

# PROPEL HIGH SCHOOLS

Scholar and Family  
Handbook

2021-2022



## **Disclaimer Policy**

In a situation where provisions of the handbook contradict approved school board policy, the policy shall prevail. Recent school board policies may not have yet been updated in printed copies of the scholar and family handbook. For specific information regarding pandemic planning and protocols, please reference the Propel Schools website: [propelschools.org](http://propelschools.org)

## **Scholar and Family Handbook**

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## **I. Introduction to Propel Schools**

Propel Schools is a network of public charter schools that transforms the lives of children in underserved communities through innovative, scholar-centered learning. Propel sets a standard for creating productive citizens by prioritizing academic and behavioral excellence and fundamental life skills. Propel believes that in order to accomplish these goals positive family support is vital.

**Propel's Mission Statement:** *Propel Schools, based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a not-for-profit federation of charter schools, dedicated to the mission of catalyzing the transformation of public education so that all children have access to high performing public schools.*

In order to fulfill our mission, Propel Schools is committed to:

- Acting urgently on our promise of educational excellence
- Sustaining a culture where every individual has authentic voice and everyone thrives
- Building and advancing a resilient team through targeted guidance and support
- Rallying support for Propel scholars and mission by building partnerships and fostering advocacy and outreach

Propel's Six Promising Principles and supporting Powerful Practices provide the structure and common language that are used as a foundation to fulfill the mission and commitments.

- Embedded Support
- Culture of Dignity
- Fully Valued Arts Program
- Vibrant Teaching Communities
- Quest for Excellence
- Agile Instruction

## **II. Academic Excellence and Standards**

Propel Schools believes that academic excellence is a requirement of a high quality education and recognizes the importance of developing, assessing, and expanding academic standards to challenge scholars to achieve at their highest level possible. To this end, Propel Schools has established rigorous academic standards in accordance with, and may expand upon, those adopted by the State Board of Education.

Academic standards--shall be defined as what a scholar should know and be able to do at a specific grade level. For purposes of policy, the term academic standards shall be deemed to encompass PA Core Standards, state academic and local academic standards. Propel Schools' curriculum shall be designed to provide scholars with the planned instruction needed to attain established academic standards. Propel Schools shall assess individual scholar attainment of academic standards and provide assistance for scholars having difficulty attaining academic standards. scholars with disabilities may attain academic standards by completion of their Individualized Education Programs in accordance with law, regulations, and Board policy.

**References:** State Board of Education Regulations--22 PA Code Sec. 4.3, 4.4, 4.11, 4.12

## **III. Introduction to Propel High Schools**

The purpose of this handbook is to describe the requirements and expectations for all scholars who attend Propel High Schools. As such, the holistic academic approach, community standards, and discipline is outlined. This document is meant to ensure that all scholars and parents are aware of the requirements and expectations of Propel High Schools.

School-wide discipline and restorative practices are an integral part of teaching and learning. Young people must develop good work habits and mindsets if they are to be successful scholars and become successful members of the larger community. Because one of the primary goals of Propel is to promote constructive and respectful behavior, the procedures and consequences described in this Handbook are designed to modify unacceptable behavior, not to punish.

Propel Schools Board of Trustees has authorized the school administration to make reasonable and necessary rules and procedures for guiding scholar and family conduct. The intent of the rules, procedures, and consequences that follow explain how scholars and families will be held accountable for their behavior and the possible procedures for restoring positive behavior.

## **PROPEL HIGH SCHOOLS**

Propel high schools are dedicated to achieving post-secondary success for all scholars. Through deeper learning, scholar empowerment, and unique opportunities, scholars are prepared for college and career training. We are committed to the following goals:

- 100% scholar graduation rate
- 100% of scholars graduate with a reviewed and approved post-secondary plan
- 100% of scholars accepted into college
- 100% of graduates attend either college or career training

## **COMMUNITY VALUES**

Each high school has a specific set of community values that seek to build the habits and mindsets that scholars need to be successful in high school and beyond Propel. Though the specific habits vary at each school, all habits include the following concepts:

- Being engaged and prepared
- Treating oneself and others with respect
- Demonstrating self-discipline
- Offering compassion and empathy

## **II. ACADEMICS**

### **OVERALL APPROACH**

- Deeper Learning: Learning in all classrooms emphasizes authentic, real-world learning experiences. Classrooms employ inquiry-based strategies while developing collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creativity skills.
- Scholar Empowerment: Scholars are leaders of their own learning. Through citizenship, voice, and leadership, Propel High Schools instill confidence and critical engagement for scholars to interact within various communities. Scholars possess the agency to positively impact self and society. Self-reflection and revision of work are concepts valued within our schools and beyond.

- ❑ Unique Opportunities: Propel Schools know that closing the achievement gap also includes closing the opportunity gap. Learning experiences extend well beyond the traditional classroom. scholars gain confidence and transferable knowledge by leaving their comfort zones. Through these opportunities Propel redefines school and our scholars defy expectations.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

This chart outlines the required credits to meet graduation requirements by graduating year. Beginning with the class of 2023, scholars will have the option of pursuing a Career Pathway (i.e. Nursing). scholars who elect a Career Pathway will also pursue up to 30 college credits (depending on the selected pathway). Should a scholar withdraw or be withdrawn from the career pathway, the scholar would need to meet the general graduation requirements.

	Grade 9 and 10 Career Pathway Class of 2023 and 2024	Grade 9 and 10 General Class of 2023 and 2024	Grade 11 Class of 2022	Grade 12 Class of 2021
English Language Arts	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4	4 or completion of Alg II
Science	4	4	4	3.5
Social Studies	3	3	3	3
World Language	2	2	2	2
The Arts	2	2	2	0
CREW	2	2	2	2
Financial Literacy	1	1	1	1
Fitness	1	1	1	1
Computer Science	1	1	0.5	0
Senior Seminar	1	1	1	1
Electives	0	2	2.5	5
Total	25	27	27	26.5

### **Additional Graduation Requirements:**

- ❑ Successful completion of 10th grade Passage Portfolio
- ❑ Successful completion of 12th grade Senior Expedition Presentation
- ❑ Successful completion of approved and documented 100 hours of Service Learning/Community Service.

### **State Graduation Requirements:**

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, the statewide graduation requirement will apply, as will any other locally-established policies and requirements. Additionally, Keystone Exams are the statewide assessment that Pennsylvania uses to comply with accountability requirements in the federal Every scholar Succeeds Act (ESSA). Each state is expected to achieve 95 percent participation on its statewide exams.

Scholars can meet the statewide graduation requirement by:

- ❑ Scoring proficient or advanced on each Keystone Exam - Algebra I, Literature, and Biology.
- ❑ Earning a satisfactory composite score on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams. The passing composite score will be available in August 2019.
- ❑ Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and satisfactorily complete one of the following: an alternative assessment (SAT, PSAT, ACT, ASVAB, Gold Level ACT WorkKeys), advanced coursework (AP, IB, concurrent enrollment courses), pre-apprenticeship, or acceptance in a 4-year nonprofit institution of higher education for college-level coursework.
- ❑ Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and pass the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) or the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) assessment in an approved Career and Technical Education concentration.
- ❑ Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and demonstrate readiness for postsecondary engagement through three pieces of evidence from the scholar’s career portfolio aligned to scholar goals and career plan. Examples of evidence will include ACT WorkKeys, SAT Subject tests, AP, IB and concurrent coursework, higher education acceptance, community learning project, completion of an internship, externship or co-op or full-time employment.

### **Arts Education Graduation Requirements:**

The following courses would satisfy Arts Education graduation requirements

- ❑ Media and Graphic Design courses
- ❑ Art courses
- ❑ Music courses
- ❑ Choir courses
- ❑ Performance/Drama courses
- ❑ Creative Writing courses

All credits earned previously, either within Propel or outside of Propel, will be mapped to these graduation requirements by the College and Career Counselor. Should a scholar or family wish to request an additional review of courses to determine graduation requirements, the scholar or family must next reach out to the principal. Additional recourse includes the Senior Director of Academics.

### **ACADEMIC CURRICULUM AND COURSE OF STUDY**

The chart outlines the recommended course of study for various content areas, consistent with the graduation requirements previously described. Each course has prerequisites, though some may include co-requisites, as described in each course description.

## Path/Sequence- Content Examples

<u>Course Progressions</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Social Studies</u>
1	Algebra I (2 credits)	English 9	Integrated Science	Civics and Government
2	Geometry	English 10	Biology (1.5 credits)	US History
3	Algebra II	English 11 or AP Language	Chemistry (1.5 credits)	World Cultures
4	Pre-Calculus or Statistics	English 12 or AP Literature & Senior Seminar (co-requisites)	Anatomy and Physiology	Financial Literacy
5	AP Calculus or Statistics			AP Human Geography*

\* Open to all scholars after passing Civics and Government. Does not replace any required history course.

### Exceptions to the Course of Study

1. scholars who meet a performance level of "Proficient" or "Advanced" on the 8th grade Science PSSA's will be placed directly into Biology in their 9th grade year.
2. Scholars who meet a performance level of "Proficient" or "Advanced" on the Math Keystone Exam during their 8th grade year will be placed directly into Geometry in the 9th grade year.
3. Scholars may elect to take Geometry and Algebra II in the same year (concurrently).
4. All transcripts will be reviewed by the College and Career Counselor to determine how transferred credits apply.
5. All other exceptions must be approved by the Principal through a Google Request Form.

### GRADING SYSTEM AND PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

Our high schools are transitioning from a traditional grading system to a standards-based grading system.

To receive credit for a course taken at a Propel High School, a scholar must earn a "C" or higher in a traditional grading system and a 2 or higher in a standards-based grading system..

Additionally, all honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses receive a weighted calculation in the scholar’s GPA. The scholar must first earn a grade of a “C” or higher to gain credit. If a scholar does not earn this grade, whether in an honors or AP course, then the scholar will NOT earn credit for that class. Please see the grading scale for both traditional and standards-based grading below:

<b>Standards Based Grading Scale</b>	<b>Letter Scale</b>	<b>0-100% Scale</b>	<b>Grade Point Average (GPA) Scale</b>
3.75-4.0	A+	95-100	4.25 (0.25 addition for mastery)
3.5-3.74	A	90-94.9	4.0
3.25-3.49	B+	85-89.9	3.5
3.0-3.24	B	80-84.9	3.0
2.5-2.99	C+	75-79.9	2.5
2.0-2.49	C	70-74.9	2.0
1.5-1.99	D	60-69.9	1.0
1.0-1.49	F	0-59.9	0.0

Transcripts will still have letter grades, but report cards and progress reports will be on a 4-3-2-1 scale, as listed below. The following scale gives a general description of scores under a standards-based grading system:

- 4- Exceeding Expectations
- 3- Meeting Expectations
- 2- Approaching Expectations (threshold needed to earn credit for the course)
- 1- No Evidence of scholar Learning

In order for a scholar to be promoted to the next grade, they must have earned enough credits to be on track to graduate within the course of study offered at Propel High Schools during the school day. It is important to understand that these promotion requirements are set based on the scholar passing all of their subsequent coursework with a complete schedule each year. It is also important to note that scholars will not be placed in concurrent classes if one is a prerequisite for the other. This means that a scholar is placed in the appropriate grade level Crew.



If a course is failed, the course credit will need to be recovered over the summer -- through either Propel's Credit Recovery Program or to a pre-approved 3rd party credit recovery program. Credit recovery must be documented and provided to the principal no later than the final add/drop day each year. If a scholar wishes to double up on a certain subject in order to take advanced coursework, the scholar will need parent, teacher, school counselor/College and Career Counselor, and principal approval. Still, all prerequisites are required.

Grade-Point Averages (GPA) are updated at the point of determination of credit. This will typically occur at the end of the first and second semesters. This only includes grades for the courses that have concluded. Credits recovered over the summer will be updated by the end of the add/drop period the following the year.

If a scholar has taken a course and received credit for that course, the course cannot be taken for credit again. There are some courses where a scholar is able to take the course for a second time and receive an additional credit. These courses are limited to the following:

- Add certain arts classes
- Add fitness classes
- Add certain music classes

During the 2019-2020 school year, Propel Schools made allowances in our grading scale, given the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. scholars had the opportunity to take each class as either Pass/Incomplete, which would then not impact their GPA, but would still impact graduation requirements. Please reach out to your scholar's Crew Leader and College and Career Counselor if you have questions about this after final grades are distributed. As for the 2020-2021 school year, we maintained our regular grading system throughout various contingencies, but will always work toward making sure grades are an accurate reflection of the knowledge and skills that scholars have demonstrated.

### **Credit Recovery Overview**

If a scholar fails to earn a passing grade during the school year, then scholars are expected to recover the credit by August 15th of the summer following. Credit recovery is offered at all Propel High Schools. Please read below for important information regarding course grades and GPA related to credit recovery:

- The grade of the recovered credit must be a C or higher.
- The final course grade will be replaced by a C once credit is recovered.
- GPA calculations will be updated by August 15th of each year.
- All documentation of recovered credits must be submitted to Principals and Counselors by the end of the add/drop period for a scholar to progress to the next course, according to the course of study above. If a scholar does not provide this documentation by the end of the add/drop period, then the scholar will remain in the previously failed course for the entire length of the course.
- It is the scholar's responsibility to show documentation of recovered credit.

## **COURSE SELECTION PROCESS**

Scholars have the opportunity to select certain courses as part of their Propel High School Experience. Propel High Schools have a large number of required courses to ensure that scholars have access to a well-rounded education and are exposed to a variety of content, including a Fully Valued Arts Program. The following is the course selection process that all Propel high schools follow:

### Spring

- Review transcripts and graduation map
- Review Summer Credit Recovery Options (if necessary)
- Scholar review of Course Catalogue
- Crew Leader lesson(s) on advising scholars on required next courses and prerequisites
- Scholar draft selection in paper form
- Crew Leader feedback on draft selection
- Parent sign-off on revised draft selection
- Scholars complete Course Request Form with opportunity to elect Career Pathway option.

### Summer

- Schools develop personalized schedules for scholars
- Schools adjust scholar schedules based on recovered credits
- All courses are balanced and class size minimized to create optimum learning environments
- Families will be contacted to set up a time for a meeting with each scholar's Crew Leader to review schedules.

### Fall:

- All scholars follow their given schedule. Scholars should always follow their most recent printed schedule.
- Add/Drop period for the first 2 weeks of school ONLY. This is an opportunity for parents and scholars to request a course change. Not all requests will be able to be satisfied.
- Each school follows a specific add/drop process that must be completed in order for requests to be considered. Please see your College and Career Counselor or Crew Leader to get the proper Add/Drop Request form.

## **ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) REQUIREMENTS**

Each school also offers an Advanced Placement Program. Every course is College Board

approved and counts for college credit at many colleges and universities should the scholar earn a score of a 3 (and in some cases a 4) or higher on the end-of-course exam or portfolio presentation. AP Courses also receive a 0.5 addition to their GPA only for the AP course. This bump is not reflected in the grade on the report card or transcript, but rather factored into the scholar's GPA. The 0.5 addition is omitted if the scholar does not earn a passing grade in the course.

### **III. EMPOWERING scholars**

Scholars are leaders of their own learning. Through citizenship, voice, and leadership, Propel High Schools instills confidence and critical engagement for scholars to interact within various communities. Scholars possess the agency to positively impact themselves and society. Self-reflection is a trait valued within our schools and beyond.

#### **Crew**

Crew is one way that scholars find their authentic voice. In a group of 10-15 scholars who meet daily, Crew serves as a sort of advisory program that addresses multiple purposes.

