

Bronx Community Charter School Family Handbook



Bronx Community Charter School

3170 Webster Avenue
Bronx, NY 10467
Phone: 718-944-1400
Fax: 718-944-1405
www.bronxcommunity.org

Table of Contents

BxC Calendar.....	3
Our History.....	4
Our Mission.....	4
Charter Schools.....	4
Board of Trustees.....	5
Rights and Responsibilities.....	6
School Staff	7
Home/School Communication.....	9
Family Participation	9
Community Council.....	9
School Events and Workshops.....	10
School Directory.....	10
Attendance Policy	10
Arrival Procedure.....	11
Dismissal Procedures	11
Annex.....	12
Mandated Reporting.....	12
Fire and Emergency Procedures	12
Academic Program.....	13
Homework.....	13
Promotional Policy.....	13
Support Services.....	13
Recess.....	14
Extra Clothes.....	14
Supplies.....	14
Transportation	15
Meals.....	15
Snacks.....	15
Health.....	16
Field Trips.....	16
Birthdays.....	16
Holidays	17
Reducing Waste.....	17
Discipline Policy.....	17

Our History

A small planning team of Bronx educators and parents began meeting in 2006 to imagine a high-quality charter option for District 10 families. As the idea built momentum, the team reached out to a broader array of local families to help develop the vision, holding family forums to discuss local parents' perspectives and priorities for their children's education. More than 40 families attended and shared thoughts about what they look for in their children's school. As the circle of local educators and parents continued to expand, the Board of Regents of New York State approved Bronx Community Charter School (BxC) to open in September of 2008.

In the spring of 2008, BxC hired an excellent team of educators and professionals as the founding staff and held a lottery in which 100 founding students were chosen randomly from 354 applicants.

Bronx Community Charter School opened its doors on September 2, 2008, welcoming 100 founding students in kindergarten and first grade. BxC added 2nd grade in 2009, 3rd grade in 2010, 4th grade in 2011, 5th grade in 2012. BxC moved into its permanent home at 3170 Webster Avenue in 2013.

Our Mission

Bronx Community Charter School is a small learning community founded on the principle that children learn best when they are active participants in their own learning. Our students raise questions about the world around them, engage with a wide range of materials, and learn through their interactions with each other and all of the adults in the school community. Children learn to use their minds well, cultivating strong intellectual habits and skills to become self-directed learners with clear passions and ambitions. Teachers know children deeply and develop powerful curriculum to meet the needs and interests of their students. All members of our school community are committed to making thoughtful choices, advancing democratic values, and effecting change in the broader community.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools that operate under a direct contract with the state. New York charter schools have the freedom to develop their own curriculum, control their own budget and hire teachers who best match their needs. Charter schools accept students by random lottery, with the only preference given to siblings of current students and to residents of District 10 over non-residents. Students attending charter schools qualify for all of the same services as those attending regular public schools. BxC takes advantage of the independence provided by the charter school model by creating structures to ensure student success, including two

teachers in every classroom, literacy and math specialists, a longer school day, and a longer school year.

Board of Trustees

Every charter school is governed by a Board of Trustees. BxC's Board meets ten times a year and is responsible for long-term planning, fundraising, and making sure that the school is responsible with its money. By law, all meetings are open to the public. In order to contact the BxC Board, please e-mail boardchair@bronxcommunity.org or contact the family representative to the Board, Stephanie Woo, at tristan.maddy@gmail.com or 917-257-6363.

A calendar of BxC Board meetings is posted in the school reception area and on the website, or can be requested from the school or the Board contacts above.

BxC Board of Trustees

Ariel Golden Behr	Chair
Daniel Osorio	Treasurer
Cynthia Rogers	Secretary
Beverly Falk	
Gil Schmerler	
Noah Doyle	
Joel Rivera	
Michael Akavan	
Melissa Serrano	BxC Family Representative

Grievance Policy

Any individual or group may bring complaints to the Board of Trustees of Bronx Community Charter School alleging a violation of the provisions of Education Law § 2855(4), the charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the charter school. Complaints must be submitted to the Board of Trustees at least one week prior to the next Board meeting. Complaints submitted later will be addressed at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regular public meeting. Every effort will be made to respectfully address each matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group that presented the complaint. The Board, as necessary, may direct a Co-Director or other responsible party to act upon the complaint and report to the Board. The Board of Trustees shall render a determination in writing if appropriate or required.

In accordance with Education Law § 2855(4), if after presentation of such a complaint to the Board of Trustees, the complainant determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the complaint to the charter entity, which shall investigate and respond. If, after presentation of the complaint to the Office of Charter Schools of the New York City Department of Education, the complainant determines that it has not adequately addressed the complaint, they may present the complaint to the New York State Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. The NYC DOE and the Board of Regents shall have the power and the duty to issue appropriate remedial orders to the Board of BxC under their jurisdiction to effectuate the provisions applicable under Education Law § 2855(4).

