

**The Noble Minds Institute for Whole Child Learning
Parent/Student Handbook**



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ATTENDANCE

Academic success depends on regular - and punctual - attendance. Our school day begins at 9:00am. Breakfast is served at 8:30 am. In order to begin our instructional day at 9:00, students need to be in the building **no later** than 8:45am for morning meeting. Students arriving after

8:45 will be considered tardy. We recognize that parking can be tight first thing in the morning. Parents are welcome to walk in with their children, but we ask that you allow ample time for this process. During the first week of school parents may walk their children to the door of their classrooms. After the first week of school we ask that parents walk their children only as far as the school entrance.

After 8:30am, the carpool line will be closed and parents will need to come into the building to sign students in.

Our school day ends at 4:00. To help with an orderly and safe dismissal, parents may not check their children out between 3:30 and 4:00. With the exception of those students staying for after school, all students must be picked up prior to 4:15.

Noble Minds follows state and parish compulsory attendance laws. After 3 unexcused absences or tardies, the school will schedule a conference with the parent and provide written and verbal notification to the parent or guardian. After 5 unexcused absences or tardies, the student is considered truant and will be reported to appropriate authorities. Students considered truant may be retained in their current grade level. Continued attendance at the Noble Minds Institute requires compliance with this policy. The school will monitor attendance each quarter and follow the required laws.

Louisiana Truancy Law R.S. 17:233

*17:233 Cases of habitual absence and or tardiness are referred to juvenile or family court. Any student who is a juvenile and who is habitually absent from school or is habitually tardy shall be reported by the Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance to the family or juvenile court of the parish or city as a truant. A student shall be considered habitually absent or habitually tardy when either condition continues to exist after all reasonable efforts by the principal and the teacher have failed to correct the condition after the **fifth unexcused absence or fifth unexcused tardy within a semester or a pattern of five absences is established.***

After the teacher, principal, and social worker have made efforts to assist the family in getting the student to school on time, the student and family will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

Attendance Phone Line

Please let us know if your child will be late or absent by calling our attendance line at 504-962-7283.

Excused Absence or Tardy

An absence, tardy, or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness with a note, death in the immediate family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance and education, quarantine, required court appearance, or approved field trip. To be considered excused, all of the above must have the appropriate documentation and the Head of School's approval.

Unexcused Absence or Tardy

Writing a note does NOT mean that an absence is automatically excused. An absence, tardiness, or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for non-attendance does not fall into the above categories. The following are considered unexcused absences: personal

illness without a note, lack of required immunizations, family vacation, kept home by a parent, no transportation, oversleeping or other such reasons.

Illness

We want your children to attend school when they are healthy. If your child has a fever, please keep your child home for 24 hours or until the child no longer has a fever. If your child has contracted a communicable disease, please notify the front office as soon as possible. Your child will be able to return to school with a note from the doctor stating that s/he is no longer contagious.

SIGN OUT PROCEDURES

All students shall be signed out in the office by an individual listed on the Emergency Card before leaving campus for any reason prior to the end of each school day. **If a person not listed on the emergency card is sent to pick up the student, such person must deliver to the Office Manager a note from the parent/legal guardian requesting a release of the student.** The Office Manager shall verify the request by telephoning the parent/legal guardian. If the parent/ legal guardian cannot be reached by telephone, the student will not be released from school. If such written authorization is not presented and the parent/legal guardian telephones giving oral permission for the student to depart the campus with such unauthorized person, the Office Manager shall verify by telephoning the parent/legal guardian at the telephone number listed on the student Emergency Card. If the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached by telephone, the student will not be released from school. If deemed appropriate, we may request picture identification.

BIRTHDAYS/PARTIES

We celebrate all student birthdays and parents are invited to host celebrations in class. We ask that you give the teacher at least one week's notice. Any parent wishing to read a special book to his or her child's class on their child's birthday is welcome to do so.

Invitations

Invitations to parties may not be distributed at school unless everyone in the class is invited.

CAFETERIA

We're proud to serve food prepared by OPSB. OPSB prepares healthy, fresh, real food for schools and families across the state. Their recipes do not include products containing trans fats or high fructose corn syrup. They incorporate lean meats, whole grains, low-fat and fat free products into all of their menu options.

