

Behavior Agreement

Discipline Policies and Procedures
SY 2013-2014

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Introduction

Amber Charter School's mission is to provide our students an academically rigorous and well-rounded education, along with strong character development, that will enable them to prosper in middle schools and beyond.

*Discipline at the Amber Charter School draws from the central premise that the school is a learning community, encompassing faculty, non-faculty staff, students, and parents. Our discipline policy exists to preserve the ability of the community to function effectively; to promote self-responsibility and accountability; and to strengthen the integration of the student into the school and global communities. These ideals were developed as part of a series of meetings with members of Amber's community. These meetings involved readings and discussions of relevant articles such as The Tone of Teaching by **Max Van Manen**, analyzing diverse discipline documents, and from the understandings written in the initial charter document.*

Students, families, school staff & administrators, and every member of our community pledge to adhere to the following tenets:

- *We are committed to non-violence in all areas of our lives.*
- *We are respectful of ourselves, of others and of our environment.*
- *We communicate with each other using positive language.*

Our Principles of Responsible Behavior

Our school is a community where everyone has responsibilities. We base our daily relationships and interaction on the following *Common Understandings*:

Our School Rituals,

We will:

- ❖ greet everyone by name to welcome him or her to a community that is enriching.
- ❖ eat healthy food and drink in a peaceful and calm manner.
- ❖ create a safe haven in our public spaces by behaving in a socially responsible and acceptable manner (low voices, polite manners, physically respectful of self and others).
- ❖ be punctual during pick-up and dismissal.
- ❖ obey rules in common areas (dining hall, bathrooms, stage, specialist rooms, gym, hallways).
- ❖ walk safely and attentively to and from the park during recess.
- ❖ respect all adults and each other at all times.

Our Tone and Voice,

We will:

- ❖ set a positive inclusive tone by meeting with our parents and other community members.
- ❖ always use our low voices in common spaces (classrooms, libraries, dining hall).
- ❖ use our student council as the vehicle to express student voice and promote student leadership.
- ❖ demonstrate respect for self and others.
- ❖ use non-verbal communication in common spaces whenever possible.
- ❖ use kind and positive words.
- ❖ hold important or personal discussions in private spaces.
- ❖ wear our school uniform.

Our Recognition of Efforts,

We will develop and distribute:

- ❖ super readers' awards.
- ❖ attendance certificates.
- ❖ student council participation award.
- ❖ Principal Honor Roll.
- ❖ academic achievement and merit awards.
- ❖ community service awards.
- ❖ leadership awards.

Our Environment and Space,

We will:

- ❖ always walk up & down the stairs in one line as we move throughout the school.
- ❖ walk in two orderly lines outside the school.
- ❖ keep our environment clean and free from vandalism.
- ❖ resolve our conflicts peacefully in designated spaces (classroom, counselor/social worker room, office).
- ❖ behave in an orderly manner in the dining hall during morning pick-up and dismissal

- time.
- ❖ not bring toys, games/electronic equipment or other personal property of that nature to school.

Essential Components of the Discipline Policy

Discipline policies exist to enable the school to function effectively without disruption and to help strengthen the integration of students into the overall school community. The focus is on behaviors that are helpful and constructive for the community and to reduce/eliminate behaviors that weaken the community. This helps us to live in a community where everyone is respected and feels safe emotionally and physically.

Administrators, school staff and students will use self-discipline to develop a positive, safe, healthy and successful school environment. Therefore, everyone is responsible for respecting and implementing the aforementioned common understandings.

Discipline procedures at Amber are designed to help the student to:

1. function creatively and effectively,
2. promote self-responsibility and accountability,
3. participate actively in the school and global community,
4. engage in the teaching and learning process,
5. Involve their families as responsible and accountable members.

It is essential that we establish an on-going staff-student relationship based on trust and respect.

It is essential that self-responsibility and accountability be promoted by maximizing student involvement in making decisions and resolving problems. Students will be involved in the analysis of an incident and in the discussion of appropriate consequences (if necessary).

It is essential that students and parents are accountable for student learning by completing homework assignments and school projects, having excellent attendance and arriving to school on time.

It is essential that parents/guardians participate and support school discipline policies.