Bronx Community Charter School Rights and Responsibilities Agreement

We, the members of Bronx Community Charter School, made up of students, teachers, parents, school aides, custodians, office staff and Co-Directors, are working to create a school community in which learning and respect are valued and celebrated. Toward that end, we agree to uphold the following:

- 1) We have the right to learn.
We are responsible for our own learning and for allowing others to learn.
- 2) We have the right to learn from our mistakes.
We are responsible and accountable for our choices and actions.
- 3) We have the right to have our differences respected.
We have a responsibility to respect each other's background and culture.
- 4) We have the right to express our feelings and opinions.
We have a responsibility to speak at appropriate times and in a manner that allows people to listen
- 5) We have the right to be heard.
We have a responsibility to listen carefully to everyone.
- 6) We have the right to feel safe.
We have a responsibility to act in a safe way with our bodies and words.
- 7) We have the right to have our belongings respected.
We have a responsibility to respect and care for school materials and other people's property.

Whom to talk to about what?

Your child's classroom teachers: Please know that your child's teachers are always happy to talk to you and happy to schedule time for you to come to the classroom as well. You should stay in close touch with them about your child.

Jeannine King, Director of Student Support: Jeannine coordinates all special education services at BxC and also works with students and staff on school culture and behavior. Talk to her about behavior concerns (including bus behavior) and special education-related questions.

Roxane Brogan, Director of Family Support: Roxane's job is similar to a parent coordinator with the addition of being in charge of attendance and overseeing student records and the big picture of family involvement at school. Talk to Roxane if you have ideas about family events or if you and your family need specific support from school. Keep Roxane in the loop with family milestones: new babies, someone's illness, etc. Please do not hesitate to ask for support when you need it.

Evelyn Acevedo, Administrative Assistant: Evelyn assists Roxane and is the person who greets you at the 3rd floor reception desk or calls you to check about an absence.

Melvin Alvarez, Director of Operations: Melvin is responsible for the smooth operation of the school including school food, busing, security, and custodial services. He and **Abigail Rivera**, our Operations Associate, coordinate dismissal each day. Any calls about dismissal changes are directed to them.

Lesline Gardner, Director of Finance: Lesline makes sure our school remains in strong financial health. You should reach out to her if you have a lunch or late pick-up bill to pay.

Martha Andrews and Sasha Wilson, Co-Directors: Sasha is responsible for K-2 classrooms and Martha for 3rd-5th grade. If you have schoolwide concerns, or you've addressed a concern with teachers or other staff people and feel your concern hasn't been adequately addressed, speak to us.

Melissa Serrano, Family Representative to the Board of Trustees: Stephanie is the parent of a 1st grader and a 4th grader at BxC and is the new family representative to the Board of Trustees. Speak to her if you want to know about how the Board governs the school or want to express concerns to the Board: mvalcarc@news12.com

Everyone on staff is available by email (firstname@bronxcommunity.org, Jess the kindergarten teacher: jessical@bronxcommunity.org, John B. the 6th grade teacher: johnb@bronxcommunity.org, and Jessica the reading teacher: jessicah@bronxcommunity.org) or by leaving a phone message (718-944-1400) for them to return. We look forward to hearing from you!

Home/School Communication

BxC believes that communication between families and staff is crucial for the success of students. This communication happens in various ways, through phone calls, notes, class newsletters, and meetings.

Every BxC student has a Home/School Communication Folder. **It is extremely important that family members check this folder every night to read anything that has been sent home and to sign anything that requires a signature.** Teachers check the folder each morning for notes from home. Teachers can also be reached by e-mail and will return messages left by phone. While we will gladly take messages for teachers by phone, please keep in mind that since they are in classrooms all day they will not always receive the messages immediately. The most effective way to reach out to your student's teachers is through email or notes in folders.

Teachers send home a biweekly class newsletter to let family members know what the class is working on. This is an excellent opportunity for family members to talk to their children about the work they're doing, and to support that work at home.

The school holds a Curriculum Night during the first weeks of school as an opportunity for each class to talk about the work they will do all year long. Each family also has a family conference with the teachers in November and March, and receives progress reports, including narrative reports and checklists in November, March, and at the end of the year.

Family Participation in School

BxC families are encouraged to participate in the life of the school. This can happen in a wide variety of ways. Some possibilities are:

- Reading a favorite story to the class
- Talking to the class about your work
- Sending in recycled materials for class use
- Chaperoning a field trip
- Coming to an all-school sing
- Volunteering to help organize schoolwide events
- Participating in the Community Council

Please contact your child's teacher to see how you can be involved in your child's classroom. Roxane will also reach out with volunteer opportunities. If you should have something particular in mind please call or email her.

