



# ***River Charter Schools***

## ***Family Handbook 2024 - 2025***

Dear River Charter Schools Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! We are thrilled and honored that you have chosen River Charter Schools to be a part of your child(ren)'s educational journey. Our commitment is to foster the academic, behavioral, and social success of each student, and we take great pride in holding ourselves to the highest standards. By setting rigorous expectations and delivering high-quality teaching, we strive to achieve excellence in all that we do.

At River Charter Schools, our mission is to be a model for educational innovation. We are dedicated to growing leaders and scholars, igniting a love of learning, and equipping each student with the knowledge, skills, character, and social-emotional well-being needed to thrive in an evolving and increasingly connected world. To achieve this, we are committed to our core values of Positive Attitude, Self-Reflection, and Collaboration to guide our approach and help us create a supportive and enriching environment for all students.

- **Positive Attitude:** At RCS, we exemplify empathy and compassion. We assume positive intent and pride ourselves on having a positive outlook and perspective daily.
- **Self-Reflection:** At RCS, we strive for continuous improvement through practicing humility, listening actively, having a willingness to change, and speaking our truth.
- **Collaboration:** At RCS, we work as a team to communicate with all stakeholders, build trusting relationships, and engage in courageous conversations. We are valued contributors who work together to develop and achieve common goals.

We recognize that parental involvement is a critical component of our educational approach. Your engagement is vital in enriching your child(ren)'s learning experience and contributing to their overall success. We encourage you to thoroughly review this handbook to gain a complete understanding of our programs, procedures, and expectations. By working together, we can ensure that every student has the support they need to thrive and excel.

Thank you for being an integral part of our River Charter Schools family. We are excited to embark on this school year with you and look forward to a year filled with growth, achievement, and shared successes.

Thank you for choosing us!

*Roxanna B. Villaseñor*

Roxanna B. Villaseñor  
Superintendent  
River Charter Schools

# Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
HISTORY.....	4
MISSION STATEMENT.....	4
VISION STATEMENT.....	5
CORE VALUES.....	5
II. ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE.....	5
ADMISSION.....	5
DAILY SCHEDULE.....	5
ATTENDANCE.....	6
INDEPENDENT STUDY.....	8
LATE ARRIVAL.....	8
EARLY PICK-UP.....	8
COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF.....	9
DELIVERIES TO YOUR STUDENT AT SCHOOL/COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR STUDENT.....	9
SCHOOL NOTICES/COMMUNICATION.....	9
III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.....	10
CORE CURRICULUM.....	10
OTHER AREAS OF EMPHASIS IN CURRICULUM.....	10
TECHNOLOGY.....	11
INTERNET TERMS AND CONDITIONS.....	11
FIELD WORK (FIELD TRIPS).....	12
REPORT CARDS.....	12
HOMEWORK.....	13
SERVING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.....	13
IV. STUDENT SERVICES.....	13
TRANSPORTATION.....	13
MEALS AND SNACKS.....	14
AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM.....	15
V. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES.....	15
MEDICATIONS.....	15
EMERGENCY FORMS.....	16
GENERAL MAINTENANCE.....	16
BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS.....	16

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT.....	16
DRESS CODE.....	17
ELECTRONIC DEVICES.....	19
PLAYGROUND PROCEDURES.....	19
HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY.....	19
HUMAN TRAFFICKING.....	20
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.....	20
PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING.....	20
DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES.....	21
VI. GOVERNANCE AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT.....	23
BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....	23
ENGLISH LEARNERS ADVISORY COUNCIL (“ELAC/DELAC”).....	23
PARENT-TEACHER COMMITTEE (“PTC”).....	23
PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES.....	24
PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT.....	24
VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS IN CLASSROOMS.....	24
RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES.....	25
PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT.....	25
NONDISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	26
FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) NOTICE.....	27
APPENDIX A: COMPLETE POLICIES.....	31

# I. INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY

River Charter School's first school, Delta Elementary Charter School, is located in the small rural community of Clarksburg, CA. When the River Delta Unified School District announced its plans to close Clarksburg Elementary School at the end of the 2005-2006 school year, a group of interested citizens initiated a course of action that led to the creation of Delta Elementary Charter School. After a year of careful deliberation, planning, and hard work, the school opened on August 22, 2007, with an enrollment of 95 students and five teachers.

The founders had a vision of what they wanted in their "ideal" school, and they developed a 56-page charter that set an ambitious roadmap for the school. They developed a curriculum that took advantage of the local environment and stressed the community's relationship to agriculture. They embarked on a journey to develop responsible citizens who are tolerant of others, honor differences, celebrate diversity, and who become lifelong learners that embrace healthy lifestyles and are prepared for the challenges they will meet.

In 2013, these same founders set out to grow what had become such a successful model for charter schools. As many of the students at Delta Elementary Charter School were from the West Sacramento area, West Sacramento seemed a perfect place to branch out and the second campus in the River Charter Schools family, Lighthouse Charter School was opened in fall 2015.

These two schools are connected by more than just the river that flows near each of their campuses – they have the same vision and purpose to provide an exceptional education for all.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of River Charter Schools, a leading center of educational innovation, is to grow leaders and scholars, ignite a love of learning and equip each student with the knowledge, skills, character, and social emotional well-being to thrive and contribute to an evolving and increasingly-connected world, through schools which;

- Promote belonging for all members of our collaborative school communities
- Transform teaching, learning, and operations in our continuing pursuit of excellence
- Are filled with teams of talented, well-trained, adequately supported and caring staff
- Are connected with communities of volunteers, parents and business people to empower students and teachers through partnerships and positive relationships
- Rely upon responsible fiscal planning.

The mission of River Charter Schools is to grow extraordinary leaders and scholars through a collaborative culture and community. To that end, the foundation for the curriculum is standards based and:

- Community Oriented
  - All Project Based Units of Study will show a connection to the community beyond the school.
- Project-based

- All students participate in Signature Nights throughout the year to connect families with Project Based Learning Projects.
- Supports the Visual and Performing Arts
  - All students attend music and art classes weekly.

## VISION STATEMENT

The founders of River Charter Schools envision an educational program for students that will:

- Decrease the ethnic and socioeconomic achievement gaps
- Provide differentiated learning for all students including our high achieving students
- Provide a multiethnic, student-centered learning environment
- Expose them to an educational program based on the Common Core State Standards

## CORE VALUES

**Positive Attitude:** At River Charter Schools, we exemplify empathy and compassion. We assume positive intent and pride ourselves on having a positive outlook and perspective daily.

**Self-Reflection:** At River Charter Schools, we strive for continuous improvement through practicing humility, listening actively, having willingness to change, and speaking our truth.

**Collaboration:** At River Charter Schools, we work as a team to communicate with all stakeholders, build trusting relationships, and engage in courageous conversations. We are valued contributors who work together to develop and achieve common goals.

## II. ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE

### ADMISSION

Charter schools are schools of choice. Thus, River Charter Schools shall admit all students who wish to attend the school up to its capacity. No test or assessment shall be administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment in the school. Except as provided in Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student, or of his or her parent or guardian, within this state.

The Charter School shall be nonsectarian in its admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations; shall not charge tuition; and shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. The Charter School will follow the admission practices described in the school's charter.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

The current calendar for the school, showing holidays, minimum days, and the first day of school, can be found on the school website at [www.deltacharter.org](http://www.deltacharter.org) or [www.lighthousecharterschool.org](http://www.lighthousecharterschool.org). The River Charter Schools bell schedule can also be found

on the website.