Amber School Behavior Agreement

A behavior agreement ensures that there is consistent and equitable treatment of all students. It is important that all members of a school community know the disciplinary measures that can be taken when any student misbehaves or substantially disrupts a classroom. However, it should be noted that inappropriate behavior may be symptomatic of a more serious problem that a student is experiencing. It is, therefore, important that members of our school community be sensitive to issues that may be impacting upon the behavior of student and utilize services provided by support staff, i.e. counselors, guidance and/or social workers to support this student. To this end, Amber has created a Child Study Team for this purpose. This team, comprised of school personnel, will develop behavior plans and explore techniques that can be used to address a student's behavioral problems. These plans and techniques will be discussed with the student and his/her parent or guardian. If, at any time, school personnel suspect that student difficulties may be the result of a disability, which may require special education services, the parent will be notified and the student may be referred for further evaluation to the Kennedy Center and/or Committee on Special Education.

Amber staff will implement the Behavior Agreement with very clear consequences for children and families. The agreement delineates clearly articulated expectations and consequences for what occurs when this agreement is violated. The Behavior Agreement covers the very important categories of:

- **Behavior Card System**
- **Uniform**
- **Homework**
- **Absences and tardiness**
- **Safety of self and others**
- **Respect of Property**

Behavior Card System

The school has implemented a mandatory *behavior card discipline system* across the grades in all classrooms. It is our expectation that, as per Amber's Mission statement (to enable all students to become fully educated, creative adults), this behavior card system will help our students to develop self-discipline and respect.

The cards are organized into colors that range from green to blue to yellow to red.

- Green: If a student remains on green, he/she is behaving in an appropriate manner.
- Blue: If a student moves to blue, he/she will be asked to self-check and may have a time out.
- Yellow: If a student moves to yellow, he/she will have a more severe consequence and may be removed from class and be required to fill out a think sheet.
- Red: If a student moves to red, his/her parent will be contacted.

This system enables both teachers and students to monitor behavior and self check. In any event, parents will be kept abreast of behavior infractions.

Uniform

UNIFORMS ARE MANDATORY. Students who are not in school uniform will pose a security threat to themselves.

Amber Uniform Requirements

WINTER: November to March	SPRING: September to October & April to June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy Long pants • Long sleeved Light blue oxford collared shirt with Amber logo embroidered on left hand side • Navy sweater with Amber logo embroidered on left hand side • Navy or black socks • Navy or black shoes/sneakers • Navy tie <p>GYM Uniform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid short sleeve light blue t-shirt with/without Amber logo silk screened on left hand side or old Amber T-shirt • Navy sweatpants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy shorts/ skirt/ skort • Short sleeved Light blue oxford collared shirt with Amber logo embroidered on left hand side • Navy or black socks • Navy or black shoes/sneakers • Navy tie <p>GYM Uniform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid short sleeve light blue t-shirt with Amber logo silk screened on left hand side or old Amber T-shirt • Navy sweatpants

Not Uniform: Cargo pants; leggings; jumpers; thermal shirts that can be seen; boots; hoodies; jackets; any clothing item that conceals the Amber logo; and any clothing item that is not the appropriate color.

Students not in FULL uniform will incur the infractions outlined in the Parent handbook and below:

Infraction	Consequence
First time out of uniform	Out of uniform infraction notice sent home by teacher. Notice must be signed and returned by the parent.
Second time out of uniform	Teacher will call parent and send second uniform infraction letter. Notice must be signed and returned by the parent.
Third time out of uniform	Dean of students will contact parent and non-compliance with the uniform policy will be noted on the student's report card.

Backpacks

To ensure the safety of all our students **all backpacks with wheels are banned** from the school. In our building there are steep stairs that the students climb every day. They all have great difficulty carrying the extra weight of the wheels up and down these stairs. It is a hazard to them. Therefore, make sure **NOT** to purchase backpacks with wheels.

Homework

Homework is viewed as a bridge between home and school giving students an opportunity to share their work and involve their family members. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for monitoring and assisting with homework assignments of their child. Each child should attempt to complete homework independently but may need assistance.

When homework is not completed consequences will be enforced.

Attendance and Tardiness

Amber views every day as an essential day of learning. Therefore, excellent attendance and punctuality are expected from all our students. School opens at 8:00AM with breakfast provided until 8:10am. All students are expected to arrive at school on time. If student absences and/or lateness become a pattern, this can lead to academic delays, poor tests results and possible holdover. Students are required to make up work missed during their absence.

All students are expected to arrive at school on time by 8:10AM SHARP! All students who arrive after 8:10AM will be considered late. Excused absences are absences where a student is too ill to report to school or has a medical, legal, dental appointment, or death in the family. All absences require appropriate documentation, i.e. note from home, note from a doctor and/or medical facility, court documents, etc. If appropriate documentation is not provided, the absence will be considered as unexcused. **If a student is absent 20 or more days, he/she may jeopardize promotion to next grade.**

Infraction:

Three - Five unexcused absences/lateness

Six - Twelve unexcused absences/lateness

Twelve or more unexcused absences/lateness

Consequence:

Official notice from the school

Promotion in doubt letter sent to parent.