Community Council

Community Council meetings serve as a forum for families and staff to discuss issues and concerns affecting the children of the school. Committees of the Council may form to study and advise the Board on facets of the school such as programmatic expansion plans, budget issues, or student recruitment activities. The Council also works to organize and promote events that celebrate the school community. Additionally, the Council helps to publicize the school in the broader community. The Council is open to all members of the school community. Meetings are listed in the monthly calendar.

School Events and Workshops

BxC holds events outside of school hours such as the Family Picnic, Curriculum Night, Community Council meetings, workshops, and celebrations. Family members are encouraged to attend these events. Each year, 100% of BxC families have participated in at least one school event. For adult-centered events, such as the Community Council, childcare will be provided for families that need to bring their children. For whole family events, such as the Family Picnic, family members remain in charge of their children and are responsible for their whereabouts and well-being. There is at least one schoolwide event or meeting each month.

Family Directory

BxC publishes a family directory in order to help families connect with each other. The school encourages families to call one another to set up play dates, invite each other to events, and make other arrangements. The information contained in the directory is for the use of BxC families only, and may not be shared with others or used for commercial purposes. Every year excitement is created among the students when the Directory is distributed. With this in mind we ask that you monitor your child's phone calls using the directory.

Attendance Policy

Expectations BxC believes that the amount of time a student is present in the classroom directly connects to her success in school. Students are expected to be at school and on time each day. Families are made aware of this expectation through this Family Handbook.

Attendance is taken at 8:30 each morning, and collected along with any attendance-related notes. Students who arrive at school after 8:30 must be accompanied into the school by an adult who will sign them in before they go to class.

When a Child is Absent If a student is absent, a parent/guardian should call the school to explain the absence. All notifications should be made to Evelyn or Roxane at the main number of the school even if you have called or texted your child's teacher.

Excessive Absences Every day that your student is absent a call will be made to you, unless we have prior notification of the absence. These phone calls will be made starting at 9:30am. All relevant notes explaining a student's absence should be brought in with the child the next day. If a student is absent more than five times during a month without a medical note explaining the reason, a parent/guardian will be required to come in for an attendance conference with Roxane and Janice. At this conference, the family, Roxane, and Janice will develop a personalized attendance plan for the student and family. If attendance issues persist, another meeting will be required with Martha and Roxane.

Excessive Lateness When teachers or Roxane notice a pattern of frequent lateness (more than once a week), families will be contacted by Roxane by phone. School staff will express concern about the important time that's being lost due to excessive lateness. Families who continue to display patterns of lateness will be called in for a meeting at which Roxane and Janice will help develop a concrete plan for arriving at school on time.

Recording and Reporting Attendance will be reported on the progress reports that are shared with families in November, March, and June. Attendance that falls below 90% will be factored into decisions about whether a student should be promoted to the next grade.

Arrival Procedures

The school day begins at 8:30am every day. Doors open at 7:45am, and the breakfast program begins at 8:00. Students who arrive before 8:30 can eat or do a quiet activity. All students enter their classrooms at 8:30 and classes begin their work then. Students who arrive at school late miss part of the learning that day.

Dismissal Procedures

The goals of the following dismissal policies are to ensure the safety of our students and to meet the needs of our families effectively.

School bus - Children who ride the school bus at the end of the day must be met by an adult at the bus stop. Children are brought back to school if an adult is not present. Children are expected to observe the following rules while riding the bus:

- Seat belts must be worn at all times
- Voices should be a conversational tone

-Eating and drinking are not allowed on the bus

Pick up - Children who are being picked up stay inside the school with an adult, while other children line up by bus and are escorted out by staff members. Families who are picking up their children go upstairs to the 3rd floor reception area, and are sent to classrooms to sign out their children once all the bus riders have gone downstairs. Photo identification is requested of all individuals picking up children for the first time. Children will not be released to adults who are not on the pick-up authorization list.

Monday - Thursday dismissal is at 4:00 and Friday is at 2:00.

Mandated Reporting

School staff are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or maltreatment by New York State law. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when they are presented with reasonable cause to suspect such behavior. Such reports are required by law.

Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures

BxC conducts 10 fire drills each academic year. Students are taught to silently and safely leave the building under the supervision of their teachers. This is an extremely important time for children to listen, and families will be contacted promptly if a child fails to listen to adults during an emergency drill. During drills and actual emergencies, student emergency contact and authorized pick-up lists are taken out of building by the school staff. In the event of an actual emergency, school staff will escort students to **the Mosholu Branch of the NY Public Library on 205th Street between Bainbridge and Perry Avenues, which is our primary emergency shelter**. If for any reason, the school is evacuated for more than two hours, families will be contacted by school staff. Families are welcome to review the complete emergency plan, which is on file in Melvin's office.