- ❑ The Crew Leader serves as a primary advocate and support for each scholar because every scholar should have a caring and compassionate adult to assist in navigating school and life.
- ❑ The Crew Leader is the primary point of contact for families. Should you have any questions regarding your scholar's progress at school, please contact the Crew Leader first.
- ❑ Crew is a program that promotes social and emotional wellness through the principles of the "Circle of Power and Respect" where scholars are encouraged to participate in courageous conversations about life and society.
- ❑ Each Crew focuses on post-secondary planning and preparation through a curriculum of college and career exploration.
- ❑ Crew members gain a sense of community and active participation through a democratic-styled curriculum.
- ❑ Crew members receive academic and social support through regular check-ins, goal setting, and advising.
- ❑ Scholars are empowered via scholar-led conferences and passage portfolios that are planned and practiced through Crew.
- ❑ Each Crew is responsible for an on-going service project collectively.

#### **Scholar LEADERSHIP AND Scholar VOICE**

Each school has a specific group of scholar leaders who work to co-create their school through democratic principles of participation, activism, voice, collaboration, citizenship, and tolerance. Through this group, scholars build their leadership and communication skills to create a strong school culture. The team plans school spirit activities and community-building events, participates in leadership training programs, and meets regularly with school leaders. The group plays an important role in developing High School programming, as well.

## **PASSAGE PORTFOLIO PRESENTATIONS**

Scholars are required to present a portfolio of work to a faculty panel at the end of 10th and 12th grades. Before they can present, all major assignments must be complete and meet grade-level standards. Each scholar selects one assignment or project from every academic subject and prepares a presentation about the process and skills they used for each one. Panel members ask questions about the strengths and weaknesses of each piece, and evaluate the scholar according to a rubric. Scholars who do not successfully complete the panel presentation have another chance to present, following more practice and reflecting upon their work, but must pass in order to move to the next grade.

**10th Grade Portfolios:** At the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, all scholars are required to make a presentation on their progress as a learner. The purpose is to empower scholars to become knowledgeable about the skills and content they possess and the areas in which they need to grow. These presentations occur at the end of the year and are required for passage into an 11<sup>th</sup> grade CREW. The presentations demonstrate the value placed on self-awareness, reflection, and empowerment.

**Senior Seminar and Senior Expedition Presentation:** In Senior Seminar, scholars will receive support for taking all necessary steps that will lead to postsecondary success. All scholars will be required to apply to 3 colleges (even if they are not interested so their options are left open), complete a resume, develop a plan for beyond Propel, and explore different opportunities like internships, apprenticeships, and other fieldwork training. The Senior Capstone Presentation will encompass much of this work, including significant fieldwork research and academic research on a topic that the scholar would like to explore in the future. Much of the class will be dedicated to ensuring that scholars are getting the support to make progress on this rigorous presentation. The purpose of the presentation is help scholars become independent in their work ethic, while preparing them for the challenges that await them after high school. These two additions to our program will help create a bridge to post high school possibilities, helping scholars be prepared and passionate for their next step. For additional information on this requirement, please see the Senior Seminar and Expedition Handbook.

## **SCHOLAR-LED CONFERENCES**

High School scholars and families are required to attend three conferences with the Crew Leader over the course of the school year, typically in August, November, and February. Please see the school year calendar for the actual dates. Families are notified a few weeks prior to each conference of time slots and asked to sign up in advance for a conference time. Families are asked to select a time slot in advance of the conference days.

- ❑ In the August conference, families meet their child's Crew Leader. Initial introductions are followed by a review of the scholar and Parent Handbook. scholars and parents commit to uphold the Propel commitments and values by signing the scholar and Family Handbook agreement. Crew Leaders will also go over the scholar's schedule.

- ❑ In November and February, scholars lead the conference. scholars share initial assessments, discusses particular strengths and weaknesses, and shares their academic and social learning goals for the school year. A short progress report with information about the scholar’s habits of work, academic performance, and social skill is also distributed in addition to all other data points such as discipline and attendance reports.
- ❑ If needed, a conference will be held in April to discuss academic concerns that may require credit recovery during summer months.

It is required that every high school scholar attends all conferences. Scholars must attend each conference, along with a parent or guardian, or the conference must be rescheduled. If a conference is not attended, the scholar risks losing credit for his or her CREW class.

### **STANDARDS-BASED GRADING**

Standards-Based Grading is one component of building scholar ownership over their own learning. Propel Schools have high levels of expectations for scholars and being able to meet grade-level standards is principle among them. Standards-Based Grading requires all scholars to adopt a growth mindset. The purpose of education is to learn, not get good grades. Grades are meant to be an accurate reflection of scholar learning. As such, scholars are encouraged to continually revise and reflect on their work in order to continually improve. Though work completion is important, scholars are required to demonstrate deep learning of all material.

Through Standards-Based Grading, all scholar work is assessed on Learning Targets that are aligned to Pennsylvania Core Standards, provided by the state which all scholars are required to meet. By assessing on Learning Targets, parents and scholars can see how much learning has been demonstrated on specific learning outcomes. This is different from a traditional form of grading that assigns grades to particular categories not aligned to standards (i.e. classwork, homework, tests, quizzes, etc.).

Scholars are continually required to reflect on their learning and provide evidence of their growth of that learning through scholar-led conferences, passage portfolios, and academic check-ins in classes and Crew. This approach not only leads to scholars who reach deeper levels of learning and who are better prepared for college and career, but allows scholars to become leaders of their own learning.

### **IV. UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES**

Propel Schools know that closing the achievement gap also includes closing the opportunity gap. Learning experiences extend well beyond the traditional classroom. scholars gain confidence and transferable knowledge by leaving their comfort zones. We are committed to ensuring scholars are prepared for success through a number of pathways. We serve all scholars to ensure success Beyond Propel. Through these opportunities Propel redefines school and our scholars defy expectation.

## **CAREER PATHWAYS**

The goal of the Career Pathways program is to provide Propel high school scholars with a set of fully-mapped out and aligned career options that promote better decision-making and prepares scholars for future success in select, high opportunity occupations. High Priority Occupations (HPO's) are identified, approved and recognized by the PA Department of Labor, PA Department of Education, PA Careerlink and Partners4Work (formerly Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board). HPOs are occupations that are in demand by employers, have higher skill needs and provide family sustaining wages.

Each pathway will consist of a variety of experiences both during and outside of the school day that build scholars exposure, knowledge, and career training in the selected fields. Some of the activities that scholars can expect to participate in include day-long job shadowing, 4-8 week summer work experiences (paid/unpaid), job and internship fairs, mock interviews, job skills training, career days and more.

The following Career Pathway is available for 2021-2022: Nursing: Scholars who select a Career Pathway are electing to complete up to 30 college credits in addition to the 25 credits required for graduation from Propel.

### **Nursing (Community College of Allegheny County)**

English (4 credits): English 9 English 10 English 11 or AP English 12 or AP	History (4 Credits): Civics World Cultures US History Financial Literacy
Math (3 credits): Algebra I Algebra II Geometry	Science (4 credits) Integrated Science Biology w/lab (1.5 credits) Chemistry w/lab (1.5 credits)
World Language (2 credits): Spanish I Spanish II	Arts (2 credits): Arts Elective Arts Elective
Other Requirements (6 credits): Math or Science Elective (1 credit) Fitness (1 credit) Computer Science (1 credit) Senior Seminar (1 credit) Crew (2 credits)	
College Courses (31 Credits): English Composition I (3 credits) - Summer 2019 Intro to Biology (3 credits) - Fall 2019 Anatomy & Physiology I (4 credits) - Spring 2020	

Anatomy & Physiology II (4 credits) - Summer 2020  
Intermediate Algebra (4 credits) - Fall 2020  
Intro to Psychology (3 credits) - Spring 2021  
Oral Communications (3 credits) - Summer 2021  
English Composition II (3 credits) - Fall 2021  
Microbiology (4 credits) - Summer 2022

scholars on this pathway can continue on to an Associate of Science in Nursing from CCAC and sit for the NCLEX-RN examination to assume an entry-level position as a Registered Nurse (RN).

### **GLOBAL EDUCATION AND SERVICE LEARNING**

Propel values Global Education to ensure that scholars are exposed to various cultures and create a deep sense of respect for diversity. Core to global education include competencies involving investigating our world, recognizing perspectives, communicating ideas, and taking action. These competencies are woven into Propel High School curricula.

The capstone service learning experience is Propel's Global Service Learning Program. In the summer before their senior year, scholars have the opportunity to travel abroad to participate in a week-long service learning project and cultural exchange. This experience is provided with our partners at Amizade and is fully funded by Propel Schools. As part of our Global Education approach, our aim is to have all seniors graduate with a passport, a voter registration card, and a drivers license.

The purpose of service learning is to create experiences that teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities. scholars complete a variety of service learning components throughout their high school years with Propel, both within and outside of the school day. In order to graduate with a Propel diploma, each scholar must complete 100 hours of service learning/community service that is logged and approved by the school. When community service is completed, the site supervisor must complete the Propel Community Service form. There is both a single-use community service form and an ongoing community service form. Signed forms must be turned into the scholar's Crew Leader who works in conjunction with the school counselor to track the hours. These hours will be updated and shared at scholar-led conferences to ensure that scholars are making progress toward this graduation requirement.

### **DUAL ENROLLMENT**

High school scholars at Propel Schools have the opportunity to earn college credits through Dual Enrollment. Dual enrollment agreements are currently in place with Point Park University (PPU) and Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). Dual Enrollment requirements involve a scholar being in good academic standing and able to demonstrate the ability to balance both their regular high school course load with their college course(s). Propel covers the cost of tuition for dual enrollment courses, books and fees. Preference for dual enrollment spaces are given to scholars who are actively engaged in the Propel career

pathway program.

## **rites of Passage**

Rites of Passage are ceremonies and/or experiences that mark important transitional periods in a scholar's life. At each transition, we celebrate achievements and developmental milestones. They may vary -- from adventure trips to passage portfolios to traditions that scholars are expected to participate in as part of the Propel Experience. Propel High School scholars can expect to participate in some or all of the following rites of passage: national/international travel, obtaining a passport, passage portfolio, senior portfolio, post-secondary plan development, college tour, prom, graduation and more.

## **School Wide Behavior Support Plan**

Propel has developed a school wide behavior support plan designed to encourage positive and productive behaviors and handle relatively minor infractions in a consistent and fair manner with a constant goal of returning the scholar to active engagement in the classroom and teaching them how to behave in a manner that meets the expectations.

## **Guidelines**

The following serves as a framework for behavior expectations throughout the school and at school sponsored events (reference the *Athletics Handbook* for participation and behavioral requirements). Additional rules and expectations may be established in each area (acting responsibly, being prepared, etc.) by school staff to guide scholar behavior in classrooms and elsewhere in the school. Each Propel School has a specific School Wide Behavior Support Plan that outlines the process and alignment of school-wide discipline and restoration. The building specific scholar/Family/School Compact outlines the exact responsibilities of each stakeholder. These can be obtained by contacting the building principal.

Families and scholars are expected to respect themselves and others by...

- assuming good intention
- acting responsibly
- being prepared
- listening carefully
- expressing themselves clearly and professionally
- asking permission
- acting in a safe manner at all time

## **Restoration and Discipline Factors**

- Age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
- Degree of harm
- Surrounding circumstances
- Nature of severity of the behavior(s)
- Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- Relationship between parties involved
- Context in which alleged incident(s) occurred



## Factors for Determining Restorative and Discipline Practices

### *Personal*

- Life skill competencies
- Experiential deficiencies
- Social relationships
- Strengths
- Talents
- Traits
- Interests
- Hobbies
- Extra-curricular activities
- Classroom participation
- Academic performance

### *Environmental*

- School culture
- School climate
- Scholar-staff relationships and staff behavior towards the scholar
- General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments
- Staff ability to prevent and de-escalate difficult or inflammatory situations
- Social-emotional and behavioral supports
- Social relationships
- Community activities
- Neighborhood culture
- Family situation

### Examples of Restorative Practices:

- ❑ Framing the aggressive behavior as a failed attempt to solve a real problem or reach a goal. The adult assists the misbehaving scholar to find a better way to solve the problem to reach a goal.
- ❑ Restitution and restoration that aligns with the behavior
- ❑ Transformative conferencing
- ❑ Peer support group
- ❑ Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- ❑ Supportive discipline to increase accountability for the offense
- ❑ Supportive interventions, including recommendation to the SAP team, peer mediation, etc.
- ❑ Behavioral assessment or evaluation
- ❑ Positive Behavioral Support Management Plan
- ❑ Scholar counseling
- ❑ Family conferences
- ❑ Scholar treatment
- ❑ scholar therapy
- ❑ Set a time, place, and person to assist in the reflect on the offending behavior, maintaining an emotionally- neutral and strength-based approach
- ❑ Scholar, school, community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to the behaviors

- School culture shift
- School climate improvement
- Research-based programs to re-teach expected behaviors
- Modifications of schedules
- Development of a response plan
- Peer support groups

### **VIII. Major Violations**

Propel Schools has placed violations of the High School scholar and Family Handbook into three categories based on the seriousness of the offense. Propel administration and each individual building principal reserve the right to determine the seriousness of each offense and place it at the appropriate level. Propel Schools uses the infraction code definitions issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) which are located in *Appendix Z of the PIMS Manual Vol 2* found on PDE's website.

#### Major I Violations

Refer to behaviors that impede orderly classroom procedures or interrupt the orderly operation of the school.

Examples (But Not Limited To):

- Repeated classroom disruption or inappropriate classroom or school behavior
- Defiance/Disrespect/Insubordination
- Disorderly bus conduct
- Eating outside of the cafeteria or in an unauthorized area
- Lying
- Running or shouting in the hallways
- Verbal harassment of others
- Failure to follow a directive given by school personnel
- Violation of dress code policy
- Inappropriate display of affection

Examples of Disciplinary Options:

- Verbal or Written Reprimand
- Parent Contact
- Removal from class
- Special Assignment
- Written Agreement/Contract
- Loss of Recess
- Loss of Privileges
- After School Detention
- Before School Detention
- Saturday Detention

#### Major II Violations

Refer to misbehavior with seriousness or frequency that tends to disrupt the learning climate of the school and/or consequences that endanger the health or safety of others in the school.

Examples But Not Limited To:

- Continuation of or extreme Major I violations
- Continuation of or extreme Defiance/Disrespect/Insubordination
- Property Damage/Vandalism
- Skipping a Consequence (Failure to serve detention, Saturday School or other consequences)
- Abusive, obscene, or disrespectful oral or written language or gestures, swearing
- Plagiarism/Cheating
- Harassment/Bullying/Threats
- Possession of Unauthorized Electronic Devices (Cell phones, handheld games, iPods, mp3 players, laser pointers, cameras)
- Violation of scholar Network/Internet Safety Policy

Examples of Disciplinary Options:

- Verbal or Written Reprimand
- Parent Contact
- Removal from class
- Special Assignment
- Written Agreement/Contract
- Loss of Recess
- Loss of Privileges
- Confiscation
- Restitution
- After School Detention
- Before School Detention
- Saturday Detention
- Bus Suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Referral to police or District Magistrate
- Expulsion

Major III Violations

Refer to misbehavior with seriousness or frequency that tends to disrupt the learning climate of the school. These acts also may be directed towards a person and/or property that pose a threat to the safety or welfare of others in the school. These violations may lead to administrative actions that could result in removal of the scholar from school and possibly intervention from legal authorities.

