This document includes Libertas Academy Charter School's
Code of Conduct and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Libertas Academy

1.01 Our Mission

1.02 Our Vision

1.03 Our Core Values

Responsibility and Accountability

2.01 Responsibility and Accountability Statement

2.02 LACS Student and Family Accountability Contract

School Policies and Procedures

3.01 School Calendar and Closings

3.02 School Hours

3.03 Attendance

3.03.1 Incomplete Days: Lateness and Early Dismissal

3.04 Dress Code

3.04.1 All black shoes, closed toe with a back

3.04.2 Supplemental Dress Code for when out of uniform

3.05 Homework Policies

3.06 Academic Tutoring

3.07 Weekly FIRST Reports

3.08 Makeup Work Policies

3.09 Grading Policies

3.10 Promotion Policies

3.11 Homeroom Teachers and Student Advisors

3.12 Community Service Requirement

3.13 Summer Growth Experience Requirement

3.14 Individual Incentive and Accountability System: Student FIRST Reports

3.15 Whole Class Incentive and Accountability: FIRST Block

3.16 Student Behavior Policy for Extra-Curricular

3.17 Electronic Device Policy

General School Information

4.01 Contact Us

4.02 Nutrition and Wellness Program

4.03 Medical Records and Health Services

4.04 Student Records

4.05 Transportation

4.06 School Visitor Policy

4.07 Internet Acceptable Use Policy

4.08 Nondiscrimination

4.09 Harassment

4.10 Sexual Harassment
4.11 Bullying and Cyberbullying.................................................................32
4.12 Hazing.............................................................................................32
4.13 Corporal Punishment and Student Restraint.......................................32
4.14 Grievance Procedure........................................................................34
4.15 Complaint Procedure..........................................................................36

Code of Conduct......................................................................................37
5.01 Purpose.............................................................................................37
5.02 Our Philosophy..................................................................................37
5.03 Behavior-Consequences and Rewards...............................................37
  5.03.1 Merits
  5.03.2 Demerits
  5.03.3 Detentions
  5.03.4 Friday Extension
  5.03.5 In-Class Support
  5.03.6 Out-of-School Suspension
  5.03.7 Out-of-School Suspension and/or Expulsion
5.04 Procedures for Disciplinary Action....................................................40
  5.04.1 Detention
  5.04.2 Friday Extension
  5.04.3 In-Class Support
  5.04.4 Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions
5.05 Discipline of Students with Special Needs..........................................45
5.06 Student Searches...............................................................................47
5.07 Bus Behavior.....................................................................................47
5.08 Field Trips/End-of-Year Events.........................................................48
5.09 Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Other’s Work...............................48

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy.............................................49
6.01 Assessing Needs and Resources.........................................................49
6.02 Planning and Oversight....................................................................49
6.03 Priority Statement............................................................................49
6.04 Training & Staff Professional Development......................................50
  6.04.1 Annual Staff Training
  6.04.2 Ongoing Professional
  6.04.3 Development Written notice to staff
6.05 Access to Resources and Services....................................................51
  6.05.1 Identifying Resources
  6.05.2 Counseling 7 Other Services
  6.05.3 Students with Disabilities
  6.05.4 Referrals to Outside Counselling: SST Referral, Communication and
       Meeting Structures
6.06 Academic and Non-Academic Activities.............................................53
  6.06.1 Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches
  6.06.2 General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts
6.07 Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and
Retaliation...54
6.07.1 Reports of Bullying or Retaliation
6.07.2 Responding to Reports of Bullying or Retaliation
6.07.3 Investigations
6.07.4 Determinations
6.07.5 Out of School Bullying Infractions
6.06.6 Suspension Procedures
6.08 Responses to Bullying.................................................................62
   6.08.1 Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building
   6.08.2 Taking Disciplinary Action
6.09 Collaboration with Families......................................................63 6.10
Prohibition Against Bullying & Retaliation........................................63 6.11
Definitions.................................................................63 6.12 Other
Definitions........................................................................64 6.13 Relation to Other
Laws.................................................................................66 6.14 Key
Forms..................................................................................67

Appendix......................................................................................... 67
A. Chapter 71, Section 37H
B. Chapter 71, Section 37H ½
C. Chapter 71, Section 37H ¾
Libertas Academy

1.01 Our Mission
Through rigorous academics, character development, and strong supports for every learner, Libertas Academy Charter School prepares all sixth through twelfth grade students to succeed within the college of their choice and to be positive, engaged members of their communities.

1.02 Our Vision
Libertas Academy Charter School is a high expectations, high achieving school that replicates the successful models of other high performing charter schools in Massachusetts and across the country. Within an achievement-oriented culture in which expectations are clear and routines are consistent, and in which the joy of learning, the power of intellectual curiosity, and the development of life-building values are at the center of our seamless 6-12 school, all learners build the skills, knowledge, and character required for college and professional success and a life of positive community engagement.

1.03 Our Core Values
We are a values-driven organization and we will instill within our students the character traits necessary to succeed in college and beyond. Our character development program is informed by our FIRST values:

- **Focus** – we set ambitious goals and achieve them.
- **Integrity** – we do what is right even when nobody is watching.
- **Respect** – we treat others as they want to be treated.
- **Selfless Service** – we give back to our community.
- **Tenacity** – we don’t ever give up.

At Libertas Academy, we are committed to the holistic development of our students. Through our rigorous academics and our core values, students will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets to succeed within the college of their choice and will be positive, engaged members of their communities. Our core values form the basis for many of the policies outlined in this handbook.
Responsibility and Accountability

2.02 Responsibility and Accountability Statement

The Libertas Academy Charter School Student and Family Accountability Contract, reprinted on the following pages, represents some of the most important responsibilities for being a member of the Libertas Academy community. For our students, this Contract provides an overview of what being a Libertas Academy student is all about. For our families, the Contract outlines some of the specific expectations the school will hold you to in order to help us provide the best possible education for our students. The Libertas Academy faculty and administration will, in exchange, work tirelessly to provide students with a seamless 6-12 school, where all learners build the skills, knowledge, and character required for college and professional success and a life of endless opportunities.

2.02 LACS Student and Family Accountability Contract

When you joined the Libertas Academy Charter School community, you joined a team of people committed to your student’s success. To achieve our mission of preparing all sixth through twelfth grade students to succeed within the college of their choice and to be positive, engaged members of their communities, we must work together. We are committed to ensuring that families and students have a full and clear understanding of our team’s responsibilities and commitment to educating your student(s). Please review Libertas Academy Student and Family Accountability Contract for additional and specific information.

SCHOOL COMMITMENT

HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION

- We will work to ensure that our school community always operates in accordance with our mission, vision, and core values.
- We commit to providing a structured, joyful, and supportive school community that holds students to high expectations for academics and behavior by employing consistent, school-wide systems, structures, and routines.
- We will have longer school days, longer school year, in order to offer students extra help and support, and always offer our students the best we have.

RESPECT and FAIRNESS

- We will teach and enforce Libertas Academy’s FIRST values consistently and fairly.
- We will encourage and respect every student. We will listen to students and their needs. We will not tolerate students disrespecting each other.
- We will communicate with families when students fail to meet expectations just as when they exceed expectations. Decisions, including consequences, will be made in the best interest of our students.
• Students will earn recognition, incentives and privileges both when they perform well academically and when they model our FIRST values do well. Likewise, they will receive consequences if they do not meet academic or behavior standards.

COMMUNICATION

• We will communicate regularly with families about their child’s progress and make ourselves available in person and over the phone.
• We recognize that parents will initiate communication with our team and we commit to returning parent phone calls and e-mails, within a 24-48-hour time frame to ensure we are always aligned on their student’s progress.

HOMEWORK and ACADEMIC SUPPORT

• We will assign quality homework to reinforce and support skills and concepts learned in class.
• We will support students with excellent teaching.

SAFETY

• We commit to providing a safe learning environment for your student and will work diligently to protect the safety, dignity, and rights of all individuals.

PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMITMENT

ATTENDANCE and PROMOTION

• I will ensure that my student comes to school every day on time by 7:40 a.m.
• I will not schedule family vacations during school time. I will do my best to schedule important appointments for out of school time.
• I understand that my student will be automatically retained if s/he fails three (3) or more core academic classes, or is absent for more than ten (10) days of the school year. If my child fails one (1) class, s/he must successfully complete LACS summer program and pass the exam in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

HOMEWORK and ACADEMIC SUPPORT

• I will provide a quiet place to study and see that my student completes homework and 25 minutes of independent reading nightly.
• I will check my student’s homework (including DEAR Journal) every night. If Libertas Academy standards have been met, I will sign my student’s homework.
• I will help my student study for tests/quizzes, give them support when they need help and praise them when they do well.
• I will arrange for my student to be at Saturday Academy if assigned by my student’s
teacher(s).

**BEHAVIOR and DRESS CODE**

- I understand that my student will serve Friday Extension if his/her weekly FIRST Report is below a 70.
- I understand that my student will be in “In-Class Support” or “Out-of-School Suspended” if s/he violates the Code of Conduct and I will be required to come into school for a family meeting. I understand that my child may be subject to expulsion if s/he is found to be in violation of Massachusetts laws (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H1/2) governing the terms for expulsion from school.
- If my student’s behavior breaches our school’s Code of Conduct, FIRST values, or other school guiding principles and I am asked to come to school immediately, I will commit to meeting this obligation. If my student receives an Out-of School Suspension, I will remove my student from the building until my student has fulfilled the terms of his/her suspension.
- I understand that the school follows a strict bullying prevention and intervention policy and if my student violates that policy, s/he will receive the associated consequences outlined in said policy.
- I will send my student to school in proper dress attire every day. If my student arrives out of uniform, I will arrange for a family member to bring him/her the proper attire.

**FAMILY SUPPORT and COMMUNICATION**

- I agree to work as part of a team with the Libertas Academy staff to achieve the academic success and behavioral growth of my student.
- I commit to returning phone calls, reviewing, and signing any and all documentation sent home, including but not limited to progress reports and FIRST Reports.
- I will attend parent-teacher conferences and meetings about my student’s academic and behavioral trajectories.

**STUDENT COMMITMENT**

**EFFORT and HELP**

- I understand that my education is paramount. Being a student is my job. I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know how.
- I will do whatever it takes to advance my learning and to lean into the FIRST values of Libertas Academy. I will do all homework diligently and on time, I will ask questions and seek to understand, and I will work to exceed the school’s expectations.
- I understand that productive failure is part of the learning process and I will seek to learn from my mistakes so as to work to be successful next time. If I need help, I will ask for it.
- I will do what I can to help support the learning of my fellow students and commit to
being a productive member of our collaborative school community. I will not criticize or ostracize my peers, rather I will offer help when I can give it and provide encouragement when the opportunity to do so arises.

ATTENDANCE and UNIFORM

- I will come to school and ready to learn by 7:45 a.m. in order to complete my morning responsibilities and be seated by 8:00 a.m.
- If I need to miss class or school, I will ask for and make up all assignments. I will stay after school if/when I am required to do so.
- I will wear the proper uniform every day and remain in uniform throughout the day.

COMMUNICATION

- I will listen to directions. I will read and re-read directions before asking for help. If I cannot solve the problem myself, I will raise my hand and ask for help. I will help my classmates if they need help. I will not make excuses. I will be honest with my teachers and myself.

RESPONSIBILITY and HONESTY

- If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept responsibility for my actions. I will do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

F.I.R.S.T. EXPECTATIONS

- I will respect my teachers, my peers, and myself. I will refrain from all disrespectful behavior including smacking teeth, rolling eyes, etc.
- I understand our FIRST expectations and will embody them every day. I will follow the school rules to protect the safety and rights of all individuals and not detract from the educational opportunities of others. I’ll accept the consequences if I don’t meet our FIRST expectations.

--------------------------------------
--------------------------------------
Student Name (Printed)          Student     Signature

--------------------------------------
--------------------------------------
| Parent Signature | School Representative Signature |
School Policies and Procedures

3.01 School Calendar and Closings

Our annual calendar is driven by our college preparatory mission and the needs of our students and staff.

Providing extended instructional time within an extended school year, we will operate on a trimester schedule and provide 185 total days of instruction calendar, including five days of student orientation, and 10 days of Saturday Math Academy for students struggling to meet math standards and who need more remedial supports. We provide 10 days of Summer Academy for all students struggling to meet academic requirements for the year in one or two core subjects, at the conclusion of which students must pass a comprehensive assessment in the subject(s). We exceed the number of instructional days as required. The first day of school will be August 29, 2017, and the last day of school will be June 26, 2018.

3.02 School Hours

Mondays through Thursdays, the regular school day runs from 7:50 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

On Fridays, the regular school day runs from 8:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Students who have a score of less than 70 on their weekly FIRST Report will serve Friday Extension.

School doors are open Monday - Friday starting at 7:30 a.m. with Breakfast and Brain Breakfast Academics. Advisory at 7:50 a.m., Independent, Accountable reading (DEAR) is until 8:20 a.m. and with academic classes beginning at 8:20 a.m. Each day except for Fridays, school dismisses at 4:30 p.m. On Fridays, school dismisses at 2:00 p.m.

The school building will open to students at 7:30 a.m. Monday - Friday. All students should arrive by 7:40 a.m. in order to submit their homework and be seated by 7:50 a.m.