Academic Program

Every day, students at BxC work with a wide range of materials, ask questions, gather information, look for answers, share ideas, and explore their world. Instruction takes place in a workshop setting that includes independent work time along with whole group, small group and individual instruction. The BxC curriculum includes Reading and Writing Workshop, word study, TERC Investigations math, inquiry-based science, project-based social studies, visual and performing arts.

Homework

BxC believes in homework that connects to the work in school and provides important practice for students. BxC does not give homework for homework's sake, and believes that young children should have a limited amount of homework. All BxC students should be reading or read to every night.

Promotional Policy

BxC looks at each child individually and assesses her readiness for the next grade level. The main criteria used are academic performance throughout the year and attendance. All forms of assessment, including individual assessments, whole class assessments, and state exams are a part of this decision. Families are informed of the possibility of grade retention on the November and March progress reports. A final decision is made and a final conference held in June.

Support Services

BxC provides special education services to students with Individualized Education Plans. These services are provided in cooperation with the Committee on Special Education of the NYC Department of Education. BxC works closely with families during the entire process of referral, evaluation, and provision of services. BxC provides English language support to English language learners. The school counselor also supports other students in the school, with the consent of their families, and provides support to families as well.

Recess

Recess is an opportunity for children to socialize with their classmates and students from other classes, make choices for themselves, and release some physical energy. BxC is fortunate to have a wonderful play area on its roof. Children have the opportunity to exercise, interact with schoolmates, and create imaginary play. Families should make sure that students wear clothes that they can play actively in and get dirty. Please monitor the shoe choices your child makes in the morning. Running in heels and flip flops can cause injury. A student may have to sit out of active play if recess staff deems a student's wardrobe inappropriate.

Because time to play is so important, BxC students will go outside all year long and should dress warmly in the cold weather. Students should have hats, mittens/gloves and a warm coat for winter recess. When the temperature is at its coldest, students will have a choice between inside and outside recess.

On rainy days, recess takes place indoors and students make choices such as drawing, board games, and puzzles.

Extra Clothes

All students in kindergarten (and older students, as appropriate) need to have an extra set of clothes at school. A full set of clothes includes: shirt, pants/shorts/skirt, socks, shoes, underwear. Families should make sure that the extra clothes at school are appropriate for the season.

Students may change into their extra clothes if they have a bathroom accident or get excessively dirty during outdoor recess. Soiled clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag.

Supplies

All supplies provided by families are for students to share. This helps students to understand the importance of sharing and making sure everyone has what they need. Pencils, scissors, paper towels, and other supplies become part of a class collection and are used as needed. Any supplies not included on the list for families are provided by the school.

Families should send children with lightweight backpacks, not heavy ones with wheels. Light backpacks will easily hold everything that students need to bring home, and are much easier to store and to take on the bus and on trips.

Transportation

Free transportation is provided to all students who live in District 10 and a certain distance from the school. (Kindergartners must live half a mile from the school, but this distance increases as students get older.) This transportation is provided by the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) of the NYC Department of Education. BxC provides addresses to OPT, and OPT determines the bus stops and creates routes just for BxC students. Bus stops are often a few blocks from students' homes. Families may choose from any of the bus stops on any BxC route.

Buses are scheduled to arrive at school at 8:00, in time for students to eat breakfast, and leave BxC at 4:00pm (2:00 on Fridays). Families should understand that there are sometimes delays, although the school and the bus company do everything they can so that the bus can run on time.

BxC buses are run by Grandpa's Bus Company, and their phone number is 718-409-4600. The number for bus complaints to the Office of Pupil Transportation is 718-392-8855.

Meals

Breakfast and lunch are provided by BxC, through the Office of School Food of the NYC Department of Education. Meals are prepared in BxC's new kitchen. A menu of meals for the month is sent home to all families, and families are welcome to send in lunch with their child if they wish.

Lunches sent in by families should be a full meal with healthy foods. If a student says that she has a home lunch, but all she has is chips and a drink, a school lunch will be ordered for her. Families should not send candy, sweets, or soda in school lunches; these items will be left in the lunch box and sent back home.

Due to dangerous allergies, BxC is a nut and shellfish free school. No shellfish, nuts, or products containing nuts are allowed at BxC. All families are required to fill out a lunch form to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. These forms are sent home the first week of school, please send them in immediately, all students who do not turn in a form will be charged full price for their lunch regardless of their eligibility. If you receive a letter stating that your child is eligible for free lunch from the city you may send that in without filling out the lunch application, please send the blank application back to the school. Families are responsible for contacting School Food at 718-707-4300 in the event that their financial situation changes.