All students at Noble Minds may eat breakfast, lunch. In order for us to successfully implement our meal program, we require an accurate count of students who plan to eat the food we offer and those who plan to bring food from home. Please let us know if you will send your child with a lunch.

If a student brings lunch from home, it is important that the food be healthy and nutritious. Students and visitors are not allowed to bring any fast food or carbonated drinks to school.

Students also may not bring dry ramen noodles, large bags of chips, boxes of cookies, candy or gum for lunch. We also discourage prepackaged meals that are high in fat and sodium. Students are expected to use good table manners and an inside voice during meals and at all times.

Candy/Gum

We try to encourage students to eat healthy. Candy and gum can be appropriate in limited quantities, but not at school. Please refrain from sending these items outside of special occasions.

CALENDAR

Our calendar is posted on our website at www.nobleinds.org. We reserve the right to change our calendar with or without notice.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

All teachers, counselors, coaches, aides and administrators who know or suspect that a child under the age of 18 is or has been the victim of child abuse must report this information to the child protective agency immediately in accordance with the Louisiana Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Law (L.S.A, RS 14:403). Child abuse is not restricted to physical injuries. The following matters must be reported: physical injuries; indication of child neglect such as failure to provide food, clothing, or shelter, even when there is not physical injury; and indication of sexual abuse, sexual assault, or child molestation.

CHILD CUSTODY

The school recognizes that issues related to the legal and physical custody of students are complicated and can impact the student's educational experience. Parents/legal guardians are strongly encouraged to stay involved with their student's academic progress. Unless a court order decrees otherwise, either parent or legal guardian may view education records and attend school functions or school meetings regarding the student. Official notices and report cards will be sent to the parent or legal guardian with primary physical custody (domiciliary parent) during the school year. It is the responsibility of the parent or legal custodian with primary physical custody to provide current copies of court orders to the school. Residency is determined by the amount of custodial time a parent has. Child visitation and exchange of custody should not take place during school hours or on school property. The school will assume no responsibility for enforcing visitation or custody orders and reserves the right to prohibit parents or legal guardians from entering the school grounds if their conduct becomes disruptive to the school environment.

COMMUNICATION

Parent-Teacher communication is a vital part of a healthy school. We encourage parents to take an active role in their children's education and to keep a dialogue going with our faculty members.

The easiest way to get in touch with our teachers is through email. We do not have telephones in our classrooms, therefore we encourage parents to use email for quick questions or comments.

Our teachers are also available to meet with parents for individual conferences. Impromptu conferences are difficult for teachers as they have many responsibilities during the day. We ask that you contact your child's teacher via email or phone to set up a time for a conference.

Email Communication

- Email is best used for brief exchanges of information such as: communicating background information; scheduling conferences; notifying a teacher of changes in your family's life; reporting an upcoming absence; reporting instances of harassment or bullying; offering to volunteer, etc. Urgent messages should be handled by a phone call to the office.
- Staff members will respond to emails/phone calls within 48 hours.
- Email is not the forum to discuss issues regarding discipline, instruction, assessment or curriculum. Teachers are happy to discuss these issues via a scheduled conference.

Parents are expected to maintain an active email address and check it regularly for communications from teachers and other school personnel. Please notify the school immediately if phone numbers or email addresses are changed.

Cell Phones

Students may bring cell phones to school but may not use them in class. If you are sending your student to school with a cell phone please notify us so that we can make sure that it is placed in a secure location.

Parents and visitors are asked to end all cell phone conversations prior to entering our carpool line, when they are in our school building and whenever they are a part of a school experience near an academic setting.

Text Messages

We limit whole-school text messages to emergencies, such as lockdowns and street closures.

Classroom Newsletter

Most teachers send out a classroom newsletter once a week. These newsletters are meant to be informative and to offer a brief window into our classrooms. They are not meant to be updates on individual children.

School Updates

Our office will email announcements to parents on a regular basis. Please check your email daily to stay aware of Noble Minds news. We also communicate frequently through our face book page, website and robo calls.