On Mondays-Thursdays, students should not be on school grounds after 4:00pm without permission from the school. On Fridays, students should not be on school grounds after 2:00pm without permission from the school.

Inclement Weather Closings

In the event of poor weather conditions such as heavy snow, please listen to the local television or radio stations for relevant information regarding school cancellation. Libertas Academy Charter School follows the same delay and cancellation policies as the Springfield Public School (SPS) district. If the SPS district is closed, Libertas Academy will be closed as well; if SPS is delayed at all due to inclement weather, Libertas Academy will have the same delay timeline.

See sample student schedule below.

Libertas Academy Daily Schedule DRAFT - Middle School

Monday – Thursday
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>School Opens (Breakfast/Brain Breakfast Academics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:50</td>
<td>Morning Advisory / Accountable Independent Reading (DEAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20</td>
<td>Math Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10</td>
<td>AM Nutrition/Advisory Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:25</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20</td>
<td>Math Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>Lunch/Recess/Homework Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:40</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:35</td>
<td>PM Nutrition/Advisory Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>PE/Health (2 x week)/Digital Literacy (2 x week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45</td>
<td>FOCUS: Homework/Tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Friday (Early Dismissal/Professional Development)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>School Opens (Breakfast/Brain Breakfast Academics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:50</td>
<td>Shortened AM Advisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:05</td>
<td>Math Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10</td>
<td>AM Nutrition/Advisory Break</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.03 Attendance

Given the fast pace and high rigor of Libertas Academy’s curriculum, missing a school day at Libertas Academy can have a detrimental effect on a student’s learning. Regular attendance is required.

Parents are expected to ensure that their child is in school so please do not allow your student to miss a day of school except for cases of serious illness. Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the LACS Student and Family Accountability contract. We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time. Families should take advantage of 2:00 pm dismissal on Fridays, as well as half-days and vacations, to schedule appointments and travel.

For their own safety, students must be picked up by a parent, guardian or designated emergency contact person in order to be dismissed prior to 4:30 p.m. A note or phone call requesting that a student be dismissed on his/her own is not sufficient and will not be honored. This policy applies to all early dismissals, including appointments and illness.

Likewise, if a student needs to be sent home due to a behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian must come to the school, meet with the Head of School and/or Dean of Students, and remove the student from school grounds. Incomplete Day consequences apply in cases of suspension. Students being sent home for behavioral infractions will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the school (please see Code of Conduct for more details), unless certain rare exceptions apply.

All student absences, including illness, suspension, appointments, vacations, excessive incomplete days, etc. count as absences. Exceptions are made for court-mandated
appearances with proper documentation and religious observances. Additionally, students are afforded rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("Section 504"), the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") should their absences be related to a disabling condition. Other rare exceptions may apply.

In order to help ensure that students do not exceed ten (10) absences, Libertas Academy has certain support policies in place. They are detailed below:

- At five (5) student absences, Libertas Academy will contact the family in writing.
- At seven (7) student absences (or five (5) absences within the first academic quarter), Libertas Academy will require a meeting with the student’s family and advisor, during which an Attendance Contract will be established aimed at ensuring attendance patterns improve.
- At ten (10) student absences, Libertas Academy’s administration will require a family meeting to discuss violation of the Attendance Contract.
- The school reserves the right to retain any student who exceeds ten (10) absences.
- Students who are absent for any reason will lose FIRST Points on their weekly FIRST Report.
- In cases of truancy, Libertas Academy may report the student and/or family to certain state agencies or file an official complaint with the court.

Students who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence unless the school has given advance permission.

According to M.G.L. c. 76 and c. 72, § 8, all students under 16 are expected to be in school. All students under the age of 16 will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in M.G.L. c. 76, § 18 if the student does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, the Head of School (or her/his designee) will investigate the situation. Libertas Academy Charter School operates in compliance with Department of Transitional Assistance requests and requirements, which can include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

Libertas Academy keeps accurate records of attendance and will make the records available for inspection by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as needed. All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school’s Office Manager.

If a student is absent for the first five (5) days of school, or at least ten (10) consecutive days during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his or her absences, that student may lose his or her seat at Libertas Academy and may be considered un-enrolled from the school.
Incomplete Days: Lateness and Early Dismissal

At Libertas Academy, if a student does not complete a full school day, s/he is assigned an Incomplete Day. If a student is not in his/her assigned seat by 7:50 a.m., for any reason, s/he is assigned an Incomplete Day. If a student is dismissed early, for any reason, he/she is assigned an Incomplete Day. If a student arrives late and leaves early, this counts as two Incomplete Days.

Incomplete Days due to traffic, medical appointments, family emergencies etc., are not excused.

Libertas Academy may excuse Incomplete Days in cases of court-mandated appearances, if proper documentation is provided, disability related appointments and religious observances. Please use Friday afternoons, half days and early dismissals as times to schedule medical and other appointments.

Late students must check in at the main office before reporting to class. Students must arrive prior to 12:00 p.m. on Monday-Thursday or 11:00 a.m. on Friday in order to be marked as a “late arrival” vs. a full-day absence. Students who arrive after 12:00 p.m. on Monday-Thursday or 11:00 a.m. on Friday are marked as a full-day absence unless the student returns to school with a note from a medical or legal professional. If the student does arrive after these stated times but does so with a note from a medical or legal professional justifying this greater-than-half-day absence, their time away from school will be marked as a “late arrival.” This policy ensures that students who are marked present are in class for a significant part of the academic day.

Students leaving early must check in with the main office before leaving.

Excessive Incomplete Days are not tolerated. In order to ensure that students show up on time and do not leave early, the school has clear consequences for student lateness and early dismissals.

- Every five (5) Incomplete Days count as one absence within Libertas Academy’s attendance policy.
- At ten (10) Incomplete Days (or five (5) Incomplete Days within the first academic quarter), Libertas Academy’s administration will require a meeting with the student’s family and advisor, during which a Punctuality Contract will be established aimed at ensuring the student’s attendance patterns improve.
- Also, once a student reaches ten (10) Incomplete Days, each subsequent tardy will result in a student meeting with the Dean of Students, a phone call to the family, and an automatic detention.
- At 20 Incomplete Days, Libertas Academy’s administration will require a family meeting to discuss violation of the Punctuality Pledge.
- Students who have an Incomplete Day lose FIRST Points on their weekly FIRST Report.
3.04 Dress Code

Libertas Academy has a dress code and it applies during all school days and all school-sponsored events.

The Libertas Academy dress code has been adopted to help foster the exact environment we seek at the center of our vision – one dedicated to the joy of learning, intellectual curiosity, and strong values.

Specifically, our dress code serves to:

- foster a sense of school identity and community;
- prepare students for the expectations related to professional attire that future institutions, organizations, and employers will have;
- ensure that our students focus on learning instead of clothing;
- increase school safety and security by making the presence of visitors/outsiders immediately apparent;
- reduce the cost of clothing for families.

Enforcement of Dress Code Policy

It is the goal of the school to have a dress code that makes meeting school attire policy as simple as possible for students and their families.

As is true with all of Libertas Academy’s policies, the dress code policy is strictly enforced. Although it may seem as if minor infractions such as breaches in dress code should not raise concern, we cannot allow deviations from this code. Our staff does not have the time to inspect every item for acceptability or exception. If the policy states “shoes should be all black,” it is expected that all students arrive with black shoes only. It is important that all students adhere to the same code. We hold true to the integrity of this policy and all those set by our school and, as such, will not make exceptions for one or multiple students. Please read the code thoroughly and purchase school clothing accordingly. We have tried to make the policy clear and detailed in order to reduce ambiguity and will ensure it is enforced consistently. Families who have concerns or questions should contact the school immediately.

Parents of students who are not in dress code will be asked to bring the proper attire to school. In addition, dressing inappropriately may result in disciplinary consequences.

Purchasing of Clothing

There are two uniforms at Libertas Academy. They are the Regular School Uniform and the Fitness Uniform. Every student is required to have both. Students wear the Fitness uniform on days they have Fitness Class as well as on Friday.

Families may purchase all uniform items at the store of their choice except the official Libertas Academy polo, fitness shirt and sweatpants which MUST BE purchased from an approved vendor and MUST have the Libertas logo printed on them. Contact
information of approved vendors and order forms will be distributed to families.

Families may also choose to purchase polo shirts, dress pants, sweatshirts and fitness shorts from approved vendors. All clothing (except the dress pants) from approved vendors will have the Libertas logo on it.

School Dress Code Policy (for Boys and Girls)

Mandatory Items – School Dress Code (Every student must have the following items.)

- Red, short-sleeved or long-sleeved polo-style shirt (2 or 3 buttons).
- Khaki-colored (tan) dress pants, such as Dockers (straight leg or regular fit only).
  - Students may not wear khaki pants that are low-rise, flare, bell-bottom, cargo (more than two front pockets and two back pockets), carpenter, skinny or wide-legged, overly tight or baggy, or made of denim or corduroy. Pants made by Dickies will not be allowed.
  - Students may not wear clothing with logos, unless it is the Libertas logo or a small dress pant logo (i.e. Dockers) on the rear pocket. No other logos are allowed.
- Black or brown belt.
- Belts must look professional and must be all black or brown. They may not be overly wide.
- Buckles must be professional and not oversized or distracting.
- Black, navy blue, or gray socks. Socks must be solid colors with no patterns or logos.
- Black dress shoes or sneakers.
- Shoes must be 100% black.
- Shoes must be tied and Velcro must be fastened at all times.
- Soles of shoes must be all black.

Optional Items – School Dress Code

Students may choose to wear the following in addition to the mandatory school dress code. (All items below may not have any logos except the Libertas logo.)

- Gray crewneck sweatshirt with or without Libertas’ logo.*
  - We recommend that each student own a sweatshirt, fleece, or sweater to ensure they are comfortable in class, as temperatures can fluctuate slightly.
  - Only Libertas Hooded sweatshirts are allowed to be worn in classrooms.*
- Gray fleece with or without Libertas’ logo.*
- Gray crewneck sweater, with or without Libertas’ logo.*
- White undershirt.
  - All undershirts must be white or match the color of the student shirt (red for regular uniforms and gray for fitness uniforms) and not oversized.
  - Shirts sleeves should not show from under the uniform shirt.

Parents may choose to purchase shirts and pants from Blake’s School Uniform. All items
with an asterisk ("**") are available through Blake’s School Uniform.

Fitness Dress Code Policy (for Boys and Girls)

Mandatory Items – Fitness Dress Code:

- Grey t-shirt with Libertas logo.**
  - Plain grey t-shirts are not acceptable.
- Red sweatpants with Libertas logo.**Sweatpants must have elastic intact. Students who cut or remove elastic will be out of uniform and required to repurchase the proper sweatpants.
- White athletic socks with no patterns or logos.
- All black sneakers. It is required that fitness shoes meet the same standard as sneakers for the academic uniform. They must be all black, with no colored logos or metal.

**Parents MUST PURCHASE the grey t-shirt with Libertas’ logo and blue sweatpants with Libertas Academy’s logo from an approved vendor.

Optional Items – Fitness Dress Code:

- Gray crewneck sweatshirt with or without Libertas’ logo.*
  - This may be the same as the sweatshirt from the School Dress Code
- Red shorts with Libertas’ logo.*
  - Shorts must be appropriately sized.

*Optional items are available from Blake’s School Uniform, but families are not required to purchase them from Blake’s School Uniform.

Other Dress Code Specifics

- Students may not wear clothing with logos, unless it is the Libertas logo.
- Clothing must be sized appropriately to fit the student. Clothes may not be too big or too small.
- All undershirts must be white and fit completely under the school uniform (sleeves of the undershirt may not show under uniform). This includes thermal undershirts, long sleeve undershirts and turtlenecks. Fitness t-shirts are not allowed as undershirts.
- Students may not wear clothing with significant stains (e.g. large ink blots, food stains, etc.).
- Students may not alter their clothing in any way (e.g. writing/drawing, cutting, etc.)
- Once students enter the school building, wearing of hats, bandanas, kerchiefs, or jackets is not permitted. Hats worn in the school building will be confiscated.
- Students may not wear accessories that are unprofessional, distracting or potentially unsafe. Any clothing or accessory that might disrupt learning or that does not conform to standards of health, safety and cleanliness is not allowed.
  - excessive jewelry, including but not limited to tongue rings, eyebrow rings, glitter, and press-on nails.
- earrings must be professional, with no writing, and may not be wider than one inch (the size of a U.S. quarter) and no longer than two inches from ear lobe to end of earring.
- Chains and necklaces may only be worn beneath students’ shirts, and may need to be removed during Fitness class.
- Bracelets and rings may be worn as long as they do not distract or prevent students from completing their work. Please keep in mind that students are held accountable for any messaging worn on bracelets, shirts, hats etc. because wearing a statement will receive the same consequences as saying the statement aloud.
- Bracelets containing inappropriate content will carry consequences including but not limited to demerits, detentions, out of school suspensions, etc.
- Bracelets containing inappropriate content will be confiscated and returned to the child’s parent or guardian at the end of the school day.
- When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform. Students must be in uniform while on school grounds and may not change out of their uniform before dismissal.
- Shirts must be tucked in, shoelaces must be tied and Velcro must be fastened at all times.
- Students may not use headphones/music equipment (e.g. CD-players, iPods, etc.), or
cell-phones while in the school building, even if it is before or after school, unless granted permission by an administrator. These items will be confiscated and the student will be subject to disciplinary consequences.
- Students who wear the wrong uniform for a given day (i.e. wearing the Fitness Uniform on a day on which they should wear the School Uniform or vice versa) are considered out of uniform.