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is the first step in ensuring academic achievement. In order for students to reach for their personal best, they must show up and make their strongest effort at school each and every day. At River Charter Schools, state law requires regular attendance. Parents/guardians/families are expected to ensure that their children are in school. PLEASE do not allow your child to miss a day of school *except for serious illnesses*. Students who have excessive absences or tardies will be considered truant.

If a student is absent, **a parent or guardian must phone the school office the morning of the absence**. (Notifying the child's teacher alone is not sufficient for attendance purposes). If the parent/guardian does not contact the school office and provide a reason for the child's absence within forty-eight (48) hours, the absence will be counted as an **UNEXCUSED** absence (explained below). The student must bring a note upon return to school for our office file. After three (3) or more consecutive absences, a doctor's note must be provided.

**Under State of California law, students may be EXCUSED only for the following reasons:**

1. Personal illness, including an absence for the benefit of the student's mental or behavioral health
2. The student has a Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments:
  - a. When a student is absent because of a Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments: the office **MUST** receive a note from the doctor for each appointment. Until a note is received, the absence will be counted as UNEXCUSED.
  - b. **(If a child is brought to school late, picked up early, or is absent in the middle of the school day because of a medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointment, the parent/guardian MUST bring a doctor's note to the school office upon the student's arrival or return from the appointment.)**
3. The student goes to a funeral of a close relative (parent, sibling, grandparent). In this case, please notify the school office in advance of the absence when possible.
4. Medical quarantine. A doctor's note is required if the condition requires medical attention.
5. The student must appear in court. Please notify the school office in advance of the absence and bring documentation from the court that the child is required to attend.
6. Religious holiday. Please notify the school office in advance of these absences.

Other than for reasons listed above, any absences will be considered UNEXCUSED. Failure to notify the office to make clear the reason for a student's absence will result in an unverified absence, which will be considered an UNEXCUSED absence after one day. Numerous unexcused absences will result in families' having to attend a meeting with the Student Attendance Review Team ("SART") to brainstorm various solutions to the problem and sign an attendance agreement. If attendance does not improve after a trial period, the Board of Directors will request a meeting between the family and the Student Attendance Review Board ("SARB") to determine resolution.

**Student attendance is a key component of student achievement and school funding.** Therefore, scheduling appointments for students before or after school hours, or during curriculum development days, is *strongly* recommended. Habitual tardiness or absenteeism without proper cause may be grounds for dismissal from River Charter Schools. As a Public Charter School, our School Funding and the success of our students rely on student attendance. High rates of student absences will lead to budget cuts that can have an adverse effect on our programs. If you are having difficulty getting your student(s) to school each day, please do not hesitate to call our school office for support. All absences, unexcused, excused count against the school on the California Attendance Dashboard.

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW BOARD (SARB) PROCESS**

All River Charter School campuses will utilize a School Attendance Review Team (SART). The SART at the school site level will support the school attendance policies and address truancy at all grade levels. The SART will convene as needed to review truancy cases. If a student is habitually truant (absent without a valid excuse for nine (9) days during the school year), if they are absent or tardy by more than thirty (30) minutes without a valid excuse on five (5) occasions in a school year, or any combination thereof, a SART hearing will be called. The parent/guardian of the habitually truant student will receive notice of the SART hearing and be required to attend. At the SART hearing, information will be provided about a student's attendance record. Parents/guardians will be asked to comment on the reasons for the student's truancy. A parent contract will be developed to bind the parent to bringing their child to school on time every day. The SART will make referrals to local agencies as appropriate. Documentation of SART proceedings will be included in the child's cumulative file.

#### **Referral to School Attendance Review Board ("SARB")**

A SARB will be triggered when a student is classified as a "chronic truant," meaning a student is absent without a valid excuse for at least 10% of the school days in one school, from the date of enrollment to the current date. The SARB will meet as needed to hear cases. The SARB can consist of site leadership, River Charter Schools administration, board members, probation, local law enforcement, child protective services, county health department, and mental health providers.

#### **Referral to Appropriate Agencies or County District Attorney:**

It is River Charter School's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the students' success, and the Charter School will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, the Charter School may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

If a child's attendance does not improve after the SARB Hearing, or if the parent fails to attend a required SARB Hearing, the parent and child may be referred to the District Attorney's office.

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender



identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, pregnancy, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics.

## INDEPENDENT STUDY

Independent Study (IS) is a program by which students can earn credit for the completion of independent work while absent from school for approved absences. The IS program is conducted for the educational benefit of our students as a means to encourage daily engagement in school work even during times of extended absences. The school does not receive any funding for any absences even when it is excused, which is why it is important to place your child on Independent Study.

For non-sickness or emergency related absences IS must be requested at least twenty-four (24 hours in advance of the absence. Any planned absence over 3 days must be requested five (5 school days) prior to the start of IS.

In the case of a sick child or emergency, a parent or guardian must call the office by 9:00 am to request materials. In these extenuating circumstances the teacher will work with the parent to implement an IS packet in an expedited manner. Packets can be picked up after the completion of the school day. All IS materials must be picked up prior to the end of the first day of absence. All IS materials are due within five (5 days of the last school day issued of IS. There is a ten (10) school day cumulative annual limit to Independent Study regardless of the reason. A maximum of 10 days may be used for personal/vacation reasons.

Parents can request independent study by filling out the Absence Notification form on our website. For more information, please refer to the current River Charter Schools Independent Study Policy.

Independent study will be available beginning September 2, 2024- May 16, 2025

## LATE ARRIVAL

Campus opens at 7:30 am for drop off, breakfast and supervision of play. A student is considered tardy after 8:30 am. **All TK- 8 students must report to the office for a tardy slip after 8:30 am with a parent/guardian.** Arriving after 9:00 am will require a medical note for an excused tardy.

## EARLY PICK-UP

Early pickup is highly discouraged. Keeping students engaged in their academic work throughout the school day is very important. On those rare occasions when a student needs to leave campus early (leaving for the remainder of the day or leaving campus for a portion of the day and then returning) the student **MUST** be signed out in the office by the parent or guardian. Students will be released only to adults listed on the emergency contacts card during school

hours unless the school is notified in writing by the parent or guardian. Parents/guardians are not permitted to go to your student's classroom during school hours, please come to the office and we will be happy to request the teacher to send your student out of class.

## COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

Parents/guardians and staff members are encouraged to keep communication lines open. Please plan on attending our Meet and Greet, Parent Conferences, ("PBL") Signature Nights, Principal Coffee Chats, Parent Teacher Conference ("PTC Meetings, English Language Advisory Committee ("ELAC/DELAC Meetings, as well as other events. There will also be opportunities to volunteer throughout the school year at events and on committees. Please read all school communication from the teacher, principal, or superintendent.

Suggested ways to communicate with members of our school's team are:

- Write a note, email, and/or telephone call or message via ParentSquare and request that the teacher (or member of our River Schools' staff) call/email you back. Please indicate in your correspondence, the best time and number to call/email you back. Please be mindful that a teacher or staff member may not be able to call back during school hours. Please give our staff at least twenty-four 24 hours to respond, as communication often must be completed either before or after the school day.
- When necessary to discuss a matter in person, call the office to make an appointment with the teacher or principal. It is always advisable to try to address any concerns with your student's classroom teacher first, if appropriate.
- Always assume positive intent and be respectful when communicating with staff, as we will do the same for our families.