Emergencies/School Closure

In the event of an emergency, please check for public announcements on local media. Mass emails, calls and/or texts will be sent in the event of school closure.

Electronic Communications between Students and Employees

All electronic communication, including electronic mail, by an employee to a student relative to the education services provided to the student will use a means provided by or otherwise made available by Noble Minds. Noble Minds prohibits the use of school systems to electronically communicate with a student for a purpose not related to educational services. Communication through the use of school system means with an immediate family member for a purpose not related to such educational services is not prohibited unless communication is specifically authorized by the principal.

Any electronic communication made by an employee to an enrolled student or that is received by an employee from an enrolled student through a means other than one provided by or made available by Noble Minds on a matter not relative to educational services will be reported by the employee in a manner deemed appropriate by the Head of School. In addition to reporting communication to or from students not made through the means provided by Noble Minds, employees must report to their supervisor at the first opportunity available, any student-initiated communication that may be construed as inappropriate. Records of any such reported communication will be maintained by the Head of School for a period of three years.

Use of the Internet and Computers

Noble Minds provides its students the privilege of accessing the Internet over the school's computer network. The computer network is intended to promote educational excellence and to locally and globally share educational resources. Students will access and transmit information over the Internet or network for educational purposes. It is the intent of Noble Minds to:

1. prevent the transmission of or access to inappropriate material by means of Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of electronic communications;
2. prevent unauthorized and malicious attempts to access valuable network resources;
3. prevent unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and
4. abide by the rules established in the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Noble Minds uses technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") to prevent access to inappropriate material. The technology protection measures are applied to avoid visual depictions of material deemed obscene or pornographic, or any material deemed harmful to minors.

Authorized personnel may disable or minimize technology protection measures for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Student Behavior:

While using the computer network, students:

1. SHOULD NOT give out names, phone numbers, addresses or any personal information about themselves or others.
2. SHOULD NOT engage in activities that initiate or participate in any activities that are prohibited by local, state or federal laws.
3. SHOULD NOT use the Internet to send or receive messages that discriminate against others.
4. SHOULD NOT use abusive language or profanity over the Internet.
5. SHOULD always be polite and respectful of others.
6. SHOULD communicate with caution. Keep in mind:
 - o privacy cannot be guaranteed in a network environment.
 - o you cannot see the person with whom you are communicating.

- o you cannot tell the age or the sex of the person with whom you are communicating.
 - o you cannot always be sure you are being told the truth
 - o you should think carefully about what you say and how you say it.
7. SHOULD report any problems to their teacher.

Inappropriate Network Usage:

Accessing the Internet through Noble Minds' network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate network usage will result in disciplinary actions. Noble Minds shall take actions to uphold the safety and security of users on the network.

Any student can be found in violation of acceptable network usage if he or she:

1. uses the Internet or network for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or supports such activities. Illegal activities shall be defined as those which violate local, state, and/or federal laws.
2. violates copyrights, license agreements or other contracts.
3. intentionally disrupts information network traffic or crashes the network and connected systems.
4. steals or damages data, equipment, or intellectual property.
5. gains or seeks to gain unauthorized access to the network system.
6. forges electronic mail messages or posts anonymous messages.
7. uses an account owned by another user or invades the privacy of individuals.
8. changes or deletes another user's account information.
9. discloses personal information about anyone.

Student may print to Noble Minds printers only when authorized to do so by a faculty or staff member. Students will be billed for unauthorized printing.

Guests given access to Noble Minds computers and/or internet shall abide by the above policy.

Offensive and Inappropriate Material

Noble Minds' policy against discrimination and harassment, sexual or otherwise, applies fully to Noble Minds' computer system, and any violation of that policy is grounds for discipline up to and including discharge. Therefore, no email messages should be created, sent, or received if they contain intimidating, hostile, or offensive material concerning race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability or any other classification protected by law. Further, material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, or unlawful, inappropriate, offensive (including offensive material concerning sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or other characteristic protected by law) may not be downloaded from the Internet or displayed or stored in Noble Minds' computers.

Students encountering or receiving this kind of material should immediately report the incident to their teacher.