Dress Code Exemptions

Exemptions to the uniform dress code shall be permitted when the dress code’s requirements infringe upon a student’s sincerely held religious belief. Exemptions from the dress code for religious reasons must be appropriate and approved by the Head of School.

3.05 Homework Policies

Homework is an essential component of Libertas Academy’s academic program. Students have four (4) daily responsibilities related to homework:

- Students track all homework assignments using their grade specific organizational system.
- Complete all homework assignments to the high standards set forth by the school.
- Read independently for 25 minutes
- Show completed homework assignments to a parent and receive signatures only if the parent feels that the completed homework meets Libertas Academy’s high
standards

All homework assignments are collected each morning before the school day begins. If a student is late, they receive a 5-point attendance-related deduction for being late. If a student is late and has not turned in homework by the time the teacher picks up the homework folder, the teacher will record this assignment as Not Turned In.

When the student arrives late to school, they will turn in all of their homework to the Dean of Students. The Dean will review the homework, mark it with a late stamp, determine the appropriate assignment completion status for each assignment, write the assignment completion status on each assignment, enter the assignment completion statuses into the school’s database, and give the assignments back to the student. The student is responsible for getting this assignment to the teacher.

If a student is late and turns in the assignment after 12:00 p.m. or on a later day, the assignment completion status of “Not Turned In” will remain for that assignment. The teacher (should he or she chose to do so) may make the numerical change in the grade book. But, the teacher can’t change the assignment completion status for an assignment after 12:00 p.m. on the day the assignment was due.

If a student arrives at school after 12:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday or 11:00 a.m. on Friday with a note from a medical or legal professional and turns in his/her homework, the teacher should notify the Dean of Students and ask the Dean of Students to change the assignment completion status. Only the Dean of Students can change the assignment completion status after 12:00 p.m. on the day the assignment was originally due.

3.06 Academic Tutoring

All core subject teachers at Libertas Academy provide weekly tutoring in their respective subject areas. These tutoring sessions, scheduled carefully so as not to conflict with other student commitments, are held from 3:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (during Focus). Teachers invite specific students to attend these tutoring sessions, based on quantitative analysis of individual academic needs. Other students may request tutoring invitations from their teachers, which may be granted depending of space availability and the anticipated tutoring topics.

3.07 Weekly FIRST Reports

Libertas Academy uses FIRST Report system to provide students, families, and teachers with a frequent, comprehensive report of student performance. A student’s weekly FIRST Report total is impacted by his/her fulfillment of Behavioral, Academic, and Attendance expectations.

All students receive FIRST Reports every Friday. At the beginning of each week (FIRST Report weeks begin on Friday and end on Thursday), a student’s score starts at 90 FIRST points. Simply by meeting school expectations throughout the week, students can retain their beginning balance of 90 FIRST Points.

Students may increase their FIRST Score by exceeding expectations during a given
week by:

- Earning Merits from a staff member for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:
  - volunteering to help a student or teacher
  - exemplary classroom behavior (taking initiative, showing courtesy, performing an act of kindness)
  - outstanding effort or improvement in core academic subjects
- Accomplishing something worthy of public recognition

Students decrease their FIRST Score if they fail to meet expectations. Specifically, FIRST Points are deducted when:

- Students do not meet behavioral expectations (e.g. they earn demerits or detentions)
- Students do not meet attendance expectations (e.g. they are absent, late, or dismissed early)
- Students do not meet homework expectations

Students with FIRST scores of less than 70 must attend Friday Extension.

At the end of each week, students’ FIRST points are transferred into their FIRST Report Bank. Students may use accumulated points to spend on prizes (e.g. school supplies, lunches with staff members, gift certificates, or tickets to sporting events) at the FIRST store or during FIRST auctions.

Over time, students’ average weekly FIRST scores are also monitored. Students with high FIRST Report averages earn reward including but not limited to invitations to the PREP Store, where they may use FIRST Points in their bank to purchase:

- school celebration invitations
- school dance invitations
- field trip invitations
- “golden” and “silver” passes (a series of privileges reserved only for students with the highest FIRST averages)

Students with low PREP Report averages lose privileges and receive other consequences. Examples of such consequences include but are not limited to:

- Being unable to attend the FIRST store.
- Being unable to participate in various extra-curricular activities (e.g. school celebrations, school dances, or school field trips).

Weekly FIRST Reports are sent home for review and to be signed by parents/guardians.

Libertas Academy reserves the right to add or subtract FIRST Points for examples of very good or very poor behavior.

**3.08 Makeup Work Policies**
Students who are not in school miss critical academic assignments and assessments. Our school make-up policy is designed to hold students accountable for all missed assignments and assessments, as well as to ensure timely make-up work such that students do not fall behind academically.

Absent Folders

If a student misses a class for any reason (absence, lateness, and early dismissal), the student’s missed homework assignments will be compiled in a folder on the student’s desk. This folder will be delivered to the main office and will be available for pick up by 3:30 p.m. We strongly encourage students or their families to pick up this folder between 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. on the day of the absence as students who do not submit this work by 8:00 a.m. on the following day will be assigned Homework Club.

Return to School

Students who are absent must report to the main office immediately upon the first day of their return to school.

Homework

If a student is absent, late, or dismissed early for any reason, all missed homework assignments are due on the following timeline:

• By 8:00 a.m. on the day following the student’s return, for the purposes of academic credit.
• If a student has been absent for more than one consecutive school day, he/she will have as many school days as absences to submit missed homework for purposes of academic credit. (e.g. If a student is absent on Monday and Tuesday, the student has two (2) days to complete the homework for purposes of academic credit. In this case, the work is due by Friday morning at 8:00 a.m.)

Assessments

If a student is absent for any reason (up to five (5) consecutive days), or if a student is late and/or dismissed early, all missed assessments (e.g. tests, quizzes) must be made up within the number of consecutive school days that the student had been absent. For example, if a student had been absent for three (3) consecutive days, he/she would have three school days to take the missed assessment.

However, if should a student is absent for five or more consecutive school days, s/he must then meet with the Head of School to determine a reasonable timeline for making up missed assessments.

In rare circumstances, exceptions to the make-up policy may be granted by a school administrator.

3.09 Grading Policies

Libertas Academy students take four (4) core academic classes (mathematics, English,
social studies, and science) during a given school year. Mathematics and English classes meet for nine 55-minute blocks per week for the entire school year. Science and social studies classes meet for four 55-minute blocks per week for the entire school year.

In addition, all students take two fitness/health classes and two digital literacy classes every week.

At the mid-point of each academic trimester, students will receive Progress Reports with information about their performance in each core subject area. At the end of each trimester, students will receive formal Report Cards with detailed information about their performance in each core subject area.

On each Report Card, students receive one grade per core subject area. All grades are based on a 0 to 100% scale. Each grade is comprised of the following components:

Skill and Content component (45% of overall grade). The Skill and Content component measures student mastery of a subject’s skill and content standards, as determined by performance on formal assessments (e.g., tests, quizzes, essays, projects, lab reports, etc.) as well as objective-specific class work and assessments, such as binder quizzes, that assess mastery of good scholarly habits. Teachers will determine appropriate weighting for all other assessment types within this grading component (e.g., 20% tests, 20% quizzes, and 10% essays).

End of Trimester Assessment (25% of overall grade). Developed comprehensive assessments are given at the end of each trimester and account for 25% of each trimester’s grade.

Participation, Organization and Homework component (30% of overall grade). The Homework component measures both a student’s completion of, and performance on, Homework assignments.

Honor Roll. At the end of each quarter, an Honor Roll will be published. Students with all four (4) core grades above 90% earn High Honor status. Students with all four (4) core grades above an 80% earn Honor status. All honor roll students will be recognized at a formal, end of trimester ceremony.

Failure. At the end of the year, the trimester grades for each core academic subject are averaged together into a final, yearlong Course Grade. A student fails a core subject if his/her final, yearlong Course Grade is below 70%.

3.10 Promotion Policies

If a student passes all core subjects, with an average of 70% or higher, and has not been absent for more than ten (10) days of the school year, the student is promoted automatically to the next grade level.

If a student fails to earn a 70% in one or two (1-2) classes, s/he is eligible for a two-week Summer Academy, at the conclusion of which the student must pass a comprehensive
assessment in such subject(s). If the student does not meet the requirements of summer school, s/he may be retained.

If a student fails three or more (3+) core subject areas, s/he will be automatically retained and must repeat the grade level.

3.11 Homeroom Teachers and Student Advisors

At the beginning of the year, all students are assigned a Homeroom. Homerooms are named after the alma mater of one Homeroom teacher (e.g. UMass 6, Springfield College 6, Wellesley 6). Students take all core academic classes within their Homeroom. All administrative forms (e.g. lunch order forms, permission slips) will be collected by Homeroom teachers on a daily basis during Morning Homeroom.

All students are also assigned an Advisor. Advisors, who are assigned no more than fifteen (15) students, will develop and maintain close relationships with their advisees throughout the school year. Families should expect to hear updates from their child’s advisor on a regular basis. Families should also see their child’s advisor as the point person for all non-subject specific questions and concerns.

3.12 Community Service Requirement

One component of the Libertas Academy mission is to graduate students who will “be positive, engaged members of their community.” In order to further expose students to needs within their community, develop good service-related habits, and ensure that the school’s mission is fulfilled, all students are expected to serve the surrounding communities while enrolled at Libertas Academy. All required community service hours will be completed through school-sponsored activities in the middle school years. In high school, students will complete a minimum of 15 hours of community service per year for a total of 60 hours.

3.13 Summer Growth Experience Requirement

Every rising 10th, 11th, and 12th grader is required to complete a Summer Growth Experience (SGE). In order to achieve our mission of success in college and life, our students must experience settings outside of our school. The ability to adapt to other settings, expectations and structures is a valuable soft skill that we want each student to have before graduating. Students will work closely with their advisors to identify SGEs that align with their interests and skills.

3.14 Individual Incentive and Accountability System: Student FIRST Reports

Libertas Academy has developed a student FIRST Report system to provide students, families, and teachers with a frequent, comprehensive report of student performance. A student’s weekly FIRST Report total is impacted by his/her fulfillment of behavioral, academic, and attendance expectations.

All students receive FIRST Reports every Friday. At the beginning of each week (FIRST
Report weeks begin on Friday and end on Thursday), a student’s score starts at 90 FIRST points. Simply by meeting school expectations throughout the week, students can retain their beginning balance of 90 FIRST Points.

Students may increase their FIRST Score by exceeding expectations during a given week by:

- Earning Merits from a staff member for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:
  - volunteering to help a student or teacher
  - exemplary classroom behavior (taking initiative, showing courtesy, performing an act of kindness)
  - outstanding effort or improvement in core academic subjects
- Accomplishing something worthy of public recognition

Students will decrease their FIRST Score when they fail to meet expectations. Specifically, FIRST Points are deducted when:

- Students do not meet behavioral expectations (e.g., they earn demerits or detentions)
- Students do not meet attendance expectations (e.g., they are absent, late, or dismissed early)
- Students do not meet homework expectations

Students with FIRST scores of less than 70 must attend Friday Extension.

At the end of each week, a student’s FIRST points are transferred into the student’s FIRST Report Bank. Students may use accumulated points to spend on prizes (e.g., school supplies, lunches with staff members, gift certificates, tickets to sporting events) at the FIRST store or during FIRST auctions.

Over time, a student’s average weekly FIRST score is also monitored. Students with high FIRST Report averages earn rewards, including but not limited to:

- Invitations to the FIRST Store, where they may use FIRST Points in their bank to purchase:
  - school celebration invitations,
  - school dance invitations,
  - field trip invitations, and
  - “golden” and “silver” passes (a series of privileges reserved only for students with the highest FIRST averages)

Students with low FIRST Report averages lose privileges and receive other consequences. Specifically:

- Students are not invited to the FIRST store.
- Students cannot participate in various extra-curricular activities (i.e. school celebrations, school dances, or school field trips).
Weekly FIRST Reports are sent home for review and to be signed by parents/guardians.

* Note: Libertas Academy reserves the right to add or subtract FIRST Points for examples of very good or very poor behavior.

3.15 Whole Class Incentive and Accountability: FIRST Blocks

The Building Block program is a class-wide, positive incentive system. The system uses peer-motivation and inter-class competition to encourage students to work together to meet high expectations for preparedness, respect, engagement, and professionalism. During every period of the school day, classes are assessed on their performance as a group, earning between zero and four building blocks. The number of building blocks earned is based on the following observable criteria:

- **Focused and ready to learn:**
  All students come to class ready to succeed. All students have completed their homework, have the necessary materials for class, and begin Do Now silently and immediately.

- **Integrity is always shown:**
  All students listen do the right thing even when nobody is looking.

- **Respectful of Selves, Classmates, Teacher, and School:**
  All students cooperate with each other and treat all with respect.

- **Selfless and positive contributions are made for the benefit of the group:**
  All students listen to and look at the person who is speaking, volunteer to participate, ask smart questions, and make insightful comments.