Examples (But Not Limited To:)

- Continuation of or Extreme Major II Violations
- Assault
- Theft

- Extortion or attempted extortion
- Possession or use of Tobacco Products, e Cigarettes, Vape Pens
- Vandalism
- Physical Aggression
- Fighting
- Out of Bounds/Out of Authorized Area
- Possession of or use of drugs
- Possession or inappropriate use of prescriptive or over the counter medication
- Undesirable Group Activity (includes clothing associated with undesirable group, language, symbols or gestures and hazing)
- Verbal or physical threats
- Continuation of or extreme Harassment/Bullying/Threats
- Bomb Threat or threatening phone calls
- Racial, ethnic or minority slurs or intimidation
- Possession/use /transfer of weapons
- Possession/use/threat of toy, look-alike, or imitation firearm
- Arson or attempted arson
- All other violations of local/state/federal laws

Examples of Disciplinary Options:

- Loss of Privileges
- Confiscation
- Out of school suspension
- Loss of transportation privileges
- Restitution of property or payment of damage
- Referral to police or District Magistrate
- Expulsion

**IX. Prohibited Items**

Unless authorized by school administration, a scholar may not have in his or her possession any of the following items:

- Cell phones
- Personal radios, mp3 players, iPods, electronic handheld games, cameras, or personal computers
- Toys or playing cards of any type
- Items associated with gambling
- Pornographic or obscene material
- Tobacco, tobacco products, or lighting devices
- e Cigarettes, Vape Pens , or any associated item
- Prescription and over-the-counter medicines
- Drugs and weapons (see Major Level III Violations for consequences and review the Weapons Policy for additional information)
- Toy, look-alike, or imitation firearm or weapon
- Explosives
- Other items that the administration may from time to time find are

disruptive to the learning environment

These items will be confiscated and will not be returned until the end of the school year. Items must be picked up by a parent/guardian by the last day of school or they will be discarded.

#### Cell Phones

All cell phones will be collected by school personnel at the beginning of the school day, secured, and returned when scholars dismiss. If scholars possess cell phones or other electronic devices without permission during the school day, they will be treated as prohibited items (see above). The school is not responsible for any damage or loss of prohibited items including as a result of theft. Confiscated cell phones will not be returned until the end of the school year. There are no exceptions.

### **X. School Dress Code**

Propel has a uniform scholar dress code in order to provide an environment where the focus is on learning and the distractions of dress are kept to a minimum. All scholars are expected to be properly dressed in the school uniform every day. All parents and guardians are expected to support their children by ensuring that scholars are properly dressed when they leave for school each morning.

scholars must be properly dressed throughout the school day and during all school activities, including before and after school activities and field trips. Parents and guardians will be notified in advance of any exceptions to this rule (field trips requiring old clothes, for example).

#### Acceptable Clothing

- SHIRTS: Solid-colored Sky Blue , Yellow, Gray, Royal Blue, Navy Blue or White polo style shirts or oxfords (short or long sleeve) with collars—with NO LOGO except a Propel Logo. All shirts must be appropriately buttoned.
- PANTS: Dark Blue or Khaki colored dress slacks/skirts/shorts (knee length)  
PLEASE NOTE: sweaters or sweatshirts in the same color of the tops may be worn.  
The school will provide a top (sweater, sweat shirt or zip up) for each scholar that may be worn if cold. All pants must be at the natural waistline - please utilize a belt as necessary.  
NO HOODIES will be permitted  
INAPPROPRIATE TOPS (all of the following are not permitted)
  - Shirts/Blouses without collars
  - Shirts/Blouses with logos that do not have a Propel Logo
  - Designs (stripes, argyle, etc.)
  - Shirts/Blouses with chest cleavage

**INAPPROPRIATE BOTTOMS** (all of the following are not permitted)

- Denim pants/shorts or jeans
- Form fitting pants; pants must fit loosely on the legs
- Leggings, jeggings, sweatpants, joggers or yoga pants of any sort
- Pants above the knee; this includes shorts and skirts
- Pants beneath the natural waistline. Under NO circumstances is any scholar allowed to sag their pants or expose their underwear. Sagging or otherwise revealing undergarments will be considered indecent exposure.

**FOOTWEAR**

- Dress shoes or sneakers
- NO open toed shoes—NO Slides—NO Boots above 1 inch—NO Boots to the knee

**OUTERWEAR**

NO hats or head coverings (bandanas, du-rags, winter headbands, scarves)—unless for religious reasons and only with supporting documentation/approval.

No coats or jackets are permitted to be worn.

**Violations**

Scholars out of compliance with the school dress code will result in appropriate disciplinary action which might include but not be limited to – warning, immediate change of clothing, loss of privileges, loss of points, detention, parent contact, and Principal intervention. After five documented violations the scholar and his/her family will be required to meet with the Principal to develop a contract to comply with the Dress Code. School staff will also attempt to address the cause of the violation (willful ignorance versus family hardship preventing compliance with the Dress Code).

**XI. Discipline Factors**

Factors for Determining Consequences

- Age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
- Degree of harm
- Surrounding circumstances
- Nature of severity of the behavior(s)
- Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- Relationship between parties involved
- Context in which alleged incident(s) occurred

Factors for Determining Remedial

Measures *Personal*

- Life skill competencies
- Experiential deficiencies
- Social relationships
- Strengths
- Talents
- Traits
- Interests
- Hobbies
- Extra-curricular activities
- Classroom participation
- Academic performance

### *Environmental*

- School culture
- School climate
- Scholar-staff relationships and staff behavior towards the scholar
- General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments
- Staff ability to prevent and de-escalate difficult or inflammatory situations
- Social-emotional and behavioral supports
- Social relationships
- Community activities
- Neighborhood culture
- Family situation

### Examples of Consequences:

- Admonishment
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Classroom or administrative detention
- Referral to disciplinarian
- In-school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Legal action
- Expulsion

### Example of Remedial Measures:

#### *Personal*

- Framing the aggressive behavior as a failed attempt to solve a real problem or reach a goal. The adult assists the misbehaving scholar to find a better way to solve the problem to reach a goal.
- Restitution and restoration
- Transformative conferencing/restorative justice
- Peer support group
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Supportive discipline to increase accountability for the bullying offense
- Supportive interventions, including participation in the Care Team, peer mediation, etc.
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to the Behavior Support Coach
- Positive Behavioral Support Management Plan
- Involvement of school disciplinarian
- Scholar counseling
- Parent conferences
- Scholar treatment
- Scholar therapy

#### *Environmental (Classroom, School building)*

- Set a time, place, and person to help the bully reflect on the offending behavior, maintaining an emotionally- neutral and strength-based approach
- School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- School culture change
- School climate improvement
- Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs
- Modifications of schedules

- Adjustment in hallway traffic
- Modifications scholar routes or patterns traveling to and from school
- Targeted use of monitors
- General professional development programs for all staff
- Professional development plans for involved staff
- Family conferences
- Peer support groups
- Law enforcement involvement

**XII. Family Expectations for Resolving School Concerns**

Propel's mission and vision is to provide a high-quality educational experience to all scholars.

As we strive to redefine school and defy expectations, we count on our families to be our partners in education. Together, we will overcome challenges and celebrate scholar success.

Should a family feel a need to present a concern about a Propel School, we want to be sure that all stakeholders are using the most effective avenues of communication. This ensures that your concerns will be given the time, attention, and consideration necessary for solution-based outcomes.

It is the expectation of Propel Schools that all school personnel, staff, scholars, and scholars' parents/guardians, and families are required to be civil in all of their interpersonal school-related interactions. Civility does not require unqualified agreement or conformity of opinion. Under no circumstances will uncivil conduct at any school-related activity be tolerated.

For purposes of this expectation, to be civil means to act with self-discipline in a courteous, respectful and orderly way in every interpersonal communication and behavior.

Uncivil conduct includes, but is not limited to: using an inappropriately loud voice; using profane, vulgar, or obscene words or gestures; belittling, jeering, or taunting; using personal epithets; using violent or aggressive gestures or body-language; repeatedly and inappropriately interrupting another speaker; repeatedly demanding personal attention at inappropriate times; purposefully and inappropriately invading personal space; purposefully ignoring appropriate communications; wrongfully interfering with another person's freedom of movement; wrongfully invading another person's private possessions; or, any other behavior that inappropriately disrupts school-related activities or violates the Propel Schools policies and expectations.

An expression of disagreement or a discussion of a controversial viewpoint is not uncivil if such expression or discussion is appropriately presented and does not disrupt a school-related activity.

Any school personnel who are uncivil shall be subject to disciplinary action per the guidelines in the Employee Handbook.

Any scholar that is uncivil shall be subject to disciplinary action per the scholar and Family Handbook.

In the event that any scholar's parent/guardian or family member is uncivil during a



school-related activity, school personnel to whom the uncivil actions are directed shall immediately warn the family to communicate or act civilly. If the family fails to correct the uncivil behavior as directed, the affected school personnel shall notify the family that the school activity is terminated, and the affected school personnel shall refer the matter to school administrators for further administrative action, criminal prosecution, or legal action, which may include, but not limited to, a prohibition from any further participation in school-related activities and being excluded from Propel Schools properties.

### **How do I advocate for my scholar?**

#### I. Define the issue.

Talk with your scholar to assure that you have a clear understanding of the situation (academic, behavioral or administrative.) Work together with your scholar to identify specific elements such as the names of parties involved and the timeline of events.

#### II. Review Propel's guidelines.

Review the Scholar and Family Handbook, policies, scholar code of conduct and administrative procedures to help you clarify the issue at hand.

#### III. Communicate the issue.

Once you have clearly outlined the issue and decided if a specific policy may have been violated, it is time to communicate your concerns to the appropriate individual. By utilizing Propel's 'Chain of Command' protocol, start by reaching out to the initial contact on the list. By skipping this step, it may take a longer time to address your concerns, as information will have to be given to and received from the initial contact by those farther along the 'Chain of Command.' Be sure to document your communication efforts by detailing such items as the date, time, contact and content of conversations that take place by telephone or in person. Save all email threads that relate to the issues at hand. This will allow all stakeholders to be in alignment if an issue moves to the next 'Chain of Command.' Per Pennsylvania wiretapping laws, you cannot record telephone calls or any other conversations without consent of the other conversational party.

### **Chain of Command: Where to Go if You have a Concern**

If your concern involves academics/learning/curricula:

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Assistant Principal/Principal
3. Senior Director of Academics
4. Assistant Superintendent
5. Superintendent

If your concern involves conduct/truancy/bullying:

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Guidance Counselor
3. Assistant Principal/Principal
4. Assistant Director of scholar Affairs
5. Assistant Superintendent
6. Superintendent

If your concern involves school bus schedules/school bus conduct/school bus safety:

1. School Bus Driver
2. School Bus Company
3. Assistant Principal/Principal
4. Assistant Director of Scholar Affairs
5. Assistant Superintendent
6. Superintendent

\*\*\*All concerns that reach the Propel Schools Administrative Office are required to be in writing prior to being addressed. Contact MUST be made the the legal guardian and/or the individual who has scholar educational rights. The written statement must outline:

- Scholar name, grade and Propel School location
- Parent(s)/Guardian name, best telephone number and email address
- Overview of the items of concern and steps already taken at the school level to address the concern(s)
- After the Propel Leadership Inquiry is received and if the appropriate procedures were followed, a response will be made within 48-72 hours

### **Social Media/Multimedia and Schools - Good Practices For All Stakeholders**

For many of us, social media usage is a part of everyday life. Social media can provide wonderful opportunities for families to connect with friends and loved ones. Unfortunately, we also see that social media can be utilized in negative, harmful and destructive ways.

As adults, we have the opportunity to set a positive example for scholars when we interact with social media. All parents and families are invited to join Propel staff in setting this good example.

DO:

- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for school staff and other families/scholars when commenting/posting on social media
- Use appropriate language when discussing school
- Address issues or concerns regarding school directly with the school (using Propel's 'Chain of Command' protocol) rather than posting them on social media
- Share good news with school leadership so that scholars can be congratulated on their successes outside of school

DON'T:

- Use social networking sites to make derogatory comments about school staff or other families/scholars
- Post photographs of other people's children without parental permission
- Feel obligated or compelled to address unsolicited inquiries from media or reporters
- Conduct school business via social networks

Propel promises to:

- Address all concerns brought to school leadership in a thoughtful, fact-based and timely manner.
- Act in the best interest of our scholars/families, schools and communities at all times

### **XIII. Scholar Search Policy**

School administration reserves the right to search a scholar, a locker, a bag, a person, or vehicle on school property if the administration feels it is in the best interest of the safety of the school.

Propel provides lockers for storage of scholars' books, school materials and personal property. This policy is designed to establish guidelines for situations in which scholar lockers may be searched or inspected.

Procedures: School lockers are the property of Propel. scholars have a limited expectation of privacy. scholars are required to ensure that their lockers do not contain spoiled food items or beverages, or soiled clothing which may attract pests, create odors or cause unhealthy conditions. A scholar locker may be opened and inspected, with or without the consent of the scholar, whenever there are odors, pests, or other indications that a locker may contain these items or similarly unhealthy conditions.

- Lockers will not be used to store any substance or item that is prohibited by law, Propel policy or rules, or that presents a threat to the health, safety or welfare of Propel's community or property
- Propel may conduct without suspicion unannounced blanket or random searches of lockers in middle schools or high schools if school officials determine in good faith that a substantial problem is threatening the welfare or safety of scholars and staff and that blanket or random searches may help solve or eliminate the problem. Before such a search is conducted, Propel will take the following steps:
  - The Superintendent or his/her designee and the school principal will jointly approve the search.
  - The Superintendent or his/her designee and the school principal will determine the

method and scope of the search. Blanket searches will include all lockers in a school or all lockers in a section of a school. Random searches will include only those lockers chosen at random without discretion of school officials. For example, searching every fourth locker in a school.

- The signature page at the end of this handbook serves as an acknowledgment of this policy. Failure or refusal to sign the acknowledgment will have no effect on Propel's right to search scholar lockers.
- ❑ Propel reserves the right to search a scholar's locker at any time based on reasonable suspicion for the purpose of determining whether the locker is being used improperly for the storage of contraband, drugs or controlled substances, illegal objects or anything that poses a threat to the school population.
- ❑ Inspections or searches may include but not be limited to the use of certified drug-sniffing dogs, metal detectors or any similar means or device used to protect the health, safety and welfare of the school population.
- ❑ The principal or designee will be present whenever a scholar locker is searched on the basis of reasonable suspicion or a cleanliness inspection. The principal or designated staff shall maintain written records of all occasions when a locker is searched or inspected. Such records shall include the reason(s) for the search/inspection, persons present, objects found and their disposition.
- ❑ The scholar will be notified and be given an opportunity to be present before an individual locker cleanliness inspection or search based on reasonable suspicion. If, however, Propel has reasonable suspicion that a locker contains something that poses a threat substance or an item that poses a threat to the health, safety or welfare of Propel's school population, the scholar locker may be searched without prior warning and without the scholar being present.
- ❑ A principal shall open a scholar locker on the request of law enforcement only upon presentation by the requesting officer of a duly authorized search warrant, or that the circumstances otherwise permit the search to be lawfully conducted in accordance with the standards applicable to law enforcement actions, or on the intelligent and voluntary consent of the scholar. School staff will not interfere with or obstruct searches initiated by law enforcement, but may assist when law enforcement officials have requested such assistance.
- ❑ The principal will be responsible for the safekeeping and proper disposition of any substance or item found in a scholar locker if such substance or item is prohibited by law, Propel policy or rules, or presents a threat to the health, safety or welfare of Propel's community or property. Confiscated substances or items may be used as evidence in a disciplinary hearing.
- ❑ Illegal or dangerous substances or items will be given to law enforcement officials.
- ❑ scholars are responsible for the security of their lockers.
- ❑ scholars, parents and staff will receive a copy of this policy annually per the scholar and Family Handbook and via the school website.
- ❑ The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop procedures to implement this policy.