Snacks

Younger students eat snack in their class each day. Teachers send home a snack schedule with a calendar of each family's snack day. Families should send in enough snack for the entire class on their snack day.

Snacks should be healthy and easy to distribute. These are the acceptable snacks that can be sent in (with suggested amounts):

- Fruit
- Graham crackers (1 box)
- Pretzels (1 big bag)
- Ritz crackers (1 box)
- Animal crackers (1 big container)
- Goldfish crackers (1 big carton or 3 small bags)
- Saltines (1 box)
- Baby carrots (2 big bags)
- Raisins (25 individual small boxes)

If families can buy bulk containers of these items it means that there will be extra for a second snack. Buying the biggest amount possible is greatly appreciated!

Health

BxC now has a school nurse, Nurse Jessie. Any health-related concerns or information should be communicated to her.

Children who need to take medicine such as cough medicine or use a device such as an asthma pump during the school day must have a medication administration form on file with the school. This form will allow Nurse Jessie to administer the medication. Children are not allowed to administer their own medicine in school.

Field trips

We believe that experiences with the world outside of the school walls hold a tremendous amount of learning. In-school and out-of-school experiences should complement and enrich each other. BxC field trips may range from neighborhood walks to trips all around the Bronx and New York City. We value students getting to know nearby communities and also developing a sense of all that New York City has to offer.

Field trips are an important part of curriculum, not an added extra. Families of BxC students are expected to allow their children to participate in all field trips.

We favor field trips that are free for children. Although occasional field trips with a cost may happen, efforts will be made to minimize the burden on families. **For any field trip, no student will ever be left behind due to lack of payment.**

All BxC families sign a general permission slip for walking trips. Separate permission slips are sent for trips outside of the neighborhood.

Birthdays

If family members choose, they may schedule birthday parties by contacting the classroom teacher. Celebrations should be scheduled during the last period of the day or snack time and may not exceed twenty minutes. Cupcakes or muffins are acceptable treats. No gift bags or other items will be given to or sent home with children. Birthday or any other types of candles are not permitted on school premises at any time.

No invitations to birthday or other parties may be distributed in school unless they are given to everyone in the class. Families who want to invite selected classmates must use the school directory to contact them outside of school.

Holidays

It is the policy of BxC not to celebrate holidays. Students come from such an array of backgrounds and it would be an overwhelming use of time to celebrate holidays

from all traditions. Additionally, many holidays have religious connotations, and celebrating them would make other students and staff members uncomfortable.

Holidays may be part of the curriculum, so that children can learn about cultural traditions, but a distinction is made between learning about holidays and celebrating them.

Reducing Waste

BxC is committed to reusing, reducing, and recycling waste. BxC recycles metal trays and milk cartons from meals, as well as paper products in every classroom. BxC encourages families to send meals or supplies in reusable bags, to send household items such as toilet paper rolls in for use in art, and to speak to children about the importance of reusing, reducing, and recycling for the sake of our environment.

Discipline procedures

BxC believes in a system of logical consequences. For example: If a child fails to line up at recess when the bell is rung, she will line up five minutes earlier than the other children the next day. If a child damages school property by drawing on a table, she will be taught to clean it off and asked to clean the rest of the tables in the classroom to make amends with the community.

Physical or verbal aggression towards adults and peers is considered a significant infraction and will be addressed in a serious way.

Children who exhibit behavior that requires a more detailed plan will be addressed on an individual basis.

Following is the complete discipline policy for BxC.

Bronx Community Charter School Code of Conduct

The standards set forth in the Bronx Community Charter School Code of Conduct apply to behavior in school during school hours, before and after school, while on school property, while traveling on vehicles funded by Bronx Community Charter School, at all school-sponsored events and on other-than-school property when such behavior can be demonstrated to negatively affect the educational process or to endanger the health, safety, morals, or welfare of the school community. When misbehavior involves communication, gesture or expressive behavior, the infraction applies to oral, written or electronic communications.

At Bronx Community Charter School discipline is defined as the strategies that are used to help children develop self-control, problem solving skills, independence, and self-motivation in a school environment that is safe for all members. Clearly defined expectations and consequences that are applied consistently are important to create a school community where learning can flourish, but lists of rules and consequences are only a small part of creating a safe school where respect and responsibility are valued.

At BxC, discipline will be considered a reflective process designed to increase student self-control and increase internalization of student accountability. BxC staff will deal with each problem individually, and for each unacceptable behavior there will be a range of reasonable consequences and actions a teacher or staff member will take, often in consultation or collaboration with other staff members. This will be dependent on the frequency of the behavior, progress of the child, age of the child, and severity of the behavior. The specific situation will dictate which consequences will be used.