- **Tenacity and a can-do attitude is expected from all students:**
  All students act professionally by staying organized, demonstrating good posture throughout the class period, and following all directions and procedures.

Teachers record Building Block scores at the end of every class and advisors tally scores at the end of every day. A block is earned only if there is 100% compliance. Classes receive rewards for consistently high scores, such as ordering lunch from a restaurant, watching a movie or taking a field trip. Conversely, classes lose privileges for receiving low scores (e.g. silent breaks, no outdoor recess, silent lunches). When giving the score to the class, teachers use this opportunity to give concrete suggestions for improvement.

3.16 Student Behavior Policy for Extra-Curricular

Attending after-school extra-curricular activities a privilege, and students will be held to high expectations for their behavior at these events. Specifically,

- Students with a FIRST points average below 70 may not attend extra-curricular activities.
● Cell phones should only be used for specific, purposes related to safety/transportation (i.e. no long conversations).
● All students are expected to follow Libertas Academy’s Code of Conduct.
● School consequences may be issued at school sponsored events.

If a student who is not allowed to attend an after-school extra-curricular activity chooses to do so, he/she should be referred to the Dean of Students immediately on the following school day. The Dean of Students will determine the appropriate consequences.

3.17 Electronic Device Policy

Students may not use headphones/music equipment (e.g. CD-players, iPods, etc.), or cell-phones while in the school building, even if it is before or after school without permission. These items will be confiscated and the student will be subject to disciplinary consequences.
General School Information

4.01 To Contact Us

We are committed to establishing and maintaining an open and respectful line of communication between families and Libertas Academy staff. A staff directory will be provided to all families during our Family Orientation. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 provides an alternative that eliminates the need for household applications for free and reduced price meals in high poverty Local Educational Agencies and Schools. This alternative, which is now part of the NSLP, is referred to as the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

The CEP Program ensures that all students, under the age of 18, will receive school breakfast and lunch daily at no charge. Additionally, schools that participate in CEP will no longer be required to collect free and reduced priced school meals applications to determine student eligibility for free meals. Accurate meal counting and claiming is vital to the success of the program and must be a daily priority through the point of service (POS) system utilized by the school. Implementation of the CEP program has many benefits including:

1. All students, under 18 years of age, will receive school breakfast and lunch at no cost.
2. Eliminates household meal applications
3. Increases student meal participation
4. Eliminates student peer pressure regarding free meals
5. Increases student attendance
6. Reduces student behavioral issues and trips to the nurse as a result of being hungry

Please contact the Springfield Food Service Office at 413-787-7140, with any questions regarding the program.

4.02 Nutrition and Wellness Program

Libertas Academy has partner with Springfield Public Schools in order to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) application, through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), for the 2017-18 school year.

4.03 Medical Records and Health Services

Health Office

The goal of the Health Office is to provide professional health care and guidance and to coordinate the resources of the school, home and community as they pertain to the total health of students and staff.

The Health Office operates on a limited schedule which will be shared with families during Family Orientation.
Medical Records

Massachusetts state law requires all students enrolling in a new school to have a physical examination before entering the school. Before a student can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- **Medical Requirements Checklist**: This form contains records showing that the student has:
  - a physical exam performed within the twelve months prior to the start of the school year
  - up to-date immunizations/vaccinations
  - permission to receive screenings for vision, hearing, and scoliosis.

- **Health Information Form**: This form provides important information about a student’s emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

- **Authorization to Dispense Medication Form**: If a student requires medication while in school, the school must have on file an Authorization to Dispense Medication form, filled out by the student’s physician. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the nurse’s full knowledge. Students who have provided the school with medication dispensation authorization forms should bring the medication (other than Tylenol and ibuprofen, which the school will stock in the health office) to the school on the first day, or contact the school to make other arrangements. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy and must be brought in by a parent or accompanied by a note from the parent.

Medication

Before students may carry or self-administer any medications during the school day, the student, parent/guardian, and the school nurse must enter an agreement specifying the conditions under which such medication may be administered, and the parent or guardian must provide written authorization for the student to administer the medication. This agreement will be discussed both in a meeting with all present parties and will conclude with all parties signing a form confirming this meeting and all agreed-upon terms.

If medication for a chronic condition must be administered during school hours, the medication must be provided to the school nurse. If it is a prescription medication, it must be provided to the school in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container provided by parents or guardians with the student’s name on the label. The school will not accept any containers with labels that have any other name besides the student’s name on it. Students who are taking prescription medication should request the pharmacy to prepare separate prescriptions for home and school so that the medication is not forgotten in school and treatment is not disrupted. Medication should be provided in no more than a thirty-day supply.
The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including Tylenol, Ibuprofen, or any other over-the-counter medication. If a student needs to take Tylenol or Ibuprofen during the school day, the student must have on file the authorization signed by his or her physician and a parent/guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers which students should keep in their backpacks. If a student needs to use his/her asthma inhaler during the school day, he/she should go to the health office to self-administer the inhaler.

**Health and Illness**

The school requests that a student does not come to school if they are ill. If school staff believes that a child needs to see a doctor, if their illness is contagious, increases the risk of illness to other children, or requires prolonged individual staff attention that interferes with the safety and regular functioning of the classroom, the school will contact the student’s family and ask them to pick up and take their child home.

Examples of instances when the family will be contacted includes but is not limited to if a student has:

- a moderate-to-high fever
- is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea; shows signs of contagious diseases
- has an illness that prevents the child from participating in activities.

**Emergency Protocol**

In an emergency or life threatening situation, our school will follow the below procedure:

1. Parent or guardian is contacted.
2. Local EMTs are called via 911, and the student will be taken to a local hospital emergency room for further assessment and treatment. Because of the possibility of emergencies, all students must have current, completed emergency notification forms on file.

**Other Health Issues**

1. Parents of students with special concerns or who are considered “at risk” -- those with diabetes, asthma, seizures, severe allergies, etc. -- should advise the school nurse of the condition, any medications taken by the student, any side effects of such medication, and the manner in which acute episodes should be handled.

2. If the student’s oral temperature is over 100.0 F, they must stay at home until his/her temperature has been normal (98.6 F) for at least twenty-four (24) hours without the aid of medicine. Students who return to school while they are ill contribute to the proliferation of illness during the school year. If students return to school with a fever or develop an oral temperature of 100.0 F during the school day, the school nurse will send these students home after evaluation.
3. If students develop a highly contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, impetigo, pertussis, bacterial conjunctivitis or an infestation of head lice, please notify the Health Office at once. Any of these conditions will result in dismissal from school after evaluation by the school nurse. An antibiotic or other treatment approved by a health care professional must by administered for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours before the student will be permitted to return to school. The school nurse must evaluate students who have had any infectious/contagious condition before they will be permitted to return to class.

4. State law requires all students to have been vaccinated with up to date immunizations. Students who have not been vaccinated may be excluded from school.

**Health Exams and Screenings**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires the following screenings for school age children:

- Vision Screening: Grades 5 & 7
- Hearing Screening: Grade 7
- Height, Weight and BMI screening: Grade 7
- Postural Screening: Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8

If the school nurse identified any findings for your student during the screening process, a letter will be sent home to inform you and ask that you seek further medical assessment or evaluation for the identified issue. Please let the school nurse know when you have followed up with the physician and if we can assist with any necessary accommodations if required.

All new students who transfer into Libertas Academy are required to have a physical exam within twelve months of entry with documentation to be given to the school nurse. Although physical exams are not done on a school-wide basis, parents are urged to maintain their child’s health by periodic examinations from their private physician.

**Health Education, Sex Education, and Sexuality Education Policy**

Libertas Academy provides a comprehensive health education curriculum designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to make responsible, well-informed personal health decisions. The health education curriculum covers a wide variety of topics, including human sex education and human sexuality issues.

Under Massachusetts law, parents or guardians have the right to exempt their children from any portion of a curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues by submitting written notification to the Head of School. The written notification should specify the lessons from which the child is to be exempted. If the parent/guardian has questions about specific lessons, they should contact our Head of School for more information. We require that the notification also be signed and dated by the parent/guardian for our school records. A child who is exempted will not be penalized because of the exemption. The school may provide alternative
assignments for exempted students.

4.04 Student Records

Standardized Testing and Research Studies

Students at Libertas Academy will take the Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measure of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) test, a nationally norm referenced test when they first enroll in Libertas Academy and at the end of every school year. In addition, students will take the MCAS every spring.

Student Records - (General)

Federal and state laws provide parents and eligible students (those who are age 14 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to student records. Copies of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations (“Regulations”), detailing these rights, are available in office of the Head of School and Main Office. The following is a general overview of the provisions in the Regulations.

Access and Amendment

A parent or eligible student has a right to access student records and to seek their amendment if the parent or eligible student believes them to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. In order to obtain access or to seek amendment to student records, please contact the Head of School.

Appeals (603 CMR 23.09)

If any decision made by the Head of School or his/her designee regarding student records is not wholly or partially satisfactory to the student or parent, they have the right to appeal the Head of School. Within two weeks of the appeal, the HOS will be notified of the appeal, review the issues presented, and compose a written decision to the affected student or parent that states the reasons for the decision. If this does not satisfy the affected student or parents, they may present their case to the Board of Trustees of Libertas Academy Charter Schools.

Student Records - (Access by non-custodial parents)

Massachusetts General Laws c. 71, §34H (“Section 34H”) governs access to student records by a parent who does not have physical custody of a student. Generally, Section 37H requires a non-custodial parent seeking access to submit a written request and other documentation to the Head of School on an annual basis. Parents who have questions or concerns regarding access to records by non-custodial parents are requested to contact the Head of School for detailed information regarding the procedures that must be followed under Section 34H.

Confidentiality

Release of student records generally requires consent of the parent or eligible student. However, the Regulations provide certain exceptions. For example, staff employed or
under contract to the district may have access to records as needed to perform their duties. Libertas Academy also releases a student’s complete student record to authorized school personnel of a school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer without further notice to, or receipt of consent from, the eligible student or parent.

In addition, Libertas Academy has a practice of releasing directory information, consisting of the following:

- the student’s name
- mailing address
- telephone listing
- date and place of birth
- major field of study
- dates of attendance
- weight and height of the members of athletic teams
- class
- participation in recognized activities and sports
- honors and awards
- post-high school plans

In the event a parent or eligible student objects to the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that objection in writing to the Head of School. Absent receipt of a written objection by the third week of school, the directory information will be released without further notice or consent.

Please see the Regulations for a description of other circumstances in which student records may be released without the consent of a parent or eligible student.

Parents and eligible students have a right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures by a school district to comply with the requirements of the student records laws and regulations with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148. Complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington DC.

4.05 Transportation

Our transportation policy is identical to that of Springfield public school system. Specifically, eligibility for transportation is determined by the distance the child resides from their school and the grade in which they are enrolled. If a student resides over 2 miles from their home to school and are enrolled in grades 6-12, they also would be entitled to no cost transportation. The SPS will consider travel and safety hazards (i.e., no safe walking route or lack of sidewalks) for those students residing under the state mileage restrictions who could encounter such conditions.

For more information about Springfield public school system’s transportation policies and guidelines, please visit www.springfieldpublicschools.com/departments/transportation/about.
4.06 School Visitor Policy

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit Libertas Academy any time during the school year. All visitors are required to report to the Main Office upon entering the building. Upon reporting to the Main Office, each visitor will sign in and receive a visitor’s badge or sticker. Any visitor who does not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization will be asked to leave immediately.

In case of an emergency at home, parents/guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents/guardians contact students in their classrooms or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the Main Office.

4.07 Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Acceptable Use

The Internet is a global network linking computers around the world. Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. Libertas Academy offers Internet access to its students and staff. The primary purpose of providing access to the Internet is to support the educational mission of the Libertas Academy. Libertas Academy expects that students and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose.

While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. Libertas Academy makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the factual reliability of data available over the Internet. Users of the Libertas Academy Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet. Libertas Academy has installed special filtering software in an effort to block access to material that is not appropriate for children.

Unacceptable Use

The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. The list is not exhaustive but illustrates unacceptable uses of the Libertas Academy’s Internet Service.

- disclosing, using or disseminating personal identification information about self or others;
- accessing, sending or forwarding materials or communications that are defamatory, pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, harassing, or illegal;
- using the Internet service for any illegal activities such as gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above;
- using the Internet service to receive or send information relating to dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, automatic weapons or other firearms, or other weaponry;
• vandalizing school computers by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, attempting to disrupt the computer system, or destroying data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means;
• copying or downloading of copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder, unless the copies are used for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Users shall not copy and forward or copy and upload any copyrighted material without prior approval of the Head of School;
• plagiarizing material obtained from the Internet. Any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be cited and credited by name or by electronic address or path on the Internet. Information obtained through E-mail or news sources must also be credited as to sources;
• using the Internet service for commercial purposes;
• downloading or installing any commercial software, shareware, freeware or similar types of material onto network drives or disks without prior permission of the Director of Technology; and
• overriding the Internet filtering software.

Safety Issues

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. Users are encouraged to read guidelines provided by the Attorney General’s Office. Please review these guidelines here: http://www.mass.gov/ago/public-safety/cyber-crime-and-internet-safety/for-kids.html

The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications.

• Never reveal any identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents’ names, parents’ employers or work addresses, or photographs.
• Use the “back” key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
• Immediately tell the Head of School if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
• Never share your password or use another person’s password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify the Head of School.