### **References:**

PA Constitution--PA Const. Art I. Sec 8

School Code--24 P.S. Sec. 510

State Board of Education Regulations--22 PA Code Sec. 12.14

United States Constitution--Amendment IV

In re F.B., 555 Pa. 661, 726 A.2d 361, 368 (1999)

Commonwealth v. Class, 551 Pa 25, 709 A.2d 350, 355-56 (1998)

Safford Unified School Dist. No 1 v. Redding, 129 S.ct 2633 (U.S. 2009)

#### **XIV. Scholar Network Internet Policy**

The Propel Charter Schools and community have developed the Propel Charter Schools computer network for instructional use. All files on the network are considered property of Propel Charter Schools, and subject to normal review and maintenance procedures. The use of the Internet/Propel network is a *privilege*, not a right.

##### Policies:

It is the policy of Propel Charter Schools to mandate and expect that scholars will use the Internet/network in a responsible manner. Accordingly, the school has established a policy and procedures for the use of the Internet/network along with rules governing the behavior of scholars who access the Internet. scholars who do not comply with the standards of behavior outlined in the scholar conduct and discipline plan or with the Internet/network rules below may lose their privilege to use the Internet/network and/or be subject to other disciplinary action.

##### Guidelines:

The Propel Charter Schools network is to be used only in a moral and ethical manner. As a user of the network, scholars are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

- Only licensed software may be used on the network.
- Games and personal software are not to be installed on the computers. No one shall execute a software program that has not been installed on the server by the Propel Technology Department.
- Intentionally altering the files and/or the hardware on Propel computers or mobile devices will be viewed as vandalism.
- Deliberate attempts to spread viruses through the network will be dealt with by the administration of the school as a violation of the scholar Network Acceptable Use Policy.
- Unauthorized copying of school software will be considered theft.
- Each scholar will be provided a username and password to be used by that scholar to access the network. This is the only login information that a scholar should be using. scholars shall not lend their password out to anyone else and should inform a staff member immediately if they feel their password has been compromised.
- Users are to logoff the system as soon as they are finished to prevent use under the wrong login information.
- There will be no distributing of threatening, obscene, or harassing messages over the network or through the printer.
- Abusive, obscene, or disrespectful oral or written language or gestures and swearing will be strictly prohibited in any digital format including, but not limited to, electronic mail.
- scholars may not engage in advertising of products or services for sale or participate in "chain letters" or "pyramid schemes".
- No confidential information is to be distributed to other parties at any time. This includes re-posting of information sent by another party.
- scholars are not permitted to connect to networks other than those provided by the school.
- scholars are not permitted to deliberately bypass the Propel Charter Schools Internet firewall by use of proxy servers or other known methods.
- Scholars will follow the instructional directives of the teacher or staff member in charge at all times.**
- The illegal use of copyrighted software is strictly prohibited. Any and all damages which may occur as a result of unauthorized usage or access will be the responsibility of the user.
- The use of the network to access obscene or pornographic material is prohibited and will be dealt with as a serious breach of school rules.

##### **References:**

School Code--24 P.S. Sec. 1303.I-A

## **XV. Social Media Policy**

As a Propel scholar and family member you represent Propel. Even when scholars are not posting to social media during school hours, scholars must follow Propel Internet policies and these guidelines anytime you post material that could identify you or your relationship to the school or when using Web tools in the classroom or in any way related to classroom or school activities.

1. *Be aware of what you post online.* Social media venues are public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Do not post anything you wouldn't want friends, enemies, parents, teachers, or future employers to see.
2. *Follow the school's policies when writing online.* What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online. Harassing, bullying, threatening and other types of inappropriate conduct is prohibited in school and online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, do it in a respectful way. Criticism should be constructive and not hurtful.
3. *Be safe online.* Never give out personal information, including last names, phone numbers, exact birth dates, and addresses. Do not share your password with anyone besides your teachers and your parents.
4. *Be careful when you link.* Linking to other websites to support your thoughts and ideas is recommended. However, be sure to read the entire article prior to linking to ensure that all information is appropriate to a school setting
5. *Do your own work!* Do not use other people's work without their permission. It is illegal to copy and paste other people's work (even parts of their work) without giving credit to that person. Hyperlink to your sources or include the web address where the information can be found. Pictures, videos, songs, and audio clips may also be protected by law. If you don't have permission to use the images, videos, songs or other clips, don't use them.
6. *Don't be an imposter.* Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity
7. *Use appropriate writing.* Blog and wiki posts should be well written. Use proper grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. If you suggest edits to someone else's work be sure it is in the spirit of improving the writing.
8. *Tell someone.* If you find inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, tell your teacher. If you cannot tell your teacher, tell your principal.
9. *Follow the rules.* scholars who do not abide by Propel's policies and these guidelines will be subject to the consequences outlined in this Acceptable Use Policy.
10. *Use social media appropriately outside of school.* Speech, including but not limited to social media posts, that disrupts the school, makes a threat against a teacher or another scholar, or amounts to harassment will follow the same actions as described in the Major Violations sections.

### General Statement

Propel Charter Schools issued email accounts are not private and Propel Schools retains the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received, or sent over the electronic mail system as necessary.

Propel Charter Schools Administration reserves the right to make random audits of the history files

that record which websites scholars have visited.

The school is not, and cannot be, held responsible for the loss of material, accidental corruption or any other action that might affect transmission or loss of data.

Propel Charter Schools has taken all precautions to maintain safety of all users and these guidelines are written and enforced in the interest of all users' safety and effective use of the Internet.

#### Consequences

- Restriction of network access
- Loss of the grade
- Financial responsibility for repair/replacement of damaged items
- Suspension in accordance with school discipline code
- Criminal prosecution under appropriate state and federal laws

While teachers do their best to monitor scholar use of the Internet, the nature of the network makes it impossible to guarantee that scholars will never gain access to inappropriate areas. It is the intent that the network be used ethically for instructional activities. If we determine that a scholar has been using the system in an inappropriate activity, the privilege will be withdrawn.

**The signature of the parent or guardian must be on file for each scholar *prior* to Internet access. Access will be denied until the signature page in this scholar and Family Handbook is signed by a parent/guardian and received by the school.**

### **XVI. Propel Internet Safety Policy**

It is the policy of the Propel Schools to (a) prevent its computer network from being used to access or to transmit inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail or other forms of direct communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of minors' personal identification information; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) ("CIPA"). For specific definitions, please see an administrator.

#### Inappropriate Material Access

To the extent practical, technology protection measures shall be used to block or filter access to inappropriate material on the Internet or in other forms of electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the CIPA, internet filters will be used to block any material deemed to be obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors. Subject to staff supervision technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) (5) (D).

#### Inappropriate Network Use

To the extent possible, steps will be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Propel Schools' online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the CIPA prevention of inappropriate network use includes (a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" and other unlawful activities; (b) unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

#### Supervision and Monitoring

All Propel Schools staff members shall be responsible for supervising and monitoring use of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the CIPA.

Propel will educate all scholars about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response. The concept of digital citizenship will continue to be discussed from Kindergarten through 12th Grade, with additional instruction focusing on research and information literacy.

The Superintendent/CEO or his/her designated representative(s) shall be responsible for developing and implementing procedures for disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures.

#### Adoption

The Board of Propel Schools adopted this Internet Safety Policy at a public meeting, following normal public notice, on November 18, 2008 and in revised form in 2021.

#### References:

School Code--24 P.S. Sec 1303.1-A

PA Crimes Code--18 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 5903, 6312

Child Internet Protection Act--24 P.S. Sec. 4601 et seq.

Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)

47 U.S.C. § 254(h) (5) (D).

### **XVII. Photo Permission**

Photographs and videotape footage of scholars involved in various school related activities are often used as part of Propel's community relations. Photographs/videotapes may be used in school publications, video productions, newspapers and on television. Names of scholars may be placed in articles in school and local newspapers/newsletters to recognize various scholar achievements. "Opt-Out" photo permission forms are sent home to families at the beginning of each school year.

**In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents/guardians/family members and scholars are not permitted to view internal camera footage.**

### **XVIII. Attendance**

Consistent attendance at school is not only essential for academic, social, and behavior excellence, it is also the law. It's the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that children attend school regularly as required by the state of Pennsylvania.

Immediately upon returning to school after an absence, scholars are to present a written absence note to the school office containing the dates of absence, the reason for the absence, and a parent/guardian signature. Absences for reasons of illness, funeral, medical and dental appointments, religious observance or court appearances will be considered excused.

When a scholar accumulates three or more days of unexcused absences, a legal written notice will be sent to the parent/guardian informing them that there has been a violation of the compulsory attendance provisions of PA School Law. Further violations can result in a citation or truancy complaint being filed against the parent or the student (15 years and older) with the District Magistrate.

Scholars with 10 consecutive unexcused absences will be permanently dropped from the school's rolls.



Scholars are limited to no more than 20 absences in a full school year and no more than 10 in a semester. Both excused and unexcused absences are applicable to this total. Any absence beyond 10 days must be accompanied with a medical doctor's excuse. A scholar with a chronic health condition and/or other serious problem may petition for a waiver to the attendance policy.

### Excused Absences

An excused absence can be defined as, but is not limited to:

1. Medical appointment verified by a medical note.
2. Illness confirmed by a medical note
3. Observance of a religious holiday.
4. Illness confirmed by a note from a parent/guardian
5. Court appearance demanded by official summons or subpoena verified by court.
6. Funeral (confirmed with a parent/guardian note).
7. Extenuating circumstances that have been approved by administration.
8. Approved Educational Trips/Tours
9. Out of School Suspensions

### Preplanned Educational Tour or Trip

If parents or guardians plan to take a family vacation and have it classified as an "educational trip," they must inform the principal at least one (1) week in advance of the reason for the absence on the District's "Request for Excused Absences from School for a Preplanned Educational Tour or Trip" form. Total pre-approved absences during the school year will not exceed five (5) school days unless approved by the Superintendent. All pre-approved absences will be recorded as excused absences. An application must be filled out for each child seeking excused absence from school. Applications are also required for half-day trips. Vacations will not be approved as educational trips if any of the following apply:

- If the trip is scheduled during the weeks of PSSA testing, Keystone testing, or other standardized testing applicable to the child(ren)
- If a scholar is considered truant (3 unlawful absences), habitually truant (6 unlawful absences) or has exceeded ten (10) excused absences
- If a scholar's academic progress is in jeopardy

Scholars are required to complete all assignments and tests deemed necessary by the teacher(s) within a time period that is equivalent to the number of days of excused absence not to exceed five (5) days (e.g., if a scholar missed three (3) days of school, he/she will be given three (3) days to make up all missed assignments). The approval of any preplanned educational tour or trip is within the discretion of the principal and is not guaranteed.

### Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence can be defined as, but is not limited to:

1. Any absence that is not confirmed with a parental/guardian note, medical staff note, or within the three day grace period.
2. Truancy (absence from school without verification from the parent).
3. An illness which lasts for more than three consecutive days that is not verified by a medical note.
4. Vacation days
5. Personal reasons or business.
6. Failure to attend because of transportation problems, unless transported by school bus.
7. Non-school sponsored sports activities or events.

As per state guidelines, scholars must be in attendance 50% of the day to be considered present for the day.

### Tardiness

**Those scholars who are not in their seats and prepared to learn when the first class begins at the following time are considered tardy to school:**

**Propel Andrew Street High School - 8:25 AM**

**Propel Braddock Hills High School - 7:45 AM**

**Propel Montour High School - 7:45 AM**

Scholars who are tardy to school **must be presented at the Main Office by a parent or guardian.**

Tardiness for reasons of illness, funeral, medical and dental appointments, religious observance or court appearances will be considered excused. All other tardies will be considered unexcused. Excessive unexcused tardies may be converted into unexcused absences and may lead to possible prosecution before the magistrate.

### Early Dismissals

Early dismissals may be requested for funerals, doctor appointments, and court appearances. Such requests must be made no later than 8:30AM the morning of the requested early dismissal. scholars are to present an early dismissal form to the school office listing the date, time and reason for dismissal, and including a parent/guardian signature. At the time of dismissal, the scholar must report to the front office to sign out of the building. Scholars will not be permitted to leave for an early dismissal after 2:45 PM at Propel Andrew Street High School and 2:15PM at Braddock Hills High School and Montour High School. scholars will only be allowed to leave the school after phone verification of the dismissal from a parent/ guardian on the day of the dismissal. Excessive unexcused early dismissals may be converted into unexcused absences and may lead to possible hearings before the magistrate.

Governor Wolf signed new truancy legislation into law on Thursday, November 3, 2016. The law clearly states that the purpose of Pennsylvania's truancy law is to improve school attendance and deter truancy "through a comprehensive approach to consistently identify and address attendance issues as early as possible with credible intervention techniques."

The law explicitly defines "truant" as a scholar subject to compulsory school laws "having three (3) or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year. The law streamlines the definition of

"habitual truancy." Under the law, "habitual truancy" is defined as a scholar subject to compulsory school laws "having six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year."

Therefore, a child is habitually truant once he or she accumulates six unexcused absences during the course of the school year. These absences do not need to run consecutively. A child will be considered chronically absent when enrolled for 90+ days and absent (excused or unexcused) 10% or more of the

school days enrolled.

The law has “procedural” requirements that Propel Schools will abide by. The first pertains to procedures schools must follow when a child is “truant”; the second pertains to the procedures a school must follow when a child is “habitually truant.” Propel Schools will notify in writing the person in parental relation with a child within ten (10) school days of the child’s third unexcused absence that the child has been “truant.” This notice will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future and may include the offer of an attendance improvement conference. If the child continues to be truant and incurs additional absences after this notice has been issued, Propel Schools will offer the scholar and parent/guardian a scholar attendance improvement conference.

Habitually truant children under fifteen years of age. If a habitually truant child is under fifteen (15), the Propel Schools will refer the child to either: (1) a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or (2) the county children and youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act. Additionally, Propel Schools may file a citation against the parent of a habitually truant child under fifteen (15) in a magisterial district court. If a habitually truant child is fifteen (15) or older, Propel Schools will either: (1) refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or (2) file a citation against the scholar or parent in a magisterial district court. If a habitually truant child aged fifteen (15) or older incurs additional absences after a school refers that child to an attendance improvement program or the child refuses to participate in an attendance improvement program, the school may refer the child to the local CYS agency for possible disposition as a dependent child. The new law defines “school attendance improvement conference” as a “conference where the child’s absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance, with or without additional services.” Propel Schools will invite the following individuals to the conference: the scholar, the person in parental relation to the child, appropriate school personnel, recommended service providers (e.g. case managers, behavioral health providers, probation officers, children and youth practitioners, etc.). Propel Schools will hold the conference even if the parent/guardian declines to participate or fails to attend after the school provides advance written notice and makes attempts to communicate via telephone. There is no legal requirement for either the child or parent to attend an attendance improvement conference. Propel Schools will document the outcome of any attendance improvement conference in a written attendance improvement plan. Propel Schools may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled attendance improvement conference has passed. Attendance improvement conferences will not be perfunctory warnings that further absences will result in legal action against the scholar or parent. Propel Schools will create attendance improvement plans in conformity with the overriding purposes of the law.

Propel Schools will abide by the law for the procedure when referring cases of habitual truancy to the magisterial district courts. The venue will be determined based on the location of the school in which the child is enrolled. A magisterial district court will provide notice of the hearing to the following: the school, the person in parental relation, the local CYS agency.

#### Burden of Proof:

At the trial with respect to the citation, the burden, at all times, is on the school to prove beyond a reasonable doubt the following:

The child was habitually truant while subject to the compulsory attendance law without “justification” This standard aligns with the definition of habitual truancy in the Juvenile Act. The Superior Court has held that the Juvenile Act places the burden on the Government to prove each of these three elements. This means that the school must prove each of these elements, including that the habitual truancy was not justified. There is no burden on a scholar or parent to put forth evidence that the habitual truancy was justified. Of course, a scholar or parent may still put forth evidence that the habitual truancy was justified. If the school fails to prove that the habitual truancy was not justified, the school cannot carry its burden.

