



ELM COMMUNITY

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Family Handbook

2026 - 2027

79-17 51st Avenue | Elmhurst, NY 11373
(347) 474-3288 | hello@elmcharterschool.org

Dear Elm Community Families,

We are thrilled to welcome you to Elm Community Charter School for the 2026-27 school year! As we embark on the school year together, this handbook serves to inform you of the policies that ensure our classrooms are safe, joyful, productive centers of learning. As partners in your child's educational journey, we are committed to creating an environment that allows your child to thrive.

Our goal is to support each one of our learners in forming their own identity, seizing any opportunity, and shaping the world around them. To accomplish this goal is no small feat and will require the cooperation and dedication of everyone: learners need to arrive at school on time everyday with their homework completed, ready to learn and participate, and parents need to support their children, as well as collaborate with teachers, to best support the learner.

Please read the handbook and use it as a reference throughout the year. If you have any questions about its contents, feel free to contact the Main Office at (347) 474-3288 or email hello@elmcharterschool.org

Welcome again to the Elm Community! Let's dream big and create together!

Onwards and Upwards,

Priscilla Walton
Founder

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Priscilla Walton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Admissions and Nondiscrimination

Elm Community Charter School is a tuition-free public charter school that is open to all students. Elm does not discriminate against any student or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, creed, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, English language proficiency, aptitude, athletic ability, or any other characteristic protected by law — in admissions, in access to programs and activities, or in any other aspect of school operations.

Applications are accepted during the open enrollment period each year, with a deadline of April 1. If the number of applications for a grade exceeds the number of available seats, Elm fills those seats through a random public lottery and places remaining applicants on a waitlist. Enrollment preferences are applied only as permitted by law and Elm's charter (for example, for returning students, siblings of enrolled students, and residents of the community school district). Elm does not use admissions tests and does not consider a student's prior academic record, disability, or English language proficiency in admissions decisions.

Elm accepts and serves students with disabilities and English Language Learners on the same basis as all other students. Elm also complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the "Title IX" and "Students with Disabilities: Section 504" sections below explain how to reach the school's coordinators and raise a concern.

Parent Responsibilities

Parent Contract

The Elm Staff is dedicated to providing excellent and tailored instruction to each of our learners. We have all agreed to pool our expertise, skills, and time in ensuring that all learners at Elm are met each day with positive energy, well-planned teaching, and social emotional support. But we know that providing an excellent education cannot happen without the families. Thus, Elm asks the parents to also sign a contract, dedicating their best to the following:

- ☐ ☐ I will teach and model a posture of learning and a positive attitude toward challenges for my child.
- ☐ ☐ I will ensure that my child attends school everyday, adhering to the school calendar.
- ☐ ☐ I will bring my child to school on time each and every day, understanding that each minute of instructional time is sacred and important.
- ☐ ☐ I will notify the school of an excused absence (e.g. doctor's visit) no later than the arrival time on the day of absence and send my child with a note when they return to school.
- ☐ ☐ I will ensure that my child is picked up everyday from school on time, respecting the staff's own personal schedules.
- ☐ ☐ I will regularly and carefully read all information provided by Elm Community Charter School.
- ☐ ☐ I will provide all necessary documents for Elm Community Charter School to provide a safe environment for my child, including medical documents, contact information, and any necessary updates.
- ☐ ☐ I will communicate with Elm Staff in a timely manner, returning calls or documents within 48 hours.
- ☐ ☐ I will ensure that all homework, especially reading logs, are completed each night and turned in on time.
- ☐ ☐ I will treat all members of the Elm Staff with respect and dignity, expecting the same in return.

Required Forms

Most of the information we need to ensure the health and safety of your learner is now collected electronically through your School Mint account. Please make sure to keep all this

information current and up to date at all times. Blank copies of these forms are available upon request.

Enrollment Checklist:

- ☐ Two Proofs of Residence (dated within the last 60 days)
 - ☐ Utility Bill
 - ☐ Paystub
 - ☐ Lease agreement
 - ☐ Property tax bill
 - ☐ Any federal or state document with name/address (except Driver's Licenses)
- ☐ Birth Certificate
- ☐ Copy of Immunization Records
- ☐ Copy of most recent IEP (Individualized Educational Plan), only applicable to learners receiving services

Students in temporary housing:

A student who is in temporary housing (see "Students in Temporary Housing") will be enrolled immediately and is not required to provide proofs of residence, immunization or medical records, a birth certificate, prior school records, or proof of guardianship as a condition of enrollment. All other students must provide the documents listed above, including two proofs of residence dated within the last 60 days. Elm's McKinney-Vento Liaison, Camila Rojas, will help families in temporary housing enroll and obtain any needed records — contact the Main Office at (347) 474-3288.

Communication

As an Elm Parent or guardian we ask that you:

- ☐ Keep your contact information up-to-date;
- ☐ Return any of our calls or teacher communication within 48 hours;
- ☐ Read any notices to stay up to date on field trips, homework, and teacher concerns;
- ☐ Access and monitor Parent Square consistently for important school updates;
- ☐ Call or email the Main Office, your child's teachers, or the school leadership team

whenever you have any questions or thoughts! We are glad to help!

We are committed to building strong relationships with our families. If we do not pick up the phone, please email us at hello@elmcharterschool.org

Main Office Number: 347-474-3288

Main Email: hello@elmcharterschool.org

Homework

At Elm, we believe homework is an essential routine and habit that allows learners to practice the discipline of learning. Starting in Kindergarten, learners will receive homework that reinforces content learned in class. One of the most essential components of our homework is the reading log. We believe that even at this young of an age, learners can take ownership over their reading and develop a love for it through consistent and sacred reading times at home.

You can help your child with this habit by reading with them, creating a space in the house where they can read undisturbed, or encouraging them to read to you!

In general, you will find that homework at Elm includes:

- ☐ Parents reading aloud to learners: 6 books a week
- ☐ learners independently reading: 15 minutes a day
- ☐ Written Activities: 15 minutes a day
- ☐ Math homework: 15 minutes a day

Attendance

We expect learners to come to school every day for the entire day. At Elm, we believe every minute of instruction counts, and our teaching staff takes this seriously. Elm learners have a jam-packed day of reading, art, math, science lab, and music (just to name a few!), and our teachers plan each minute. We expect parents to do their utmost to bring their child to school on time.

In the event that absences, latenesses, or early pickups do occur, we ask that you kindly call or email the Main Office before arrival time (7:45). Absences, Tardies, and Early Dismissals can be either excused or unexcused, as set forth in the chart below:

Excused	Unexcused
Illness verified by a doctor's note.	Routine doctor's appointments. Please schedule this outside of school hours.
Death of a close family member, verified by a program or newspaper clipping.	Family Vacation
Court appearance that requires the child's attendance, verified by court document.	Parent/Guardian/Sibling Illness
Observance of a religious holiday	Problem with transportation or bad weather

Appointment for a specialist	Sibling doesn't have school that day
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Ultimately, we know that a child who is regularly absent from school falls behind. In the event of repeated absences, tardies, or early pickups, the School will contact parents/guardians to meet and discuss strategies that will help their child come to school on time for the entire day.

In addition, excessive unexcused absences will result in an automatic reduction of the GPA at the end of each cycle. Every four absences will result in the GPA being reduced by 0.5. Every three unexcused tardies and/or early dismissals will count as one unexcused absence.

Dress Code

At Elm, we believe that our core values of community, identity, and creativity, are not truly expressed through a strict uniform dress code. Elm learners will not be required to attend school in a uniform, and families will instead be provided with the below expectations and parameters on appropriate school attire through our mandatory school dress code. Parents will be called to bring a change of clothes if learners are not in compliance with the dress code.

Clothing:

- ☐ Learners must arrive at school with clean clothing.
- ☐ Any skirts or dresses worn must be knee length or longer.
- ☐ Tank tops are not permitted.
- ☐ Clothing may not contain any inappropriate words or phrases.
- ☐ Visible undergarments, midriffs, and low necklines are not permitted.
- ☐ In cold weather (<35 degrees Fahrenheit), learners are expected to come to school with a warm coat.

Footwear:

- ☐ Learners will be expected to wear appropriate footwear daily. Shoes that are not appropriate for school include: rain boots, flip flops, or slip on shoes.
- ☐ learners will be allowed to change footwear upon arrival, should they need to.

Jewelry and Accessories:

- ☐ Learners will be asked to remove any disruptive jewelry or accessories

Head Coverings:

- ☐ Learners will not wear hats or head coverings of any kind, with an exception for those worn for religious or cultural purposes.

Make Up:

- ☐ Learners are not permitted to wear makeup

Lost & Found Items

Lost items that have been found are kept in the Main Office. You or your learner can stop by to collect any lost items. We ask that you please label all your Learner's belongings so the items may be returned if found. Found items with a label will be returned to your learner and all unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each month.

Core Features

Mission

As a school seeking to invest in Queens long-term, our vision is to see every child in Elmhurst and Corona discover their passions, talents, and power to enrich their community. We believe that in order to truly invest in this community's growth and development, we must aim high, committing to reaching every child that walks through our doors.

Thus, our mission is to cultivate student leaders with the character and capacity to form their own identity, seize any opportunity, and shape the world around them through integrated studies and collaborative learning.

Our goal is to provide a rigorous and holistic academic program that will enable our learners to choose a middle-school program of their choice.

Educational Program

Elm's academic program is oriented around our learners. We are dedicated to cultivating lifelong learning in all our learners. That is why we thoughtfully refer to them as learners - whether they are learning how to read or learning how to solve a problem with a friend - we want to teach our children to constantly take on the posture of learning in life!

Elm's Educational Philosophy & Curriculum Choice

Elm Community Charter School ascribes to an inquiry-based model of teaching and learning, where learners' genuine inquiries are the heart of every unit and lesson. Learners will wrestle with real-world concepts through discussions, debates, and project-based tasks.

Inquiry-based learning will largely take place during Humanities and STEM, where learners are introduced to an interdisciplinary theme or topic (e.g. Friendship and Fairness) and explore it through project-based tasks and field studies. During these blocks, learners are taught how to apply foundational literacy, math, and science skills to their explorations. Teachers will also strategically and thoughtfully create groups that are diverse in learner types, levels, and perspectives. With thoughtful and strategic teacher facilitation, learners will

work in collaborative learning environments, challenging one another in ideas and divergent solutions. Learners will also be taught how to apply social emotional learning skills to conversations and group work.

In order for our inquiry-based curriculum to be successful, Elm's academic program must also include mastery learning blocks: times in the day where explicit instruction occurs in order to teach foundational reading, writing, and math strategy and skills. Our mastery learning blocks will follow skills-based curriculum, direct instruction, and use quantitative standards-based assessments. A typical lesson structure will follow the "I do, We do, You do" progression. During independent work, teachers will be trained to provide differentiated instruction based on learner data. Teachers will have the flexibility to provide a variety of instructional methods including small group pull-out, parallel teaching, co-teaching, or stations and centers.