Privacy

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received on the school computer network or stored in the user’s directory or on a disk drive. Libertas Academy reserves the right to examine all data stored on computer hard-drives.

Internet email messages are not private and may be considered public records subject to disclosure. All communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.
Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

Violations

Access to the Libertas Academy’s Internet service is a privilege not a right. Libertas Academy reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of this policy. The school will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through Libertas Academy’s Internet service. The District also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the service.

4.08 Nondiscrimination

Libertas Academy Charter School does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment of its services, programs and activities on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title B of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA). In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to Libertas Academy on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement, as required by M.G.L.c.71, §89(1); 603 CMR 1.06(1). Finally, no person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges or access to the courses of study offered by Libertas Academy on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation as required by M.G.L, c. 76, § 5.

4.09 Harassment

Libertas Academy is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, gender identity, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Libertas Academy requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

Definitions of Harassment
In General, harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, gender identity, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

4.10 Sexual Harassment

While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education.
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extracurricular activities.
4. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by teachers, administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by Libertas Academy.

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or Board of Trustees, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

4.11 Bullying and Cyberbullying

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, Section 37H and 37O, is prohibited and may result in
disciplinary action by the school administration. Please see Libertas Academy’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy below.

4.12 Hazing

Libertas Academy complies with Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law (MGL c. 269). Text of this law is included in the appendix of this Handbook.

4.13 Corporal Punishment and Student Restraint

In accordance with M.G.L. sect. 37G, corporal punishment of pupils is prohibited. School personnel can use reasonable force as is necessary to protect pupils, other persons, and themselves from an assault by a pupil. When such an assault has occurred, the Head of School shall file a detailed report of such with the school board. All personnel authorized to administer any forms of restraint shall be trained annually in accordance with Department of Education guidelines. In addition, Libertas will have staff members that are trained in crisis prevention and restraint.

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of Libertas Academy Charter School. Further, students at Libertas Academy Charter School are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint.

Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint only with two goals in mind.

1. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from immediate, serious, physical harm;
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

The following definitions appear at 603CMR 46:02:

1. Extended Restraint: A physical restraint the duration of which is longer than twenty (20) minutes.
2. Physical escort: Touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student.
3. Physical restraint: The use of bodily force to limit a student’s freedom of movement.

The use of mechanical or chemical restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and approved in writing by the parent/guardian. The use of seclusion restraint is prohibited in public education programs. The use of “Time out” procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered “seclusion restraint”.

The Head of School will identify specific school personnel to serve as a school-wide
resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These staff members will participate in an in-depth training program in the use of physical restraint, which the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recommends be at least 16 hours in length.

Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603CMR 46.00 shall administer physical restraint on students. Whenever possible the administration of physical restraint shall be administered in the presence of at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint. A person administering physical restraint shall only use the amount of force necessary to protect the student from injury or harm.

Whenever physical restraint is administered school personnel will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible, as soon as the incident is resolved, or upon deeming the situation clinically safe.

In addition, all school personnel will be trained regarding the school’s physical restraint policy. The Head of School will arrange training to occur in the first month of each school year, within a month of their employment. Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student’s refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

No teacher or other employees or agents of the school shall be precluded from using such reasonable force as is necessary to protect students, other persons or themselves from an assault by a student.

School personnel shall report the use of physical restraint that lasts longer than five minutes, or results in injury to a student or staff member. The staff member shall inform the administration of the physical restraint as soon as possible, and by written report, no later than the next school day. The Head of School or his/her designee, shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which, upon request, shall be made available to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

When a restraint has resulted in serious injury to a student or program staff member or when an extended restraint has been administered, the School shall provide a copy of the required report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education within five (5) school working days of the administration of the restraint.

In special circumstances waivers, may be sought from parents either through the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process or from parents of students who present a high risk of frequent, dangerous behavior that may require the use of restraint.

4.14 Grievance Procedure

Where to File a Complaint

Any student or employee who believes that Libertas Academy has discriminated against or harassed her/him because of her/his race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services,
programs, and activities may file a complaint with the Head of School. If the Head of School is the person who is alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment, the complaint may be filed with the Board of Trustees.

Complaints of Harassment by Peers

In the event the complaint consists of a student’s allegation that another student is harassing him/her based upon the above-referenced classifications, the student may, in the alternative, file the complaint with the complaint manager (hereinafter referred to as "Building Complaint Manager"). The name of the Building Complaint Manager(s) is kept at the school and may be obtained from the main office.

Complaints of Discrimination Based on Disability

A person who alleges discrimination on the basis of disability relative to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a person, who because of a handicap needs or is believed to need special instruction or related services, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 766, and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, must use the procedure outlined in the Massachusetts Department of Education’s Parents’ Rights Brochure rather than this Grievance Procedure. For more information, please visit: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/.

A person with a complaint involving discrimination on the basis of a disability other than that described above may either use this Grievance Procedure or file the complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at the address provided at the end of this Grievance Procedure.

Contents of Complaints and Timelines for Filing

Complaints under this Grievance Procedure must be filed within 30 school days of the alleged discrimination. The complaint must be in writing. The Grievance Administrator, or any person of the grievant’s choosing, may assist the grievant with filing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

- The name and school (or address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant.
- The name (and address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant’s representative, if any.
- The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment (respondent).
- A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
- The date(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
- The name of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses), as can be reasonably determined.
- A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the grievant wants the complaint to be resolved.
Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint

Respondents will be informed of the charges as soon as the Grievance Administrator deems appropriate based upon the nature of the allegations, the investigation required, and the action contemplated.

The Grievance Administrator will interview witnesses whom s/he deems necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other relevant information. Such interviews and gathering of information will be completed within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the complaint.

Within twenty (20) school days of receiving the complaint, the Grievance Administrator will meet with the grievant and/or her/his representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effect. Within ten (10) school days of the meeting with the grievant and/or representative, the Grievance Administrator will provide written disposition of the complaint to the grievant and/or representative and to the respondent(s).

Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by the Libertas Academy involves disciplinary action against an employee or a student, the complainant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the complainant (i.e., a directive to “stay away” from the complainant, as might occur as a result of a complaint of harassment).

Any disciplinary action imposed upon an employee or student is subject to applicable procedural requirements.

All the time lines specified above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation, in which case, the matter will be completed as quickly as practicable. If the time lines specified above are not met, the reason(s) for not meeting them must be clearly documented. In addition, it should be noted that in the event the respondent is subject to a collective bargaining agreement which sets forth a specific time line for notice and/or investigation of a complaint, such time lines will be followed.

Confidentiality of grievants/respondents and witnesses will be maintained, to the extent consistent with Libertas Academy’s obligations relating to investigation of complaints and the due process rights of individuals affected.

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this Grievance Procedure is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion/discharge.

**Appeals**

If the grievant is not satisfied with a disposition by a Grievance Administrator, the grievant may appeal the disposition to the Board of Trustees by writing to the Board
Chair:

Kwame Webster  
Board Chair, Libertas Academy Charter School  
146 Chestnut St  
Springfield, MA 01103

The Board of Trustees will issue a written response on the appeal to the grievant within thirty (30) school days of receiving the appeal.

Generally, a grievant may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Boston, Massachusetts 02109-3921, telephone (617) 289-0111, TDD (800) 877-8339 as follows:

- Within 180 calendar days of alleged discrimination of harassment, or
- Within 60 calendar days of receiving notice of Libertas Academy Charter School’s final disposition on a complaint filed through Libertas Academy Charter School, or
- Within 60 calendar days of receiving a final decision by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education Appeals, or
- Instead of filing a complaint with Libertas Academy.

4.15 Complaint Procedure

If an individual believes that the school has violated any provision of the charter school law and regulations, he or she may file a formal complaint with the Board of Trustees. After receiving the complaint, the Board must send a written response to the individual within 45 days. 603 CMR 1.10(2). If the Board does not address the complaint to the individual’s satisfaction, the individual may submit the complaint to the Commissioner of Education. 603 CMR 1.10(4). A parent/guardian may file a complaint with DOE at any time if he or she believes that the school has violated any federal or state law or regulation. 603 CMR 1.10(6).
Code of Conduct

5.01 Purpose

Libertas Academy Charter School has created a Code of Conduct in order to:

- maintain a respectful space for learning
- allow students to focus on their learning
- prepare students to become engaged citizens who follow rules set by our communities

The Code of Conduct describes behaviors that Libertas Academy considers inappropriate or unacceptable (which we will call “behavioral infractions”) and the consequences of those behaviors.

5.02 Our Philosophy

We believe that our students thrive within structure, and that a values-based school community allows students to do well in their classwork and act as positive, engaged members of their community. Our school is built on a culture based upon our FIRST values – Focus, Integrity, Respect, Selfless Service, and Tenacity, and we use school-wide language to develop and celebrate those values.

We define a disciplinary offense as a violation of our Code of Conduct that occurs while the student is: at school and/or on school grounds; participating in a school-sponsored activity; walking to or from school or a school-sponsored event; walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on school-provided transportation; or walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on public transportation to and from school or a school-sponsored activity. Consequences for disciplinary offenses are subject to the discretion of the Head of School and the Dean of Students and may include school service, loss of school privileges, detention, in-class support, out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion.

Students who do not meet the school community’s clearly defined standards for reasonable and acceptable behavior will not be permitted to disrupt the education of others. Without a firm and consistent discipline policy, none of what we envision for the school can happen.

Our Code of Conduct is guided by three key principles:

- We expect our students to take responsibility of their actions.
- We expect our students to respectfully accept and serve out consequences.
- Our approach to discipline is designed to deter negative behaviors and should not be seen as punishment.

5.03 Behavior- Consequences and Rewards

5.03.1 Merits

Libertas Academy’s merit program acknowledges individual acts of good citizenship
that promote a positive community. Staff members will use this system to acknowledge positive behavior by identifying specific students who exceed our expectations. Merits count as +2 points on a student’s FIRST Report.

5.03.2 Demerits
If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student will receive a demerit. In addition to a demerit, the student may receive additional targeted, corrective consequences and/or lose other school privileges as determined by Libertas Academy staff.

Infractions which may warrant a demerit include, but are not limited to:

- Being out of uniform (e.g., shirt is untucked)
- Arriving late to class
- Being unprepared for class
- Making inappropriate noises during class
- Failing to follow directions or procedures of the class or school
- Talking out of turn
- Other behaviors deemed inappropriate by school staff

5.03.3 Detentions
If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student may receive a detention. Infractions which warrant a detention include, but are not limited to:

- Receiving three demerits within a given week for the same infraction (Friday-Thursday)
- Receiving 7 demerits in any category in a given week (Friday-Thursday)
- Low-level disrespect towards a fellow student
- Low-level disrespect towards faculty, staff, or other members of the school community
- Low-level disrespect of school property
- Deliberately disrupting class
- Being found in any of the restricted areas of the school, or outside the school (including the park)
- Horseplay or engaging in physical contact that causes a disruption
- Possessing an electronic device (e.g., cell phone) in the school building
- Failing to return forms by school-mandated deadlines (e.g., FIRST Reports, Report Cards)
- Being in local establishments without an adult, before or after school
- Possession of, or drinking, soda or any caffeinated beverage.

5.03.4 Friday Extension
If a student earns a weekly FIRST Score of lower than 70, the student may receive a Friday Extension.

5.03.5 In-Class Support
At times, particular infractions warrant consequences that are more severe than
detention or Friday Extension, but less severe than Out-of-School Suspension. Therefore, Libertas Academy has an In-Class Support model ensuring that students have access to the curriculum while at the same time ensuring that students face serious consequences.

Specific infractions which may warrant In-Class Support from the community include, but are not limited to:

- Low-level forging, cheating, plagiarism or dishonesty
- Skipping school or after school commitments

In addition, students who have not met behavioral expectations over an extended period of time, as measured by a FIRST Report score less than a specific school-determined threshold, may face In-Class Support.

Furthermore, in order to promote and uphold our school community’s values and Code of Conduct, students who communicate with a student who is currently In-School Support may also earn the consequence of being In-School Support.

5.03.6 Out-of-School Suspension

Infractions which may warrant an Out-of-School Suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Gross disrespect of a fellow student including, but not limited to, bullying and harassment as described in our policies and procedures
- Gross disrespect of faculty, staff, visitor, volunteers, or school transportation provider
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing tobacco products or electronic cigarettes.
- Disrupting Friday Extension or In-Class Support through misbehavior
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation as defined in our policies and procedures
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language
- Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Serious forgery, plagiarism, or cheating
- Lying
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Being in a restricted zone for an extended amount of time.
- Being found in any of the restricted areas of the school, or outside the school (including the park.
- Being charged with a felony (see M.G.L. c. 71, §37H1/2 in Appendix)
- Being asked to report to the Dean of Students’ office during class three times in a given week
• Repeated offenses for which the student has already earned In-Class Suspension

5.03.7 Out-of-School Suspension and/ or Expulsion
MA law (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H1/2) provides the Head of School with the authority to expel students without Board involvement for the following behavioral infractions:
• Possessing a dangerous weapon including but not limited to a knife or a gun
• Possessing a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C including but not limited to illegal drugs (e.g. marijuana) and prescription medication
• Assaulting educational personnel
• Being convicted of a felony or being found guilty of committing a felony either by admission or adjudication.