#### Affirmative Defenses:

Scholar and parent-respondents may put forth evidence of an “affirmative defense” that justifies the habitual truancy. For example, at least one court has held that a scholar has a right to present evidence of her disability to justify her habitual truancy. Additionally, the law continues to permit parents to present an affirmative defense that he or she took every reasonable step to ensure the child’s attendance at school. Affirmative defenses must be proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

Relevant evidence: The law explicitly states that, at sentencing, the judge must permit the school, parent, or scholar to present relevant information that will assist the judge in making an informed decision regarding the appropriate sentence. This is important because the law affords considerable discretion to local judges in determining the most appropriate penalty in conformity with the purposes of the law.

Potential Penalties: The law states that a person convicted of habitual truancy may be fined: (1) up to \$300 per offense, with court costs, for the first offense; (2) up to \$500 per offense, with court costs, for the second offense; and (3) up to \$750 per offense, with court costs, for a third and any and all subsequent offenses. The law defines “offense” as “each citation filed under Section 1333.1 for a violation of the requirement for compulsory school attendance regardless of the number of unexcused absences averred in the citation.” The law states that a court may jail a parent/guardian who fails to pay a fine or completed court-ordered community service for a period not to exceed three days in any one case. The failure of a scholar to comply with a fine or costs associated with court must not be considered a “delinquent act” under the Juvenile Act. Under the law, if a parent or scholar is convicted a second time for habitual truancy within three years, the court must refer the child to CYS for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act. Judges have the discretion on whether to send the Department of Transportation a certified record of a scholar’s conviction for license suspension. Where a scholar’s license has been suspended, he or she may seek to have his or her eligibility restored by providing DOT with a form that indicates that (1) the child has attended school for a period of at least two months after the first conviction or four months after the second conviction without an unexcused absence or tardy; or (2) is subject to exception to the compulsory school attendance law; or (3) has graduated from school. The law provides that scholars who have been convicted of violating the compulsory school attendance laws and had their licenses suspended may apply for an occupational limited license pursuant to 75 Pa.C.S. § 1553 in order to get to and from work or school. Thus, even a scholar whose license has been suspended may drive to school if he or she applies for and receives an occupational limited license. This removes a potential barrier to school attendance. The law states that a child who has been convicted of habitual truancy may apply for an expungement. The court must grant a child’s application if (1) the child has earned a high school diploma, a Commonwealth secondary diploma, or another PDE-approved equivalent, or is subject to an exception to compulsory school attendance and (2) the child has satisfied any sentence imposed by the court with respect to the conviction, including payment of fines and costs. If a court grants an expungement application, the court must also order DOT to expunge all administrative records related to the convictions. Courts should make scholars aware of the opportunity to seek an expungement throughout the dispositional process.

**References:**

Pennsylvania Department of Education  
In re C.M.T., 861 A.2d348, 352-55 (pa. Super Ct. 2004)

**XIX. Transportation**

Propel Schools does not provide transportation to and from school. The school district of residence is responsible for providing transportation. The law requires school districts to provide transportation to resident scholars attending a Propel School "on such dates and periods that the charter school is in regular

session" if: The charter school is located within the school district or the charter school is located not more than ten miles by the nearest public highway beyond the school district boundary. The law allows a school district to ask a child, regardless of age, to walk up to a mile and a half to a bus stop or school. The mile and a half is measured by public roads and does not include any private lane or walkway of the child's residence. All questions and concerns about assigned routes, bus stops, and/or any bus grievance out of the realm of Propel Schools control should be directed to the resident bus company.

**Failure to update and maintain accurate residency information and home address may result in loss of transportation until such matters are resolved and/or withdrawal.**

**Any change to daily transportation must be made no later than 8:30AM on the morning of the request.** The appropriate forms must be submitted to the main office. For example, if a scholar is not taking the bus home and is getting picked up by an authorized friend/relative the office must be notified that morning in writing.

Scholars who take a school bus are expected to act responsibly and respectfully at all times. Every scholar is charged with the responsibility of proper school bus behavior and the knowledge that pupil transportation is a privilege. Scholars may be denied the privilege of being transported to and from school or other school related activities. Parents/guardians are responsible for supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day. Once the child boards the bus, and only at that time, does he/she become the responsibility of Propel Schools and the bus company. In cases that scholars do not conduct themselves according to the bus expectations and expectations outlined in this handbook, instances will be brought to the attention of the building principal. As Propel Schools knows the importance of scholars being present in school and to prevent the loss of the bus privilege, the schools take a number of measures to facilitate responsible and respectful behavior, including but limited to:

**The procedures and policies in the scholar and Family Handbook apply whenever a scholar is on a school bus.**

- The Principal or his/her designee reviews expectations for appropriate bus behavior at all Family Orientations.
- Classroom teachers review expectations for appropriate bus behavior.
- A staff member meets each bus every morning to ensure appropriate scholar behaviors with the bus driver.
- A staff member contacts any parent or guardian whose child had failed to act responsibly and respectfully on the bus and imposes the appropriate consequences for the misbehavior.

**Bus Regulations and Expectations:**

- ❑ Be at the bus stop 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled time.
- ❑ Parents/guardians are responsible for supervision of scholars before boarding and after departing from the bus.
- ❑ **Parents/guardians are NOT permitted to board a school bus. Only those people who are authorized by the driver are permitted to be on the school bus. Please reference Pennsylvania's unauthorized bus entry statute**
  - Cross in front of the school bus when crossing a street.
  - Keep buses clean, sanitary, and orderly.
  - Obey bus drivers/monitors, as they are in full charge of buses and pupils while in transit.
  - Always ride seated in an assigned seat facing the front of the bus.
  - Never cause damage to the school bus, and report anything noticed to the driver. Any scholar disfiguring or mutilating a bus will be required to pay for the damage, and denied further use of buses.
  - Never get off the bus at any stop other than your assigned bus stop, unless you have

- written permission from your parents and the bus driver.
- Never fight, scuffle, or incite any disturbance creating a hazard to the safety of others on the bus.
  - Never use obscenities or profane language on the school bus.
  - Do not extend arms or head out of the bus window at any time.

**School officials will act upon referrals given by the school bus driver.**

- First Referral – Bus Discipline Letter
- Second Referral – 1 day bus suspension
- Third Referral – 3 day bus suspension
- Fourth Referral – 5 day bus suspension (Family conference will be scheduled before the scholar is permitted to ride the bus.)
- Fifth Referral – 10 day bus suspension (Family conference will be scheduled before the scholar is permitted to ride the bus.)
- Sixth Referral – Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

**The above consequences are the bare minimum for each referral. School officials reserve the right to impose greater consequences depending on the severity of the situation. In addition, bus audio and video recordings are not always available as evidence to confirm violations. Accounts given by the driver and/or additional investigation may be used to substantiate referrals.**

**References:**

School Code--24 P.S. Sec 510  
18 Pa. C.S. § 5571

**XX. Criminal Activity**

Propel will report to the appropriate authorities any criminal act upon suspicion that such an act has been committed. The school shall also cooperate with the authorities in the prosecution of such offenses. This applies to all stakeholders including scholars and parents/guardians.

**XXI. Weapons Policy**

Any instance of possession or suspicion of possession of a weapon; including a toy, look-alike, and imitation weapon; will be reported to the appropriate authorities. A weapon shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. Propel will cooperate with the authorities in the prosecution of such offenses. Possession of a weapon will be grounds for expulsion from the school. Any object used in a threatening manner shall be considered a weapon even if its normal use is not as a weapon. This applies to all stakeholders including scholars and parents/guardians.

**XXII. Smoke Free/Tobacco Free Policy**

Propel is committed to providing a healthy and productive environment for staff, scholars, scholar families and community members. We believe that education has a central role to play in establishing healthy habits for children; we also believe it is appropriate to take measures to help scholars resist the use of tobacco.

Scholars are NOT permitted to use or possess tobacco products of any kind or any form including E Cigarettes and Vape Pens while in a school building, on school property, in a school vehicle, in a school bus, or while attending any school sponsored function at any time.

All stakeholders are NOT permitted to use tobacco products of any kind or any form including E Cigarettes and Vape Pens while in a school building, on school property, in a school vehicle, in a school bus, or while attending any school sponsored function at any time.

### **XXIII. Guidelines for Medication Administration**

An increase in the number of medications being sent into the schools make it necessary to establish guidelines for taking medications in the school, for the protection of both scholars and school personnel.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GIVE MEDICATION AT HOME as only essential prescribed medicines will be given at school. The parent or guardian will assume, in writing, full responsibility for any medications sent into school. **All medications MUST be brought to school and picked up by an adult.** If the School Nurse is not available, the building Principal may accept delivery of the medication. In addition: the administration of over-the-counter medications is governed by state law, which forbids a school nurse to administer any medication without a licensed medical practitioner's or dentist's written order.

#### *All Medications*

- All medications, including over-the-counter medications, must be accompanied by written instruction from a licensed medical practitioner or dentist. **NO EXPIRED MEDICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- All prescription medications must be in its original labeled pharmacy container and must be accompanied by a health professional's written request for administration which includes:
  - Name of scholar
  - Name of medication
  - Name of qualified healthcare professional
  - Dosage
  - Date
  - Time of administration
- Over-the-counter medications must be in the manufacturer's original container and be labeled by the parent/guardian with the scholar's name and must be accompanied by a health professional's written request for administration which includes:
  - Name of scholar
  - Name of medication
  - Name of qualified healthcare professional
  - Dosage
  - Date
  - Time of administration
- In addition, a parent or guardian must complete a permission form issued by the school for ALL medications given at school.
- All medications are to be kept in a locked cabinet in the school health office.
- Medications not in compliance with the above guidelines cannot be given and will be returned to the parents/guardians.
- Self-administration of emergency asthma and anaphylaxis medications (EpiPens) will be permitted with a licensed medical practitioners order and parent permission, including a statement that it is necessary for the scholar to carry the medication and that the scholar is capable of self-administration.

#### *Self-Administration*

To self-administer medication, the scholar must be able to:

- Respond to and visually recognize his/her name
  - Identify his/her medication
  - Measure, pour and administer the prescribed dosage
- 
- All medication orders and parent permission will be valid for the current school year only. ALL MEDICATIONS must have a new doctor's order and parent permission submitted at the beginning of each school year.
  - All medications will be sent home with a parent or guardian only at the conclusion of the school year. Any medication not picked up at the conclusion of the school year will be discarded. No medication can be kept at the school over the summer. Medication will be returned to the parent or an adult designee only

#### Field Trip Medications

Due to current Pennsylvania State Mandates school medications **MAY NOT BE SENT WITH THE TEACHER** if the school nurse is unable to attend the field trip. Families of children with life threatening medical conditions and those taking daily medications will be dealt with on an individual basis. Families of children who receive routine medication during school hours may choose to have their scholar not receive his/ her medication on the day of the field trip if a nurse cannot attend. Any questions should be directed to your scholar's school nurse.

#### When to Keep Your Scholar Home from School

Upon occasion it is necessary for your scholar to remain home due to an illness. The Allegheny County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have provided the following guidelines:

- Your child should not be sent to school hoping that he or she will feel better after arriving.
- Your child should be kept home following a nighttime bout of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea and watched for further symptoms.
- Your child should remain home if he/she has had a temperature of 100 degrees or higher. A child should have a normal temperature for 24 hours **without fever reducing medicines** before returning to school.
- Whooping Cough: exclude from school until 5 days from start of appropriate antimicrobial treatment.
- Pink Eye: 24 hours after initiation of treatment.
- Strep Throat: 24 hours after initiation of treatment.
- Lice: Until treated with a pediculicidal agent. Seven days after treatment a health care provider or school nurse shall re-examine for infestation.
- Chicken Pox: Six days from the outbreak of the last crop of blisters with all pox marks dried.
- Impetigo, scabies or ringworm: Until judged non-infectious by the physician or 24 hours after initiation of treatment.

#### **XXIV. Miscellaneous**

##### Telephone Use

Scholars are not permitted to use the school telephones to make phone calls during the school day unless given permission and accompanied by school staff. If there is an emergency an adult will make a phone call home.

##### Updating Pertinent Information

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure all pertinent information including but not limited to telephone numbers, address, medical information, and emergency contacts are up to date. If there is a change in residency, a change of address form must be completed within 10 days. If this does not



occur, the scholar may be dropped from school enrollment.

#### Wellness Policy

Please reference the Wellness Policy on Propel Schools website for more information regarding wellness and birthday celebrations and food treats.

#### Lost and Damaged School Property

Scholars are responsible for taking care of and returning school property provided for their use—including but not limited to locks, lockers, lab equipment, books, technology. Families will be billed for lost or damaged items. Scholars with outstanding balances may be excluded from school activities and reports may be held.

#### Complaints

See Family Expectations for Resolving School Concerns

#### Accidents

If your scholar is injured at school, we will make him/her comfortable and begin appropriate first aid procedures. If you cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact the emergency numbers you have provided to us. If your scholar needs to be transported to a hospital, an ambulance will be called. A school staff member will accompany your scholar to the hospital and stay with him/her until you arrive.

#### Volunteer Practices/Procedures

All volunteers (scholar family members, community members) must have the required clearances including criminal, child abuse, FBI, PA Department of Education, and a TB test. Volunteers are assigned duties by the building principal and will work directly with an administrator who will work with faculty or staff for appropriate placement and direction of the volunteer work.

Any other arrangements must be cleared with the superintendent or his/her designee. Volunteers must have proper clearances to assist with school events, performances, trips, attend conferences, etc. Paperwork to obtain the proper clearances can be provided by the building administrative assistant. All volunteers will be required to follow the Building Visitation Guidelines.

#### Building Visitation Guidelines

The safety of our staff and scholars is of the utmost importance to us. In order to enter a school building, all visitors must have in their possession a photo ID that will be scanned as a security measure. Upon entering the building, all visitors must go directly to the main office, check in with the administrative assistant, provide photo ID, and secure a visitor's pass, and wait for a staff member to provide you with directions on how to proceed. Propel Schools has the right to deny visitors into the building and/or have them exit school grounds at any time.

#### Parent Visitation

The administration and faculty of Propel Schools wish to support home/school cooperation. In order to make your visit to school more profitable to you and to us, and safe for all scholars, the following must occur:

1. Schedule your visit at least 24 hours in advance. A phone call to the principal office will ensure all staff are prepared and aware of your presence.
2. If you desire a conference with a teacher, make an appointment through the office. Classes will not be interrupted for this purpose.
3. All visitors must register in the office and obtain a visitor's ID. See Building Visitation Guidelines.

**XXV. Title I, Part A: LEA Parent-Family Engagement Policy**  
**PART I. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

Propel Schools agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

1. The school district will put into operation programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.
2. Consistent with section 1118, the school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent-family engagement policies meet the requirements of section 1118(b) of the ESEA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1118(d) of the ESEA.
3. The school district will incorporate this district wide parent-family engagement policy into its LEA plan developed under section 1112 of the ESEA. In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent-family engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
4. If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school district will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the State Department of Education.
5. The school district will be governed by the following statutory definition of parent-family engagement , and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with this definition: Parent-family engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving scholar academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring— (A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning; (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; (C) that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA.

**PART II. DESCRIPTION OF HOW DISTRICT WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED DISTRICT WIDE PARENT-FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COMPONENTS**

1. Propel Schools will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of its district wide parent-family engagement policy under section 1112 of the ESEA:
  - a. Propel will meet with parents, families, members of the community, and school staff to discuss the design and implementation of the parent-family engagement policy. Propel will recruit participants through various avenues of publicity. Meetings will be planned and held at convenient times and locations.
2. Propel Schools will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA:
  - a. Propel will meet with parents, families, members of the community, and school staff to discuss the design and implementation of the parent-family engagement policy. Propel will recruit participants through various avenues of publicity. Meetings will be planned and held at convenient times and locations.