Our academic program can be distilled into two types of curriculum and instruction: inquiry-based learning and mastery learning. Below is a general sample of the curriculum and instruction are usually implemented:

	Inquiry-based Learning		Mastery Learning	
Literacy	Integrated Studies Course: Humanities	45 min. 2x week	SFA/Guided Reading	45 min. 4x week
	Interactive Reading	45 min. 1x week	Reading Workshop	45 min. 2x week
			Writing Workshop	45 min. 2x week
			Language Routines	1x week
Math	Cognitively Guided Instruction	45 min. 4x week	TERC Investigations	45 min. 3x week
			Math Routines	45 min. 1x week
Science	Integrated Studies Course: STEM	45 min. 2x week	Science	45 min. 3x week

At Elm, we believe that excellent education encompasses a strong arts curriculum. Thus, integral to Elm's academic program are our Creative Courses: Doing and Making to Think Differently. Our arts curriculum seeks to create well-rounded learners through an excellent and diverse arts program, led by teachers with expertise in the related fields. The goals of these courses are two-fold:

- Providing learners with a well-rounded education that includes the arts, physical education, with teachers certified in their respected fields
- Providing opportunities for learners to explore and exhibit mastery of content and skills through other modalities

At Elm, we will offer a set of extracurricular courses to provide Elm learners with a holistic education that includes non-academic courses, as well as opportunities to learn and express content through traditionally non-academic methods. For example, a learner will learn about the relationship between the Mespat Indians and Dutch through historical paintings (during fine arts course). They can show their understanding through an essay as well as a song (during vocal music). Offering a variety of courses will ultimately cultivate well-rounded learners, while also providing learners with various access points to rigorous content.

Key Elements

Elm is founded upon 5 key design elements that drive our academic program and school culture:

Collaborative Learning: Elm believes that students learn best when they are challenged to discuss, debate, and form conclusions and opinions with others similar and different from themselves. Collaborative learning ultimately develops learners' ability to think critically and creatively while also building their social skills, confidence, and capability to articulate their ideas clearly. At Elm, our academic program highlights collaborative group work with rubrics that hold teachers and learners accountable to focusing on a group's collaborative learning process rather than solely the product.

Student-Led Integrated Studies: At Elm, we believe that students learn best when they are engaged in interdisciplinary studies and pushed to use higher order thinking skills, adapting their knowledge and understanding to conflicting perspectives and real-world scenarios. Our essential learning periods are our Integrated Studies blocks: Humanities and STEM. During these blocks, learners design and conduct their own experiments and projects, explore divergent solutions and conclusions, and show their understanding of content through the development of their own evidence-based conclusions. When learners take ownership over their education, it can yield a greater love for learning and academic success.

Data-Driven Small Group Learning: At Elm, we believe learners learn best when instruction is tailored to their specific needs. Teachers will receive weekly training on data collection and analysis using standard-based grading and reading leveled assessments. Our schedule also

creatively and strategically creates space for smaller class sizes including splitting classes in half up to 2 hours a day and providing small group instruction up to 3 hours a day. Our staffing plan allows for two lead teachers in every classroom, giving teachers the flexibility to implement a myriad of teaching options including parallel teaching, and co-teaching.

A Focus on Self-Exploration and Self-Awareness: We believe students learn best when they are self-aware, knowing what frustrates and motivates them in order to do their best throughout the day. At the foundation of successful collaborative learning must be social and emotional intelligence. Our schedule devotes considerable time guiding learners through their emotions around failure, disagreements, and conflicts. The goal is to cultivate learners' self-awareness so that they are able to articulate their feelings, preferences, and ideas with one another. The development of learners' emotional intelligence will be nurtured through the Yale RULER program on Emotional Intelligence.

Creative Courses (Doing and Making to Think Differently): At Elm, we believe students learn best when they can make things with their hands and voices, experiencing topics through the arts. We aim to provide learners with a well-rounded education through our Creative Courses, which consist of fine arts, chorus/vocal and music theory, and physical education. As we grow, we will be adding woodworking, shop, blocks, organized sports, and Language classes. Our schedule ensures that creative course teachers are able to join collaborative planning meetings, as well as facilitate small groups of learners who choose to present their knowledge through an arts project rather than an academic performance task.

Academic Calendar and School Day

Academic Calendar: 2026-27

Elm's Academic Calendar marks key events taking place during the school year including:

- ☐ No-school days: holidays and professional development days for staff
- ☐ Early-dismissal days
- ☐ The first and last days of school

School Closures/Delayed Openings

Since the majority of our families depend on public bussing, Elm will follow the Department of Education's (DOE) school closing decisions. When inclement weather occurs, please refer

to the DOE's decision. Elm will also send out an email, Parent Square message and/or text to confirm whether the School will be opened or closed.

Arrival and Dismissal

For safety reasons, all Elm learners must always be dropped off and picked up by a parent/guardian, an authorized adult, or an authorized older sibling (siblings must be over 18 years of age) indicated on the school's pick-up list. Authorized adults and siblings must come prepared with a photo ID to enter the school building. If parents/guardians wish to update the pick-up list, they must do so in-person at the Main Office at least 24 hours in advance of pick up.

Under no circumstance may learners travel in a cab, in a van with a driver, or on the bus, subway, or foot without a parent/guardian or other authorized adult.

- ☐ Doors Open: 7:15AM (Breakfast begins)
- ☐ Arrival: 7:45 AM (Breakfast ends)
- ☐ Dismissal:
 - ☐ Bussing Dismissal: 3:00PM (12:00 PM on Wednesdays)
 - ☐ Parent Pickup: 3:15PM (12:15 PM on Wednesdays)

Arrival

Elm will open the school doors each morning at 7:15AM. A school leader will be present at the front door, where parents/guardians may drop off learners. Doors close promptly at 7:45AM. If parents/guardians arrive late, learners **MUST** be escorted into the building to sign in. Please do not leave your child at the front entrance or at the corner of the building to walk into the building alone.

Dismissal

With safety in mind, our dismissal will always be conducted in an orderly manner by teachers. Teachers must dismiss each Elm learner individually and check the ID of the adult who is picking up the learner.

During the first two weeks of the school year, please be patient and allow the necessary extra time for staff to properly and safely dismiss all learners. We promise that as we get to know each learner and family, dismissal will become more timely and efficient!

Transportation Policy

Yellow bus services: Transportation options at Elm are provided by the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). The school will work with families to coordinate public transportation options to learners who qualify for bussing or metrocards provided by OPT.

According to the Office of Pupil Transportation, all learners in grades K-2 that live 0.5 miles or more, but less than 1 mile away from the school are eligible for transportation options. All learners in grades 3-6 that live 1 mile or more, but less than 1.5 miles away from the school are eligible for transportation options.

Your child's safety is most important to us. Learners in grades 2-5 may be allowed to walk home from the bus stop, unaccompanied by an adult, with the written parental consent. Should you, as parents, feel your child (grades 2-5) is mature enough to cope with the responsibility of walking home from the bus stop without an adult supervisor, please complete and sign the Bus Parental Consent Form. No child will be allowed to walk home from the bus stop without prior consent from a parent or guardian.

For inquiries, requests, or questions, all families are welcome to contact OPT directly at 718-392-8855.

Late Pick Up

It is imperative that you pick up your child from school on time. Our staff work incredibly hard throughout the day. Picking up your child on time also means that the Elm staff can go home to their families as well. If late pick ups become a pattern, school leadership will contact you to schedule a meeting to discuss reasons for late pick up and strategies for arriving on time. We greatly appreciate your consideration and diligence in this matter.

Early Pick Up

In the case that your learner needs to be picked up at a time earlier than dismissal time, please contact the main office as soon as you can to make the request.

Please note that requests made after 1PM or 10AM on Wednesdays might not be accommodated. Early pick up will only be accommodated before 2:45PM or 11:45AM on Wednesdays. Please plan accordingly.

After School

Our school strongly believes in supporting our families with their needs. As such, Elm will be hosting our own in-school After School Program. The After School Program is:

- ☐ First come, first serve for fully registered families;
- ☐ Runs Monday - Friday from 3:30PM - 6:00PM; On Wednesdays from 12:30PM - 4:00PM

Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays	Wednesdays
3:30 - 4:00 PM Snack	12:30 - 1:00 PM Snack
4:00 - 5:00 PM Enrichment Class (Art Project)	1:00 - 2:00 PM Enrichment Class (Art Project)
5:00 - 6:00 PM Learner Pick Up	2:00 - 4:00 PM Learner Pick Up

- ☐ Lateness Policy: At Elm, we want to ensure all our staff have sustainable schedules. It is important that families pick up learners on time between 5:30 - 6:00PM and 3:30 - 4:00PM. Families who pick up their learners late (after 4:00PM or 6:00PM) more than 3 times will forfeit their afterschool seat. We believe this upholds our core value of Community. We thank you for collaborating with us.
- ☐ Transportation: There will not be any afternoon bussing for learners participating in the After School Program. You must arrange for your child to be picked up at the school when after-school ends.

School Day Policies

Nut Policy

Elm is a nut-free environment. Nut allergies are a medical condition that may cause severe and life threatening reactions. For the safety of all Elm Learners and staff we ask that you adhere to the nut-free policy and only send nut free snacks and lunch.

Candy and Junk Food Free Policy

Elm Community Charter School takes nutritional standards very highly. Elm has a strict policy against any sugary drink or junk food. The school will offer learners a well balanced nutritious breakfast and lunch. We ask that you send learners with nutritional snacks or lunch. The following items will be discarded or sent back home if learners bring them to the school:

- ☐ Sweetened soda
- ☐ Chewing gum

- ☐ Hard candy

Birthday Celebration Policy

We know that learners love celebrating their birthdays with their classmates and how much of a great time it is for them. In order for us to have the best celebration, please see below important information for your consideration:

Birthday celebrations must be confirmed with your child's teacher(s) 2 weeks in advance. You can notify your child's teacher(s) by sending them a message via ParentSquare regarding your child's birthday celebration. Since we only have a short time span for the celebration, please only bring individually packaged items that can be easily distributed. This can include, but is not limited to:

- ☐ Cupcakes
- ☐ Hostess snacks
- ☐ Cookies
- ☐ Chips

Due to our no candy policy in the school, please ensure that goodie bags do not include candy items. If the goodie bags include candies, we will not distribute them in the class and send them back with your learner.

Outdoor activities

Children benefit from vigorous exercise and should be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. At Elm, learners will have the opportunity to visit the outdoor play area on rotation so all learners may get a chance to be outdoors. Those who are not outside will engage in recess like activities in a controlled indoor environment. Unless it is snowing, there is ice on the playground, or the wind chill factor produces an effective temperature below zero degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius), temperature alone should not be a barrier to outdoor play.