In addition, the Head of School has the authority to assign a long-term out-of-school suspension of students for up to 90 days for behavioral infractions including the following:
• Repeated, deliberate and fundamental disregard of school policies and procedures
• Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol
• Assault (i.e. threatening assault, hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, pushing) against fellow students or other members of the school community
• Theft or destruction (or attempted theft or destruction) of personal or school property including arson
• Harassment, bullying and violations of civil rights, as delineated in the Libertas Academy Student and Family Handbook

In addition to any of these infractions, any breaches of Federal law, Massachusetts State law, or bylaws of the city in which the school is located, may be handled in cooperation with the local police department and may result in long-term out-of-school suspension and/or expulsion.

As set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, §37H3/4, students serving an in-school support, short-term suspension, or long-term suspension have the opportunity to, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. Students who are suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days are entitled to an opportunity to make academic progress while suspended or expelled. In these circumstances, the School must create an education service plan for the student to be executed while the student is out of school.

5.04 Procedures for Disciplinary Action
The following section explains the procedures for determining consequences students may face for violation of this Code of Conduct. All students are entitled to due process commensurate with the disciplinary consequences to which they may be subject.
5.04.1 Detention

- **Requirements:** Mondays-Thursdays, detention is served during the Lunch/Recess block the day after the detention is earned.
- Any detention(s) earned on Thursday or Friday will be served the following Monday, as detention is not held on Friday afternoon.

5.04.2 Friday Extension

- **Requirements:** Students will miss Friday enrichment and will stay at school in Friday Extension until dismissal.
- **Student Notification:** Students will receive notice with their weekly FIRST Reports on Friday.
- **Parent Notification:** Libertas Academy will make reasonable efforts to reach families by phone before 12:00pm on Fridays. Students will be expected to stay even if the school is unable to reach the family.

5.04.3 In-Class Support

- **Requirements:** In the morning, students will need to check in with Dean of Students who will reiterate the expectations of In-School Support. Students on In-Class Support will:
  - Attend classes, receive instruction and complete class work
  - Not be permitted to communicate with any students throughout the day, including during breaks and lunch, except as specifically instructed by a teacher during an academic discussion.
  - Not participate in selected class activities, as determined by each teacher
  - Not participate in recess
  - Not attend reward events including field trips, dances etc. (exceptions may be made in extraordinary circumstances at the sole discretion of the school administration)

Violation of the requirements of In-Class Support may result in additional days of In-Class Support or an out of school suspension. Students will not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular or community service field trips and other class rewards while on In-Class Support.

The number of days on In-Class Support, determined by a school administrator, will be commensurate with the severity of the behavioral infraction. For each day that a student does not meet the requirements of In-Class Support, they will be required to complete an additional day of suspension.

5.04.4 Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions

1. **Short-Term Suspension**
   For suspension between one and ten (1-10) days, when an infraction occurs, the student will be removed from class and sent to the Main Office, Dean of Students’ office, or another designated school location.
i. **Student Notice:**
   An administrator informs the student orally of the following:
   - The disciplinary offense
   - Basis for the charge
   - Potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension
   - The opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the Dean of Student concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student’s explanation of the alleged incident and for the parent to attend the hearing; the date, time and location of the hearing
   - The student’s parent or guardian will be notified of the incident by a school administrator.

Unless a student presents a danger or risk of substantial disruption to the educational process, the student and the parents shall receive oral and written notice and an opportunity to present her/his version of the relevant facts at a disciplinary meeting.

ii. **Efforts to Involve Parent:**
   The administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the opportunity to attend the disciplinary hearing. To conduct a disciplinary meeting without the parent present, the administrator will document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The administrator is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the administrator has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

   The student and family shall receive written notice of the following information in English and the primary language spoke in the student’s home:
   - the disciplinary offense
   - the basis for the charge
   - the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student’s suspension
   - the opportunity for the student to have a disciplinary hearing with the administrator concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student’s explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing
   - the date, time, and location of the disciplinary hearing
   - the right of the student and the student’s parent to interpreter services at the meeting if needed to participate.

iii. **Format of Disciplinary Hearing:**
   The administrator will discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also will have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the administrator should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be
appropriate. The administrator will provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to
discuss the student’s conduct and offer information, including mitigating
circumstances, that the administrator should consider in determining
consequences for the student.

iv. Decision:
The administrator will provide written notice to the student and parent of his/her
determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and
duration of suspension. The notice of determination may be in the form of an
update to the original written notice of hearing.

The administrator will provide the family with opportunities for the student to make
up assignments and other such school work as needed to make academic
progress during the period of removal.

Prior to the student’s re-entry to the Libertas Academy community following an Out
of School suspension, the following may be requested:
- The student will write a letter of apology and publicly present this letter to
  Libertas Academy staff and/or students.
- An administrator will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a required
  re-entry meeting if necessary.
- Students who are suspended two or more times may be asked to submit a
  reasonable and genuine plan for improvement in addition to an apology to the
  Dean of Students.
- The student may have to meet additional conditions as required by Libertas
  Academy.

If a student has not met the above requirements, he or she may earn In-Class
Support.

Students are responsible for completing academic work missed during the
suspension. This work will be available in a folder for pick-up by a family member
at the school daily between 3:45-4:30pm. The completed work will receive full
credit, if submitted by deadlines in accordance with the school make-up policy. If a
student does not complete this work, the student may face standard academic
consequences (e.g., no academic credit).

2. Long-term Suspension
Prior to a suspension of more than ten days, the following procedures will apply:

i. Student Notice:
The student shall receive written notice in English and the primary language spoke
in the student’s home which will include all of the components for a short-term
suspension above, plus the following:
- In advance of the disciplinary hearing
- The opportunity to review the student’s record and the documents upon which the administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not
- The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student’s choice, at the student’s/parent’s expense
- The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student’s explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so
- The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- The right to request that the meeting be recorded by the administrator, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request
- The right to appeal administrator’s decision to impose long-term suspension to the Head of School

**ii. Format of Hearing:**
The Hearing will afford the rights set forth in the notice above. The administrator will also provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student’s conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Head of School should consider in determining consequences for the student.

**iii. Decision:**
Based on the evidence, the Head of School will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to long-term suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The administrator will send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and the parent. If the administrator decides to suspend the student on a long-term basis, the written determination will:

- Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing
- Set out the key facts and conclusions reached
- Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school
- Include notice of the student’s opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school (if more than 10 cumulative days)
- Inform the student of the right to appeal the administrator’s decision to the superintendent or designee. Notice of the right of appeal will be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and will include the following information stated in plain language:
  a. The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within
five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that
b. The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the administrator’s determination on appeal.

No long-term suspension will extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

All decisions made by the Head of School regarding long-term suspension of a student for any reason other than the four outlined in M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H1/2 will be in writing and are subject to review by the Head of School, if requested.

3. Exception for Emergency Removal
Notwithstanding the provisions for short or long-term suspension set forth above, a student who is charged with a disciplinary offense may be removed temporarily from school if the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the administrator’s judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The temporary removal will not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the administrator will provide the following, as applicable to the length of suspension:

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student’s parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and other applicable matters;
- Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in Section C or D above, as applicable;
- Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the administrator, as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the administrator, student, and parent.
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

An administrator may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student’s safety and transportation.

4. School-Wide Education Service Plan
Students serving short-term suspension or long-term suspension have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and
other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school.

**Expulsion**

Students are subject to expulsion (i.e., permanent exclusion) by the Head of School for the conduct listed below:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon*
- Possession of a controlled substance (such as marijuana, cocaine, or prescription drugs not authorized by the school nurse)
- Assault on teachers, administrative staff or other educational personnel

*This includes not only knives and guns, explosive devices and realistic replicas of such weapons/devices, but also other objects used to assault another person or to otherwise create a dangerous situation, such as a baseball bat, a pair of scissors, matches or a lighter. While such objects would not always constitute “dangerous weapons”, administrators and educational professionals will review the circumstances of each case and make a reasonable determination about whether a particular object in a student’s possession constitutes a dangerous weapon in the school setting. Any illegal weapon will be turned over to the Police Department.

Students are also subject to long term suspension/expulsion by the Head of School when charged/convicted of a felony based upon the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2.

Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §37H or §37H½ for more than ten consecutive days will have an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress during the period of removal under a school-wide education service plan, and will be so informed at the time of the suspension/expulsion.

**PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO CONDUCT COVERED BY M.G.L. C. 71, §37H AND 37H½**

When considering the exclusion of a student from school for possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance (such as marijuana, cocaine, or prescription drugs not authorized by the school nurse), or assault on teachers, an administrator may place a student on short term suspension (ten days or less) based upon an informal hearing, to be followed by a formal hearing before the Head of School within that period of suspension to determine whether to take additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from school.

1. The informal hearing will be in the form of a conference between the student and the Head of School or designee. At this conference, the student (1) shall be informed of the reason for the conference, (2) shall be given the opportunity to present his or her side of the story, and (3) shall be given a decision on the suspension. If the administrator deems delay of the hearing necessary to avoid danger or substantial disruption, this process may occur
immediately after, rather than before, the suspension.

2. Prior to putting a suspension into effect, the principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to telephone and inform the student’s parent or guardian of the impending suspension.

3. A letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian of the suspended student stating:
   - The reason for the suspension
   - A statement of the effective date and duration of the suspension
   - A statement regarding whether or not the Head of School will schedule a formal hearing to consider further discipline, up to and including expulsion from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H

When considering a suspension/expulsion of a student charged with/convicted of felony, the Head of School will use the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2. In addition, prior to initiating such procedures, the Principal may meet informally with the student and/or his parents to review the charge and the applicable standards if the Head of School deems appropriate.

**5.05 Discipline of Students with Special Needs**

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of students who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon a disability.

- A suspension of longer than ten (10) consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than ten (10) consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement for the student.
- When a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, relevant members of the Team, as determined by the parent and the schools, convene within ten (10) days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student’s file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the district’s failure to implement the IEP—"a manifestation determination."

If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that Libertas Academy will still offer:

a. Access to the school’s Educational Service Plan;
b. Services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals; and

c. As appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it
does not recur.

Regardless of the manifestation determination, Libertas Academy may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 school days under the following circumstances:

a. on its own authority if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function or, considered case by case, unique circumstances; or

b. On the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after Libertas Academy provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others. In either case, the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum and to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.

If the Head of School, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews it and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with part 4, the student returns to the original placement unless the parents and Libertas Academy agree otherwise or the hearing officer orders a new placement. Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the school district notifies the parents of that decision and provides them with the written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent chooses to appeal or Libertas Academy requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student’s current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and Libertas Academy agree otherwise.

If, prior to the disciplinary action, Libertas Academy had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then Libertas Academy makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. Libertas Academy may be considered to have prior knowledge if:

- The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
- The parent had requested an evaluation; or
- Libertas Academy staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student. Libertas Academy may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to evaluation of the student.
or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility. If Libertas Academy had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, Libertas Academy will conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

5.06 Student Searches

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Libertas Academy Charter School staff reserve the right to conduct searches of its students and their property when there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated the law or a school rule. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the students is respected to the extent possible, and that students and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search. School cubbies, lockers and desks, which are assigned to students for their use, remain the property of Libertas Academy Charter School, and students should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas.

5.07 Bus Behavior

The Libertas Academy Charter School Code of Conduct applies to students while on school bus transportation to and/or from school. The following additional rules apply to the bus:

1. Students must sit in their given assigned seats.
2. Failing to take the assigned seat, putting hands out of the bus, throwing objects, using bad language, and not obeying the bus driver, are all infractions, in addition to those listed in part (C) of this Code of Conduct. More serious behavior (i.e. fighting) will be investigated and assigned consequences just as if it happened on school grounds.

First infraction = consequence consistent with the Code of Conduct (i.e. same as if infraction occurred on school ground).

Second (or more) infractions = consequence consistent with the Code of Conduct (i.e. same as if infraction occurred on school ground) and, if warranted, loss of bus privileges.

Infractions, if serious enough, can warrant immediate loss of bus privileges. Other consequences (e.g., demerits, detentions, suspensions) apply as well. Students engaged in misconduct on the bus will receive all due process protections described in the Code of Conduct.

Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences for bad behavior.

Consequences for misconduct by Special Education students riding on transportation
provided by their Individual Education Plan will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

5.08 Field Trips/End-of-Year Events

We seek to provide many opportunities for our students to apply what they are learning in school to the real world. As such, the school’s curriculum will sometimes require outside learning experiences or special school events. During these activities, it is important for all students to be responsible for their behavior since the site of the activity or event is a temporary extension of the school grounds.

A permission slip that allows students to attend all school-sponsored field trips and events will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and should be signed by a parent or guardian. The school will attempt to notify all parents and guardians before each school-sponsored trip.

A student may be considered ineligible for a trip for reasons including but not limited to: low FIRST Report average, not returning the school-sponsored trip permission form, involvement in a disciplinary incident on a prior trip, poor school attendance, misbehavior or severe lack of academic effort in the days prior to the trip, etc. Students who are considered ineligible for attending a trip will be required to attend school that day.