Student reported to Attendance Officer;
Possible educational neglect report to ACS
(Agency for Child Services)

Behaviors that Lead to Suspension

Safety of Self and Others

In order to ensure that Amber is a place where learning is a priority, the student must be safe at all times. Any student action or intention that can be deemed as violating the safety of oneself or others can result in serious consequences.

Possible Consequences:

1. No Recess: Teachers will be responsible for students that are not having recess.
2. Parent/Guardian Meeting: May be set up with teacher, administration or support staff
3. Parental Escort during Field Trips: If a teacher feels that a student cannot be secured during a trip, parent/guardian will be required to attend for the student to participate.
4. Behavior Plan: Referral to Child Study Team for the development and implementation of a Behavior Intervention Plan.

Respect for School /Personal Property

In order to maximize instruction, Amber's physical environment must be respected and kept clean and orderly at all times. School and student property must also be protected and secured. If a student violates or disrespects school property, there will be serious consequences.

Examples of these violations include:

- Steals school or private property

- Vandalizes or defaces school or private property
- Destroys school, private or public property

Infraction:

First offense of any of the above

Second offense of any of the above

Third offense of any of the above

Fourth offense or more

Consequence:

Intervention conference with adult staff member.

Intervention conference with Amber support staff member and parent letter sent home.

Suspension.

Official meeting with school administrator and parent. **Suspension for two (2) days.**

Possible expulsion. Case presented to Board of Trustees.

Category I & Category II Infractions

Category I

- Disrupts school activities (including meals and recess)
- Disrespects a peer, teacher, administrator or other adult staff.
- Commits an obscene act or engages in profanity or vulgarity
- Uses hateful language
- Cheats or plagiarizes

Infraction:

First offense of any of the above

Second offense of any of the above

Third offense of any of the above

Fourth offense or more

Consequence:

Intervention conference with adult staff Member

Intervention conference with Amber support staff member and parent letter sent home

Official meeting with school administrator and parent. Possible suspension.

Suspensions

Category II

- Participates in any verbal, physical or sexual assault or harassment
- Threatens others physical and/or emotional safety
- Fights, bites, scratches, etc.

Infraction:

First offense of any of the above

Consequence:

Intervention conference with adult staff

member

Second offense of any of the above

Intervention conference with Amber support staff member and parent letter sent home
Suspension.

Third offense of any of the above

Official meeting with school administrator and parent. **Suspension for two (2) days.**

Fourth offense or more

Possible expulsion. Case presented to Board of Trustees.

Suspensions

In the case of more severe violations such as physical misconduct, vandalism, verbal abuse or sexual harassment, a suspension may be incurred either in-school or at home. If a student is suspended, the parent/guardian will be called and a letter will be sent home stating the violation and where the suspension is to take place.

In-house suspension: Students will be placed in another classroom or supervised area. The teacher will be responsible for providing the student enough schoolwork to keep them learning during their suspension.

Out of school suspension: Out of School Suspensions will be considered if a student engages in an action that severely threatens his/her safety or the safety of others. Parents will be notified and must attend a conference with administration or support staff (counselor/social worker). If needed, individualized behavior plans will be created by a Child Study Team members and parents/guardians.

Suspended students must be provided with alternative instructional time and with homework and class work that is missed during his/her suspension period.

Protocol for 911 calls

Calls are made to 911 when:

Circumstance	Time frame
Physical injury/sickness	As soon as identified
Violent outburst with potential of physical harm toward self or others	15 minutes and outburst has not abated
Missing child	15 minutes and child has not been found
Suicide ideation with plausible plan	After parent has been notified, and parent is uncooperative.

First administrator on scene makes the decision for call to be made and identifies person to make the call.
Parents will always be notified.
Incident reports must be filed.

Chain of Command for Calls to Agency of Child Services [ACS]

All staff members are free to call ACS for any incident they judge as necessary to report.

In the event that a staff member is unsure they should confer with:

- Dean of students
- Guidance Counselor
- Nurse [for all evidence of physical injury]
- Assistant principal
- Principal

The Principal will make the final decision on whether a call is to be made, and who will place the call.

Expulsion

After a child's third suspension, the student's parent or guardian may be required to come to school and to sit with the student in his or her classroom(s). Upon a student's fourth suspension in one year, the student may be referred to the Amber Board of Trustees for an expulsion hearing.