## DELIVERIES TO YOUR STUDENT AT SCHOOL/COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR STUDENT

Our staff recognizes the importance of providing students with sustained, uninterrupted instruction. Interruptions and distractions must be limited to ensure that teachers can dedicate classroom time to the instruction of students. Please make arrangements with your student before school to eliminate the need to have your student called out of class. Please do not call or text your student during school hours. If you need to deliver something to your student (including a phone message), please contact the office in order to not disrupt class. Students will be sent a notice from the office to come pick up their item(s) at an appropriate, non-intrusive time. It is the student's responsibility to come to the office and check for such things during recess, lunch, or after school. **For the safety of our students, ALWAYS take items directly to the office. Please send lunches to school with students. We are NOT allowing Door Dash, or other food delivery services.**

## SCHOOL NOTICES/COMMUNICATION

The majority of communication from River Charter Schools is sent home electronically. Please ensure that you keep your email contact up to date in order to receive correspondence via email

and emails from your student's teacher. Messages of importance are sent out often via ParentSquare and our All Call Phone system. If you do not have access to an email account or a phone, please let the office know immediately so that we may provide your family with printed information.

### III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

#### CORE CURRICULUM

Standards aligned textbooks and materials, along with a variety of supplemental resources, will be used at River Charter Schools. The academic core curriculum will include reading and language arts, mathematics, history and social science, and science. The content or "key" standards will define for each subject and grade the most important knowledge that students must acquire and the skills that they must master. This listing of curriculum is not exhaustive. Teachers may supplement with additional curricular resources as needed to address student learning needs.

- Ready Reading (iReady): Students will demonstrate strong reading, writing, speaking, and language skills in multiple forms of expression (e.g., written, oral, multimedia, and performing arts) with communication skills appropriate to age, setting, and audience.
- iReady Math: Students will develop abilities to reason logically and to understand and apply mathematical processes and concepts, including those within number sense and operations, functions and algebra, geometry and measurement, statistics, data analysis, and probability appropriate to their skill levels.
- Authentic Learning PBL Units in Social Science (PBL Works): Students will understand and apply knowledge in the areas of history, geography, economics, civics, and government to appreciate the interrelationships that exist within our complex 21st Century. They will develop the skills of a historian through research and the use of primary sources.
- Authentic Learning PBL Units in Science (PBL Works): Students will successfully use scientific research and inquiry methods to understand and apply the major concepts underlying various branches of the sciences, including health and agriculture utilizing the newly adopted Next Generation Science Standards.

#### OTHER AREAS OF EMPHASIS IN CURRICULUM

In addition to the core curriculum, River Charter Schools will also emphasize several other curricular areas in its course of study, including:

1. Health, especially those elements cited in the California state standards;
2. Physical education, as outlined in the *Physical Education Content Standards for California Public Schools*; and
3. Visual and performing arts, as spelled out by grade level in the *Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools*.
4. Project Based Learning) ("PBL") meshes student engagement with deep level inquiry. Students are presented with a driving question that guides them into exploring a particular area of study. Through this exploration, students utilize critical thinking,

collaboration with peers, and communication through public presentation. At River Charter Schools, all students participate in two PBL Signature Nights (Fall and Spring), that highlight their work in an extended six to eight (6-8 week inquiry unit. River Charter Schools students will continue to utilize the PBL strategies of critical thinking, collaboration, and communication throughout the school year during limited projects, or smaller units of inquiry.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology at River Charter Schools is a key element to the success of our programs. Through the use of programs such as Lexia and other software based interventions, we are able to measure invaluable skills such as comprehension, literacy skills, critical thinking, phonics, and grammar, while capturing a love for reading. With our Curriculum Based Measurements (CBM) and iReady diagnostics in English Language Arts and math benchmark testing bi-annually, we can truly know every student by name and need allowing us to use data to drive instruction and differentiate. This tool also allows us to compare our student outcomes both in district and national norms.

English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) is also used as a component in determining the proficiency of our English Language Learners and their reclassification. Taking differentiation further we have adopted the online program. With our adopted, Common Core aligned; curriculum, teachers access online materials daily and students practice these core concepts and skills through the use of their devices.

All technology provided by River Charter Schools is for student academic use only.

All families are required to sign the take home usage agreement when River Charter Schools devices leave the school campus.

## INTERNET TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **Acceptable Use:** The use of computing devices with internet access must be in support of education and research and consistent with the school's education objectives. (Please see the Policy for Student Use of Technology and Acceptable Use Agreement on the River Charter Schools' website.)
2. **Unacceptable Use:** Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited. Any transmission, reception or web search of pornographic material is expressly prohibited and may result in the cancellation of all information technology access and privileges and a possible recommendation for expulsion or referral to law enforcement.
3. **Privileges:** The use of information technology is a privilege and unacceptable use will result in cancellation of those privileges.
4. **Network Etiquette:** You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette.

These include (but are not limited) to the following:

- Be polite
  - Use appropriate language
  - Share resources
  - Do not reveal personal information (address, phone numbers, or email)
  - Social networking (i.e. use of Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Musical.ly) is prohibited.
5. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the students' own risk.
  6. Security: Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you can identify a security problem, notify an administrator or teacher immediately. Do not use another individual's account without written permission from that individual. Attempts to login to any network server as a system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges.
  7. Vandalism: Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, hardware, network or any of the above listed agencies or other networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses or installation of software on school computers by students. Please see Lost or Damaged School Property in the handbook.

## FIELD WORK (FIELD TRIPS)

Field Work experiences at River Charter Schools are designed around the Common Core State Standards and are designed to include opportunities to promote character education and team building outside of the campus, and deep level inquiry to support project based learning.

Field Work is an important part of the River Charter Schools experience, and our goal is to have each class go on several excursions over the course of the school year to connect students with the community and applied educational experiences. As a public charter school, it is never a requirement for families to pay the requested donation for students to participate in the Field Work experiences; however, any amount is appreciated.

No student may go on a field trip without a parent's or guardian's signed written permission. Phone calls are not acceptable. For all bus-driven field trips, students must follow the "Bus Rules" as listed in this handbook. Siblings are not permitted to ride River Charter Schools School Bus for field trips or miss school to accompany a sibling.

**Your child must attend school the morning of the field trip. Students will not be allowed to meet their class at the destination.**

Some Field Work experiences will depend on parent/guardian transportation. In such cases, there are strict guidelines relative to those who choose to drive. Current information regarding drivers' records and liability insurance coverage has been established by Board policy. This information can be obtained from our website under volunteer requirements.

## REPORT CARDS

Our report cards in grades TK-6 are Standards-based and follow the Common Core State Standards. Students in our middle school program (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) will receive letter grades in all subject areas (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Science, PE, Art and Music). Report cards are available on-line through the Parent Portal, three (3) times a year, at the end of each trimester. Parent-Teacher Conferences will take place at least once per school year.

## HOMework

If homework is given, its purpose is to reinforce what has been learned in class, to prepare students for upcoming lessons, to teach responsibility, organizational skills, time management skills, and to help students develop positive study habits. The faculty and staff of River Charter Schools believe that homework is the responsibility of the students and should be completed at home. If a student participates in the after-school program and completes their homework during that time, parents are encouraged to review the homework with their child.

Listening to your child read or reading to your child on a daily basis is probably the single most important academic activity that will produce the greatest benefit for your child. Therefore, in addition to assignments given, twenty (20) to thirty (30) minutes of nightly reading is recommended for your student.

## SERVING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

River Charter Schools shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (IDEIA).

River Charter Schools is an independent “public charter school”. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the district and River Charter Schools outlines the official agreement between the district and the charter school. River Charter Schools complies with all state and federal laws related to the provision of special education and related services and all the Special Education Local Plan Area’s (SELPA) policies and procedures. River Charter Schools is a member of the El Dorado County Charter SELPA.

## IV. STUDENT SERVICES

### TRANSPORTATION

River Charter Schools is pleased to provide bus service for field trips. Students are expected to behave appropriately on any and all bus rides and waiting areas.