On very cold days, school staff should make sure that learners cover up skin, wear warm clothing, and use several layers to stay warm. Learners who need to avoid the cold weather for medical reasons must submit a note from their healthcare provider to the school nurse.

When the outdoor temperature is above 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius), children are at increased risk for heat-related illness and may have lower tolerance for exercise. When outdoor temperatures are in the 90s and humidity is high, we will:

- ☐ Limit learners' outdoor recess and playtime between the sun's peak hours (10:00 a.m. to at least 2:00 p.m.)
- ☐ Reduce the intensity of outdoor activities lasting more than 15 minutes;
- ☐ Make sure learners have easy access to water and encourage them to drink often. Pay special attention to learners who may be more susceptible to heat related illness, like those with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes.

Parents and caregivers should encourage their learners to wear clothing that is light-colored and lightweight.

Health Policy

At Elm, we ask that if your learner has a contagious illness or any of the symptoms below, to please stay at home and seek medical care.

Fever

If your child has a fever of 100.4 °F or higher, we highly encourage you to keep your learner at home and seek medical attention. Under CDC and NYDOH guidelines, Learners are encouraged not to return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

Redness or swelling of the eyelid, often combined with crustiness or a liquid discharge. Pink eye is highly contagious and commonly clears within 7-10 days. We ask that you speak to your learner about frequent hand washing. Poor hand washing is the main cause of the spread of pink eye. Should your child be sent home with Pink Eye, we must insist that they not return without proper documentation that shows they've been treated by a Doctor for this condition, as it is highly contagious, and this is necessary to protect our other children.

Body Lice

Tiny insects that live in clothing and bedding that travel to skin several times a day to feed on blood. They are different from head lice and are spread by skin to skin contact. To prevent body lice routinely check your learner's head and body for rashes/bumps or bites. Treat all household members who have had skin to skin contact with the infected individual.

Head Lice

Head lice occurs commonly among school age children. Head lice is not a sign of poor hygiene and is common. Lice do not transmit infections and do not endanger a person's health. Lice passes from person to person by direct contact or by sharing clothing with lice on them. Head lice causes itching, commonly at the back of the head and neck or behind the ears. Many effective creams and shampoos are available over the counter or by prescription from your doctor

If your learner has head lice they must be seen and treated by a doctor. If your learner comes to school with head lice they will be sent home.

Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are tiny insects that live in furniture, mattresses, sofas, and couches. Bites may consist of raised bumps and intense itching. If you suspect your home may have bed bugs please notify the school immediately and arrange to have your home inspected and or treated by an exterminator. The learner may return to school once the family shows proof of inspection and extermination.

Scarlet Fever

A bacterial illness that develops in some people that have had strep throat. If your learner has a fever of 102 °F or higher and swollen or tender glands on the neck, please seek medical attention.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal infection on the skin that is highly contagious. If you suspect that your learner has ringworm please speak with your doctor and get treatment. Learners sent home with ringworm must receive medical treatment before returning to school. You must provide documentary proof upon doing so to prevent the spread of this infection.

Seasonal Allergies

Many Elm learners suffer from seasonal allergies. We want our learners to be happy, healthy, and able to focus during school hours. If your learner suffers from seasonal allergies, please make sure that they are receiving proper care and being administered all necessary medication. If your child needs to take an allergy medication during the school day (whether prescribed or over the counter) please make sure to have your doctor complete an MAF Form (Medical Administration Form). Legal requirements do not permit us to administer or store any medications, even those not requiring a prescription, without a fully completed MAF Form.

Academics

Learner Report Cards

At Elm, the purpose of progress reports is to inform families and learners of their current level of proficiency in all courses. Proficiency levels are based on both mastery and inquiry-based assessments, and not on learner effort. You will receive report cards four times a year to inform you of your child's academic and demonstrated social-emotional progress.

Upon receiving your child's report card, you will have the opportunity to discuss progress made with your learner and their teacher during our Student-Led Conference. As Elm learners grow, they will be taught how to honestly analyze their scores to create realistic goals and strategically work to reach those goals.

You can request a copy of your child's most updated progress report at any time by contacting the Main Office at hello@elmcharterschool.org.

Special Education & Services

The Elm staff is dedicated to ensuring your child receives all the services they need to excel in both academic and creative courses. Teachers collect learner data daily and weekly to tailor whole-group lessons and small group instruction to each learner's needs. If your learner continues to struggle despite our comprehensive general education program and support, the Elm staff will follow our Response to Intervention (RtI).

Response to Intervention (RtI) at Elm

The RtI framework moves through four tiers of increasing support: Tier 1: Universal for all Students; Tier 2: Targeted Group Support; Tier 3: Small Group and Individualized Support; and Tier 4: CSE Referral.

Tier 1: Universal for all Students:

Indicators (Pattern of): incomplete work; wrong answers; lack of reading comprehension; lack of math number sense; lack of progress. Supports (Within classroom): Guided Reading; CGI; Small Group pull-out; Peer support.

Tier 2: Targeted Group Support:

Indicators: Consistently scoring low on a particular standard; Demonstrating O-1 levels of growth in 2 consecutive F&P assessments (with students who are already identified as below grade level readers); Consistently struggling with the comprehension component of CGI

(math); Achieving low scores (1-2) on inquiry-based performance task rubrics. Supports (Within Grade Team): Creating strategic groups across grade levels during the following times: Reading Workshop; Writing Workshop; Math Workshop; Math Routines; Language Routines.

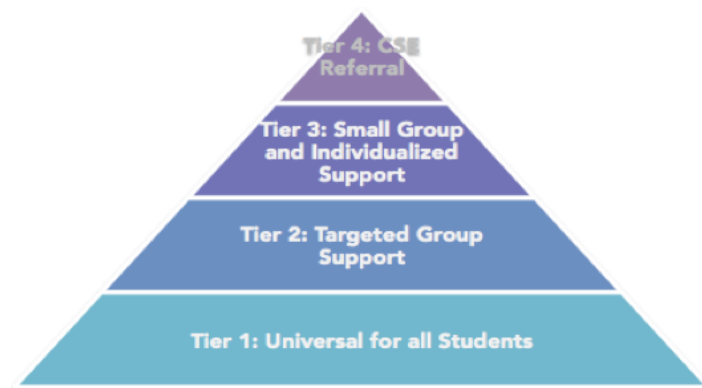
Tier 3: Small Group + Individualized Support:

Indicators: Consistently scoring low on multiple standards, student is unable to keep up with the class; Three or more reading levels below on-grade-level reading targets (in accordance with F&P Reading Assessment); Consistently struggling with the comprehension component of CGI (math); Achieving low scores on several (1-2) on inquiry-based performance task rubrics. Supports: Student Success Team becomes involved and may conduct observations and testing; Specific curriculum interventions: Wilson Language Training, Foundations, Just Words; Select teacher from each grade to run intervention group during any of the following times: Reading, Writing, or Math Workshop, Math and Language Routines.

Tier 4: Committee of Special Education (CSE) Referral:

Indicators: Tier 3 interventions are not supporting student growth. Supports: Student Support Team works with CSE for additional supports outside the school's resources and capacity.

If you are a new incoming family with a child who has an Individualized Education Program, please notify the school leadership as soon as possible. You can directly email the main office at hello@elmcharterschool.org This will allow us ample time to ensure your child receives the services they need. If you have any questions about the Committee on Special Education, or about special education in general, please feel free to contact the Director of Students Supports.



Rtl at Elm Tier 1: Universal for all Students <table> <tr> <td data-bbox="196 268 488 527"> Indicators Pattern of: • Incomplete work • wrong answers • Lack of reading comprehension • Lack of math number sense • Lack of progress </td> <td data-bbox="488 268 797 527"> Supports: Within classroom • Guided Reading • CGI • Small Group pull-out • Peer support </td> </tr> </table>	Indicators Pattern of: • Incomplete work • wrong answers • Lack of reading comprehension • Lack of math number sense • Lack of progress	Supports: Within classroom • Guided Reading • CGI • Small Group pull-out • Peer support	Rtl at Elm Tier 2: Targeted Group Support <table> <tr> <td data-bbox="797 268 1089 527"> Indicators • Consistently scoring low on a particular standard • Demonstrating 0-1 levels of growth in 2 consecutive F&P assessments (with students who are already identified as below grade level readers) • Consistently struggling with the comprehension component of CGI (math) • Achieving low scores (1-2) on inquiry-based performance task rubrics </td> <td data-bbox="1089 268 1404 527"> Supports: Within Grade Team Creating strategic groups across grade levels during the following times: • Reading Workshop • Writing Workshop • Math Workshop • Math Routines • Language Routines </td> </tr> </table>	Indicators • Consistently scoring low on a particular standard • Demonstrating 0-1 levels of growth in 2 consecutive F&P assessments (with students who are already identified as below grade level readers) • Consistently struggling with the comprehension component of CGI (math) • Achieving low scores (1-2) on inquiry-based performance task rubrics	Supports: Within Grade Team Creating strategic groups across grade levels during the following times: • Reading Workshop • Writing Workshop • Math Workshop • Math Routines • Language Routines
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State Exams

All learners grades 3-5 participate in New York State Testing in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Though we do not believe that state exams show our learners' abilities accurately, we are committed to ensuring we equip our learners with test taking skills and strategies necessary to truly seize any opportunity in the future. We are well aware that our learners will need to operate in a test-driven society, where tests will (too often) dictate their opportunities and success. We are confident we can do this through our balance of both inquiry and mastery-based curriculum and assessments, which will also prepare our learners with life skills such as preparation, persistence, and studying.

School Culture

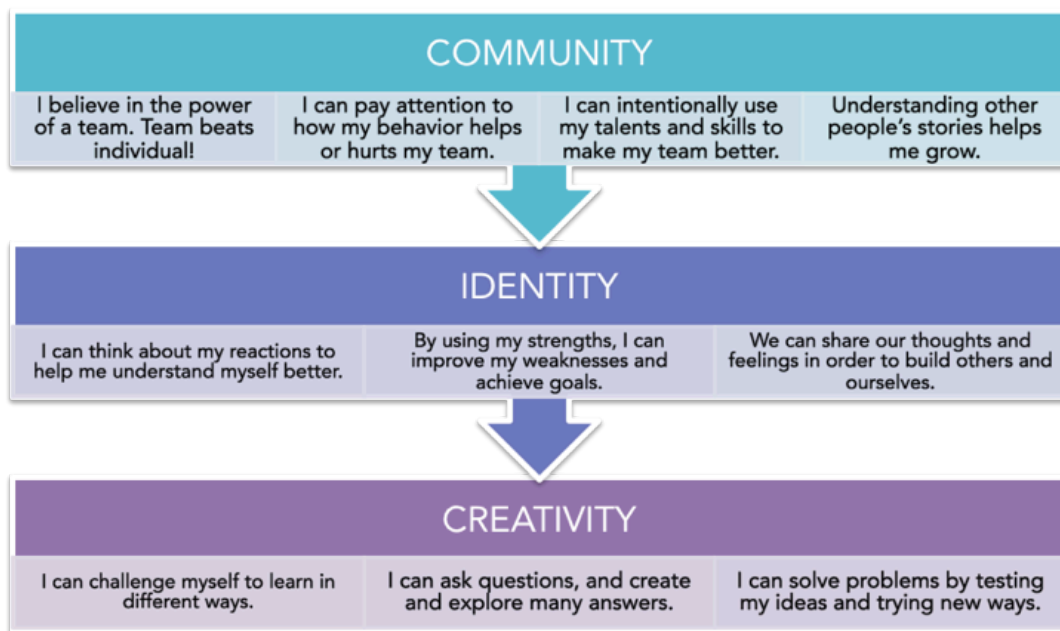
Overview

At Elm Community Charter School, we believe it is equally important to create a culture that fosters our learners' growth and willingness to take risks than holding fast to high academic standards. This is why one of our key design elements is a Focus on Self-Awareness and Self-Exploration. Learners' self-awareness, involving the development and understanding of their identities and emotional intelligence, is key to academic and social success. In order to engage successfully and collaboratively, learners need to be equipped with social emotional skills.