Expulsion requires Board approval. Violation of the following three infractions will be grounds for immediate action by the Board of Trustees and could result in expulsion.

1. Students may not sell, distribute, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. Students may not possess and/or use firearms, dangerous weapons or other instruments.
3. Four or more suspensions in one year.

In the event of a suspension or a potential suspension, or expulsion, all students are entitled to due process. Students with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students, and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses. In the event of potential suspension or expulsion of a student with a disability, Amber Charter School will follow the disciplinary guidelines in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and the appropriate State and Federal statutes.

Appeal

A parent has the right to appeal a decision of suspension by:

- Requesting for a meeting with the Head of School. If the decision is not sufficient, then
- Contacting the Board of Trustees for a meeting.

A parent has the right to appeal a decision of expulsion by:

- Requesting another meeting with the Board of Trustees. If the decision is not sufficient, then,
- Contacting the SUNY Charter School Institute at Charter School Institute Grievance Desk, 41 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, NY 12207. If the decision is not sufficient, then
- Contacting the Board of Regents at Charter Schools Unit, 465 Education Building Annex, Albany, New York 12234.

Anti-bullying Rules

1. We will not bully others and always treat each other with respect.
2. We will help students who are bullied.
3. We will include students who are left out.
4. If I or somebody else is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

Amber Charter School Complaint Policy

(Vea traducción en español al dorso)

Amber Charter School places considerable value on courtesy, respect, and responsibility. We encourage parents/guardians and staff to develop open lines of communication with each other for the benefit of the children attending the school. However, we know that from time to time, situations may arise that are upsetting. If a parent/guardian, student, or other individuals are not satisfied with a school decision, policy, or act they may do the following:

1. Discuss the complaint with the staff member that has direct responsibility for the problem.

- Within a week, take the complaint directly to the staff member involved (in the case of violation of laws or issues with school-wide policies, the Head of School would be the appropriate staff member) to resolve the problem through discussion.
- Amber is committed to using communication to work out problems and therefore, if needed, the two-parties involved may request mediation from the staff member's immediate supervisor.
- If the aggrieved person is not satisfied, within a week they must move to step 2.

2. Discuss the complaint with the staff member's immediate supervisor.

- If a solution is not found between the two parties involved then it should be taken to the staff member's immediate supervisor for discussion including use of mediation as necessary. If the original complaint was with the Head of School and discussion (as mentioned in step 1) has not worked, move directly to step 3.
- This should continue through the ranks until the complaint has been discussed with the Head of School.
- If the complaint has not been satisfactorily addressed after talking with the Head of School, move to step 3. This should occur no later than a month from the original complaint.

3. Submit the complaint in writing to the Head of School.

- The Head of School may speak to all parties involved and will try to resolve the issue through discussions with those people. Otherwise, within two weeks, the Head of School will give a written decision concerning the complaint, giving the reasons for the decision.
- If the Head of School's written decision is unsatisfactory, move to step 4 within 1 week.

4. Submit the complaint in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

- Upon receiving the written complaint, the Chair shall request copies of all written communications from Step 3.
- The Chair shall convene a committee of the Board (with no fewer than 3 people) that shall meet within 10 working days to discuss the issues. Those involved in the complaint shall have a right to attend the meeting.
- The committee of the Board of Trustees will conduct reviews to ensure compliance with the law. Amber and the specific individuals involved will cooperate to the fullest extent with the review.
- The committee of the Board shall decide on the matter by majority vote and shall respond in writing to the person issuing the complaint no later than 30 days from the receipt of the complaint.
- If the committee of the Board is unable to reach a decision and/or the complaint is of such a nature that it might interfere with the normal functions of the school, then the committee shall bring this matter to the full Board for consideration.

5. If the Board of Trustees' written decision is not sufficient, the complaint may be submitted in writing to the Charter Schools Institute, Amber's authorizer.

Charter Schools Institute Grievance Desk
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207

6. If the Charter School Institute's written decision is not sufficient, the complaint may be submitted in writing to the Board of Regents, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute authorizer.

Board of Regents, Charter Schools Unit
465 Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234

Exceptions to Procedural Steps

Amber recognizes that there may be certain circumstances in which it may be inappropriate to resolve a problem as prescribed above. Therefore, the following exceptions are instances where the above-listed policy may be by-passed:

- a. Any complaint or problem involving a known or suspected violation of the law should be immediately reported to the Head of School, and, if needed, to the appropriate government authority (e.g., police, Charter Schools Institute).
- b. The complaint or problem is clearly not within the authority of the staff member's supervisor to resolve; then one may proceed to step 3.