**Bus Rules:** Students who misbehave will be issued bus citations, which may result in revocation of bus-riding privileges.

**Bus riders shall not:**

- Distract the bus driver, create loud noise.
- Deface or tamper with the bus or the property of others.
- Use language or gestures that others might find offensive.
- Eat, drink, chew, smoke, litter, spit, throw, buy, sell, trade, or gamble on the bus.
- Use electronic devices on the bus.

Delta Elementary Charter School (DECS) is pleased to provide bus service to those students who need it. Seats on the bus will be assigned based on an application process and selected by random lottery.

Students must be at bus stops five (5) minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. The driver will not release kindergarten students unless a parent or guardian is there to receive their child.

Delta Elementary Charter School staff will be available at the school to meet riders in the morning and supervise them in the afternoon until the bus departs. Students are expected to behave appropriately on any and all of the bus runs and waiting areas.

Bus payments are only accepted through our school website [www.deltacharter.org](http://www.deltacharter.org).

**Pick-up and drop-off procedures:**

- **Please be patient and alert during busy times at DECS. These are our kids! Safety first!** Because of limited parking at the school site, it is recommended that students walk or be carpooled to and from school. Please drive slowly and be patient and alert to students who walk to and from school.
- Students are required to always have a Zonar bus pass to ride the DECS bus. Replacements can be purchased through the schools website.
- Students must ride the assigned route and are not allowed to switch unless reassigned with the school office.
- If a parent/guardian is not available to pick up their student at the stop after the first bus run of the afternoon, the student will be returned to DECS and can be picked up at school or returned to the bus stop at the second bus run of the afternoon.
- Lighthouse Charter School (LCS) uses a system for parents to drive onto campus referred to as Driveline.

## MEALS AND SNACKS

**Meals from the Cafeteria:** All students have the option to obtain free of charge, lunch and/or milk only from the cafeteria. Menus are provided on a monthly basis and will be posted on our website. If you would like a copy of the lunch menu, please come to the school office to obtain it. Menus are also available on our school website and ParentSquare. Students may also bring a nonperishable sack lunch. Microwaves are not available for students. River Charter School asks that parents not provide fast foods, sodas, energy drinks, or candy for their child's lunch. This does not promote nutritional eating.

Free and reduced-priced meals are available to all families. RCS still collects applications for state compliance reasons. It is requested that **ALL families submit a new application each school year** as the formula for qualifications change. Confidential staff will process the application and notify families of qualifications.

<https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/rivercs/Board.nsf/vpublic?open#>

This institution is an equal-opportunity provider.

## AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

River Charter Schools provides an after-school program for TK-8th grade students from their dismissal time until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at Lighthouse Charter.

Delta Elementary Charter School provides an after school program for TK-6th grade students from their dismissal time until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, if necessary. It is being overseen by an After School Program lead.

**Attendance at the after-school program is a privilege, not a right.** All students must be signed out of the after-school program by a parent or guardian. Students may be picked up at any time prior to 6:00 p.m. and **no later than 6:00 p.m.** Repeated late pick-ups can result in revocation of the right to the after-school program. The same holds true for persistent behavioral problems. This, too, could lead to disallowing further participation for a period of time in the after-school program.

## V. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

### MEDICATIONS

**Any medication that is to be administered during school hours** must be checked in to the school office (where it will be kept in a secure location), and the medication must be accompanied by a signed "Physician's Authorization for Medication at School" form. This includes all over-the-counter medication, such as Tylenol, Neosporin, aspirin, cough medicine, as well as all prescription medication, such as asthma inhalers, antibiotics, etc. Parents must bring in medication and forms, medication will not be accepted from students. Please note that a new "Physician's Authorization for Medication at School" form must be submitted each school year, as well as instructions for providing the care. We can only keep a two (2 week supply of controlled substances at a time. All medication that is prescribed by a doctor, must be in its original container with the student's identifying information on the container. All medication must be picked up by the last day of school or will be properly disposed of.

**Asthma Medication and Epi-Pens:** Students who need to take asthma medication or Epi-Pen prescribed by a physician during the school day may carry and self-administer the medication under the following conditions:



1. The school must receive a written statement from the physician, showing the name of the medication, how it is to be used, dosage, and confirmation that the student is able to self-administer the medication.
2. The school must receive written consent from the parent or guardian, allowing the student to self-administer their asthma medication; a signed release allowing the principal or school staff to consult with the student's physician if questions or concerns arise; and a signed release absolving the school and school personnel from civil liability if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction.

## EMERGENCY FORMS

It is important that the parents or guardians complete the emergency form for their children. River Charter Schools must have the names and phone numbers of reachable relatives or other adults who can assume responsibility for the student if the parent cannot be reached when necessary. Please update each student's emergency form when there is a change of information.

## GENERAL MAINTENANCE

Students are expected to make every effort to keep ALL school property (including, but not limited to, furniture, books, supplies, hallways, restrooms, and garden and lawn areas) as neat and clean as possible. As a courtesy to others and out of respect for the environment, students should make every effort to conserve paper and water and to dispose of litter appropriately. **Gum is not permitted in any form at River Charter Schools.** Students are financially responsible for all books, technology and other instructional materials that have been issued to them.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The teacher is the front-line authority for discipline. Teachers and students should try to handle problems first through the classroom disciplinary plan. Serious infractions of the rules will be referred to the principal and/or Superintendent for discipline. The Principal will determine appropriate measures in disciplinary matters, based on several factors, including, but not limited to, the *California Education Code* and the policies of the school's Board of Directors.

River Charter School's behavioral expectations are as follows:

- Show respect to self and others at all times
- Make decisions that reflect health and safety at all times
- Solve problems proactively, fairly and respectfully
- Show respectful, responsible and safe behaviors aligned to our Positive Behavior and Intervention System (PBIS)

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to help ensure a respectful, responsible learning environment, it is expected that a

student shall:

**Academics:**

- *Come to school every day, ready to learn.*
- *Work hard every day.*
- *Participate and be engaged in class discussions and learning.*
- *Do their personal best to complete all assignments.*
- *Ask questions if something is unclear.*

**Attendance:**

- *Come to school every day on time, ready to learn.*
- *Come to school with a positive attitude.*

**Citizenship:**

- *Be safe*
- *Be kind*
- *Be respectful*
- *Be productive*
- *Be a good listener*

**Homework:**

- *Complete all homework assignments as assigned by the classroom teacher.*
- *Have a parent look over homework before turning it in.*

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. This requirement refers to their actions toward other students, teachers, and adults within the school including their language, dress and manners.

We believe self-discipline is key to individual success. Students have a responsibility to know and respect the policies, rules and expectations of the school. Violations of such policies, rules and regulations will result in disciplinary action. School authorities have authorization to employ probation and suspension and to recommend expulsion, if necessary, to enforce this policy.

Application of the policies contained in this handbook regarding student conduct are in effect during the following times and in the following places:

- On school grounds during, and immediately before or immediately after school hours
- On school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a school group
- Off school grounds at a school activity, function or event
- En route to and from school/school activity on a school bus or other school vehicle
- At any time or in any place that impacts the school's ability to maintain order and discipline

## DRESS CODE

In order to meet the goals of River Charter Schools to provide a safe and orderly learning environment for all students, River Charter Schools requests that students dress in such a way that it remain appropriate to the educational environment. The following dress code guidelines apply to all regular school activities and field work.