If parents or other volunteers assist with such trips or events, students must afford these chaperones the same respect they would provide to teachers. Appropriate behavior must be maintained when attending school-sponsored events, and riding on school-provided transportation. Past inappropriate behavior, or excessive demerits and/or suspensions, may result in loss of privileges in attending or participating in class trips and events, end-of-year or otherwise.

5.09 Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Other’s Work

Cheating on homework or exams, using resources inappropriately, and copying other people’s work – students’ or otherwise – is not only unfair but in the case of plagiarism, illegal. If students are unsure about an assignment or unsure about a test question or testing procedure, they should go to their teacher and ask for direction. Specific guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism will be reviewed with students during Student Orientation and continued throughout the year. The school will determine appropriate consequences but cheating, plagiarism, and copying other’s work may result in In-Class Support, Suspension, loss of academic credit, and/or other consequences.
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

6.01 Assessing Needs and Resources
Libertas Academy developed a behavior system based on the choices that students make. When students choose to do the right thing, follow the rules and uphold the honor code, good things happen. If students make choices that are not upholding the honor code or school rules, they receive the appropriate consequence. One main component of the choice system is the Merit and Demerit system that focuses on “the little” behaviors before they become a larger problem. Additionally, the teacher coverage schedule to targets “problem behavior areas” in and out of the school to proactively set students up for behavioral success and minimize behavioral infractions. Each time an incident occurs, Libertas Academy’s administration, staff, board and families will work to re-evaluate our system to better support student’s behavior choices. Lunch, Breaks, Bathroom, Hall and Dismissal coverage have all been created to minimize poor behavior choices.

6.02 Planning 8 Oversight
Libertas Academy’s Head of School and the Dean of Students are responsible for the following tasks under the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:
- Receiving reports on bullying
- Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes
- Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law;
- Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use;
- Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them;
- Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct;
- Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and
- Reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

6.03 Priority Statement
Libertas Academy Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is based off of the schools Code of Conduct that clearly defines standards for respectful, civil and acceptable behavior for the members within its community. Disrupting the education of others by creating a hostile or unsafe work environment is not tolerated. Libertas Academy has created a plan in order to:
- Maintain a respectful space for learning
- Allow students to focus on their learning
- Prepare students to become positive, engaged member of their communities who follow rules set by our communities
Libertas Academy expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

Libertas Academy is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic, status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target’s sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation and the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The Dean of Students is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan. Also, all teachers and Staff who work directly with students are also responsible for ensuring the consistent implementation for the schools anti-bullying and anti-harassment protocols.

6.04 Training & Staff Professional Development

6.04.1 Annual Staff Training
The first 4 weeks of Libertas Academy annual staff training includes proper training of all Libertas Academy’s procedures and policies and will include the Bullying Prevention
and Intervention Plan. This training will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district.

Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, even if they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

6.04.2 Ongoing Professional Development

Libertas Academy is committed to ongoing professional development in regards to bullying prevention and understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. We have committed to build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. All staff training content, which is outlined below, has been informed by research and will include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.
- Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

6.04.3 Written notice to staff
The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

6.05 Access to Resources and Services

6.05.1 Identifying Resources
The Dean of Students manages many of the members of the Student Support Team, serves as leader and facilitator for Student Support Team meetings, and coordinates
Libertas Academy’s Student Support Services. The Student Support Team is made up of the Deans, Nurse, a teacher, and the Head of School. The goal of this team is to assist with social and emotional issues that are affecting our students including but not limited to target, aggressor, and retaliating students. This group meets once a week to discuss student needs. During this time, each person is given next steps and follow-up items on students discussed. Next steps range from quick student check-ins to scheduling and completing family meetings to filing cases with the Department of Children and Families where appropriate. During these meetings, the team will decide next steps for in school counseling or outside counseling/services for all parties involved in a bullying incident as soon as reports are given.

6.05.2 Counseling & Other Services

As stated above, SST meetings were created for next steps for in school counseling or to determine is outside counseling/services for all parties involved in a bullying incident are necessary. Additionally, Libertas Academy provides the following.

Internal Services
- Student Support Team
- Parent Support Group
- School Nurse
- Young Men’s Leadership Group
- Young Women’s Leadership Group
- Targeted afterschool support groups
- Mediation
  - At times, the Dean will be needed to mediate a dispute between Target Students and Aggressors. This may also start with a student or parent approaching the Dean with a problem that they want help in resolving.
    1) Gather initial information to get general layout (and determine if mediation is appropriate—as opposed to more formal investigation and consequences)
    2) Work with both parties individually to get ready each to a place where they can have a productive conversation
    3) Set norms for conversation (Honesty, productive comments, some degree of “immunity”),
    4) Facilitate meeting, give space and “amnesty” as needed to ensure students get to crux of issue,
    5) Once resolution is achieved (or if resolution requires other parties to be present, bring in other students who are involved to ensure closure,
    6) Let kids know that future infractions around this will come with school consequences.
  - If this fails or seems like it may be unsuccessful, the Dean may choose to make the students complete a joint project tailored to the specific situation. This generally requires a high degree of cooperation and comes with the threat of consequences (or continued consequences) if not successfully
completed. Students are required to work on project during breaks and lunches.

As a part of many next steps, Libertas Academy connects students and families with many external organizations for a number of reasons. Below is a list of agencies Excel has referred students and their families too:

**External Organizations**
- Department of Children and Families: The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the organization to which the Dean would report suspected abuse or neglect. This filing is called a 51s. To file, call the Springfield branch of the DCF at (413) 452-3200
- Truancy / Attendance CHINS: The Dean of Student can file for a CHINS (Child in Need of Services) for attendance concerns (known as a truancy CHINS).
- Stubborn CHINS: A second type of CHINS is for repeated failure to follow rules and request of those entrusted with a student’s care (known as a stubborn CHINS).

**Outside Counseling**
Given that many students could benefit from regular counseling above what the school has the capacity to provide, one of the major roles of the SST is to help families secure counseling from outside providers. The easiest way for families to do this is to go through their primary care physician to get a referral.

**Outside Mentoring**
Finding good mentors for Target and or Aggressor Students can be a helpful intervention, but it can also take a very long time. It is very easy to start the process, but requires parent follow up to see it through. If the team thinks a student could use a mentor, make sure to invest the family in this idea (of course), as they will need to follow up with completing paperwork and being interviewed. To make an initial referral, go to Big Brother Big Sisters of Massachusetts [http://www.bbbsmb.org/GetInvolved/ReferAChild/Default.aspx](http://www.bbbsmb.org/GetInvolved/ReferAChild/Default.aspx) or Big Sisters of Massachusetts [http://www.bigsister.org/index.cfm?pid=10569](http://www.bigsister.org/index.cfm?pid=10569).

It can be helpful to enlist the help of particular staff members in executing individualized behavior plans (including members of the team). This is not quite mentoring, but does result in increased attention and can be very effective.

**6.05.3 Students with Disabilities**

When the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
6.05.4 Referrals to Outside Counseling: SST Referral, Communication and Meeting structures

Grade level teams refer students whom they believe would benefit from the services of the SST. Referrals are usually made in cases where the team feels mental health/counseling, health or additional behavioral interventions are needed. It is the job of the leader of this group to respond to referrals, route students to services, and communicate next steps and updates on those next steps to the larger team. If the leader is unclear or seeks guidance, he/she puts this item on the SST agenda for discussion.

6.06 Academic and Non-Academic Activities

6.06.1 Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches

Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- Emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students’ skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

The above criteria are used in elective courses in order to deliver the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as part of the schools Character Education program. Some schools focus on conversations around values. While this is a good starting point, we will also prioritize skill-focused, project based character education. Skills are measurable and demonstrable; they are concrete. By focusing on teaching students specific skills, Libertas Academy hopes to provide students with the tools and skills to positively interact with everyone they meet.

These skills are taught through engaging and rigorous projects. It is through team building projects that the school delivers a secondary curriculum targeted at teaching specific skills; team building skills and positive interactions with classmates they may not have apparent interests or commonalities with. Projects require team work; in order for students to value these projects, Libertas Academy has adopted the model of setting students up well, but then letting the students themselves determine the relative level of success of a project. Libertas Academy clearly lays out expectations and
procedures for accomplishing tasks, divides students into teams, appoints and trains strong leaders, and taking a step back. Specific objectives and lessons surrounding bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation will be taught in 6th and 7th grade elective courses in addition to 3-4 weeks of health class. This portion of the health classes curricula will be devoted to bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation and internet safety. Lessons will be based on the Michigan Model for School Health.

6.06.2 General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts

The following approaches are integral to establish a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and class routines
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- Using positive behavioral supports;
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- Using the Internet safely; and
- Supporting students’ interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

This philosophy of student ownership over success, it is believed, more closely mirrors real life and teachers more valuable lessons than teacher-led projects. These projects also allow teachers to model respectful interactions and monitor those interactions among students. The overview of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan will be taught during Parent and Student Orientation.

Libertas Academy’s goal is for all students to become more mature young adults. Staff (and students) is required to use appropriate responses to both positive and negative behavior as a way of modeling interactions with peers. We will use positive and reactive behavioral supports to address issues before and after they occur.

Libertas Academy staff has sole discretion to determine the consequence of Bullying. A school-related bullying infraction refers to the violation of our Code of Conduct when occurring:
- While the student is on school grounds or school-related transportation
- During school-sponsored activities and trips
• During all other school-related events
• Off of school grounds that result in substantial disruption to the learning environment

6.07 Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

6.07.1 Reports of Bullying or Retaliation
Students who are victims of bullying, who witness bullying activity, or who are retaliated against for reporting bullying, should report the incident to the principal. Students may also report to a teacher or guidance counselor, or other trusted adult in the building, who will in turn report the incident to the principal. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

1) Reporting by Students
   - Target Students are sent to the Dean’s office to fill out an incident report.
   - Incidents may be reported over the phone.
   - Incidents may be reported over voicemail.
   - Incidents may be reported anonymously

2) Reporting by Staff
   - Incidents may be reported to a teacher or staff member and then immediately brought to the Dean’s attention and submitted in writing.
   - Incidents may be reported over the phone.
   - Incidents may be reported over voicemail.
   - Incidents may not be reported anonymously.

3) Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others
   - Incidents may be submitted to the Dean’s Office in writing
   - Incidents may be reported over the phone.
   - Incidents may be reported over voicemail.
   - Incidents may be reported anonymously.

• Reports made may be of bullying or retaliation. Written reports can be on the Incident Reporting Form and can be delivered in person, through the mail, via e-mail. Oral reports can be given on a voice-mail, in person, or on the phone.
• Students, Parents, & Guardians may report bullying or retaliation anonymously to the Principal or Dean of Students. No disciplinary action will be taken based on anonymous reports until a full investigation is completed.

6.07.2 Responding to Reports of Bullying or Retaliation

• Reports are written down to maintain clarity and record evidence and accounts
• Dean investigates using the appropriate initial tone and response.
  - Dean does not jump to conclusions and has calm, assertive tone.
  - Dean appears calm and neutral.
- Target student tells their side of the story.
- While efforts should be made to limit the amount of missed class, it is essential to have these meetings
- Dean initiates investigation. This may involve a number of techniques discussed later.
- Dean speaks with aggressor to hear their side of story.
- Dean confers with Dean/admin to assess precedent and get guidance on appropriate response
- Once information gathered and facts are known, Dean closes loop with Target Student, issuing consequences and/or guidance in direct conversation to Aggressor.
  - Tone should be matter of fact. Dean should make effort to separate intent from action, conceding points which are not essential to the case. Distill the case down to the essential facts.
- Dean follows up with parents before each student goes home that day
  - Students are not allowed to speak with their parents before the Dean has explained the situation.
- Dean closes loop with teachers, admin and graduate services by email before COB that day
- Students will submit information in writing or use the referral form below.
- Parents of the aggressor (if a student) and the target will be notified of all actions taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. Parents will be called immediately and required to come in for a parent meeting.
- To restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents, Libertas Academy’s response to promote safety may include, but not be limited to:
  - Creating a personal safety plan.
  - Pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor (if a student) in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus.
  - Identify a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target.
  - Altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target.
  - The Head of School, Dean of Students & Libertas Academy Staff will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.
- The Head of School and/or Dean of Students will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.
  - Creating a personal safety plan
  - Pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor (if a student) in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus
  - Identify a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target
- Altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target.
- The Head of School, Dean of Students & Libertas Academy Staff will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

6.07.3 Obligations to Notify Others

- **Notice to parents or guardians:** As stated above, upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or dean of students will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor (if a student) of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or dean of students contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. In addition, parents of targets and aggressors (if students) will be required to come in for a family meeting to discuss actions being taken to further prevent acts of bullying or retaliation.

- **Notice to Another School or District:** If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

- **Notice to Law Enforcement:** At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

6.07.4 Investigations

When the needs to gather information on a situation to ensure they have accurate information, it is likely that some level of investigating will need to be done. Note: investigations must be conducted to properly gather information. If the Dean has the intuition that a student is lying and could confess in a relatively short amount of time, it is probably a better use of time to talk with the offending aggressor one on one rather than start an investigation. The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known,
including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Head of School or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

**Approach**

A good investigation must:

1) Be timely - should be started within 24 hours of a report and resolved within 48

2) Be conducted quickly and efficiently - the investigators must move the investigation to a reasonable point (solid understanding of situation, main culprits identified) before students have the chance to interact socially to avoid corruption of reports and the spread of gossip

3) Communicate outwardly with administration and teachers as quickly as possible.
   a) Protect the students who reports the situation - While a good Dean would never explicitly reveal a source, steps need to be taken to protect information when reporting back to students and families—Dean should be general as possible to avoid making the source of the information known (i.e. if only one student witness is aware of a certain fact, the Dean needs to be careful when reporting this information as fact)
   b) The Dean should be careful when soliciting information from students—the simple fact of pulling certain students in to your office can be interpreted as informing/generate a lot of gossip. Creative methods of routing students to the Dean’s office can be: finding student on way to/from bathroom, putting an appointment pass on student desk, or asking teacher or other staff member to pull out the student and bring them to the Dean’s office.