3. Propel will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parent-family engagement activities to improve scholar academic achievement and school performance:
  - a. Monthly meetings with school leadership will be held to provide professional development and support. Monthly checklists will be sent to school leadership.
4. Propel Schools will coordinate and integrate parent-family engagement strategies in Title I, Part A with parental involvement strategies under the following other programs:
  - a. Local Head Start Programs and partnerships with establishments in the local communities.
5. Propel Schools will take the following actions to conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent-family engagement policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parental involvement activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its parent-family engagement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents) its parent-family engagement policies.
  - a. Multiple modes of communication will be used to notify all parents and families of the annual review meeting. Parents and families will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with the principal and instructional coaches to provide feedback and suggestions for evaluating the parent-family engagement policy.
  - b. 6. Propel Schools will build the schools' and parent's capacity for strong parent-family engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve scholar academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:
  - c. The school district will, with the assistance of its Title I, Part A schools, provide assistance to parents of children served by the school district or school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph by conducting parent-family workshops:
    - i. the State's academic content standards, the State's scholar academic achievement standards, the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments, the requirements of Title I Part A, how to monitor their child's progress, and how to work with educators
  - d. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, by conducting parent-family workshops.
  - e. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools, by holding professional development sessions.
  - f. The school district will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent-family engagement programs and activities with Head Start and public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents and families in more fully participating in the education of their children, by visiting local pre-schools and conducting parent-family workshops.

- g. The school district will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent- programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand, by using multiple exposures and modes of communication.

### **PART III. DISCRETIONARY DISTRICT WIDE PARENT-FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS**

1. Involving parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training;
2. Providing necessary literacy training for parents from Title I, Part A funds, if the school district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for that training;
3. Paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental involvement activities
4. In order to maximize parent-family involvement and participation in their children’s education, arranging school meetings at a variety of times, or conducting in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend those conferences at school
5. Adopting and implementing model approaches to improving parental involvement
6. Developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parental involvement activities
7. Providing other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under section 1118 as parents may request

### **PART IV. ADOPTION**

This District wide Parent-Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs. It will be reviewed annually with all stakeholders. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children annually.

### **Title I, Part A: School Level Parent-Family Engagement Policy**

Propel Schools is dedicated to providing a high-quality education for every scholar. To accomplish this objective, there needs to be a strong partnership between the school and the family. Parents and families work as partners to increase scholar achievement and develop positive attitudes about self and school.

Teachers will keep parents and families informed of grade level learning objectives and expectations. All scholars will be expected to work toward mastering these objectives before moving onto the next grade level. In order for this to occur, the expectation is that parents and families attend at least two face-to-face conferences at the school where the academic, social, and emotional progress of the child is discussed.

Propel Schools has developed a written Title I Schoolwide Parent-Family Engagement Policy and School/Parent/Scholar Compact with input from parents and families. Propel believes that the parents and families are the child’s first teacher and even after entering school, the continued involvement of the parents and families is critical to the success of the child while in school. In order to accomplish this goal, all parents and families will receive a copy of the Parent-Family Engagement Policy and School/Parent/scholar Compact at the beginning of the school year, and it will be posted on the school’s

web-site. The policy describes the means for carrying out the following Title I parent and family engagement requirements [20 USC 6318 Section 1118(a)-(f) inclusive.

### Parent-Family Engagement in the I Schoolwide Program

To involve parent and families in the Title I Schoolwide Program at Propel Schools, the following practices have been established:

- The school convenes two annual meetings each fall and spring to inform all parents and families about the Title I Schoolwide Programs, Title I requirements ,and about the right of parents to be involved in the Title I Schoolwide Program.
- The school offers a flexible number of meeting times and dates for all parents and families, such as meetings in the morning or evening.
- The school involves parents and families in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school’s Title I Schoolwide program and the Title I Parent-Family Engagement Policy and School Compact. Parents, families, and school staff meet to discuss the design, implementation, and provide feedback.
- The school provides parents and families with timely information through various modes of communication including phone calls, newsletters, emails, social media postings, and website postings.
- The school provides parents and families with an explanation of the curriculum used at the school, the assessments used to measure scholar progress, and the proficiency levels scholars are expected to meet. Parents and families are required to attend two parent-teacher conferences each year where the above information will be discussed. The information will also be discussed at the annual Title I meetings.
- If requested by parents and families, the school provides opportunities for regular meetings that allow the parents to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.

### **School/Parent/Scholar Compact**

Propel Schools distributes to parents and families a School/Parent/scholar Compact. The compact, which has been jointly developed with parents, outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and scholars will share the responsibility for improved scholar academic achievement. It describes specific ways the school and families will partner to help children achieve the State’s high academic standards. It addresses the following legally required items, as well as other items suggested by parents and families.

- The school’s responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- The ways parents will be responsible for supporting their children’s learning.
- The importance of ongoing communication between parents and teachers through, at a minimum, semi-annual parent-teacher conferences; frequent reports on scholar progress; access to staff; opportunities for parents to volunteer and participate in their child’s class; and opportunities to observe classroom activities when requested and scheduled.

Parents and families along with school staff met to discuss the design implementation of the compact. Propel uses various modes of communication and holds meetings at different times to accommodate parents and families.

Propel Schools engages parents and families in meaningful interactions with the school. It supports a partnership among staff, parents, and the community to improve scholar academic achievement. To help reach these goals, the school has established the following practices which require the home and school to recognize and agree upon the responsibilities of each party in the learning process.

### **Scholar Responsibilities:**

- Take ownership for my education without making excuses
- Read and follow the scholar and Family Handbook
- Attend at least 4 school events per year to support my education/my school.
- Attend school regularly and on time
- Complete and return homework assignments
- Read every day at home
- Respect myself, my peers, and school personnel
- Respect the rights of others to learn without distraction and disruption
- Accept responsibility for my own actions
- Make an effort to do my best work
- Respect the cultural differences of other scholars, their families, and staff
- Work to resolve conflicts in positive nonviolent ways
- Comply with school rules at all times and during off campus school functions
- Deliver all reports and notices sent by the school to my parent/guardian

### **Family Responsibilities:**

- Read and follow the scholar and Family Handbook and all Procedures and Policies
- Assume good intentions
- Conduct self in a professional manner at all times
- Follow all LEA and school procedures and policies
- Assure my child gets to school on time and attends regularly
- Provide adequate rest, food, and medical attention for my child
- Monitor the completion of homework by establishing a time for homework, reviewing it regularly, providing a well-lighted and quiet place for study, encouraging my child's efforts and being available for questions
- Monitor television watching and media exposure
- Encourage positive use of extracurricular time
- Encourage my child to read for about 30 minutes each day at home and engage with literacy
- Participate in school activities on a regular basis
- Attend fall and spring educator-family conferences
- Communicate with school staff regarding my child's needs and circumstances
- Stay aware of what my child is learning and his/her progress in school
- Be aware of and follow rules and regulations of the school. Encourage and support my child in following the rules and regulations of the school
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain proper discipline according to the Scholar and Family Handbook
- Update contact information regularly to maintain communication with the school

### **Teacher Responsibilities**

- Maintain and foster high standards of academic achievement and positive behavior

- Serve as a positive role model
- Conduct self in a professional manner at all times
- Follow all LEA and school procedures and policies
- Respect the cultural differences of scholars, their families, and other staff
- Assist the administration in facilitating and implementing the Title I Parent Involvement policy and parent involvement activities
- Provide a safe, caring and pleasant environment that promotes active learning
- Explain assignments clearly and provide homework that supports the curriculum
- Help scholars learn how to resolve conflicts in an appropriate and positive manner
- Advise families of their scholar's progress on a regular basis
- Be readily accessible to parents and provide opportunities for parents to meet on a regular basis to discuss their scholar's progress and to participate as appropriate in the decisions relating to their scholar's education
- Provide opportunities for parents to volunteer and participate in their scholar's class and observe classroom activities when appropriately scheduled
- Demonstrate exemplary attendance as a model for the scholars
- Provide necessary assistance to parents so that they can help with the assignments
- Continue efforts to develop professionally

### **School Responsibilities**

- The school provides families with assistance in understanding the State's academic content standards, assessments, and how to monitor and improve the achievement of their children.
- The school provides parents and families with materials and training to help them work with their children to improve their children's achievement.
- With the assistance of families, the school educates staff members about the value of family contributions, and in how to work with families as equal partners.
- The school coordinates and integrates the Title I Parent-Family involvement program with other programs, and conducts other activities, such as parent resource centers, to encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.
- The school distributes information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities to parents and families in a format and language that the parents understand.
- The school provides support for parent and family involvement activities requested by parents, when reasonable.

### **Accessibility**

Propel Schools provides opportunities for the participation of all parents and families, including parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory scholars. Information and school reports are provided in a format and language that parents can understand.

### **XXVI. Annual Child Find Notice and scholar Records Notice**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA - C.F.R. Part 99), was most recently amended January 8, 2008, state regulations (Chapter 711-Special Education Services and Programs, Chapter 12-scholar Rights and Responsibilities) and district policy.

It is the intent of this Annual Notice and policy to inform parent/guardian(s) and eligible children (i.e. scholars 18 and older) of their rights relevant to their privacy rights in the collection, maintenance, release

and destruction of these records as required by the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, 20 U.S.C. '1232g, 34 C.F.R. part 99 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Annual notice of this policy is given on the District's website, in scholar agendas, in building handbooks and hard copies are available in the main lobby of the administration building.

The different categories of information maintained by the school district are as follows; educational and health records, personally identifiable information and directory information. Information known as directory information can be released without consent. Parents may opt out of this by requesting in writing to the school principal that some or all directory information not be released. In addition, photographs and/or videos may be used in newspaper articles highlighting various school activities or television coverage of school events. If you do not wish your child to be photographed or videotaped for these purposes, you must inform the district in writing.

**Education Records** include records directly related to a scholar that are maintained by Propel Schools. The Educational Records of the District may include all of the following (this list is not intended to be exhaustive): grades, standardized test results, scholar evaluation reports, samples of scholar work, records transferred from sending schools, discipline records, medical records and any other records created and maintained by the school district directly related to the scholar. Educational records do not include communications with legal counsel that are attorney client privileged. Educational Records do not include records maintained solely by the creator for their personal use, not shared with others. The contents of a scholar's educational file shall be determined by the District unless a specific parental request is made or a complaint is made, consistent with this Notice.

The District shall permit the parent/guardian(s) of a scholar or an eligible special education scholar, who is or has been in attendance in the District, to inspect and review the education records of the scholar upon written request. The District will comply with a written request to review records within a reasonable period of time (never to exceed 45 calendar days from the date of written request; 30 days if the scholar receives special education services) after the request has been made. When there are special cases and where necessary, a parental request to review records will be granted and arranged as soon as possible. Visits to review a scholar's records shall be arranged and facilitated by the building principal or designee, or any party selected by the District, for the purposes of security and assistance in explaining or interpreting the data. The right to inspect and review education records includes:

1. The right to a response from the District to reasonable requests, made in writing, for explanation and interpretations of the record; and
2. The right to obtain copies of records from the District where failure of the District to provide the copies would effectively prevent a parent or eligible scholar from exercising the right to inspect and review the educational records (e.g. where the parent lives too far to come review the records personally). ***A reasonable fee of .25 will be charged per page for duplicate copies of documents already provided to parents/guardians***

In accordance with FERPA, the District will not produce or compile documentation that does not already exist.

It is presumed by the District that both natural parent/guardian(s) of a scholar has authority to inspect and review the education records of the scholar at the school in the child's attendance area (main office)



by appointment unless there is evidence that there is a legally binding instrument, or a State law or court order governing such matters as divorce, separation or custody, which provides to the contrary. A District designee will sit with the parent when the parent reviews the records in a private conference area. As part of the notice of a parent's right to access, Propel Schools has the responsibility to inform all parents of provisions affecting parental access, and request verification of any court order denying either parent access to records. It is the responsibility of the parent seeking to deny access to the records to provide Propel Schools with a copy of the court order or other document that limits or controls access to scholar records. In cases where the request for access to records is made by a non-custodial parent, Propel Schools has the responsibility to verify the person's identity and notify the custodial parent of the request. If a parent seeking to deny access does not respond to the school's request within the 45 or 30 day time frame, the school must grant the request.

### **Legal Custody and Court Orders**

Propel Schools will do everything possible to ensure that the safety and rights of all family members are protected. Parents/guardians who have custody situations involving their scholars must submit a copy of the standing and current court order to the school office immediately. Court order statements will be fully honored by Propel Schools. Please inform the school and provide updated documentation when necessary. Documentation must be submitted each school year.

**Under federal law, family consent is not required for the release of Directory information, which is information contained in an education record of a scholar that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.**

The District designates the following as **Directory Information means:** information contained in an education record of a scholar that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

(a) Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the scholar's name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time); dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

(b) Directory information does not include a scholar's ---  
1. Social security number; or  
2. scholar identification (ID) number, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) Directory information includes a scholar ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used by the scholar for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

**A written record of this information, or electronic copy of the same, including grade level completed and year completed, may be maintained at least 100 years after a scholar attains**

**age 21.** A parent/guardian or eligible scholar may notify the District in writing of their refusal to allow the District to release directory information without prior consent. Such a written refusal for consent must be sent to the Director of Pupil Services, Propel Schools, 3447 East Carson Street, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15203.

Pursuant to Section 9528 of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the District is required to release scholar directory information (access to names, addresses, and phone numbers of high school juniors and seniors) to **military recruiters and college admissions officers**. The *No Child Left Behind* law requires high schools to release information to colleges or other higher learning institutions upon request. Any parent/guardian or scholar who has reached age eighteen may notify the District **in writing of their refusal** for this information to be released. Letters seeking the withholding of information to military recruiters should be sent to: Director of Pupil Services, Propel Schools, 3447 East Carson Street, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15203.

Per federal guidance, **scholar medical records**, maintained by the nurses' office, are considered educational records and will be shared with staff who the district determines have a legitimate educational interest in the information and a need to know medical information to protect the safety and health of the scholar. **Once provided to the District, specific parental consent will not be sought to share information on a need to know basis. Parental requests to maintain the confidentiality of specific medical information must be made in writing to the nurse's office.** Requests for complete confidentiality of medical information will be granted at the discretion of the nurse. These requests will be granted unless dangerous to the scholar.

If the district reported a crime committed by a scholar with a disability the district will ensure that copies of the special education records and disciplinary records of the scholar will be transmitted properly and only to the extent possible that the transmission is permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The District can communicate about sex offenders from agency to agency.

The District shall obtain the written consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a scholar age eighteen before disclosing personally identifiable information, other than directory information, from the education records of a scholar to a third party. Consent is not required where the disclosure is to the parent/guardian(s) of a scholar who is not an eligible scholar or the scholar himself or herself.

### **Personally Identifiable Information**

The term includes, but is not limited to ---

- A. The scholar's name;
- B. The name of the scholar's parent or other family members;
- C. The address of the scholar or scholar's family;
- D. A personal identifier, such as the scholar's social security number, scholar number, or biometric record;
- E. Other indirect identifier,; such as the scholar's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; that other information, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific scholar that any reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the scholar be able to identify the scholar to whom the education record relates.