In providing a Student Discipline Policy with a range of permissible disciplinary measures, BxC strives to ensure both consistency and equitable treatment for all students and to enable the BxC school community to exercise discretion and educational judgment. Co-directors, teachers, school staff, students, and families need to know the disciplinary measures that can be taken when any student misbehaves or substantially disrupts a classroom. It should, however, be recognized that inappropriate behavior or violations of the discipline policy may be symptomatic of more serious problems that students are experiencing. It is, therefore, important that school personnel be sensitive to issues that may be impacting the behavior of students and respond in a manner that is most supportive of their needs.

BxC staff members are responsible for developing and utilizing strategies and measures that promote optimal learning and address behaviors which negatively impact the education process. Toward that end, school staff will develop plans and explore techniques for addressing a student's behavioral problems and discuss these alternatives with the student and her family. These plans might include the use of alternative instructional materials and/or approaches, alternative classroom management techniques, behavior contracts, remedial services, alternative class placement, guidance support, and referral to services that will address personal and family circumstances.

BxC has developed this Code of Conduct to address proper student behavior, maintenance of order within the school and while engaged in school activities off-site, and a statement of student and family rights. This policy also includes descriptions of infractions that may warrant removal from class, in-school and out-of-school suspensions and the appropriate procedures for each. In all disciplinary matters, students will be given notice and will have the opportunity to present their version of the facts and circumstances leading to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions to the staff member imposing such sanctions. Depending on the severity of the infraction, disciplinary responses may include temporary removal from class, suspension (in-school or out-of school), exclusion from extracurricular activities, and expulsion. Where appropriate, school officials will also contact law enforcement agencies.

The BxC staff will ensure that parents and students are well informed of these policies. In this way, students will have a clear understanding of the type of behavior that is expected of them and parents will be reassured about the type of school environment maintained at BxC.

Student Discipline Policy

Minor Infractions and Reasonable Consequences

Minor infractions can be just as disruptive to learning as severe infractions. In the classroom and in other places, teachers and staff must consistently address student behavior that interferes with learning and safety. The outcome of any consequence for misbehavior should be to reinforce for that child the parameters of acceptable behavior and to help her develop a better sense of how negative behavior impacts the group and herself.

Minor Infractions that do not qualify for in-school and out-of-school suspensions, but are determined by appropriate school staff to warrant disciplinary action, include:

- Teasing or taunting others
- Interruptions/calling out in class
- Inappropriately copying the work of others
- Refusing to complete classwork
- Lying to staff
- Bringing electronic items to school without permission that detract from learning
- Not completing homework
- Eating food, gum or candy at inappropriate times or without permission
- Swearing or cursing
- Play fighting
- Ignoring instructions from an adult
- Bringing violent or pornographic material to school

Reasonable consequences for these behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

- Warning from teacher or other staff member
- Loss of recess/project time
- Student/teacher conversation
- Loss of choice
- Call home to parents
- Making written or verbal apologies
- Making amends through service to school
- Missing special activities or school trips
- Removal from class for a period of time to reflect/cool down in another room
- Co-director/student conversation
- Co-director/student/family conversation
- Development of a behavior contract

Removal from Class or In-School Suspensions

A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below may be subject to removal from class or an In-School Suspension:

Disciplinary Infractions that warrant an in-school suspension:

- Attempt to assault any student or staff member
- Vandalize school property causing minor damage
- Endanger the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force that reasonably places the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury
- Engage in conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity or endanger or threaten to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Used forged notes or excuses
- Steal, or attempt to steal, or possess property known by the student to be stolen
- Commit extortion
- Engage in gambling
- Abuse school property or equipment
- Use obscene or abusive language or gestures
- Engage in acts of verbal or physical sexual harassment

- Make a false bomb threat or pull a false emergency alarm
- Possess tobacco or alcohol
- Commit any other act which school officials reasonably conclude disrupts the learning environment of the school
- Repeatedly commit minor behavioral infractions which, in aggregate, may be considered an infraction subject to formal disciplinary action

Procedures and Due Process for In-School Suspensions

During an In-School Suspension, students may be temporarily removed from the classroom and placed in another area of the school where the student will receive substantially equivalent education. The student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will be given a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference regarding such suspension. Students will be afforded due process protections consistent with *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565).

The Co-Directors also shall immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 24 hours of suspension at the last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents, which resulted in the suspension.

Teachers will provide appropriate class work for students receiving In-School Suspensions equal to that which they would receive in their regular classrooms.

