooks.
- (4) **Textbook Definition.** For the purposes of this section, a textbook is defined as a systematically organized material comprehensive enough to cover the primary objectives outlined in the standard course of study for a grade or course. Formats for textbooks may be print or nonprint, including hardbound books, softbound books, activity-oriented programs, classroom kits, and technology-based programs that require the use of electronic equipment to be used in the learning process. Textbooks do not include supplementary instructional materials, including supplementary textbooks, periodicals, audiovisual materials, and other supplementary materials used for instructional purposes.
- (5) **Requirements of § 115C-76.55.** Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality shall not be included in the curriculum provided in grades kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties. For the purposes of this section, the curriculum includes the standard course of study and support materials, locally developed curriculum, supplemental instruction, textbooks, and other supplementary materials but does not include responses to scholar-initiated questions. Further, scholars may discuss gender identity, sexual activity, and sexuality with the school counselor and/or social worker, or any adult they feel comfortable with. This provision shall be implemented consistent with Title IX, and where a conflict arises between the two laws, federal law will control. Nothing in this provision prevents school staff and teachers from appropriate classroom displays not inconsistent with any school policy on such displays.
- (6) **Use and Purpose of Textbooks.** The School selects and uses textbooks as part of its curriculum and course of study. The textbooks selected are intended to advance the school's curricular objectives.
- (7) **Process For Selecting Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Books And Instructional Materials.** The School's process for selecting curriculum, textbooks, supplementary books, and instructional material is as follows: teachers have the autonomy and authority to select

instructional materials conducive to Project Based Learning and in alignment with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

- (8) **Procedures for Learning about the Course of Study.** Parents are provided their child's course of study, including textbooks and the source of any supplementary instructional materials in a variety of ways: in our Student Handbook, at Open House, at Back to School night, and through teacher communications. Personal Adult Advocates will communicate regularly with parents, teachers will communicate with parents regarding academic progress and learning, and student-led conferences and presentations of learning will occur throughout the school year.
- (9) Parents may inspect and review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classroom at an open house, Back to School Night, and by making an appointment with their child's teacher to be held between the hours of 7:30 am and 3:30 pm. They will also participate in student-led conferences and presentations of learning, which will highlight instructional materials and learning that occurs in the classroom.
- (10) **Process for Library Check Out and Notification**
Scholars may be able to check out books from their classroom library. We have also partnered with the local library to allow scholars to check out books from the Book Mobile provided by the local library.

P. Process for Parent Challenges to Textbooks and Supplementary Instructional Materials.

- (1) The School reserves the right to create an advisory committee to investigate and evaluate challenges from parents, teachers, and members of the public to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials on the grounds that they are educationally unsuitable, pervasively vulgar, or inappropriate to the age, maturity, or grade level of the scholars. To the extent the School establishes such an advisory committee, information about that advisory committee will be communicated to parents, teachers, and the community.
In the event the School has not established such an advisory committee, parents may submit challenges to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials for the following reasons only: the textbook and/or supplementary materials are educationally unsuitable, pervasively vulgar, or inappropriate to the age, maturity, or grade level of the scholars. There are no other grounds for challenges to textbooks or supplementary materials under this provision.
- (2) To submit a challenge to a particular textbook and/or supplementary material, the parent shall submit in writing a detailed description of their challenge to the School. Such challenges must clearly identify the textbook and/or supplementary material they are challenging, and what precise material they contend is educationally unsuitable, pervasively vulgar, or inappropriate to the scholar's age, maturity, or grade level. The parent should also provide suggestions for alternatives to such textbooks and/or supplementary materials that they are challenging. Challenges must be sent to the School via email at mainoffice@riversideleadershipacademy.org

or sent via mail or hand delivered to the School's address and designate on the outside of the letter: *Textbook and/or Supplementary Material Challenge*.

- (3)** An administrator shall review such challenges and respond to the challenge within ten (10) business days.
- (4)** If the decision does not resolve the matter, the parent may file a written appeal to the Executive Director if they were not involved in the initial review of the challenge. The Executive Director shall review and respond to the challenge within five (5) business days.
- (5)** If the Executive Director is not able to resolve the matter, the parent may file a written appeal on the record with the School's Board of Directors within five (5) business days. There are no hearings on appeal, and decisions will be based solely on the written challenge provided by the parent and information provided by the School. The appeal must comply with section (1) above. The Board will designate a Board Panel to review the challenge and communicate its decision to remove or retain the challenged material within twenty (20) business days. The Board Panel's decision is final.
- (6)** The Board always has sole authority and discretion to determine whether a challenge has merit and whether challenged material should be retained or removed. There is no appeal from a decision of the Board Panel.
- (7)** Timelines set forth herein may be extended for good cause.