Collaborative learning is an essential component throughout each lesson. For learners to successfully enter daily collaborative work, largely in the form of academic and social discussions, they will need to be equipped with social emotional skills. In Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, our curriculum will be heavily focused on emotional intelligence, giving learners multiple opportunities to discover their emotions, create healthy coping skills to express their feelings, and finally advocate for themselves during conflicts and challenges.

Core Values & Curriculum

Three core values form the foundation of Elm's culture: Community, Identity, and Creativity. We have created actionable "I can" statements that help us embody these core values as a staff while also enabling teachers to teach learners how to concretely bring these values to life at our school.



Elm staff will instill the school's core values through three main curriculum: the *Responsive Classroom* approach to teaching, Yale's Emotional Intelligence Program: RULER, and Restorative Justice Practices. Each one of these programs contributes to the building and maintaining of our three core values. Responsive Classroom builds largely on our core value: Community. It is a preventative program that focuses a great deal on the daily incorporation of positive reinforcement, reflection, and relationship building. Coupled with this preventative method, will be the Restorative Justice approach, which is a responsive method of addressing

behavioral concerns and conflicts. Implementing preventative and responsive programs will support both staff and learners in quickly addressing everyday small conflicts and larger tensions between individual learners and groups. RULER will empower our learners in the forming of their Identity and their ability to show Creativity, our second and third core values. This program focuses on teaching learners self-awareness and the identification and expression of their feelings. The three programs are complementary and will be used to establish all three of Elm's core values.

	Responsive Classroom	RULER	Restorative Justice
Community	✓ Normed language + Positive reinforcement ✓ Emphasizes the adult community	✓ Builds <u>self awareness</u> and coping skills	✓ Logical consequences for behavioral concerns ✓ Restores members who violated core values
Identity	✓ Emphasizes assertiveness + self-control for cooperative learning	✓ Teaches students how to identify, understand and articulate their feelings	✓ Restorative circles encourage victims and wrong doers to reflect and speak up
Creativity	✓ Teaches assertiveness + cooperation	✓ Builds resilience and goal-setting through reflection	✓ Approaches to responses and consequences are creative

Core Value Progress Reports

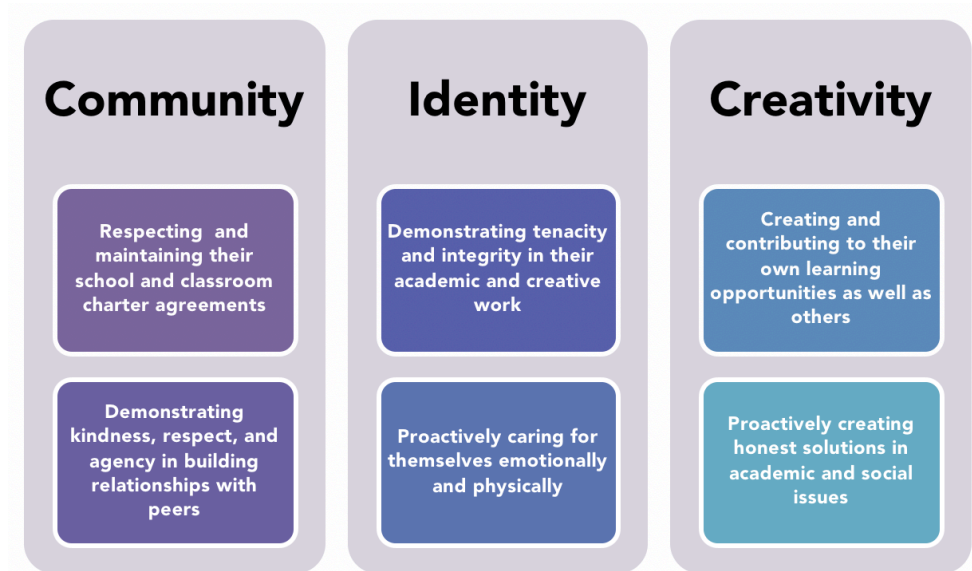
Parents can expect to have daily communication with teachers regarding their child's social emotional growth and development. Learners will be led through daily reflections on their emotions, how it affected their actions and decisions, and strategies they can use to help make each day enjoyable and productive. Teachers will track specific ways that learners exhibit the Core Values and regularly communicate their observations with parents through reflection sheets signed daily by parents, brief conversations at dismissal, or scheduled appointments.

Code of Conduct

Elm is committed to creating an environment where all learners have the right to form their own identity, seize any opportunities, and shape their school community in meaningful ways.

Elm learners have the responsibility of respecting and supporting one another in each other's academic and creative purpose. Elm learners have the right to be respected as individuals and to have their own academic and creative goals respected and supported by members of the community.

Elm Learners will honor and embody the core values by:



This code of conduct, which upholds integrity, kindness, resilience, respect, and care for self and others, as well as creativity, also applies to Elm staff, who are expected to model and mirror the core values both personally and professionally in their adult learning communities. Holding all members of Elm Community Charter School to these shared values will ultimately create strong accountability and school culture.

In cases where Elm's code of conduct is violated, Elm's learner Discipline Policy, for general education and special education, will be followed and executed (see Appendices A and B).

School-wide, Grade-level, and Classroom Procedures and Systems

In order to foster community, creativity, and identity, Elm staff will dedicate the first 6 weeks of school to teaching learners school-wide, grade-level, and classroom procedures and systems. Each grade team will decide on a behavior monitoring system that clearly communicates with learners how their day and actions are progressing throughout the day. The purpose of behavior monitoring systems is to help communicate clear expectations and cultivate self-awareness within our learners. Teachers will proactively communicate each day through verbal or written form how a learner's actions and decisions affected their participation and learning. We encourage parents to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

School Discipline Policy

In-School Disciplinary Measures

At Elm, we believe that prevention is the foundation of creating a strong discipline system. We have elected to train teachers in the Responsive Classroom and RULER programs because we believe both of these approaches will help learners develop better social-emotional and behavior-regulating skills, minimizing disciplinary infractions. Our in-school disciplinary procedures will largely follow the Restorative Justice framework and follow three phases: prevention, intervention, and reentry, in response to conflict/harm.

Phase One: Prevention

Prior to giving consequences for misbehavior, teachers must teach learners what the expectations will be, and provide them with an opportunity to practice and receive feedback. In the Responsive Classroom Approach, this is done through Interactive Modeling, where the teacher models expected behaviors, coaches the class or specific learners through it, and leads the class in practicing it frequently. Often, this will require teachers to interrupt class activities to restart and redo transitions or behaviors until expectations are met. At Elm, teachers will prioritize setting these expectations and procedures from the very beginning. The first 2 weeks of school will be set aside for culture building, where procedures and routines are integrated into lessons, and time is allotted for frequent practice. Our ultimate goal is that as the year progresses, learners become more aware of when they are not aligned to their peers, and how their actions affect others positively or negatively. Procedures that were once explicitly taught will be gradually released to learners.

Phase Two: Intervention & Phase Three: Reentry

The levels of intervention and reentry will vary based on the severity of the infraction. We have categorized infractions at Elm into tiers:

- ☐ Minor Disruptions
- ☐ Progressive Interventions
- ☐ Serious Behavior Infractions

Logical Consequences Philosophy

As a part of our commitment to helping learners develop prosocial, problem-solving skills, we believe that logical consequences should be applied as often as possible. Logical consequences are interventions that help learners form associations between their misbehavior and the negative outcomes produced.

Health & Safety

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

Emergency and Evacuation procedures are taken very seriously at Elm Community Charter School. Whether it is a safety drill or real emergency, the actions that learners and staff should take are the same. Emergency drills are conducted throughout the year. The drills are planned in a way to ensure the safety of all learners and staff in the quickest and most orderly fashion. The Principal and Director of Operations will ensure that the school complies with all the requirements related to necessary emergency and evacuation procedures.

Elm has a full-time, on-site registered school nurse as mandated by the State. Learners may visit the nurse in the school's health office if they become ill during the school day, have a health related question, or injure themselves. Learners requiring basic care when the nurse is not available may receive assistance from other Elm staff.

Health Staff

Elm has a full-time, on-site registered school nurse as mandated by the State. Learners may visit the nurse in the school's health office if they become ill during the school day, have a health related question, or injure themselves. Learners requiring basic care when the nurse is not available may receive assistance from other Elm staff.

Medical Exams, Medication Forms, and Vaccines:

The health and safety of our Elm Learners is our priority. In order to manage the health needs of our learners, we require that your child's health care provider completes certain medical forms. Our school nurse will utilize these forms to ensure your child receives the care and services needed during the school day.

Annual Health Examination:

All Elm learners must have an updated Annual Health Examination Form completed before entering school. Physical exams for new entrants and learners in Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 should be completed over the summer. Learners will not be permitted to start school unless we have a physician-signed form on file.

Medical Administration Forms:

In addition, parents/guardians are required to provide the school with any information regarding allergies or illness from which the child may suffer. Parents/guardians are also asked to inform the school if they give permission for their learner to be taken to

a hospital in the event of a serious emergency during school hours. Elm's nurse is authorized to administer prescribed medication only if there is a completed Medical Authorization Form on file. If applicable, please submit the following forms prior to the start of school.

- General Medication Administration Form
- Allergies/Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Form
- Asthma Medication Administration Form

Immunizations:

And finally, all NY learners must meet the DOE immunization requirements in order to attend school. Elm Learners are required to receive the below listed vaccinations prior to the first day of school:

- The DTaP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis)
- Poliovirus
- MMR (measles-mumps-rubella)
- Varicella
- Hepatitis B

Elm also recommends annual flu vaccination. For additional information about NY State required vaccinations and doses, please review this Immunization Chart.