### **Elementary School TK – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- Students must wear shoes with a back strap and safe for P.E. class.
- Shirts and blouses must be appropriately buttoned/zipped.
- Shorts and shirts must be of decent length (midhigh).
- The following **may not be worn**: Clothing, jewelry, and personal items shall be free of writing, pictures, or other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane, or sexually suggestive or which advocate racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice or promote the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, or violence. Head coverings, including hats of any kind, are not to be worn inside school buildings including assemblies, classrooms, labs and offices. Hats may be worn outside for sun protection. All hats are to be removed upon entering school buildings. Headwear worn for religious purposes are permitted both indoors and outdoors.
- Make-up, combs, brushes, or other grooming materials are not to be used in the classrooms or cafeteria.
- No pajama pants (except on designated pajama days).
- No undergarments that show.
- No bare midriff.
- Pants should be correct length and size and worn with a belt.
- Shirts need to cover the undergarment straps and be at least one inch wide. **No spaghetti straps.**
- Swim/beachwear may not be worn.

### **Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Includes all requirements from above, and in addition:

1. Extreme or inappropriate make-up, hair color, or hair style resulting in a disruption of instructional activities is not acceptable. Hairstyles that impair vision or eye contact is not appropriate.
2. Shoes must be worn at all times.
3. Clothing, jewelry, and personal items shall be free of writing, pictures, or other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane, or sexually suggestive or which advocate racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice or promote the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, or violence.
4. All clothing shall be appropriate for school. Garments shall conceal undergarments at all times.
  - The hem of all shorts, skirts, or dresses shall not be more than a minimum length of five (5 inches above the knee. (midhigh). If there is a slit in a skirt, the upper end of the slit is considered to be the edge of the garment.

- Pants should be worn at or above the hip with no undergarments showing.
- Fashion holes/torn in jeans knee and below
- No revealing clothing may be worn including low-cut (no cleavage) tops, bare midriff tops, strapless tops, halter tops, and garments with excessive holes or fraying. **ALL** top straps must be at least one inch (1” wide. See through garments are not allowed without proper undergarments underneath. A bandeau is considered a “bra” and must not be visible.
- No gang affiliated attire, including bandanas, may be worn.
- Pajamas, sleepwear, slippers, blankets or other bedtime clothes are not allowed unless there is a special spirit day deeming this as acceptable.
- Swim/beachwear may not be worn.
- Chains, large earrings, and or jewelry with protrusions/sharp edges are not allowed.

Teachers and or other River Charter Schools staff may impose more stringent dress requirements to accommodate the special needs of certain sports, classes, and/or other school-sponsored activities. **Please mark the interior tags within articles of clothing with the student’s name for ease of recovering lost items.**

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal Electronic devices are not permitted to be used during school hours at any time (7:30 am- 3:15 pm). If students bring electronic devices to school, they must be turned off and kept in their backpacks. Electronic devices that are misused such as cell phones, smartphones, I-pods, hand- held games, smart watches, etc, will be taken away if used at School or “ON” and kept by the office until the parent/guardian picks it up, after first speaking with the child’s teacher and/or the Charter School Principal. The use of social media is not permitted at school. River Charter Schools is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices.

## PLAYGROUND PROCEDURES

In order to maintain a safe and positive environment on the playground River Charter Schools has established the following expectations:

- River Charter Schools is a “hands free” zone
- Engage in positive, non-violent play
- Use all equipment appropriately
- Follow ball check out and check in rules with the ball monitors
- Follow the “stop and take a knee” whistle procedure
- After the whistle blows, all equipment must be held and walked back to the equipment area for check in
- The thruways are “quiet zones” where students are to walk at all times

## HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

Our campus brings together a diverse group of individuals. We are guided by the principle that respect and consideration for all individuals is foremost in all school activities. It is unlawful to discriminate against any individual based on disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance or enrolls students who receive state student financial aid. It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to observe and uphold the principles of equal opportunity as they affect staff, faculty and students in all aspects of school life. It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to actively promote appropriate workplace behavior. Any form of coercion or harassment that insults the dignity of others or impedes their freedom to work and learn will not be tolerated. Any such form of coercion or harassment will result in appropriate discipline, up to and including expulsion.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is modern slavery. It involves exploiting a person through force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of forced labor, commercial sex, or both. Victims of human trafficking include men, women, boys, girls, and transgender individuals lured by the promise of a better life in the United States as well as adults and children who were born and raised in the United States. Few crimes are more abhorrent than child trafficking, and few crimes are more challenging for communities to recognize and address. For many people, the reality of trafficking in their

community is difficult to comprehend, let alone confront. For educators and school personnel, the reality of these crimes and the severity of their impact are cause for a call to action. *Source: National Center on Safe, Supportive Learning Environments.*

For more information in general about Human Trafficking, visit:

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools>.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

River Charter Schools is committed to the health and well-being of all students. Mental health services are available at each campus and can be accessed by communicating (verbally or in writing) with the School Principal, School Psychologist, and/or the Mental Health Counselor. For mental health service across Yolo County, please contact the Yolo County Department of Health Services Mental Health Crisis and Access Line 24 hours a day at (888) 965-6647 or by visiting <https://www.yolocounty.org/health-human-services/mental-health>].

## PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING

Each school at River Charter Schools is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and patrons free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, when

the intentional written, verbal, or physical act:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student's property; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; or
- Is severe, persistent, or pervasive such that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

Nothing in this policy requires the affected student to possess a characteristic that is a perceived basis for the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or other distinguishing characteristic.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendo's, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. "Intentional acts" refers to the individual's choice to engage in the acts rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s). Anyone found to violate the above policy, is in violation of the California Education Code (Section 48900.4) and may be subject to suspension or expulsion. RCS BP# 1125

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

### DUE PROCESS PROTECTIONS

Prior to student discipline, especially those involving suspension or expulsion or other limitation of fundamentally protected student rights, every student will have access to the maximum due process protections provided under the law, within the context of the circumstances. Students who are being considered for suspension and expulsion will be provided the specific due process protections provided below to safeguard the student's interests within the situation.

#### **Suspension Procedure**

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

#### **Informal Conference**

Suspension shall be preceded by an informal conference conducted by the principal or designee with the student and whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the principal. The conference may be omitted if the principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists, or a parent/guardian is unresponsive. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

#### **Notice to Parents/Guardians**

At the time of the suspension, a charter school employee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the student may return to school. If school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may add that state law requires the parent/guardian to respond to such requests without delay.

### **Authority to Expel**

Only the River Charter School Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the expulsion panel, may expel a student. The governing board may expel any student found to have committed an expellable offense.

### **Expulsion Procedure**

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Written notice of the expulsion hearing shall be provided to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) at least ten (10) calendar days before the scheduled hearing date. The hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the date of suspension. The hearing will be conducted by the expulsion panel. The charter school principal will make a recommendation to the expulsion panel. The expulsion panel shall consist of at least three members of the administration team and neither a teacher of the pupil or a board member of the charter school's board of directors.

Finding of facts shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While no evidence shall be based solely on hearsay, sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses whose disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

The decision of the expulsion panel shall be in the form of a recommendation to the River Charter School governing board which will make a final determination regarding the expulsion.

### **Written Notice to Expel**

The principal or designee following a decision of the River Charter School's governing board to expel, shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall include the following:

- 1) The specific offense committed by the student;
- 2) Notice of the student's right to appeal the expulsion;
- 3) Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district and/or new school in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the charter school.

The principal, or designee, shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student's district of residence and the county office of education. This notice shall include the following:

- 1) The student's name;
- 2) The specific offense committed by the student.

Upon a student's expulsion from the charter school, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student shall be responsible for seeking alternative educational programs, including, but not limited to, programs within the county or their district of residence. River Charter Schools shall work cooperatively with student's parent(s)/guardian(s) as requested by parent(s)/guardian(s) or by the school district of residence to assist with locating alternative placements during expulsion.