**Uses of Personally Identifiable Information:**

The district may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a scholar without written consent of the parent/guardian(s) or the scholar or the eligible scholar in several situations. See 34

C.F.R. Part 99. Some important examples of when no consent to release information is needed include (list is not exhaustive):

1. To other school officials, including teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, and I.U. personnel within the District who have been determined by the District to have legitimate educational interests or are providing instruction or services to scholars. The District has determined that all school employees involved in the direct supervision of a scholar (academic or non-academic) (including support staff) have a legitimate educational interest in academic and health related scholar information if the information is necessary to ensure appropriate fulfillment of their professional duties and to ensure the health and safety of the scholar.
2. To officials of another school or school system or post-secondary schools in which the scholar seeks or intends to enroll, subject to the requirements set forth in 99.34. Parents may request a copy of the record sent.
3. To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency, subject to the conditions set in 99.36, if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the scholar or other individuals.
4. Information designated by the District as Directory Information.
5. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible scholar in order to release any information from a scholar's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - Specified officials for audit and evaluation purposes
  - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a scholar
  - Organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the school
  - Accrediting organizations
  - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
  - State and local authorities, within the juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law
  - Contracted, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom an agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions may be considered a school official under this paragraph---
    1. Performs an institutional service or function for which the agency or institution would otherwise use employees;
    2. Is under the direct control of the agency or institution with respect to the use and maintenance of education records; and
    3. Is subject to the requirements of §99.33 (a) governing the use and disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.

Propel Schools will use reasonable methods to ensure that school officials obtain access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests. When providing records to authorized third parties, the District will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent/guardian(s) of the scholar or the eligible scholar of the transfer of the records at the last known address of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible scholar. Per state law, the District will not provide any notice of transfer of records of a scholar to a school in which a scholar seeks or intends to enroll.

Under federal and state law, Propel Schools will maintain a list of all persons who have requested or obtained access to personally identifiable information contained in the scholar's educational record. The list will include the name of the party making the request, the basis upon which the party claims the right to access the information, and the date the request was made. The list will be available to the scholar's parent/guardian upon request.

The District maintains scholar records in the individual Propel buildings. Special education scholar records, scholar health records, and 504 scholar service plans are kept in separate locked files in the individual schools until the time when the scholar is no longer active. Once a scholar becomes inactive in Propel their records are transferred to a locked storage space.

PLEASE NOTE: PROPEL SCHOOLS MAY DESTROY RECORDS UNDER THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES AND TIMELINES

- A. Records that include a scholar's name, address, grades, attendance records, classes attended, grade level completed and year completed may be destroyed once 100 years have passed since the scholar's 24<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. **Special Education records**, Section 504 records, Response to Intervention (RTI) records, and health records **may be destroyed once 10 years have passed from the date a scholar has graduated or reached graduation age** (if exiting the district before graduation) as long as there is no outstanding request to inspect and review the records and the records are no longer deemed useful to the school district.
- C. **Notice of destruction of these records is provided annually via this publication.** Educational records of a scholar are longer needed by the District to provide educational services at the end of one year following a scholar's graduation from the District. A parent/guardian may submit a written request for the destruction of all education records at that time.
- D. Destruction will proceed where parents or eligible scholars have not requested copies by November 1<sup>st</sup> of the year the records may be destroyed as per paragraphs A&B above. Parents or scholars over eighteen have the right to request a copy of their record before destruction.

Parents are reminded that copies of the records might be needed for the acquisition of Social Security benefits or for other purposes.

#### **Amendment of Education Records**

A Parent/guardian or eligible scholar has the right to request amendment of a scholar's educational file if it is believed that any information is inaccurate, or in violation of a scholar's rights. The educational agency shall decide within a reasonable time whether to amend the record. If the school district decides not to amend the educational record it shall notify the parent/scholar of the right to and arrange an informal hearing. The hearing will be conducted by an official of the District without an interest in the outcome, who will be either the Director of Pupil Services or their designee. The parent may present relevant evidence. The District will issue a written decision based on the hearing. Informal inquiries may be sent to: **ferpa@ed.gov** or **ppra@ed.gov**. The website address is: **www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guide/fpcd**

Complaints regarding violation of rights accorded parent(s)/guardian(s) and eligible scholars with

respect to scholar records are to be submitted to the Director of Pupil Services, Propel Schools, 3447 East Carson Street, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15203, in writing. All Complaints will be investigated and responded to in writing within a reasonable period of time. If complaints cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the District, complaints can be filed with the following:

**Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605**

Questions regarding the above information or requests for a copy of the records policy may be referred to: Director of Pupil Services, Propel Schools, 3447 East Carson Street, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15203.

### **SCREENING AND EVALUATION**

Propel Schools has a three-part screening process in place that identifies any scholar who may need special education.

#### LEVEL 1: Review of Group-Based Data

The building principals, general education teachers, and resource teachers review enrollment information, academic and health records, and results from group-based tests such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Measure of Academic Performance Assessment (MAP), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), 4- Sight Assessments, and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). For incoming kindergarten scholars, results from a kindergarten readiness screening are examined. Data gathered through a thorough review of records may prompt a referral for screening of a child for special education.

#### LEVEL 2: Review of Hearing, Vision, Motor, Speech and Language

As prescribed by Section 1402 of the Pennsylvania school code, Propel Schools routinely conducts health screenings for kindergarten (K) through 12<sup>th</sup> grade scholars and new scholars without history of recent exams: Vision (Gr. K-12); Hearing (Gr. K-3, 7, & 11 and any scholar with a known history of hearing loss and ungraded scholars); Mandated Physical Exams (Gr. K or 1, 6, and 11); Dental Screenings (Gr. K or 1, 3 and 7); Scoliosis Screening (Gr. 6 & 7); and Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening (Gr. K-12). Speech and language skills are screened in kindergarten and upon referral to the speech pathologist. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic and social-emotional skills are assessed by the general education teachers, special education teachers, and support staff on an ongoing basis. Specified needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the child's official file, discussed with parents and, when appropriate, referred to the Response to Intervention and Instruction Team (RTII) which meets monthly to conduct various ongoing screening and to develop interventions

#### LEVEL 3: Response to Intervention and Instruction Team (RTII Team)

RTII is a group process aimed to maximize individual scholar success in the regular classroom, consider barriers to learning, and to serve as a screening process for scholars who may be in need of special education services. RTII is a positive, team based process which uses intervention techniques to help remove educational, behavioral or affective stumbling blocks for all scholars in the regular classroom. RTII program runs from kindergarten through grade 12. Referrals for RTII may be initiated by the parent, classroom teacher or any staff member. RTII includes general education teachers, special

education teachers, math coach, literacy coach, guidance counselors, behavior coaches, and administrators.

RTII Process:

1. Identify the scholar's needs for academic and behavioral support and identify the strategies that have been tried within the classroom.
2. Determine more specific interventions to be implemented
3. Implement the interventions
4. Determine if the interventions are addressing the scholar's needs
5. If the interventions work, continue the interventions
6. If the interventions do not work, determine if the interventions need more time to be implemented or refer the scholar for a multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE)

Parents or guardians may request that their child be screened or evaluated for special education services. Requests for screening or evaluation should be made in writing and directed to the attention of the Director of Pupil Services, Propel Schools, 3447 East Carson Street, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA, 15203.

**Parents or guardians should request an evaluation for special education services if their child demonstrates warning signs of a developmental delay.**

What are the warning signs of a developmental delay? There are several general "warning signs" of possible delay. These include:

#### Behavioral Warning Signs

- Does not pay attention or stay focused on an activity for as long a time as other children of the same age
- Displays violent behaviors on a daily basis
- Stares into space, rocks body, or talks to self more often than other children of the same age
- Gets unusually frustrated when trying to do simple tasks that most children of the same age can do
- Shows aggressive behaviors and acting out and appears to be very stubborn compared with other
- Avoids or rarely makes eye contact with others
- Does not seek love and approval from a caregiver or parent
- Focuses on unusual objects for long periods of time; enjoys this more than interacting with others children

#### Gross Motor Warning Signs

- Has stiff arms and/or legs
- Has a floppy or limp body posture compared to other children of the same age
- Uses one side of body more than the other
- Has a very clumsy manner compared with other children of the same age

#### Vision Warning Signs

- o Rubs eyes frequently

- Seems to have difficulty following objects or people with his/her eyes
- Turns, tilts or holds head in a strained or unusual position when trying to look at an object
- Seems to have difficulty finding or picking up small objects dropped on the floor (after the age of 12 months)
- Has difficulty focusing or making eye contact
- Closes one eye when trying to look at distant objects
- Eyes appear to be crossed or turned
- Brings objects too close to eyes to see
- One or both eyes appear abnormal in size or coloring

#### Hearing Warning Signs

- Talks in a very loud or very soft voice
- Seems to have difficulty responding when called from across the room, even when it is for something interesting
- Turns body so that the same ear is always turned toward sound
- Has difficulty understanding what has been said or following directions after once he/she has turned 3 years of age
- Doesn't startle to loud noises
- Ears appear small or deformed
- Fails to develop sounds or words that would be appropriate at his/her age

### **XXVII. Services for School Age Scholars with Disabilities**

Propel Schools provides a free, appropriate public education to scholars with disabilities according to state and federal rules. To be eligible, the child must:

- Be of school age.
- Have a disability and be in need of specially designed instruction.
- Meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards: autism, deaf-blindness, blindness, visual impairment, emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, other health impairment, traumatic brain injury, and speech/language impairment, orthopedic impairment, hearing impairment, deafness, multiple disabilities or mental retardation.

If a scholar is found eligible for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) according to state and federal law, the following services are designed to meet the needs of eligible scholars with disabilities:

- ❑ The annual development of an individualized education program (IEP).
- ❑ A triennial multidisciplinary re-evaluation for scholars with disabilities (except for those scholars with Intellectual Disabilities where evaluation remains biennial).
- ❑ A range of supports for scholars from itinerant level to supplemental level to full time level special education support within the district or placement in a full-time special education disabilities class outside of the regular school.

The extent of special education services for scholars with disabilities and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the parents and the district staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the scholar's identified needs and abilities, chronological age and the level of intensity of the specified intervention. The district also provides related services, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy and assistive technology (not an exhaustive list) if they are required to enable the scholar with disabilities to derive educational outcomes.

Prior to initiation of services, parents of a scholar with disabilities are presented a "Notice of

Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice" (NOREP) with which they agree or disagree. If parents agree to the program outlined by the multidisciplinary team and the parent signs the NOREP, then the program is implemented for their child. If parents disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request IEP facilitation, mediation and/or a due process hearing. Parents are issued their "Procedural Safeguards" which outlines in detail their legal rights as a parent of a child identified as having a disability.

### **Services for Protected Handicapped Scholars**

Propel Schools will provide to each protected handicapped scholar without discrimination or cost to the scholar or family those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the scholar's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped scholar, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental handicap which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

Services for protected handicapped scholars are distinct from those applicable to disabled scholars enrolled in special education programs. Protected handicapped scholars fall under Pennsylvania's Chapter 15, sometimes known by its federal name, Section 504 (of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act). In contrast, scholars with disabilities who qualify for special education services are covered by regulations contained in Pennsylvania's Chapter 711. While both Chapter 711 and 15 provide services to scholars, there are technical differences between the two. Additional information about evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped scholars is available by contacting, Director of Pupil Services, Propel Schools, 3447 East Carson Street, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA, 15203.

### **XXVIII. Propel Nondiscrimination Policy**

Propel Charter Schools ("Propel") provides equal opportunities for all scholars regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, genetic history, or disability to achieve their maximum potential through the programs offered in the schools. Propel shall provide to all scholars, without discrimination, course offerings, counseling, assistance, athletics and extracurricular activities. Propel shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

Propel encourages scholars and others (who are not scholars or Propel employees) who have been subject to discrimination to promptly report such incidents to designated employees as listed in this policy. Employee complaints of discrimination are covered in the employee handbook.

All complaints of discrimination shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained to the extent possible, consistent with Propel's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliations shall occur as a result of good faith charges of discrimination. Propel's Superintendent or his/her designee is Propel's Compliance Officer for purposes of this nondiscrimination policy.

The Compliance Officer shall publish and disseminate this policy and complaint procedure at least annually to scholars, parents/guardians, employees and the public. Such communications to scholars, parents/guardians and the public shall include the position, office address and telephone number of the Compliance Officer. This policy, its complaint procedures and the Compliance Officer's



contact information shall be available on the Propel Schools website.

Contact information for the Compliance Officer and for the building principals appears in Attachment A of this policy.

## PROCEDURES

Examples of discrimination, harassment and retaliation when such actions (or any other actions) are based on the target's race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, genetic history, or disability prohibited by this policy include but are not limited to...

1. Name calling or insults
2. Inappropriate jokes
3. Inappropriate pictures, cartoons, drawings or other depictions
4. Isolation or exclusion
5. Bullying
6. Intimidation

The list above is not all inclusive. Any behavior that marginalizes, isolates or harasses a scholar due to his/her race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, genetic history, or disability is prohibited by this policy. This policy also prohibits (a) retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports behavior prohibited by this policy; and (b) intimidation of any witness or party who participates in an investigation.

This policy applies to scholars, employees and third-parties (such as vendors, independent contractors and members of the general public) and covers incidents that cause a hostile environment for Propel scholars in the school regardless of whether the incidents themselves occur on school property.

The Compliance Officer is responsible for monitoring nondiscrimination procedures in the following areas:

1. Curriculum and Materials - Review of curriculum guides, textbooks and supplemental materials for discriminatory bias.
2. Training - Provision of training for scholars and staff to identify and alleviate problems of discrimination.
3. scholar Access - Review of programs, activities and practices to ensure that all scholars have equal access and are not segregated except when permissible by law or regulation.
4. Support - Assurance that like aspects of the school program receive like support as to staffing and compensation, facilities, equipment and related matters.
5. scholar Evaluation - Review of tests, procedures, and guidance and counseling materials for stereotyping and discrimination.

The building principal or his/her designee shall be responsible to complete the following duties when receiving a complaint of discrimination:

1. Inform the complaining party of the right to file a complaint and the complaint procedure.
2. Inform the complaining party if s/he is a scholar that s/he may be accompanied by a parent/guardian during all steps of the complaint procedure.

3. Notify the complaining party and the accused of the progress at appropriate stages of the procedure.
4. Refer the complaining party to the Compliance Officer if the building principal is the subject of the complaint.

A list of school contact information is available in Attachment A of this policy and on the Propel Schools website. Scholars and parents will be provided with the names of their building principals before or at the beginning of the school year.

#### Complaint Procedure Step 1 - Reporting

Anyone who believes s/he has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report the incident to the building principal. A school employee who suspects or is notified that a scholar has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the building principal. Within two (2) school days, the building principal (or Compliance Officer, as the case may be) will follow up with the scholar reported to be the subject of such conduct. If the building principal is the subject of a complaint, the complaining party or the reporting employee shall report the incident directly to the Compliance Officer.

The complaining party or reporting employee is encouraged to use the report form available from the building principal, but oral complaints shall be acceptable. In cases in which the alleged victim may be in danger or his/her ability to participate fully in the educational process may be seriously impaired, the Compliance Officer or his/her designee may take interim action (consistent with state and federal law) to keep the alleged victim from his/her alleged harasser. Such action may include parent contact, removal from class, loss of privileges, detention, or suspension of the alleged harasser. **REPORTS OF ALLEGED INCIDENTS MUST BE MADE NO LATER THAN SIXTY (60) DAYS AFTER THE ALLEGED INCIDENT OCCURRED.**

#### Step 2 - Investigation

Incidents of discrimination, intimidation and retaliation prohibited by this policy will be promptly and equitably investigated. Upon receiving a complaint of discrimination, the building principal shall immediately notify the Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer shall authorize the building principal to investigate the complaint, unless the building principal is the subject of the complaint or is unable to complete the investigation. If the building principal is unable to conduct the investigation, the Compliance Officer shall authorize another appropriate person.

The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the complaining party, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation. Both the alleged victim and the alleged harasser will be given the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. The investigator will use the preponderance of evidence standard to determine whether this policy has been violated. That is, a violation will be found if the complainant or victim presents evidence establishing it is more likely than not that the prohibited conduct occurred. The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.