Medical Exemptions:

As of June 13, 2019, NY State no longer allows religious exemptions for mandated vaccinations. This legislation is in response to the recent measles outbreak. To submit a medical exemption to Elm's immunization requirements, please complete the Medical Exemption Form and contact Elm's Director of Operations. In all cases, learners who do not have the proper immunizations and have not provided a medical exemption will be denied access to Elm until the immunizations are administered and proof of immunization is provided to Elm.

Incident/Accident

Any accident involving a learner will be documented and communicated to the family. In the event that the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the nurse will send a report home with the learner. In emergencies, Elm staff will notify the people indicated on a child's Emergency Contact form, as well as law enforcement, or emergency medical personnel, as necessary or in the best judgment of the school nurse and/or Elm staff. In any emergency, Elm's absolute priority will be to first attend to the emergency and ensure the safety and health of the

learner or learners involved in the incident, then secure the surrounding area to address the unsafe conditions, and then contact parents, guardians, and/or emergency contacts.

Mandated Reporting of Abuse

All members of Elm staff are known as mandated reporters, in compliance with state law. If an Elm staff member suspects that a learner is being abused or neglected, he/she is obligated to report the suspicion to the Administration For Children's Services (ACS). Signs of abuse or neglect may include but are not limited to:

- Patterns of lateness and absence to school
- Patterns of late pick up from school or school bus
- Learners appearing consistently unkempt or dirty
- Signs of physical abuse, such as bruises cuts or apparent fear

Elm's School Counselors will be available to provide supportive services to the family and learner and will remain the liaison throughout the process in the event that a report has been made by an Elm staff member.

Student Privacy & Records

Access to Student Records

Except for Elm Leadership, Health Personnel, and local and state health department officials, no third party shall have access to information in or from a learner record without informed written consent from the parent of the eligible learner. Any individual, except for Elm staff and specific local or state health department personnel, who request access to learner records must follow Elm's FERPA policy and records request protocol. Please see Appendix C for Elm's FERPA Policy.

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)

Elm complies with the New York State Freedom of Information law (Article 6 of the New York Public Officers Law). This means that certain school records can be made available to the public upon request because Elm is a publicly funded school. Please see the Director of Operations if you would like a copy of the Freedom of Information Law.

Parent's Right to Know

Parent's may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their learners classroom teachers, including at a minimum the following:

- ☐ Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade level and subjects in which the teacher provides instruction
- ☐ Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing have been waived
- ☐ The degree major of the teacher and any other certification or degree held by the teacher, including the field of discipline
- ☐ Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and if so, their qualifications

Complaints and Grievances

Elm Community Charter School welcomes questions and concerns from families and works to resolve them fairly and promptly. Most concerns can be resolved informally, and families are encouraged to start there. Certain concerns follow a formal process required by New York State Education Law § 2855(4).

Informal Concerns

For everyday concerns — such as questions about a class, a teacher, grades, promotion or retention, homework, or a disciplinary decision — families should first speak with the staff member closest to the issue, usually the classroom teacher. If the concern is not resolved, families should raise it with the Principal or a member of the school leadership team. Elm works to address these concerns quickly, and most matters are resolved at this level.

Formal Complaints (Education Law § 2855(4))

A formal complaint is an allegation that Elm has violated its charter, the New York Charter Schools Act, or another law relating to the management or operation of the school. Any parent, or any other individual or group, may file a formal complaint using the process below. A copy of this policy is available to any family or member of the public upon request from the Main Office.

Step 1 — Complaint to the Board of Trustees.

A formal complaint must first be made, in writing, to Elm's Board of Trustees. Written complaints may be submitted by email to elmboard@elmcharterschool.org or left in hard copy at the Main Office, addressed to the Board of Trustees. The complaint should describe the alleged violation, the facts supporting it, and the relief requested. The Board, or its designee, will investigate and provide the complainant with a written decision.

Step 2 — Appeal to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Board's decision — or the Board does not respond within a reasonable time — the complainant may appeal to Elm's authorizer, the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York (SUNY-CSI). The appeal should include a description of the alleged violation of law or charter, the response received from the Board, copies of any related correspondence, and the relief sought. Appeals may be sent to:

SUNY Charter Schools Institute
H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246
charters@suny.edu

Step 3 — Appeal to the Board of Regents.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after SUNY-CSI's determination, they may appeal to the New York State Board of Regents through the New York State Education Department:

New York State Education Department
Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue, Room 5N Mezzanine
Albany, NY 12234

Title IX (Sex-Based Discrimination and Harassment)

Elm Community Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This includes discrimination or harassment based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy or related conditions, as well as sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Any student, family member, or employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sex-based discrimination or harassment may report it to Elm's Title IX Coordinator, Kayla Cobb, the School Principal, who can be reached through the Main Office at (347) 474-3288 or hello@elmcharterschool.org. Elm will respond promptly and equitably to reports, take steps to stop the conduct and prevent its recurrence, and prohibit retaliation against anyone who reports a concern or participates in an investigation. A report may be made whether the conduct occurred on or off school grounds when it affects a student's access to Elm's programs.

Students with Disabilities: Section 504

In addition to services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) described under "Special Education & Services," Elm complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity may be entitled to reasonable accommodations at school, even if the student does not have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Families who believe their child may need accommodations under Section 504 should contact Elm's Section 504 Coordinator, Kayla Cobb, the School Principal, through the Main Office at (347) 474-3288. Elm will evaluate the student and, if the student qualifies, develop a written 504 plan describing the accommodations and services the student will receive. Families have the right to review relevant records and to seek review of decisions about their child's 504 eligibility or plan.

English Language Learners (Multilingual Learners)

Elm Community Charter School welcomes and serves English Language Learners — also called Multilingual Learners — and provides them equal access to all school programs.

When a student enrolls, families complete a Home Language Questionnaire that helps identify students who may be English Language Learners. Students identified through this process take the State-required English language proficiency screening. Students who qualify receive language support services designed to build their English skills while they continue to learn grade-level content, and their progress is assessed each year until they reach proficiency. Whenever possible, Elm provides information to families of English Language Learners in a language they can understand, and treats them as full partners in their child's education. Questions about identification or services may be directed to the Main Office at (347) 474-3288.

Students in Temporary Housing

Our Commitment

Elm Community Charter School is committed to ensuring that every student experiencing homelessness has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as all other students. In keeping with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and New York State Education Law § 3209, Elm removes barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and

success of students in temporary housing, and ensures these students are not separated from the regular school program or stigmatized.

Who Is Covered

A student is considered to be in temporary housing if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes students who are:

- ☐ Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason ("doubled up")
- ☐ Living in a shelter, transitional housing, or a domestic violence shelter
- ☐ Living in a hotel or motel due to lack of alternative adequate housing
- ☐ Living in a car, park, campground, abandoned building, bus or train station, or similar setting
- ☐ Living in housing that lacks adequate heat, water, electricity, or other essentials; or
- ☐ Unaccompanied youth (a young person not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) in any of the above situations.

What Students in Temporary Housing Qualify For

Immediate enrollment.

A student in temporary housing has the right to enroll and attend Elm immediately, even without documents normally required for enrollment — such as proof of residency, immunization or medical records, a birth certificate, prior school records, or proof of guardianship. Elm will enroll the student right away and then work with the family to obtain any needed records. A lack of documentation will never delay or prevent enrollment.

School stability (school of origin).

Families and unaccompanied youth may choose for the student to remain at their school of origin for as long as they are in temporary housing — and through the end of the school year in which they obtain permanent housing — or to enroll in a school near where they are currently living. Elm makes school-selection decisions based on the student's best interest.

Transportation.

Transportation will never be a barrier to a student in temporary housing attending school. Working with the Office of Pupil Transportation, Elm will provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the request of the parent, guardian, or liaison, for the duration of the student's homelessness — regardless of the grade and distance rules that apply to other students. This may include busing, a free student MetroCard or OMNY card when busing is not available, and a MetroCard for a parent or guardian to accompany a younger child. When

the student's temporary housing is in a different district from the school of origin, the districts involved coordinate and share the cost. Transportation continues through the end of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed, and for one additional year if that is the student's final grade at the school.

Free school meals.

Students in temporary housing are automatically eligible for free school breakfast and lunch.

Full and equal participation.

Students in temporary housing have full access to all educational programs and services for which they are eligible — including special education, services for English Language Learners, and academic, arts, and after-school programs — on the same basis as all other students, without separation or stigma.

Support and referrals.

Elm will help connect families to services they may need, which can include school supplies and referrals for health, dental, mental health, and housing assistance.

McKinney-Vento Liaison

Elm designates Camila Rojas as the school's McKinney-Vento Liaison. The Liaison can be reached through the Main Office at (347) 474-3288 or hello@elmcharterschool.org. The Liaison identifies students in temporary housing; ensures they enroll immediately, receive transportation and other services, and can participate fully in school; informs families and unaccompanied youth of their rights; helps resolve disputes; and coordinates with the Office of Pupil Transportation, shelters, and community agencies.

Housing Questionnaire and Confidentiality

To identify students who may qualify, Elm distributes a Housing Questionnaire to families at the time of enrollment and whenever a family changes address. Information that identifies a student or family as being in temporary housing is kept confidential, is not treated as directory information, and is shared only as permitted by law.

Dispute Resolution and Appeals

Families and unaccompanied youth have the right to challenge decisions about a student's eligibility as a student in temporary housing, school selection or enrollment, or transportation. Elm Community Charter School will resolve these disputes promptly and fairly, following the process below. Throughout this process, the student's education will not be interrupted.

1. Immediate enrollment and services while the dispute is decided.

If a disagreement arises about eligibility, enrollment, school of origin, or transportation, Elm will immediately enroll the student — or keep the student enrolled — in the school the family or youth chooses, and will provide all services the student is entitled to, including transportation. This continues for the full length of the dispute, including all available appeals, until a final decision is reached.

2. Written notice.

When Elm makes a decision the family or youth disagrees with, Elm will provide a written explanation of that decision. The notice will state the reason for the decision, explain the right to appeal, and describe the steps for doing so. It will be provided in a manner and, to the extent possible, in a language the family or youth can understand.

3. Referral to the McKinney-Vento Liaison.

The family or unaccompanied youth will be referred to Elm's McKinney-Vento Liaison, Camila Rojas, who can be reached through the Main Office at (347) 474-3288 or hello@elmcharterschool.org. The Liaison will explain the family's rights, help complete any needed forms, ensure the student remains enrolled and served during the dispute, and carry out the dispute process as quickly as possible. Unaccompanied youth receive the same rights and an expedited process.

4. School-level review and decision.

The Liaison will review the concern and any information the family provides and will issue a written decision as quickly as possible — generally within five (5) school days of the dispute being raised. The decision will again explain the family's right to appeal to the State if they disagree.