Out-of-School Suspensions

Out-of-School Suspensions shall refer to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for any length of time. A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below may be subject to an out-of-school suspension, unless the Co-Directors or the Board of Trustees determine that an exception should be made based on the circumstance of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. Such a student may also be subject to referral to law enforcement authorities and/or expulsion.

Disciplinary Infractions that warrant out-of school suspension:

- Possess, use, attempt to use, or transfer of any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student in school
- Commit, or attempt to commit arson on school property
- Assault any other student or staff member
- Intentionally cause physical injury to another person, except when student's actions are reasonably necessary to protect him or herself from injury
- Vandalize school property causing major damage
- Commit any act, which school officials reasonably conclude warrants an Out-of-School suspension

In addition, a student who commits any of the acts previously described as causes for In-School Suspension may, instead or in addition, be subject to an Out-of-School suspension at the Co-Directors' discretion.

Procedures and Due Process for Out-of-School Suspension

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

If the Co-Directors initiate the suspension proceeding, he or she shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the Co-Directors may accept or reject all or part of it.

Provision of Instruction During Removal

Bronx Community Charter School will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been suspended or removed, which are equal to that which they would have received in their regular classroom within 24 hours of the suspension or expulsion. For a student who has been suspended, alternative instruction will be provided to the extent required by applicable law. For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided in a like manner as a suspended student until the student enrolls in another school or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

Alternative instruction will be provided to students suspended or expelled in a way that best suits the needs of the student on a case-by-case basis, and is equal to that which they would have received in their regular classrooms. Instruction for such students shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress, and shall provide them the opportunity to complete the assignments, learn the curriculum, and participate in assessments. Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the child's home, a contracted facility (e.g., in the school district of location), or a suspension room at the School. During any removal for drug or weapon offenses, additional services such as counseling shall include strategies designed to prevent such behavior from recurring. Instruction will be provided by one or more of the following individuals in consultation with the student's teacher(s): teacher aides or trained volunteers; individuals within a contracted facility; or a tutor hired for this purpose.

Participation in School Activities

All students have the right to have the opportunity to take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of race, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, creed, or disability; and to address the school on the same terms as any citizen. Similarly, all students are bound by the same rules for exclusion from school activities and public address.

Records

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

Freedom of Expression

Students are entitled to express their personal opinions verbally, in writing, or by symbolic speech. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves, and written expression of opinions must be signed by the author. Any form of expression that involves libel, slander, the use of obscenity, or personal attacks, or that otherwise disrupts the educational process, is prohibited. All forms of expression also must be in compliance with the Student Disciplinary Code, violations of which are punishable as stated in the Disciplinary Code.

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

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

Dress Code

Students are to dress appropriately for a serious learning environment. Students may not bare midriffs, wear short-shorts or clothing that advocates or advertises the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs or violence. There is no uniform for students at BxC. The Co-Directors will contact the families of students who regularly disregard the dress code.

Search and Seizure

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

Student cubbies and desks remain the property of the school, though the school is not responsible for books, clothing, or valuables left in cubbies or desks. A student shall not place or keep in a cubby or desk any article or material

which is of a non-school nature and may cause or tend to cause the disruption of the mission of the school.

The following rules shall apply to the search of school property assigned to a specific student and the seizure of illegal items found therein:

- School authorities will make an individual search of a student's desk, or cubby only when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in the possession of an item which is prohibited on school property or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
- Searches shall be conducted under the authorization of the Co-Directors or his/her designee.
- Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from student desks, or cubbies by school authorities.

Off-Campus Events

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

Due Process

All students and families have a right to due process and to make formal grievances to the Board of Trustees of Bronx Community Charter School in accordance with the proper procedures. All students will be afforded due process prior to any action that could result in their removal or exclusion from regular classroom instruction or from other school activities. Such students will be entitled to a fair hearing prior to any such exclusion, except in cases of emergency where removal is necessary for the safety of the student, of other students or of other members of the school community.

Right to Appeal

The Co-Directors' decision after the formal hearing to impose a suspension, expulsion or other action may be appealed to the School's Board of Trustees. If a parent is dissatisfied following the Board of Trustees' decision regarding the appeal, the parent may appeal the decision to the charter school authorizer.

Student Records

Bronx Community Charter School maintains written records of all suspensions and expulsions including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Firearm Violations

Federal and State law require the expulsion from School for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Co-Directors may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). "Weapon," as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC§8921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214(3)(d) effectuates this federal law.) The Co-Directors shall refer a student under the age of sixteen who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act except a student fourteen or fifteen years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20(42).

Maintenance of Public Order

The following proposed rules shall govern the conduct of students, teachers, staff, licensees, invitees, and other persons, whether or not their presence is authorized, on all property or facilities operated under the auspices of Bronx Community Charter School.