All complaints will be investigated within three (3) school days of a complaint being filed. Any reasonable delays (e.g., the unavailability of witnesses or parties due to illness) will be noted in the investigative file, and the investigation will be completed as soon as possible following the delay.

#### Step 3 - Investigative Report

The building principal (or other person conducting the investigation) shall prepare a written report within

fifteen (15) days, unless additional time to complete the investigation is required. Any reason for additional time in which to complete the report will be noted in the investigative file. The report shall include a summary of the investigation, a determination of whether the complaint has been substantiated as factual, whether it is a violation of this policy, and a recommended disposition of the complaint. Findings of the investigation shall be provided in writing within five (5) school days to the complaining party, the accused and the Compliance Officer.

#### Step 4 - Action

If the investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, Propel shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur. Victims of substantiated harassment or discrimination claims will be offered counseling and other resources consistent with the circumstances of their charges.

Disciplinary action shall be consistent with the employee handbook, scholar Code of Conduct, Board policies, Propel procedures, applicable employment agreements, and applicable law. Employees will be disciplined consistent with the findings and such discipline may include termination. Independent contractors found to be in violation of this policy may have their agreements terminated or may be debarred from transacting business with Propel. Other third-party actors may be prohibited from participating in Propel activities.

Examples of scholar discipline are as follows:

- Oral or Written Reprimand
- Parent Contact
- Removal from class
- Special Assignment
- Written Agreement/Contract
- Loss of Recess
- Loss of Privileges
- After School Detention
- Before School Detention
- Saturday Detention

A. scholars who continue to harass after being disciplined or scholars who use abusive, obscene, or disrespectful oral or written language or gestures, swearing or Harass/Bully/Threaten may receive

- Oral or Written Reprimand
- Parent Contact
- Removal from class
- Special Assignment
- Written Agreement/Contract
- Loss of Recess
- Loss of Privileges
- After School Detention
- Before School Detention
- Saturday Detention
- Bus Suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Referral to police or District Magistrate
- Expulsion

B. scholars whose discriminating or harassing behavior is so serious or frequent that it tends to

disrupt the learning climate of the school such as continuation of behaviors listed in A and B above

- Assault
- Vandalism
- Physical Aggression
- Fighting
- Oral or physical threats
- Continuation of or extreme harassment/bullying/threats
- Discriminatory slurs or intimidation may receive
- Loss of Privileges
- Out of school suspension
- Loss of transportation privileges
- Restitution of property or payment of damage
- Referral to police or District Magistrate
- Expulsion

The above lists of prohibited behavior and possible discipline are illustrative only. Consistent with state and federal law, Propel will take appropriate action to provide equal opportunities for all scholars regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, genetic history, or disability to achieve their maximum potential through the programs offered in the schools.

Appeal Procedure:

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with a finding of no violation of the policy or with the corrective action recommended in the investigative report, s/he may submit a written appeal to the Compliance Officer within fifteen (15) days.
2. The Compliance Officer shall review the investigation and the investigative report and may also conduct an additional reasonable investigation.
3. The Compliance Officer shall prepare a written response to the appeal within fifteen (15) days of receipt. Copies of the response shall be provided to the complainant, the accused and the building principal (or other person) who conducted the initial investigation.

**References:**

PA Human Relations Act--43 P.S. Sec.951 et seq.  
Federal Anti-Discrimination Law--20 U.S.C Sec. 1681 et seq. (Title IX)  
Harassment Regulations and Guidelines  
Code of Federal Regulation--29 CFR Sec. 1604.11(a). 1606.8(a)

**XXIX. Propel Schools Anti-Bullying Policy**

Introduction

Propel prohibits acts of harassment or bullying (including cyberbullying). (See full anti-cyberbully policy on Propel's website). In order for the scholars of Propel to achieve high academic standards, it is necessary that the buildings be a safe and civil environment. Harassment or bullying, like any other disruptive or violent behavior, is conduct that disrupts a scholar's ability to learn as well as the learning of others. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying of any kind is expected of administrators, faculty, and staff as they provide positive examples for scholar behavior.

*Harassment or bullying* is any gesture or written, oral, graphic, or physical act (including electronically

transmitted act) that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored activity, or in a school vehicle and is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. *Harassment or bullying* includes any gesture or written, oral, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted act) that takes place off school property if such act causes a hostile environment on school grounds.

Propel encourages scholars who have been subject to bullying or harassment to promptly report such incidents to designated employees in writing and as listed in this policy. All complaints of harassment or bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained to the extent possible, consistent with Propel's legal and investigative obligations. This policy also prohibits (a) retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports behavior prohibited by this policy; and (b) intimidation of any witness or party who participates in an investigation.

This policy applies to scholars, employees and third-parties (such as vendors, independent contractors and members of the general public) and covers incidents that result in the bullying or harassment of Propel scholars regardless of whether the incidents themselves occur on school property.

Propel's Superintendent or his/her designee is Propel's Compliance Officer for purposes of this anti-bullying policy. The Compliance Officer shall publish and disseminate this policy and complaint procedure at least annually to scholars, parents/guardians, employees and the public. Such communications to scholars, parents/guardians and the public shall include the position, office address and telephone number of the Compliance Officer. This policy, its complaint procedures and the Compliance Officer's contact information shall be available on the Propel Schools website.

Propel officials must explain that this policy applies to all applicable acts of harassment and bullying that occur on school property, at school sponsored events, on a school bus or as a result of a scholar's association with the school. The Superintendent shall develop an annual process for discussing the policy on harassment and bullying with scholars and staff.

Contact information for the Compliance Officer and for the building principals appears in Attachment A of this policy.

## **DEFINITIONS**

*Harassment* is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- Is directed at one or more scholars;
- Substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more scholars;
- Adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from Propel's educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the scholar, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect; and,
- Is based on a scholar's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have a distinguishing characteristic, such as race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, genetic history, or disability.

*Bullying* is conduct that meets the following criteria:

- Is directed at one or more scholars;
- Is severe, persistent or pervasive; and
- Has the effect of doing any of the following:

- Creating a threatening environment;
- Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more scholars;
- Substantially interfering with the orderly operation of the school.

**PROCEDURE**

Examples of bullying, intimidation and retaliation when such actions (or any other actions) are based on the target’s race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, genetic history, or disability prohibited by this policy include but are not limited to

1. Name calling or insults
2. Inappropriate jokes
3. Inappropriate pictures, cartoons, drawings or other depictions
4. Isolation or exclusion

The list above is not all inclusive. Any action that marginalizes, isolates or harasses a scholar due to his/her race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, genetic history, or disability to the extent that such action creates a hostile environment is prohibited by this policy.

Propel expects scholars to conduct themselves in a manner keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other scholars and school personnel. To prevent harassment and bullying, Propel staff shall use disciplinary situations as opportunities for helping scholars to learn to assume responsibility and consequences for their behavior. Staff members who interact with scholars shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage scholars’ abilities to develop self-discipline.

Propel prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying. The staff should encourage scholars to support scholars who walk away from these acts. Propel staff shall attempt to stop bystander support or encouragement of harassment or bullying. In serious cases of bystander support or encouragement of harassment or bullying staff shall report such actions to the building principal. Bystander support or encouragement of harassment or bullying shall be punishable as harassment or bullying. Administrators shall develop and implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses to scholar harassment or bullying. The following factors, at a minimum, shall be given full consideration by school administrators in the development of the procedures for determining appropriate consequences and remedial measures harassment or bullying.

- Parties’ ages, development, and maturity
- Harm, if any
- Surrounding circumstances
- Severity
- Prior incidents
- Parties’ relationship
- Context
- Life skill competencies
- Experiential deficiencies
- Social relationships
- School culture
- School climate
- Social-emotional and behavioral supports
- Neighborhood culture
- Family situation

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the scholar, and the scholar's history of problem behaviors and performance, but consequences must be consistent with Propel's Code of scholar Conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act. The consequences may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below...

- Admonishment
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Classroom or administrative detention
- Referral to disciplinarian
- In-school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Legal action
- Expulsion

Remedial measures may include:

*Personal*

- Problem solving advice
- Restitution and restoration
- Peer support group
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Supportive discipline to increase accountability for the bullying offense
- Supportive interventions, including participation in peer mediation, or similar services
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation
- Positive Behavioral Support Management Plan
- Involvement of school disciplinarian
- scholar counseling
- Parent conferences
- scholar treatment
- scholar therapy

*Environmental (Classroom, School building)*

- Modifications of schedule
- Adjustment in hallway traffic
- Modifications scholar routes or patterns traveling to and from school
- Targeted use of monitors
- Parent conferences
- Law enforcement involvement
- Peer support groups
- School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- School culture change
- School climate improvement
- Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs
- General professional development programs for all staff

The principal and/or assistant principal at each school are/is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations to this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the building principal or principal's designee. The complaining party or reporting employee is encouraged to use the report form available from the building principal, but oral complaints shall be acceptable. A school employee who suspects or is notified that a scholar has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the building principal. Within two (2) school days, the building principal (or Compliance Officer, as the case may be) will follow up with the scholar reported to be the subject of such conduct. All other members of the school community, including scholars, parents, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

### **Step 1 – Reporting**

The principal and/or the principal's designee also are/is responsible for conducting a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The building principal or his/her designee shall...

1. Inform the complaining party of the right to file a complaint and the complaint procedure.
2. Inform the complaining party if s/he is a scholar that s/he may be accompanied by a parent/guardian during all steps of the complaint procedure.
3. Notify the complaining party and the accused of the progress at appropriate stages of the procedure.
4. Refer the complaining party to the Compliance Officer if the building principal is the subject of the complaint.

A list of building contact information is available in Attachment A of this policy and on the Propel Schools website. scholars and parents will be provided with the names of their building principals before or at the beginning of the school year. If the building principal is the subject of a complaint, the complaining party or the reporting employee shall report the incident directly to the Compliance Officer. In cases in which the alleged victim may be in danger or his/her ability to participate fully in the educational process may be seriously impaired, the Compliance Officer or his/her designee may take interim action (consistent with state and federal law) to keep the alleged victim from his/her alleged cyber-bully. Such action may include parent contact, removal from class, loss of privileges, detention, or suspension of the alleged cyber-bully. **REPORTS OF ALLEGED INCIDENTS MUST BE MADE NO LATER THAN SIXTY (60) DAYS AFTER THE ALLEGED INCIDENT OCCURRED.**

### **Step 2 – Investigation**

The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the complaining party, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation. Both the alleged victim and the alleged cyber-bully will be given the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. The investigator will use the preponderance of evidence standard to determine whether this policy has been violated. That is, a violation will be found if the complainant or victim presents evidence establishing it is more likely than not that the prohibited conduct occurred. The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded. The investigation is to be completed within three (3) school days after a report or complaint is made. Any reasonable delays (e.g., the unavailability of witnesses or parties due to illness) will be noted in the investigative file, and the investigation will be completed as soon as possible following the delay.



### **Step 3 - Investigative Report**

The building principal (or other person conducting the investigation) shall prepare a written report within fifteen(15) days, unless additional time to complete the investigation is required. Any reason for additional time in which to complete the report will be noted in the investigative file. The report shall include a summary of the investigation, a determination of whether the complaint has been substantiated as factual, whether it is a violation of this policy, and a recommended disposition of the complaint. Findings of the investigation shall be provided in writing within five (5) school days to the complaining party, the accused and the Compliance Officer.

### **Step 4 – Action**

If the investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, Propel shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur. Victims of substantiated bullying claims will be offered counseling and other resources consistent with the circumstances of their charges. Some acts of bullying may be isolated incidents requiring Propel to respond appropriately to the individual committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of bullying that require a response either at the classroom, school building, or school district level or by law enforcement officials. Disciplinary action shall be consistent with the employee handbook, scholar and Family Handbook, Board policies, Propel procedures, applicable employment agreements, and applicable law.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for scholars who commit acts of bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, bullying using Propel technology violates the Internet Policy and subjects the scholar to discipline as set forth in the policy. Employees will be disciplined consistent with the findings and the employee handbook.

Independent contractors found to be in violation of this policy may have their agreements terminated or may be debarred from transacting business with Propel. Other third party actors may be prohibited from participating in Propel activities. Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of cyber-bullying is prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation. False accusations of cyber-bullying are prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another of cyberbullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a Propel employee found to have falsely accused another of an act of cyber-bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with Propel policies and procedures. Prevention and intervention techniques to prevent cyber-bullying and to support and protect victims shall include appropriate strategies and activities as determined by the building principal or his/her designee.

### **Appeal Procedure**

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with a finding of no violation of the policy or with the corrective action recommended in the investigative report, s/he may submit a written appeal to the Compliance Officer within fifteen (15) days.
2. The Compliance Officer shall review the investigation and the investigative report and may also conduct an additional reasonable investigation.
3. The Compliance Officer shall prepare a written response to the appeal within fifteen (15) days of receipt. Copies of the response shall be provided to the complainant, the accused and the building principal (or other person) who conducted the initial investigation.

This Policy will be distributed by the Compliance Officer or his/her designees at the beginning of every school year to all Propel staff, scholars, and parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The policy will also be published on Propel's website.

**References:**

PA Human Relations Act--43 P.S. Sec.951 et seq.  
Federal Anti-Discrimination Law--20 U.S.C Sec. 1681 et seq. (Title IX)  
Harassment Regulations and Guidelines  
Code of Federal Regulation--29 CFR Sec. 1604.11(a). 1606.8(a)

**CONTACT INFORMATION**  
Attachment A**Compliance Officer**

Dr. Tina Chekan,  
Superintendent/CEO  
3447 East Carson  
Street  
Suite 200  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203  
412-325-7305  
412-325-7309 (fax)

**Building Contact Information***Andrew Street High  
School*

605 East Tenth Ave  
Munhall, PA 15120  
412-462-4625  
412-462-6980 (fax)

*Braddock Hills Elementary*

1500 Yost Blvd  
Braddock Hills, PA 15221  
412-271-3061 x1436  
412-271-0865 (fax)

*Braddock Hills Middle School*

1500 Yost Blvd  
Braddock Hills, PA 15221  
412-376-5590 x 2100  
412-271-1630 (fax)

*Braddock Hills High School*

1500 Yost Blvd, Suite 2  
Braddock Hills, PA 15221  
412-271-4929 x 1007  
412-271-4905 (fax)

*East*

1611 Monroeville Ave  
Turtle Creek, PA 15145

412-823-0347

*Hazelwood*

5401 Glenwood Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
412-325-0492  
412-325-0494 (fax)

*Homestead*

129 East Tenth Ave  
Homestead, PA 15120  
412-464-2604  
(412) 464-2605 (fax)

*McKeesport*

2412 Versailles Ave  
McKeesport, PA 15132  
412-678-7215 x1012

*Montour K-5*

340 Bilmar Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

*Montour Middle School*

5501 Steubenville Pike,  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136

*Montour High School*

5501 Steubenville Pike,  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136

*Northside*

1805 Buena Vista St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
412-325-1412  
412-325-1428 (fax)

*Pitcairn*

435 Agatha Street  
Pitcairn, PA 15140  
412-457-0020

**Confidentiality of Scholar Records**

The privacy rights of parents and scholars are mandated by federal legislation known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA - C.F.R. Part 99), most recently amended in November 1996, state regulations (Chapter 711-Special Education Services and Programs, Chapter 12-scholar Rights and Responsibilities) and district policy.

Scholar's First Name:  
Scholar's Last Name  
Propel School Attending:  
Scholar's Grade **in 2021-2022**

Parent /Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/ Guardian Name

**\*\*\*All parents/guardians are required to review this handbook with their children and complete this page. Failure or refusal to sign this page will have no effect on the parents/guardians and scholars expectations to abide by the procedures and policies or Propel's right to uphold the procedures and policies.**