5. Appeal to the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

If the family or youth disagrees with Elm's decision, they may appeal to NYSED's Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. At the family's request, the Liaison will forward the complete record of the dispute to NYSED — generally within five (5) business days — and will help the family submit the appeal. Contact information and assistance are available through the New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students (NYS-TEACHS) at 1-800-388-2014 or www.nysteachs.org.

6. Further appeal to the Commissioner of Education.

A family or youth also has the right to appeal a final determination to the New York State Commissioner of Education under Section 310 of the New York State Education Law. The student remains enrolled and served throughout any such appeal.

Appendix A: School Discipline Policy - General Education

I. Infractions and Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

To ensure that an environment is created where teaching and learning can thrive, Elm Community Charter School ("Elm or, the "School") has developed a series of rules that address proper student behavior, maintenance of order within the School and while people are engaged in school activities, and a statement of student rights and responsibilities (the "Discipline Policy" or the "Policy").

The Discipline Policy sets forth Elm's policy regarding how students are expected to behave when participating in School activities- on and off School grounds- and how the School will respond when students fail to behave in accordance with these rules.

In all disciplinary matters, students will be given notice and will have the opportunity to present their version of the facts and circumstances leading to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions to the staff member imposing such sanctions. Depending on the severity of the infraction, disciplinary responses include, but are not limited to, suspension (short or long term), detention, exclusion from extracurricular activities, and expulsion. Where appropriate, School officials also will contact law enforcement agencies.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Elm's Code of Conduct states that all students, staff and community members are expected to:

- ☐ Speak and act honestly and openly, with kindness and respect for others;
- ☐ Support each other's learning and creativity;
- ☐ Solve for problems cooperatively within the community;
- ☐ Take care of one another's property, including their own;
- ☐ Avoid reckless behavior, especially any that might endanger members in the school community; and
- ☐ Attend school regularly and be on time for classes and school events.

Elm recognizes that the best way for the community to support students to make safe, positive choices when handling conflicts, is to model the correct behavior. All members of the Elm community are expected to be respectful in our interactions with each other.

Families are encouraged to schedule a meeting with their child's classroom teacher in the event of a problem or disagreement. If the problem persists, the Principal may contact the family. The Principal is ultimately responsible to resolve any issue that cannot be addressed

by other staff members. If you wish to discuss a matter with the Principal, you should schedule an appointment with him or her through the appropriate process.

A. Student Responsibility:

Elm believes that disciplinary issues are learning opportunities for students. Elm's goal is to teach students to learn how to be responsible for the well being of themselves and others, based on the following expectations:

- ☐ Students are respectful to all members of the community;
- ☐ Students take responsibility for their choices and actions;
- ☐ Students accept the rewards/consequences of their choices and actions;
- ☐ Students work to make amends for breaking school rules and any actions that contradict the School's Discipline Policies and core values; and
- ☐ Students reflect on their experiences and learn lessons from poor choices or actions.

B. Conflict Resolution:

Elm's conflict resolution program is intended to support students as they are taught to deal with their own emotions and the emotions of others. Elm works to ensure that students have the necessary skills to solve conflicts in a nonviolent way. This approach to discipline helps Students recognize that they have obligations to their own learning and the Elm community.

C. Dignity For All Students Act Policy:

Elm and its Board of Trustees (the "Board") are committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment within the School. In accordance with New York State's Dignity for All Students Act ("DASA"), Elm is committed to promptly addressing incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of students that impede students' ability to learn. This includes bullying, taunting, or intimidation in all their myriad forms both on-campus and off-campus (including on-line).

Students' Rights

No student shall be subjected to harassment by staff or students on School property or at a School function. Nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on the students actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex or any other characteristic protected by law by Elm employees or students on School property or at School functions. In addition, Elm reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with the Discipline Policy, who engage in harassment of Students off School property (including without limitation: on-line, on social media platforms, text messaging and other electronic media) under circumstances where such off campus conduct: 1) affects the educative process; 2) actually endangers the health and safety of Elm students within the educational system; or 3) is reasonably believed to

pose a danger to the health and safety of Elm students. This includes written and/or verbal harassment which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of Elm and/or which Elm officials reasonably foresee as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of Elm.

Dignity Act Coordinator

Elm designates Kayla Cobb, the School Principal, as the Dignity Act Coordinator (the "DAC"). The DAC is trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex. The DAC will be accessible to students and other employees for consultation and advice.

Reporting and Investigating

Personnel at all levels are responsible for reporting harassment of which they have been made aware to their immediate supervisor. Any student who believes that he or she is being subjected to harassment, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, shall report the harassment to any staff member or to the DAC. A staff member who witnesses harassment or who receives a report of harassment shall inform the DAC. The DAC, or their designee, shall promptly investigate the complaint and take appropriate action to include, as necessary, referral to the next level of supervisory authority and/or other official designated by Elm to investigate allegations of harassment. Follow-up inquiries and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged harasser and victim shall be made to ensure that harassment has not resumed and that those involved in the investigation of the allegations of harassment have not suffered retaliation. Material incidents of discrimination and harassment on School grounds or at a School function will be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

No Retaliation

Elm and its Board prohibit any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of allegations of harassment. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and Elm policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

Infractions and Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses

The infractions below are grouped by level, each with its range of possible disciplinary responses.

Level #1 Infractions (Insubordinate Behavior)

Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
1. Being late to school 2. Bringing prohibited equipment to school without authorization (cell phones, mp3 players, toys, electronic devices) 3. Failing to be in one's assigned place on school premises (staying within your classroom/in your assigned spot). 4. Behaving in a manner which disturbs the education process (e.g., making excessive noise verbally and physically, singing when inappropriate, interruptions, calling-out, humming, in the classroom and in the hallway, etc.) 5. Engaging in verbally rude or disrespectful behavior (to both teachers and peers: talking back when given a direction, name-calling, mimicking, harassing, teasing, taunting, etc.) 6. Wearing clothing or other items that are unsafe or disruptive to the educational process (not wearing uniform, wearing non-school regulated street clothes, not wearing closed-toed shoes, etc.) 7. Posting or distributing material on school premises in violation of written School rules. 8. Using school computers, faxes, telephones, or other electronic equipment without permission. 9. Using or touching other people's property without permission (both teachers' and peers' property, belongings, equipment, supplies, etc.)	1. Admonishment by school staff 2. Student/teacher conference 3. Reprimand by appropriate supervisor (e.g., Principal, teacher) 4. Parent conference 5. In-school disciplinary action (e.g., exclusion from extracurricular activities, recess, or communal lunchtime) 6. Removal from classroom by teacher (After a Student is removed from a classroom by any teacher three (3) times during a semester, Principal's suspension must be sought if the Student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in removal by a teacher)

Level #2 Infractions (Disorderly, Disruptive Behaviors)

Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
1. Smoking 2. Gambling 3. Using profane, obscene, vulgar, lewd, or abusive, language or gestures 4. Lying, or giving false information to school personnel 5. Misusing property belonging to others (including breaking, destroying, ripping, etc.). 6. Engaging in or causing in disruptive behavior on the school bus, causing safety issues to the driver, Students, and self. 7. Leaving class or school premises without permission of supervising school personnel. 8. Engaging in inappropriate or unwanted physical contact (poking, pinching, tapping, throwing of objects, etc.). 9. Violating CPCSNY's Internet use policy, e.g., use of the school's system for non-educational purposes, security/privacy violations 10. Engaging in scholastic dishonesty which includes: cheating, plagiarizing, colluding, copying, etc. 11. Plagiarizing (appropriating someone's work and using it as one's own for credit without required citation and attribution.)	1. Admonishment by school staff 2. Student/teacher conference 3. Reprimand by appropriate supervisor (e.g., Principal, teacher) 4. Parent conference 5. In-school disciplinary action (e.g., exclusion from extracurricular activities, recess, or communal lunchtime) 6. Removal from classroom by teacher (After a Student is removed from a classroom by any teacher three times during a semester, Principal's suspension must be sought if the Student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in removal by a teacher) 7. Short term suspension (1-10 days)

12. Colluding (engaging in fraudulent collaboration with another person in preparing written work for credit.) 13. Engaging in a pattern of persistent Level 1 behavior (whenever possible and appropriate, prior to imposing a Level 2 disciplinary response, School should have exhausted the disciplinary responses in Level 1 infractions)	
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Level #3 Infractions (Seriously Disruptive or Dangerous Behaviors)

Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
1. Being insubordinate; defying or disobeying the lawful authority of school personnel or school safety agents. 2. Using slurs based upon race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. 3. Fighting/engaging in physical aggressive behavior (hitting, punching, spitting, kicking, hitting with an object, etc.). 4. Bringing unauthorized visitors to school or allowing unauthorized visitors to enter school in violation of written school rules. 5. Engaging in theft or knowingly possessing property belonging to another without authorization. 6. Engaging in inappropriate or unwanted physical contact* 7. Tampering with, changing or altering a record or document of a school by any method, including, but not limited to, computer access or any electronic means. 8. Posting or distributing libelous or defamatory material or literature or material containing a threat of violence, injury or harm. (Disciplinary responses 3-8 only) 9. Engaging in vandalism or other intentional damage to school property, staff property, or others; including	1. Admonishment by school staff 2. Student/teacher conference 3. Reprimand by appropriate supervisor (e.g., Principal) 4. Parent conference 5. In-school disciplinary action (e.g., exclusion from extracurricular activities, recess or communal lunchtime) 6. Removal from classroom by teacher (After a Student is removed from any classroom by any teacher three times during a semester, a Principal's suspension must be sought if the Student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in removal by a teacher) 7. Short term suspension (1-10 days) 8. Long term suspension (More than 10 days)

Student bathrooms. (Disciplinary responses 3-8 only) 10. Falsely activating a fire alarm or other disaster alarm or making a bomb threat. (Disciplinary responses 3-8 only) 11. Engaging in gang related behavior** (e.g., wearing gang apparel, writing graffiti, making gestures or signs) (Disciplinary responses 4-8 only) 12. Engaging in a pattern of persistent Level 2 behavior (Whenever possible and appropriate, prior to imposing a Level 3 disciplinary response, school officials should have exhausted the disciplinary responses in Level 2. Further, repeated Level 2 infractions are limited to Level 3 disciplinary responses.) (Disciplinary responses 4-8 only)	
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**The school will offer appropriate counseling to Students engaging in this behavior*

***In determining whether the behavior is gang related, school officials may consult with the New York City's Office of School Safety and Planning's Gang Unit or the New York Police Department*

Level #4 Infractions (Dangerous or Violent Behavior)

Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
1. Engaging in intimidation, coercion or extortion or threatening violence, injury, harm or retaliation to another or others. 2. Engaging in behavior that creates a substantial risk of or results in injury. 3. Engaging in intimidating and bullying behavior- threatening, stalking or seeking to coerce or compel a Student or staff member to do something; engaging in verbal or physical conduct that threatens another with harm, including intimidation through the use of epithets or slurs involving race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, religious practice, gender, sexual orientation or disability. 4. Engaging in sexual harassment* (to peers or school staff). 5. Possessing illegal drugs, alcohol or controlled substances without appropriate authorization* 6. Engaging in threatening, dangerous or violent behavior that is gang-related. (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 7. Participating in an incident of group violence. (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 8. Threatening while on school property, to use any instrument that appears capable of causing physical injury. (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 9. Engaging in behavior on the school bus that creates a substantial risk of injury or	1. Parent conference 2. In-school disciplinary actions (e.g., exclusion for extracurricular activities, recess or communal lunchtime) 3. Removal from classroom by any teacher. (After a Student is removed from any classroom by any teacher three times during a semester or twice in a trimester, a Principal's suspension must be sought if the Student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in a removal by a teacher.) 4. Short term suspension (1-10 days) 5. Long term suspension (More than 10 days) 6. Expulsion

results in injury. (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 10. Engaging in physical sexual aggression/compelling or forcing another to engage in sexual activity. * (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 11. Committing arson. (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 12. Inciting/causing a riot. (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 13. Possessing any weapon as defined in Category I or II** (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 14. Using illegal drugs, alcohol or controlled substances without appropriate authorization* (Disciplinary responses 4-6 only) 15. Engaging in a pattern of persistent Level 3 behavior (Whenever possible and appropriate, prior to imposing a Level 4 disciplinary response, school officials should have exhausted the disciplinary responses in Level 3. Further, repeated Level 3 infractions are limited to Level 4 disciplinary responses)	
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**The school should offer appropriate counseling to Students who engage in this behavior*

***Before requesting a suspension for possession of an article listed in Category II for which a purpose other than infliction of physical harm exists, e.g., a nail file, the Principal must consider whether there are mitigating factors present. In addition, the Principal must consider whether an imitation gun is realistic looking by considering factors such as its color, size, shape, appearance and weight.*

Level #5 Infractions (Seriously Dangerous or Violent Behavior)

Infractions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
1. Using force against or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury against school personal or school safety agents. 2. Using extreme force against or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury upon Students or others. 3. Selling or distributing illegal drugs or controlled substances. * 4. Possessing any weapon, other than a firearm, as defined in Category I. 5. Using any weapon as defined in Category II to attempt to inflict injury upon school personnel, Students or others. 6. Using any weapon, other than a firearm, as defined in Category I or II to inflict injury or Category I to attempt to inflict injury upon school personnel, Students or others. 7. Possessing or using a firearm (I only)**	1. Short term suspension (1-10 days) 2. Long term suspension (More than 10 days) 3. Expulsion

**The school should offer appropriate counseling to Students who engage in this behavior*

***Before requesting a suspension for possession of an article listed in Category II for which a purpose other than infliction of physical harm exists, e.g., a nail file, the Principal must consider whether there are mitigating factors present. In addition, the Principal must consider whether an imitation gun is realistic looking by considering factors such as its color, size, shape, appearance and weight.*

Prohibited Weapons – Category 1	Prohibited Weapons – Category 2
• Firearm, including pistol and handgun, silencers, electronic darts and stun gun; • Shotgun, rifle, machine gun, or any other weapon which simulates or is adaptable for use as a machine gun; • Air gun, spring gun, or other instrument or weapon in which the propelling force is a spring or air, and any weapon in which any loaded or blank cartridge may be used (such as a BB gun); • Switchblade knife, gravity knife, pilum ballistic knife; and cane sword (a cane that conceals a knife or sword); • Dagger, stiletto, dirk, razor, box cutter, utility knife and other dangerous knives; • Billy club, blackjack, bludgeon, chuka stick, and metal knuckles; • Sandbag and sand club; • Sling shot (small heavy weights attached to or propelled by a thong) and sling shot; • Explosives, including bombs, firecrackers and bombshells.	• Martial arts objects including kung-fu stars, nunchucks, and shurikens; • Acid or deadly or dangerous chemicals; • Imitation gun; • Loaded or blank cartridges and other ammunition; • Stink bombs; • Stun pens; • Any deadly, dangerous, or sharp pointed instrument that can be used or is intended for use as a weapon (such as scissors, nail file, broken glass, chains, wire, laser beam, pointers).

II. Levels of Suspension & Due Process Procedures

A. SHORT TERM SUSPENSION

A short-term suspension refers to an in-school removal or out-of-school removal of a student for disciplinary reasons for a period of ten (10) or fewer days. A student who has

committed a Level 2, 3, 4, or 5 infraction may be subject minimally to a short-term suspension, unless the Principal determines that an exception should be made based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. The Principal reserves the right to adjust the punishment for each infraction per his or her judgment.

Procedures and Due Process for Short Term Suspension

The Principal may impose a short-term suspension, and shall follow due process procedures consistent with federal case law pursuant to *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565). Before imposing a short-term suspension, or other, less serious discipline, the Principal shall provide notice to inform the student of the charges against him or her, and if the student denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence against the student. A chance to present the student's version of events shall also be provided.

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

The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be appealed by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with Elm's Complaint Policy, contained in the Student Handbook, accessible on the School's website and available in hard copy from the School's Office upon request.

B. LONG TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than ten (10) days. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons. A student who is determined to have committed any Level 3, 4, or 5 infraction may be subject to a long-term suspension or expulsion, unless the Principal determines that an exception should be made based on the

circumstance of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. Such a student may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures outlined elsewhere in this document including a referral to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

A student who commits any of the acts previously described as causes for short term-suspension may, instead or in addition, be subject to a long-term suspension in the Principal's reasonable discretion if the student has committed the act at least three (3) times in the academic year or if the Principal shall otherwise reasonably determine that subjecting a student to a long-term suspension is reasonable and warranted.

Procedures and Due Process for Long Term Suspension

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

If the Principal initiates the suspension proceeding, he or she shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, at his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the Principal may accept or reject all or part of it. The Principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion may be challenged by the parent or guardian by submitting a written appeal to the Board of Trustees within five (5) days of receipt of the Principal's decision (appeal can be submitted by email to elmboard@elmcharterschool.org or left in hard copy with the Principal), at which point the Board shall designate two (2) or more Trustees (the "Designated Trustees") to review the appeal which may include, in the Designated Trustees discretion, an in-person meeting (the "Meeting") whereby the parents/guardians of the affected Student and the Principal shall each have up to fifteen (15) minutes to present information for the Designated Trustees' consideration. The Designated Trustees shall render their decision

within five (5) days of the Meeting. NOTE: In any instance where the Principal is directly involved in the instance(s) at issue for a suspension or expulsion, the Principal shall appoint a designee to handle any investigation, hearing and determination.

You may appeal the Board's decision, in writing, to the Schools' authorizer, the State University of New York – Charter Schools Institute ("SUNY-CSI"). To do so, you must send a written copy of the School Board's decision along with your complaint to charters@suny.edu or by mail to:

SUNY Charter Schools Institute
H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246

If SUNY-CSI as the authorizer of the Schools does not satisfactorily resolve your formal complaint, you can appeal SUNY-CSI's written determination to the New York State Board of Regents through the New York State Education Department. Please or by submit written appeals by mail to:

New York State Education Department
Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue, Room 5N Mezzanine
Albany, NY 12234

III. Firearm Violations

Federal and New York law require the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one (1) year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). "Weapon," as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC § 921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214 effectuates this federal law.) The following are included within this definition: (a) Any device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. Knives with a blade of two and half inches or more in length fall within this definition; (b) Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (c) the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; (d) Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; (e) Any destructible device, which is defined as any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, such as a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant

charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or other similar device.

The Principal shall refer a student under the age of sixteen (16) who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act except a student fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42). The Principal shall refer any pupil sixteen (16) years of age or older or a student fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42), who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

IV. Provision of Instruction During Removal

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

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

V. Disciplinary Policy for Students with Disabilities

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all Students, Elm shall implement the following disciplinary policy procedures with respect to students with disabilities. A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.527(b)—that a disability exists will be

disciplined in accordance with these provisions. Elm shall comply with sections 300.519-300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

If a student violates the School's discipline code and is being considered for a suspension or removal, the School must ensure the following due process protections are provided to the student and to the student's parent(s) in addition to those set forth in the regular education discipline code. For suspensions of five (5) school days or less, the Student's parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice, and a follow up telephone call if possible, within 24 hours of the incident leading up to the suspension which describes the basis for the suspension and explains that the parent or guardian has the right to request an informal conference with the Principal and appropriate staff to discuss the incident and question any complaining witness against the student. For suspensions in excess of five (5) consecutive school days, the student's parent(s) or guardian must be provided with a written notice which indicates that the School proposes to suspend the student from school in excess of five consecutive school days, describes the basis for the proposed suspension, explains that the student has an opportunity for a fair hearing conducted by the Principal or his or her designee at which the student will have a right to question any witnesses accusing him/her of committing the misconduct charge and to present witnesses on his/her behalf. Where possible, notification must also be provided by telephone. In addition, the Schools must provide alternative education to the student during the suspension as set forth below, including any special services required by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared by the Student's Committee on Special Education (CSE) of their district of residence. Final determination on a suspension or removal of a Student, following due process, shall be made by the Principal.

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

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

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student's

district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student's district of residence prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement. In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement.

Elm shall work with the district to ensure that the CSE of the student's district of residence meets within seven (7) days of notification of any of the following: (1) The commission of an infraction by a Student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the maximum allowable number of days; (2) The commission of any infraction that Elm suspects is the result of the student's disability; (3) The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student has previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infraction been committed by a non-disabled student, the Principal would seek to impose a suspension in excess of five (5) days.

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

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

Provision of Services During Removal

Those students removed for a period fewer than ten (10) days will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule to complete such assignments during the time of his or her suspension. Provisions will be made to permit a suspended student to make up assignments or tests missed as a result of such suspension. Elm also shall provide additional alternative instruction with reasonable promptness and by appropriate means to assist the student, so that the student is given full opportunity to complete assignments and master curriculum, including additional instructions, phone assistance, computer instruction and/or home visits and one-on-one tutoring.

During any subsequent removal that, combined with previous removals equals ten (10) or more school days during the school year, but does not constitute a change in placement, services must be provided to the extent determined necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

During any removal for weapon, drug or infliction of serious bodily injury-related offenses pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g)(1), (2) and (3), respectively, services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence. The school will place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate and mandated by the IDEA.

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

CSE Meetings

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

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

Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the Student with a disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten school days after the date on which

such decision is made, the CSE of the Student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

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

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

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

Students with a 504 Plan and "Deemed to Know" Students

With regard to disciplinary actions, including suspension or expulsion, the Section 504 rights of charter school students with disabilities are the same as other students with disabilities. When addressing discipline for students with disabilities, including students with 504 plans or those who are "presumed to have a disability," Elm will comply with applicable legal requirements governing the discipline of a student for misconduct.