These rules and penalties are not to be considered exclusive or to preclude in any way the prosecution and conviction of any person for the violation of any federal, state or local law, rule, regulation, or ordinance, or the imposition of a fine or penalty provided therein. Additionally, these rules and regulations should not be construed to limit, but rather exist in conjunction with any other codes of conduct established for the school, such as disciplinary code and/or a bill of student rights and responsibilities.

Prohibited Conduct

No person, either singly or in concert, shall:

- Willfully cause physical injury to any other person, or threaten to use force, which would result in such injury.
- Physically restrain or detain any other person, nor remove such person from any place where he or she is authorized

to remain, except as necessary to maintain the established educational process.

- Willfully damage or destroy school property, nor remove or use such property without authorization.
- Without permission, express or implied, enter into any private office or classroom of an administrative officer, teacher, or staff member.
- Enter or remain in any building or facility for any purpose other than its authorized use or in such a manner as to obstruct its authorized use by others.
- Without authorization, remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed, nor without permission enter any building or facility prior to its normal opening.
- Refuse to leave any building or facility after being required to do so by the head of school or an authorized administrative officer or his or her designee.
- Willfully obstruct or interfere with the free movement of persons and vehicles.
- Deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, lectures, and meetings or deliberately interfere with the freedom of any person to express his or her views, unless such disruption is necessary to maintain order of the educational process.
- Possess on school property any rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver, knife, chain, club or other weapon, whether or not the person has a license to possess such weapon. Further, it is the duty of the head of school to inform the police of the presence or use of any such weapon or implements used as weapons on school property.
- Commit acts which threaten the safety and welfare of persons on school property.
- Violate any federal or State statute or regulation, local ordinance or school policy.
- Possess, use or distribute alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia.
- Harass or coerce any person.
- Refuse or fail to comply with a lawful order or direction of a school official in the performance of his or her duty.
- Distribute or post on school property any written material, pamphlets or posters without the prior approval of the Co-Directors.

Penalties and Enforcement

Staff members are required to report known violations of these rules to the Co-Directors and to make reasonable efforts to stop the prohibited conduct. The Co-Directors are responsible for the enforcement of these rules. Penalties for violations of these rules include, but are not limited to:

- the withdrawal of authorization to remain upon school property;
- ejection;
- arrest;
- for students, suspension or other disciplinary action; and
- for school employees, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Bronx Community Charter School Student Discipline Policy for Students with Disabilities

Bronx Community Charter School shall comply with sections 300.519- 300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the following procedures, except that in the event that the following procedures are inconsistent with federal law and regulations, such federal law and regulations shall govern.

Bronx Community Charter School shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. Students for whom the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to the infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the student's district of residence for consideration of a change in the guidelines.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight days, such student will immediately be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for reconsideration of the student's educational placement. Such a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than ten days during the school year without the specific involvement of the CSE of the student's district of residence prior to the eleventh day of suspension, because such suspensions may be considered to be a change in placement.

In considering the placement of students referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE of the student's district of residence is expected to follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement. Bronx Community Charter School shall work with the district to ensure that the CSE of the student's district of residence meets within seven days of notification of any of the following:

- The commission of an infraction by a student with a disability who has previously been suspended for the

maximum allowable number of days

- The commission of any fraction resulting from the student's disability
- The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student has previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infraction been committed by a non-disabled student, the head of school would seek to impose a suspension in excess of five days.

Bronx Community Charter School shall ensure that when the suspension or removal of a student with a disability will constitute a disciplinary charge of placement, the CSE will be immediately notified so that the CSE can meet its required obligations to:

- Convene a CSE meeting within ten school days to make a manifestation determination.
- Convene a CSE meeting within ten business days to develop a plan to conduct a functional behavioral assessment or review an existing functional behavioral assessment or behavioral intervention plan
- Provide the student's parent with a copy of their procedural due process rights
- Work closely with the CSE of the student's district of residence in determining educational services or the interim alternative educational setting that would ensure the provision of the requirements of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

Provision of Services During Removal

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

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

During any removal for drug or weapon offenses [pursuant to 34 CFR §300.520(a)(2)] services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and in achieving the goals of his or her IEP. These service determinations will be made by the CSE of the student's district of residence. The school will place students in interim alternative educational settings as appropriate and mandated by 34 CFR §300.520(a)(2).

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

CSE Meetings

Meetings of the CSE of the student's district of residence to either develop a behavioral assessment plan or, if the child has one, to review such plan are required when: (1) the child is first removed from his or her current placement for more than ten school days in a school year; and (2) when commencing a removal which constitutes a change in placement.

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

Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten school days after the date on which such decision is made, the CSE of the student's district of residence and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

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

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

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