### **Appeal Rights**

Following receipt of the notice of expulsion or suspension, the student shall have the right to

appeal that decision to the full River Charter School Board of Directors. The student shall have 10 days to present her/his intention to appeal the decision. Upon the appeal, the student shall have the right to a de novo review in front of the full governing board in closed session, including the full complement of due process rights available to the student during the initial hearing. The full governing board will then render a final decision regarding the student's appeal.

### **Disciplinary Records**

The school shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions. Such records shall be made available for the district/ county office's review upon request, but neither the district nor county office of education shall be involved in the disciplinary decision.

### **Readmission**

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be the sole discretion of the governing board following a meeting with the principal and the pupil and guardian or representative, to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The principal shall make a recommendation to the governing board following the meeting regarding his or her determination.

### **CALIFORNIA EDUCATIONAL CODE SECTION 48900**

A pupil may be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion if the Principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled determines that the pupil has committed an act as defined pursuant to Education Code Section 48900.

**Corporal Punishment will not be permitted at any River Charter School campus.** Any employee who engages in such action will be terminated immediately.

## **VI. GOVERNANCE AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors of River Charter Schools ("Board") meets at the schools regularly, at least once a month throughout the year alternating between the schools for regular board meetings. This Board of Directors is fully responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of River Charter Schools. All parents are encouraged and welcome to attend the monthly Board meetings. [Note: For a more complete accounting of the Board's responsibilities and operations, see the *Charter of the River Charter Schools*, which is available from the school's main office. Notices of the Board's meetings and planned agendas are also available from the school's main office and on the schools' websites.

### **ENGLISH LEARNERS ADVISORY COUNCIL (ELAC/DELAC)**

River Charter Schools complies with federal guidelines to ensure that parents of English Language Learners are aware of the programs and services provided to their student. All parents are encouraged and welcome to attend the quarterly ELAC meetings to discuss



educational programs available to English Language Learners. [Note: Check the school's website for meeting times and locations.]

## PARENT-TEACHER COMMITTEE (PTC)

River Charter Schools Parent-Teacher Committee (PTC) is composed of parents and teachers volunteering their time and talents in various ways for the benefit of the children and the school. This is accomplished by supporting school activities, class programs, and fundraisers and sharing time and ideas. PTC meetings are held monthly. All parents/guardians are welcome to attend these meetings and encouraged to participate in PTC activities. Dates are listed on the PTC link on the schools' website.

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Research has shown that parental involvement is the most important factor in a student's success in school; therefore, parents are encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Parent-teacher conferences may be conducted at any time a need arises. Teachers will notify parents with the dates and times of the conferences. Families are encouraged to meet with teachers/staff throughout the year. A formal parent teacher conference is held within the first trimester of the school year.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

River Charter Schools is committed to excellence in education and providing a safe and nurturing environment for the children. River Charter Schools encourages and expects the dedicated support of its parents to achieve this goal.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer at River Charter Schools. The principal shall maintain a comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities, including, but not limited to, the following: volunteering in the classroom/school (including at-home assistance); tutoring; attending parent- teacher conferences; attending meetings of the Board of Directors (as member or observer), ELAC, or any applicable parent group function; participating in the planning of, or attendance at, fundraising or academic/arts events; or taking part in other activities upon approval by the Principal. We value our parents and families greatly!

## VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS IN CLASSROOMS

Parents/guardians are encouraged to volunteer in classrooms, providing they sign up for volunteer time with the teacher. River Charter Schools asks that, when possible, teachers be notified at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance if a parent or guardian wishes to visit their child's classroom to observe or assist. This way, visitors may be assured that there are no conflicting activities such as art or music. The Charter School asks that parents/guardians respect the requests of teachers for alternative days for visitation. **Visiting parents/guardians and adults must sign in and out of the school office and abide by the school's rules. In order to volunteer in a classroom all adults must have an up-to-date Tuberculosis test**

**and be fingerprinted specifically for River Charter Schools. Please visit the school office for clearance to volunteer in your child's classroom.**

**All volunteers in the classrooms will be fingerprinted and cleared by the Department of Justice.**

Exclusion of Volunteers:

- Any convicted sex offender will be prohibited from volunteering at River Charter Schools.
- The Superintendent or site administrator has the discretion to deny volunteer service to any individual based on a criminal conviction. In determining whether an individual will be prohibited the designee shall consider the nature of the conviction as it relates to the volunteer's duties, to the potential for the individual's behavior or negatively impact the school and the duration of time since the conviction.
- Volunteers who have been convicted of a DUI will be prohibited from transporting students.

## RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Dispute resolution policies and procedures are to be followed by staff, parents, and students at River Charter Schools. The intent of this dispute resolution process is to:

- Resolve disputes within the school pursuant to the school's policies.
- Ensure a fair and timely resolution to disputes.

When a complaint is communicated to the school or an employee of the school, it must be done in a respectful manner. These complaints may arise during regular communication or as part of the Uniform Complaint Procedure. This may include disputes among or between students, staff, parents, volunteers, partner organizations, and Board of Director members (Governing Board). Complaints regarding sexual harassment, however, will follow the guidelines specified in the River Charter School's "Title IX, Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, & Bullying".

## PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to maintain an orderly, respectful and secure educational environment for the students and staff of River Charter Schools, it is essential that all parents/guardians and visitors to our school or school sanctioned events be aware of their responsibilities and adheres to the expected code of conduct.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

### **Academics:**

- Talk to their child about the importance of education and coming to school.
- Encourage their child to read at home.
- Review their child's progress.

**Attendance:**

- Get their child to school on-time every day.
- Notify the school if their child is ill and will not be coming to school within required time frames.
- Pick up or make arrangements for their child to be picked up every day.
- Understand the importance of Independent Study and the financial impact to River Charter Schools.

**Citizenship:**

- Support the school in developing positive behavior.
- Always respect other parents/guardians and school staff.
- Bring concerns and questions directly to staff.

**Homework:**

- Provide a quiet time and place for their child.
- Assist their child with understanding the work.

**Parent Involvement:**

- Attend Back to School Night, Parent Conferences, Open House, etc.

Parents/guardians are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. This requirement refers to their actions toward other students, teachers, and adults within the school including their language, dress and manners. This also includes online interactions with other parents, students, and school staff on social media, phone or email.

We believe self-discipline is key to individual success. Students and parents/guardians have a responsibility to know and respect the policies, rules and expectations of the school. Violations of such policies, rules and regulations will result in disciplinary action. School authorities have authorization to employ probation and suspension and to recommend expulsion, if necessary, to enforce this policy.

Parents/guardians and adult family members who fail to meet the Charter School's standards of conduct may be banned from campus for a specified period of time pursuant to the law.

Application of the policies contained in this handbook regarding parent/guardian conduct are in effect during the following times and in the following places:

- On school grounds during, and immediately before or immediately after school hours
- On school grounds at any other time when the Charter school is being used by a school group
- Off school grounds at a school activity, function or event
- En route to and from a Charter School/school activity on a school bus or other school vehicle
- At any time or in any place that impacts the school's ability to maintain order and discipline, including online

**NONDISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The River Charter School's Governing Board is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals. River Charter School's programs and activities shall be free from discrimination based on age, sex, race, color, religion, political affiliation, national origin, ethnic group, ancestry, marital or parental status, disability, or any other unlawful consideration. The Board shall promote programs which ensure that discriminatory practices are eliminated in all school activities and which, at the same time, provide personnel practices based on fitness and merit. This policy is subscribed to in the belief that River Charter Schools must ensure equal treatment for all persons. It is a goal of this Governing Board to achieve and maintain a workforce representative of the general population for all occupations and at all levels.