When interviewing students, it is generally better to start ask students targeted questions rather than assume fault. Assuming fault can damage trust.

**Say this** | **Not This**
--- | ---
Tell me what happened | “how could you do ___!”
Every choice comes with a consequence | This is clearly a suspension!
What we need to do is find out the truth | You are a liar
The best way out of this situation is for you to be honest and me to be fair | I cannot deal with you, I just do not trust you!

**Procedure**

1) **Receive Report**
   There are three types of reports, Teacher, Parent and Student Reports:
   **Teacher Report**
   - Upon receiving a referral from a teacher, reach out to them to find the earliest
possible time to connect about the incident. From a teacher, gather the “who, what, when, where” of the situation and also ask for:
- Witnesses
- History/Context (has this already been addressed)
- Others involved (suspected)
- Relative level of severity

Parent & Student Report
- Receiving a report from a parents or student should be done privately, quickly and in such a way so that the individuals providing the information does not have their anonymity compromised. The Dean should be available for report or able to schedule a time for this conversation quickly. Gather the report based on what the student has seen (not heard via gossip). Gather a list of other parents or students who may be aware/were in the area/might have information.
- The Dean should also be sensitive to severity and hysteria (and downplay accordingly). Dean should also take into account if report is possibly attention seeking or revenge oriented.

2) Gather Information
- Even if an initial report is very clear, in the absence of teacher or adult report, it is crucial to gather at least 3 independent student accounts of a situation. It is generally best to strategize at this point as to the best way to finish gathering information. There are two general ways to gather information from witnesses—targeted follow up and whole class
- Targeted Follow Up:
  - Use this protocol in a situation where there is a report that is detailed enough to have either:
    i) good understanding of the situation and likely aggressors and witnesses
    ii) clear list of other students to interview about a situation
- Conduct brief interviews with potential informants.
  - The Dean should figure out which students it makes sense to talk to first (those that are reliable sources) These interviews should focus on what students have seen, not on what they heard. Conjecture is helpful for finding out whom else to talk to, but not for holding students accountable.
  - Be aware of starting gossip and kids tipping off others so that they have time to get stories straight etc. It is important to not start an investigation that cannot be concluded or brought to a stable point by the next student social time (break/lunch). At these times, students will converse, gossip, get their explanations aligned, and intimidate possible sources. Always ask students at the end of the conversation if there are students who may be aware of the situation (so that the Dean can follow up with these additional witnesses).
  - Whole class “State of the Union”: When doing this, ask kids to write down one good thing about the culture of the group, one thing that concerns them, and one suggestion for improvement for a given group (homeroom or grade level usually). This is not framed as a crackdown (just an update) and usually
generates a number of items to follow up on—some serious and some not. This is a good way to gather a lot of info and get a pulse on where things are without pulling out kids one by one. Often times this approach will lead into Targeted Follow Up.

- Student Interviews. Once there is a basic idea of what happened in a given situation and the Deans have a list of names of students who may have more information, the Dean should conduct student interviews to accomplish one or both of the following purposes: to confirm reports so that there is a strong understanding of the facts of the case and so that the Dean can use these facts to hold others accountable or to elicit a confession.

- When gathering information from students, it is important to focus on eye witnesses, not conjecture. It is helpful to take detailed notes to document the situation and to refer back to.
  1) Take detailed notes—it is often difficult remember key details of different stories. It is these details which are often invaluable in understanding and catching inconsistencies between stories/versions.
  2) Synthesize reports, formulate a “charge,” assess precedent and propose consequence
  3) As needed, check with another administrator (other Dean or Principal) to ensure appropriateness of consequence.

6.07.5 Determinations

Consequences should be dispassionately issued. Consequences are not personal, but a response to a choice. The student should not feel that this consequence is being issued because the staff member is angry or hurt. Not showing anger helps the student focus more on their actions and less on those of the Dean/Head of School. The role of the Dean is to execute a well-defined system with a strong history of well-developed precedent.

Consequences must feel appropriate to students (both offending student and class) so as to avoid sense of martyrdom from class/school and to limit the student tendency to focus on Dean/school’s response over their own choices. Consequences for low-level infractions include demerits, detentions, and/or a referral to the dean’s office. Any bullying, harassment, or retaliation will result in a suspension. In-class suspension (ICS) is served in school and in the student’s classroom. Students who earn ICS are not allowed to interact with their peers until they earn their way back into the community. Out of School Suspension (OSS) is served out of the school building.

The following table is a rough sketch of Excel suspension precedent
Note – repeat suspension for students add multiple days to the suspension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual harassment, gestures</td>
<td>2 days OSS, 4 days ICS</td>
<td>In class apology and apology directly to victim, if severe, Dean may have family to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment/Bullying</td>
<td>1-2 days OSS, 2-4 ICS</td>
<td>In class apology, research project and presentation to the class, peer mediation and counseling may be recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>1 day OSS – depending on the level of the threat</td>
<td>Mediated conversation between parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook/out of school issues</td>
<td>2+ days ICS</td>
<td>Mediated conversation between parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus Infractions</td>
<td>Generally only ICS, depends on severity of the situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Head of School or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

6.07.6 Out of School Bullying Infractions

While in some ways the school might want to control all aspects of student behavior, it is obviously not possible. When incidents that happen off campus affect the school culture, the Deans generally do invest time in investigating, informing parents, and issuing consequences when appropriate. Libertas Academy’s code of conduct applies in the following four areas:

- On school grounds (which includes entirety of pharmacy and Domino’s parking lot)
- On school related transportation
- On school field trips, and
- Any out of school infraction that negatively impacts school culture, including cyberbullying.
  - This fourth point is nuanced. While many things will happen off campus that the school may not like, it is important to carefully consider whether or not the action truly negatively impacts school culture. The school does not have the time to police every area of our students’ lives. Generally, if the issue is being talked about among the kids or is brought to the school’s attention by a student or parent, it may be impacting school culture. The most common situations to which this applies is when students are in transit to and from school and on social networking sites.
  - In the past, this consequence has been reserved for fighting, severe harassment/bullying, and smoking/drug use near the school.
  - In some situations, as with some issues that occur on Facebook, parents are notified and students may be given school-based consequences.

6.07.7 Suspension Procedures

Students who are asked to leave the school community temporarily (out of school suspension or in-class suspension) must earn their way back in. To earn re-entry,
students and families need to do three things:

1. **Meeting between Family and Administration**
   At the time of suspension, the family is contacted. The family needs to come immediately (or as soon as possible) to the school to pick up their student and meet with the Dean of Students or other Administrator to discuss what happened and ways to avoid this problem in the future. This meeting is very important. In this meeting the Dean will discuss what happened, try and figure out why it happened, and discuss ways to avoid this situation in the future. A school administrator must meet with a member of the family before the student returns to class.

   Family meetings are a requirement for reentry and in some cases may be the most important tactic in modifying student behavior. Dean should arrange this meeting as soon as possible and ensure that families understand its importance—this is not an optional meeting and it is time sensitive. At the same time, given that parent buy-in is helpful in modifying student behavior, the Dean may need/want to take into account parent schedules and work to arrange a time that is convenient for family member. During this meeting, it is most effective to follow these steps:

   1) In a somber but not angry tone, welcome and thank the family for coming
   2) Explain the high level terms of the infraction and why this impacts school culture and why it is important that their student learns to avoid this mistake in the future.
   3) Explain the process of ascertaining information (while protecting sources) and specifics of the infraction.
   4) Reiterate the Bullying Policy and possible next steps should this happen again or continue.
   5) Ask the student if he disagrees with anything that has presented so far
   6) Ask the parent if they have questions (if the meeting starts to become contentious, excuse the student)
   7) Explain exact terms of suspension and reentry.

2. **Completing Work**
   Students will complete the work they missed (and any additional work specific to their suspension). Families need to come and pick up the work the student missed after 4pm on the day of suspension. Students who do not complete this homework may receive academic consequences (homework club and grades of zero on every assignment).

3. **Writing and Delivering an Apology**
   Students are expected to write an apology to the appropriate group of the school community. The school may require that the apology be shared with the Targeted students(s), class, teacher, staff or the Dean of Students, depending on the situation. All suspensions require an apology and students will follow their grade-level appropriate rubrics for completion of the apology. To assist with apologies, all students work with the Dean or Head of School on editing and delivering their apologies.
4. Suspension Tracking
Suspension tracking can be found in the Dean of Students folder on Google Drive at Libertas Academy. All staff members will be notified after a suspension occurs for bullying using the tracking document above.

6.08 Responses to Bullying

6.08.1 Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building
Should Libertas Academy determine that Bullying or Retaliation has occurred, the school will use one or more of the following from the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan based on SST protocol to better support both Target Students and Aggressor Students:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the Libertas Academy anti-bullying curricula
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with advisors and other appropriate school personnel
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills
- Making a referral for evaluation

6.08.2 Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school’s or district’s code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others
The Head of School, Dean of Students and or Staff will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target’s sense of safety and
that of others as well. One strategy that Libertas Academy may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. In addition, Libertas Academy will make sure that the target student is able to get to and from school safely and free of bullying.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

6.08 Collaboration with Families

Parent Education and Resources
The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the School Board meetings, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations within Libertas Academy.

Notification Requirements
Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians.

Libertas Academy will post the Plan and related information on its website.

6.10 Prohibition Against Bullying & Retaliation

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:
- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds
- At an school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds
- At a school bus stop
- On a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by Libertas Academy
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by Libertas Academy
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is school-related
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Libertas Academy
• If the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses
• Infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the
  education process or the orderly operation of Libertas Academy
• Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an
  investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is
  also prohibited

6.11 Definitions

• Aggressor is a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an
  educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver,
  athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.
• Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been
  perpetrated.
• Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more
  students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture
  or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:
  - Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s
    property;
  - Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of
    damage to his or her property;
  - Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
  - Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
  - Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly
    operation of a school.
• Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices
  such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is
  not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See
  M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.
• Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which
  bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation,
  ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a
  student’s education.
• Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a
  student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of
  bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.
• Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school
  nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to
  extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

6.12 Other Definitions

Harassment
Libertas Academy Charter School is committed to maintaining a school environment
free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual
orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Libertas Academy Charter School requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

Definition of Harassment
In General: Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

By law: what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive. Sexual Harassment. While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education.
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extra-curricular activities.
4. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited
Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by teachers, administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by Libertas Academy Charter School.

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or Board of Trustees, subject to applicable procedural requirements.
Bullying
Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, Section 37H and 37O, bullying is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action by the school administration. Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of the school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including intimidating an individual into taking an action against his/her will; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; stalking; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

Cyber-bullying
Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others.

6.13 Relation to Other Laws
Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Libertas Academy, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person’s membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.
In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of Libertas Academy to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

### 6.14 Key Forms

*Libertas Academy Rubric for Break/Lunch Behavior*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Time of Day:</th>
<th>Monitor:</th>
<th>Possible teacher actions to drive student improvement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trends:</td>
<td>Students are:</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Social Interactions</strong></td>
<td>Students are socializing in a way that appears to be non-exclusive and have volume and body language that is not exclusive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students appear to be forming/fostering positive social connections with a variety of students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Behavior</strong></td>
<td>Students are evenly distributed throughout the room (not congregating)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students are engaging each other in appropriate conversations/activities (limited hushed conversations/&quot;sneaky&quot; behavior)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparedness</strong></td>
<td>Students are using bathroom list, passes appropriately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students are using time to organize, get materials, sharpen pencils and are prepared for next class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students get silent at warning bell without teacher direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalism</strong></td>
<td>Students are modulating volume at appropriate levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students are actively keeping/making space neat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students are maintaining minimum standard of classroom decorum and tone (playing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERRAL FORM**
Directions: Fill out this form in its entirety. Use complete sentences

Your Name: ________________________________  Today's Date: ______________

Your Homeroom: ______________  Your Advisor: __________________

Reporting Poor Choices

1. What happened was...

What were these individuals trying to do?

2. It caused...

-------------------------

APPENDIX
Appendix

A. Chapter 71, Section 37H

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher’s aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

(c) After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

(f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total
number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.

(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

B. Chapter 71, Section 37H ½

(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster, if said principal or headmaster determines that the student’s continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student’s parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student’s request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student’s continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such
expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student’s parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

C. Chapter 71, Section 37H ¼

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion; consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reasons for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent.
or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal’s duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student’s alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term “out-of-school suspension” shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student’s request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is
In regard to language used in M.G.L. c.71, §37H or M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2 or M.G.L. c.71, §37H3/4, students and families should note that Libertas Academy Charter School should be considered both the school and the school district. The Head of School should be considered the Superintendent and the Principal.