Compliance with the Child Find Requirements of IDEA

Elm will comply with the federal Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.111), which require schools to have in place a process for identifying, locating and evaluating students with disabilities. Students enrolling for the first time in a New York public school will be screened by a team of teachers (including both regular and special education teachers) to identify any possible indication that the child may need a specialized or Individualized Education Program, or referral to the CSE of the student's district of residence. Other students will be brought to the attention of the team if they are demonstrating any problems within the regular classroom environment. Strategies will then be implemented to address any identified special needs of the student. Should the problems persist and a disability is suspected, the student will be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for an evaluation.

VI. Search and Seizure

A Student and/or the student's belongings may be searched by a school official if the official has a reasonable suspicion to believe that a search of that student will result in evidence that the student violated the law or a school rule. Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from the student by school authorities and returned to parents at the school or turned over to law enforcement as appropriate.

All school-related property always remains under the control of the School and is subject to search at any time. School-related property includes but is not limited to computers, lockers, cabinets, desks, bookcases, buses and other vehicles and items controlled or directed by school officials in the support of educational-related programs or activities. The school is not responsible for books, clothing, or valuables left in lockers or desks. A student shall not place or keep in a locker, desk or other school-related property any article or material which is of a non-school nature and may cause or tend to cause the disruption of the mission of the school. The following rules will apply to the search of school property assigned to a specific student and the seizure of illegal or prohibited items found therein:

- ☐ School authorities will make a reasonable search of a student's locker, desk, or other school-related property only when there is reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of an item which is prohibited on school property or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process
- ☐ Searches shall be conducted under the authorization of the Principal or his/her designee
- ☐ Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed by school authorities
- ☐ Searches of an individual will be made on individual suspicion of wrongdoing. To the extent practicable, searches of an individual will be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex and with another witness present
- ☐ Searches of students and school property may be conducted on school grounds or whenever the student is involved with or attending a school sponsored or related function, whether it is on school grounds or not.

VII. Freedom of Expression

Students are entitled to express their personal opinions verbally, in writing, or by symbolic speech. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves, and written expression of opinion must be signed by the author. Any form of expression that involves libel, slander, the use of obscenity, or personal

attacks, or that otherwise disrupts the educational process, is prohibited. All forms of expression also must be in compliance with the student disciplinary policy and the school dress code, violations of which are punishable as stated in the disciplinary policy.

Student participation in the publication of school-sponsored student newsletters, yearbooks, literary magazines and similar publications is encouraged as a learning and educational experience. These publications, if any, shall be supervised by qualified faculty advisors and shall strive to meet high standards of journalism. In order to maintain consistency with the school's basic educational mission, the content of such publications is controlled by school authorities.

No person shall distribute any printed or written materials on school property without the prior permission of the Principal. The Principal may regulate the content of materials to be distributed on school property to the extent necessary to avoid material and substantial interference with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. The Principal may also regulate the time, place, manner and duration of such distribution.

VIII. Off-Campus Events

Students at school-sponsored off-campus events shall be governed by all the guidelines of the school and are subject to the authority of school officials. Failure to obey the lawful instructions of school officials shall result in a loss of eligibility to attend school-sponsored off-campus events and may result in additional disciplinary measures in accordance with the student disciplinary policy.

IX. Student Use of School Technology

The use of technology provided by Elm is a privilege permitted at Elm's discretion and is subject to the conditions and restrictions set forth in applicable School policies, administrative regulations, and this Acceptable Use Agreement. Elm reserves the right to suspend access at any time, without notice, for any reason.

Elm expects all students to use technology responsibly in order to avoid potential problems and liability. Elm may place reasonable restrictions on the sites, material, and/or information that students may access through the system.

Each student who is authorized to use Elm technology and his/her parent/guardian may be required each year to sign an agreement that contains, among other things, the terms set forth in this Discipline Code.

Definitions

ELM technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, CPCSNY's computer network including servers and wireless computer networking technology (Wi-Fi), the Internet, third-party platforms (e.g. Google Classroom, Zoom, Skype, etc.) utilized by Elm for delivery of instruction and/or information to students and families, email, USB drives, wireless access points (routers), tablet computers, smartphones and smart devices, telephones, cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, MP3 players, wearable technology, any wireless communication device including, and/or future technological innovations, whether accessed on or off site or through School-owned or personally owned equipment or devices.

Technology Ownership

This technology is, and at all time remains, the property of Elm, and is herewith lent to the student for educational purposes only. Equipment provided by Elm to the student will be returned to Elm when requested to do so by Elm, or sooner, if the student withdraws from Elm prior to the end of the school year.

Student Obligations and Responsibilities

Students are expected to use Elm technology safely, responsibly, and for educational purposes only. The student in whose name Elm technology is issued is responsible for its proper use at all times. Students shall not share their assigned online services account information, passwords, or other information used for identification and authorization purposes, and shall use the system only under the account to which they have been assigned.

Students are prohibited from using Elm technology for improper purposes, including, but not limited to, use of Elm technology to:

1. Access, post, display, or otherwise use material that is discriminatory, libelous, defamatory, obscene, sexually explicit, or disruptive.
2. Bully, harass, intimidate, or threaten other students, staff, or other individuals ("cyberbullying").
3. Disclose, use, or disseminate personal identification information (such as name, address, telephone number, Social Security number, or other personal information) of another student, staff member, or other person with the intent to threaten, intimidate, harass, or ridicule that person.
4. Infringe on copyright, license, trademark, patent, or other intellectual property rights.
5. Intentionally disrupt or harm Elm technology or other Elm operations (such as destroying Elm equipment, placing a virus on Elm computers, adding or removing a computer program without permission from teacher or other Elm personnel, changing settings on shared computers).

6. Install unauthorized software.
7. "Hack" into the system to manipulate data of Elm or other users.
8. Engage in or promote any practice that is unethical or violates any law or Elm policy, administrative regulation, or Elm practice.

Privacy

Since the use of Elm technology is intended for educational purposes, Students shall not have any expectation of privacy in any use of School technology.

Elm reserves the right to monitor and record all use of Elm technology, including, but not limited to, access to the Internet or social media, communications sent or received from Elm technology, or other uses. Such monitoring/recording may occur at any time without prior notice for any legal purposes including, but not limited to, record retention and distribution and/or investigation of improper, illegal, or prohibited activity. Students should be aware that, in most instances, their use of Elm technology (such as web searches and emails) cannot be erased or deleted.

All passwords created for or used on any Elm technology are the sole property of Elm. The creation or use of a password by a student on Elm technology does not create a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Personal Devices

If a student uses a personally owned device to access Elm technology, he/she shall abide by all applicable Elm policies. Any such use of a personally owned device may subject the contents of the device and any communications sent or received on the device to disclosure pursuant to a lawful subpoena or public records request.

Reporting

If a student becomes aware of any security problem (such as any compromise of the confidentiality of any login or account information), experiences problems with the functioning of or notices the misuse of Elm technology, he/she shall immediately report such information to the teacher or other Elm personnel.

Consequences for Violation

Violations of the law, Elm policy, or this agreement may result in revocation of a student's access to Elm technology and/or discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, violations of the law, Elm policy, or this agreement may be reported to law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

X. Student Records

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

Charter schools are subject to the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA") that requires a school to protect a student's privacy. Elm will not disclose any information from the student's permanent records except as authorized pursuant to FERPA, or in response to a subpoena, as required by law. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student under 18 years of age, or a student 18 years of age or older, is entitled to access to the student's school records by submitting a written request to the Principal. Further information concerning the disclosure of student information and limitations on such disclosure may be found in FERPA and the school's FERPA policy.

Appendix B: Elm Community Charter FERPA Policy

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 learner 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 learner when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. learners to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible learners."

- ☐ Parents or eligible learners have the right to inspect and review the learner's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible learners to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- ☐ Parents or eligible learners have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible learner 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 learner has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- ☐ Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible learner in order to release any information from a learner's education record. However, FERPA

allows schools 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 learner is transferring;
- ☐ Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- ☐ Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a learner;
- ☐ 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.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a learner's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible learners about directory information and allow parents and eligible learners a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible learners annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, learner handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Appendix C: Use of Internet-Enabled Devices During the School Day

I. Purpose

This policy is established in accordance with New York State Education Law § 2803 to regulate the use of internet-enabled devices by students during the school day. The goal is to create a focused, equitable, and safe learning environment free from digital distractions while ensuring students' health, safety, and legal rights are respected.

At Elm, we believe that a device-free space will cultivate a thriving learning community where learners are connecting with the work, their peers, and teachers, as well as themselves.

II. Definitions

Internet-Enabled Devices: Any device capable of connecting to the internet and accessing content, including smartphones, tablets, and smartwatches. Excluded from this definition

are: Non-internet-enabled cell phones or communication devices; School-issued devices used strictly for educational purposes.

School Day: The full instructional day, including non-instructional times such as homeroom, recess, lunch, passing time, and office hours. Generally, this will be the hours of 7:15AM - 3:30PM.

School Grounds: Any building, field, structure, or land within the boundaries of Elm Community Charter School's property.

III. General Policy

Students are prohibited from using internet-enabled devices on school grounds during the school day unless permitted under one of the exceptions outlined in Section V.

IV. Communication with Students During the Day

Elm Community Charter School recognizes the importance of communication between students and their families. To facilitate this:

- ☐ Parents/guardians may contact the main office to reach their child.
- ☐ In urgent or emergency situations, the school will facilitate timely communication.
- ☐ Written notice of these procedures will be shared with families annually and upon enrollment.

V. Exceptions to the Policy

Use of internet-enabled devices may be authorized in the following cases:

- ☐ For Educational Purposes, as approved by a teacher, principal, or staff member and do not have a school-issued device for such purpose.
- ☐ For Healthcare Needs and Caregiving Responsibilities, including but not limited to medical monitoring or condition management. Please note an accommodation form must be submitted and approved by the Director of Student Services.
- ☐ In Emergency Situations, such as school lockdowns or evacuations.
- ☐ For Translation Services, to support communication needs when no other means are available.
- ☐ When Legally Required, under state or federal law.
- ☐ When Specified in a Student's: Individualized Education Program (IEP); Section 504 Plan.

VI. Device Storage

Secure storage areas will be provided for learners to store their personal internet-enabled devices for the duration of the school day. Acceptable storage are only school-issued lockboxes or collection bins in classrooms or offices.

VII. Disciplinary Considerations

Violations of this policy may result in non-punitive interventions such as a parent conference, confiscation for the day, or restorative conversation.

Suspension may not be used solely for a violation of this policy.

The school will implement fair and equitable enforcement practices to avoid disproportionate disciplinary action.

VIII. School Liability

Elm Community Charter School is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal internet-enabled device brought onto school grounds.

Students who bring personal devices to school do so at their own risk. The school will make reasonable efforts to provide secure storage (as outlined in Section VI).

IX. Contact Information

For questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact:

Elm Community Charter School Main Office

Phone: (347) 474-3288

Email: hello@elmcharterschool.org