River Charter School's programs and facilities, viewed in their entirety, shall be readily accessible to individuals with handicaps. The principal shall ensure that interested persons, including those with impaired vision and hearing, can obtain information about the programs, facilities, and activities available.

The Governing Board prohibits unlawful sexual harassment of or by any student by anyone in or from the school. "Sexual harassment" is unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical contact of a sexual nature made by someone from or in the workplace or educational setting.

Any student, staff member, or parent who feels that harassment has occurred should immediately contact the principal. If a situation involving sexual harassment is not promptly remedied by the principal, a complaint of harassment can be filed at the school. Put the complaint in writing and submit it to the principal. If the complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing, staff shall help him or her file the complaint. If the concern is not resolved, a formal complaint may be initiated at the school or by directly contacting the River Charter Schools' Board of Directors.

Complaints will be kept confidential. The school prohibits retaliation against any participant in the complaint process. Each complaint shall be investigated promptly and in a way that respects the privacy of all parties concerned. Complaints concerning the principal shall go directly to the Superintendent.

## FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) NOTICE

### **Notice to Parents**

At the beginning of each school year, in addition to the notice required for directory information, all River Charter Schools' schools shall provide parents and eligible students with a notice of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The notice shall inform the parents and eligible students that they have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the student's education records;
2. Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and the Code of Federal Regulations authorize disclosure without consent; and

4. File with the Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA and its promulgated regulations.
5. Request that the School does not release student names, addresses and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent.

The notice must also include the following:

1. The procedure for exercising the right to inspect and review educational records;
2. The procedure for requesting amendment of records;

### **Education Record**

An education record is any written or computerized document, file, entry, or record containing information directly relating to a student that is compiled and maintained by the School. Such information includes but is not limited to:

1. Date and place of birth; parent and/or guardian's address, and where the parties may be contacted for emergency purposes;
2. Grades, test scores, courses taken, academic specializations and school activities;
3. Special education records;
4. Disciplinary records;
5. Medical and health records;
6. Attendance records and records of past schools attended;
7. Personal information such as, but not limited to, student identification numbers, social security numbers, photographs, or any other type of information that aids in identification of a student.

An education record does not include any of the following:

1. Records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record;
2. Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the School that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purposes of law enforcement;
3. Records relating to a School employee that are made and maintained in the normal course of business, relate exclusively to the individual in that individual's capacity as an employee; and are not available for use for any other purpose;
4. Records on a student who is 18 years of age or older, or is attending an institution of postsecondary education, that are: a) made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his or her professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity; b) made, maintained, or used only in connection with treatment of the student; and c) disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment. For the purposes of this definition, "treatment" does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program of instruction at the School or
5. Records that only contain information about the individual after he or she is no longer a student at the School.

### **Parental and Eligible Student Rights Relating to Education Records**

Parents and eligible students have the right to review the student's education records. In order to do so, parents and eligible students shall submit a request to review education records in writing

to the Site Administrator. Within 5 business days, the School shall comply with the request. If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the education records, the School will provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the requested records or made other arrangements for inspection and review of the requested records.

### **Copies of Education Records**

The School will provide copies of requested documents within 5 business days of a written request for copies to the Education Rights holder of the student. The School will charge reasonable fees for copies it provides to parents or eligible students unless it effectively prevents a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the education records. The charge will not include a fee to search for or to retrieve the education records.

### **Request for Amendment to Education Record**

If upon review, a parent of eligible student discovers any information or notation that is factually inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's right of privacy, he or she may request, in writing, that the School amend the record. The request must be submitted within thirty (30) days of the discovery of the inaccurate or misleading information or a violation of the student's right of privacy. The School will respond within a reasonable prompt period of time to the request. The School's response will be in writing and if the request for amendment is denied, the School will set forth the reason for the denial and inform the parent or eligible student of his or her right to a hearing challenging the content of education record.

### **Hearing to Challenge Education Record**

If the School denies a parent of eligible student's request to amend an education record, the parent or eligible student may request in writing that he/she be given the opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the student's education records on the grounds that the information contained in the education records is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the privacy right of the student. The hearing to challenge the education record shall be held within 30 days of the date of the request for a hearing, notice of date, time and place of the hearing will be sent by the School to the parent or eligible student no later than 20 days before the hearing.

The hearing will be conducted by the River Charter School Superintendent or his/her designee. The parent or eligible student will be given a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues relating to the challenge to the education record. The parent or eligible student may also, at his/her own expense, be assisted or represented by one or more individuals of his/her choice, including an attorney. The Superintendent or his/her designee's decision will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. Within 45 days of the conclusion of the hearing, the School's decision regarding the challenge will be made in writing and will include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.

If, as a result of the hearing the Superintendent or designee determines that the information is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, the School will amend the record accordingly and the parent or eligible student will be informed of the amendment in writing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the Superintendent or designee decides that the information in the education record is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of

the student, the parent or eligible student shall be informed of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he/she disagrees with the decision or both. River Charter Schools will maintain the statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose that statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

### **Disclosure of Education Records and Directory Information**

The school must have a signed and dated written permission from the education rights holder or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's education record with the exceptions listed below and for directory information. With the exceptions listed below, the school will not release educational records to any person or entity outside of the River Charter Schools network without the written consent of a parent or eligible student. The written permission must specify the records that may be disclosed, the purpose of the disclosure and the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. When disclosure is made pursuant to written permission, the parent or eligible student may request a copy of the disclosed records. Signed and dated written consent may include a record and signature in electronic form if it identifies and authenticates a particular person as a source of the electronic consent and indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent.

The school will only disclose personally identifiable information on the condition that the receiving parties not disclose the information to any party without the prior consent of the parent or eligible student and the receiving party use it for the purposes for which the disclosure was made. This restriction does not apply to disclosures that fall within the disclosure exceptions listed below and the school maintains the appropriate records, as described below. Except for the disclosures pursuant to a judicial order or lawfully issues subpoena, of directory information or to the parents or eligible students, the school will inform a receiving party of the requirement that the party not disclose the information to any other party without the prior writing consent of the parent or eligible student and that the receiving party use it for the purpose for which the disclosure was made.

The school will disclose education records, without consent, to the following parties:

1. River Charter School employees who have legitimate educational interest as defined by 34 C.F.R. Part 99;
2. Other schools to which a student seeks or intends to enroll;
3. Certain government official listed in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1) in order to carry out lawful functions;
4. Appropriate parties in connection to a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid to a student if it is necessary to determine eligibility, amount of aid, conditions for aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of the aid;
5. Organizations conducting certain studies for the school in accordance with 20 U.S.C § 1232g(b)(1)(F); including Northwest Evaluation Association as it relates to student assessment;
6. Accrediting organization in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
7. Parents or a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
8. Individuals who have obtained lawful court order or subpoenas;
9. Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies;
10. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law;

11. A victim of an alleged perpetrator of crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense. The disclosure may only include final results of the disciplinary proceedings conducted by the school with respect that that alleged crime or

## **APPENDIX A: COMPLETE POLICIES**

<https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/rivercs/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>



<https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/rivercs/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>

Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, And Bullying Policy

## **Board Policy #1125.1**

**Adopted/Ratified: 9/12/22 (previously #22-06)**

**Revision Date Approved: 7/15/24**



### HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, DISCRIMINATION, AND BULLYING POLICY

Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are all disruptive behaviors, which interfere with students' ability to learn, negatively affect student engagement, diminish school safety, and contribute to a hostile school environment. As such, River Charter Schools ("RCS") prohibits any acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying altogether.