The Complaint Policy has been approved by the Amber Charter School Board of Trustees at its regular meeting held on January 10, 2007.

Reglamento de Quejas de la Escuela Autorizada Ámbar

(See English version on the other side)

La escuela Autorizada Ámbar pone mayor énfasis en la cortesía, respeto y la responsabilidad. Animamos a los padres/tutores y al personal en general a desarrollar canales abiertos de comunicación entre sí, para el beneficio de los alumnos que asisten a la escuela. Sin embargo, sabemos que de vez en cuando pueden ocurrir situaciones inquietantes. Si algún padre/tutor, alumno u otra persona no están satisfechos con la decisión de la escuela, reglamento o regulación pueden hacer lo siguiente:

1. Hable de la queja con el empleado que tenga responsabilidad directa con el problema.

- Dentro de una semana, someta la queja directamente al personal involucrado (si es infracción del reglamento, el jefe de la escuela sería la persona apropiada) para resolver el problema a través de la discusión.
- Ámbar está comprometida en usar la comunicación para solucionar los problemas y por lo tanto, si fuere necesario, las partes involucradas pueden pedir mediación al supervisor inmediato
- Si la persona ofendida no está satisfecha, dentro de una semana debe proceder al paso 2.

2. Hable de la queja con el supervisor del personal inmediato.

- Si no se encuentra solución entre las partes involucradas, entonces debe ser llevado al supervisor de personal inmediato para su discusión y la mediación si es necesaria. Si la queja original fuera con el jefe de la escuela y la discusión no ha trabajado, proceda al Paso 3
- Esto debe continuar a través de los rangos hasta que la queja haya sido discutida con el jefe de la escuela.
- Si la queja no ha podido ser dirigida satisfactoriamente después de hablar con el jefe de la escuela, proceda al paso 3. A no más tardar de un mes de la queja original.

3. Presente la queja por escrito al jefe de la escuela.

- El jefe de la escuela puede considerar hablar a todas las partes involucradas y tratar de resolver el asunto, discutiéndolo. Dentro de 2 semanas, el jefe de la escuela dará una decisión escrita acerca de la queja, dando razones para la decisión.
- Si la decisión escrita de la escuela es deficiente, proceda al Paso 4 dentro de una semana.

4. Presente la queja por escrito al Presidente de la Junta Directiva.

- Al recibir la queja escrita, el Presidente de la Junta Directiva pedirá copias de todas las comunicaciones escritas del paso 3.
 - El Presidente convocará un comité de la junta (no menos de 3 personas) que deberán reunirse dentro de 10 días hábiles para hablar del asunto. Aquellos involucrados en la queja tendrán el derecho de asistir a la reunión.
 - El comité de la Junta Directiva dirigirá evaluaciones para asegurar el acatamiento de la ley. Ámbar y los individuos específicos involucrados cooperarán extensivamente con la evaluación
 - El comité de la Junta Directiva se decidirá por mayoría de votos y responderá por escrito, a las personas y hará público la queja a no más tardar 30 días del recibo de la queja al Jefe de la escuela.
 - Si el comité de la Junta Directiva no puede llegar a una decisión y/o la queja es de tal naturaleza que podría interferir con las funciones normales de la escuela, entonces el comité traerá el tema a todo el directorio para su consideración.
5. Si la decisión de la Junta Directiva no es suficiente, la queja puede ser presentada por escrito a Instituto de Escuelas autorizadas, Autorizadores de Ámbar.

Charter Schools Institute Grievance Desk
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207

6. If the Charter School Institute's written decision is not sufficient, the complaint may be submitted in writing to the Board of Regents, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute authorizer.

Board of Regents, Charter Schools Unit
465 Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234

Excepciones para los pasos de procedimiento

Ámbar reconoce que puede haber ciertas circunstancias en las que podría ser inapropiado resolver un problema como se ha descrito arriba. Por lo tanto, las siguientes excepciones son los ejemplos donde el reglamento anterior puede ser sobrepasado

- a. Cualquier queja o problema que involucre una infracción conocida o supuesta de la ley debe ser informado al jefe de la escuela inmediatamente, y si fuese necesario a la autoridad del gobierno apropiada (por ejemplo. La policía, al Instituto de escuelas autorizada)
- b. La queja o el problema no está evidentemente dentro de la autoridad del supervisor para resolver; luego uno puede proseguir al paso 3.

El Reglamento de Quejas ha sido aprobado por la Junta Directiva de la escuela Ámbar el 10 de Enero del 2007.