As used in this policy, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are described as the intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, written communication or cyber-bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, based on the actual or perceived characteristics of mental or physical disability, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions, and parental status), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality (including national origin, country of origin, and citizenship), race or ethnicity (including ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, ethnic background, and traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, and twists), religion (including agnosticism and atheism), religious affiliation, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or based on any other characteristic protected under applicable state or federal law or local ordinance. Hereafter, such actions are referred to as "misconduct prohibited by this Policy."

To the extent possible, RCS will make reasonable efforts to prevent students from being discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, and/or bullied, and will take action to investigate, respond, address and report on such behaviors in a timely manner. RCS school staff who witness acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.

This policy applies to incidents occurring on the school campus, at school-sponsored events and activities regardless of the location, through school-owned technology, and through other electronic means, whether perpetrated by a student, employee, parent/guardian, volunteer, independent contractor or other person with whom RCS does business, and all acts of RCS's Board of Directors ("Board") in enacting policies and procedures that govern RCS.[1]

RCS complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and local ordinances in its investigation of and response to reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

## Definitions

Harassment means conduct based upon one or more of the protected characteristics listed above that is severe or pervasive, which unreasonably disrupts an individual's educational or work environment or that creates a hostile educational or work environment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes, comments or slurs.

Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work or school based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.

Deferential or preferential treatment based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

Bullying is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. Bullying includes one or more acts committed by a student or group of students that may constitute hate violence, or creates an intimidating and/or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

Placing a reasonable student [2] or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.

Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.

[1] This policy becomes effective on August 1, 2024. Conduct occurring before August 1, 2024 will be addressed in accordance with the former version of this policy, which was entitled "Title IX, Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Policy."

[2] "Reasonable student" is defined as a student, including, but not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill and judgment in conduct for a person of the student's age, or for a person of the student's age with the student's exceptional needs.

Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with the student's academic performance.

Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by RCS.

Cyberbullying is an electronic act that includes the transmission of harassing communication, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, video or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Electronic act means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

A message, text, sound, video, or image.

A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:

Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in the definition of "bullying," above.

Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.

Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.

An act of "Cyber sexual bullying" including, but not limited to:

- o The dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in definition of "bullying," above. A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

o “Cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

Notwithstanding the definitions of “bullying” and “electronic act” above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

## Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

RCS has adopted the following procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying.

### Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

RCS advises students:

To never share passwords, personal data, or private photos online.

To think about what they are doing carefully before posting and by emphasizing that comments cannot be retracted once they are posted.

That personal information revealed on social media [RL2] can be shared with anyone including parents, teachers, administrators, and potential employers. Students should never reveal information that would make them uncomfortable if the world had access to it.

To consider how it would feel receiving such comments before making comments about others online.

RCS informs its employees, students, and parents/guardians of RCS's policies regarding the use of technology in and out of the classroom. RCS encourages parents/guardians to discuss these policies with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with such policies.

### Education

RCS employees cannot always be present when bullying incidents occur, so educating students about bullying is a key prevention technique to limit bullying from happening. RCS advises students that hateful and/or demeaning behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in our society and at RCS and encourages students to practice compassion and respect each other.

RCS educates students to accept all student peers regardless of protected characteristics (including but not limited to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identification, physical or cognitive disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, and immigration status) and about the negative impact of bullying other students based on protected characteristics.

RCS's bullying prevention education also discusses the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and includes sample situations to help students learn and practice appropriate behavior and to develop techniques and strategies to respond in a non-aggressive way

to bullying-type behaviors. Students will also develop confidence and learn how to advocate for themselves and others, and when to go to an adult for help.

RCS informs RCS employees, students, and parents/guardians of this Policy and encourages parents/guardians to discuss this Policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this Policy.

#### Professional Development

RCS annually makes available the online training module developed by the California Department of Education pursuant Education Code section 32283.5(a) to its certificated employees and all other RCS employees who have regular interaction with students[RL3] .

RCS informs certificated employees about the common signs that a student is a target of bullying including:

Physical cuts or injuries

Lost or broken personal items

Fear of going to school/practice/games

Loss of interest in school, activities, or friends

Trouble sleeping or eating

Anxious/sick/nervous behavior or distracted appearance

Self-destructiveness or displays of odd behavior

Decreased self-esteem

RCS also informs certificated employees about the groups of students determined by RCS and available research to be at elevated risk for bullying and provides its certificated employees with information on existing school and community resources related to the support of these groups. These groups include but are not limited to:

Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth (“LGBTQ”) and those youth perceived as LGBTQ; [RL4] and

Students with physical or learning disabilities.

RCS encourages its employees to demonstrate effective problem-solving, anger management, and self-confidence skills for RCS’s students.

## Complaint Procedures

### Scope of the Complaint Procedures

RCS will comply with its Uniform Complaint Procedures (“UCP”) policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging unlawful harassment, discrimination, intimidation or bullying against a protected group or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of the protected characteristics set forth in the UCP that:

Are written and signed[RL6] ;

Filed by an individual who alleges that they have personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, or by one who believes any specific class of individuals has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based on a protected characteristic, or by a duly authorized representative who alleges that an individual student has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and

Submitted to the RCS UCP Compliance Officer not later than six (6) months from the date the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

RCS will comply with its Title IX Policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in its education program or activity, as applicable.

The following procedures shall be utilized for complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy that do not fall within the scope of RCS's Title IX Policy or comply with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements of the UCP. A copy of RCS's Title IX Policy and UCP is available in the main office[RL7] .

#### Submitting a Report or Complaint

All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, to intervene when safe to do so, call for assistance, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in this Policy for reporting alleged acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

Reports and complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy shall be submitted to the Superintendent (or the Chair of the Board if the complaint is against the Superintendent) as soon as possible after the incidents giving rise to the report or complaint.

Complaints regarding such misconduct may also be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to complainants.

While submission of a written report is not required, and RCS will investigate and respond to all oral and written reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, the reporting party is encouraged to submit a written report. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

Students are expected to report all incidents of misconduct prohibited by this Policy and other verbal or physical abuses. Any student who feels they are a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, the Executive Director, a staff person or a family member so that the student can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this Policy.

RCS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports and complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes keeping the identity of the reporter and/or complainant confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with applicable



law, carry out the investigation and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by RCS on a case-by-case basis.

RCS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report or complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the individual. Individuals alleging retaliation in violation of this Policy may file a grievance using the procedures set forth in this Policy.

### Investigation and Response

Upon receipt of a report or complaint of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, the Superintendent or designee will promptly initiate an investigation. In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than twenty-five (25) school days.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Superintendent or designee will, to the extent possible with respect to confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation. However, the Superintendent or designee will not reveal confidential information related to other students or employees.

If the complaint is against the Superintendent, a non-employee Board member who is not the Board Chair or a parent/guardian of a student at RCS will conduct a fact-finding investigation and provide the complainant [RL11] with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation.

### Consequences

Students or employees who engage in misconduct prohibited by this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from RCS or termination of employment.

## Right of Appeal

Should a complainant find RCS's resolution unsatisfactory, for complaints within the scope of this Policy, the complainant may, within five (5) business days of notice of RCS's decision or resolution, submit a written appeal to the Chair of the RCS Board, who will serve as the decisionmaker for the appeal or designate a decisionmaker for the appeal. The decisionmaker for the appeal will notify the complainant of the final decision.



RIVER CHARTER SCHOOLS

Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination & Bullying

COMPLAINT FORM

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: \_\_\_\_\_

List any witnesses that were present: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident(s) occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e., specific statements and conduct; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

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I hereby authorize RCS to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Complainant \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

To be completed by RCS:

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow up Meeting with Complainant held on: \_\_\_\_\_