Noble Minds uses software to identify inappropriate or sexually explicit Internet sites. Such sites may be blocked from access by Noble Minds networks. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Noble Minds is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the Internet. The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that many of these pages include offensive, sexually explicit, and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the Internet. Even innocuous search requests may lead to sites with highly offensive content. In addition, having an email address on the Internet may lead to receipt of

unsolicited email containing offensive content. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk. Students who encounter inappropriate or sexually explicit material while browsing on the Internet should immediately disconnect from the site, regardless of whether the site was subject to Noble Minds' blocking software.

Definitions:

1. Electronic Communication - includes any direct communication facilitated by voice or text-based telecommunication devices, or both, computers, as well as those devices that facilitate indirect communication using an intermediate method, including but not limited to Internet-based social networks. It shall also include transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature in whole or in part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectric, or photo-optical system and pertains to both personal and school-issued devices.
2. Electronic mail – the transmission of text-based information or communication by use of the Internet, computers, i-pads, tablets, a facsimile machine, a pager, a cellular telephone, a video recorder, or any other electronic device or means sent to a person identified by a unique address or address number and received by that person.
3. Computers – pertains to any and all computers.
4. Social networks – locations on the Internet where users may interact with other users – examples are Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and other social networking sites available on the Internet.
5. Improper or inappropriate communications – any communication between employee and student, regardless of who initiates the communication that may be viewed as derogatory.
6. Sexual or lewd in content, threatening or harassing, discriminatory, simple fraternization, or suggestive in nature.

Notification:

1. Noble Minds shall ensure that at the beginning of each school year each employee, student, and parent, or other person responsible for a student's attendance, be notified of the provisions of this policy and any related procedures or practices regarding communications between employees and students.
2. The parent or other person responsible for a student's attendance shall also be notified of his/her right to request that his/her child not be contacted through electronic communication by any school employee unless the purpose of such communication is directly related to the child's educational services and is sent to and received by more than one student at the school.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The primary purpose for discipline at Noble Minds is to guide children's behaviors and provide important boundaries for optimal learning and to promote our core values while maintaining a safe, caring community in which each member of the community can achieve his/her highest learning potential, and feel safe, respected, and valued. Personal development is an integral part of a Noble Minds education and we are clear about those behaviors that support a caring community environment and those behaviors that are inappropriate. We seek to develop self-regulatory behaviors in all students as we foster community and promote a climate that allows and encourages optimal academic, social, and emotional growth. Our approach to discipline is guided by the principles of the Responsive Classroom approach to learning. Desired behaviors

are explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced individually, in the classrooms, and in larger school community gatherings. Misbehaviors are addressed in a manner that maintains safety and order, helps students recognize and fix their mistakes, and grow in self-awareness, self-regulation, and social/emotional problem solving skills. We are clear about our expectations and actively teach students how to meet those expectations. We expect children to:

- Keep themselves and each other safe and healthy, physically and emotionally.
- Take care of the school, classroom, and community environment.
- Treat others with kindness and respect.
- Be an engaged, responsible learner.
- Honorably represent Noble Minds in all situations in and out of school.

Misbehaviors initially will be addressed with a simple, immediate response within the environment in which the misbehavior occurred—generally the classroom—with the adults and students who are directly involved. A non-punitive consequence is the first response with more intensive support, redirection, and supervision offered with repeated or more serious infractions.

In some cases, student will need to leave the classroom in order to regain control. We are committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, civil, and positive learning environment so that no child or adult feels threatened while in school or participating school-related activities. We will work with the families of any student chronically disrupting the academic environment at Noble Minds to determine an age and developmentally appropriate strategy for managing the student's behavior and ensuring that they contribute positively to the school community.

Providing an optimal learning environment requires a high-level of parent support for and cooperation with our discipline policies. It is only in working together that we can foster optimal social, emotional, and academic growth in our students.

Ongoing behavioral concerns will be addressed through individual, group and/or family counseling. In some cases loss of extra privileges will be necessary.

Bus Discipline

All students are expected to follow Noble Minds behavior policies when riding the bus and waiting at bus stops. Repeated violations of the behavior policy may result in suspension from the bus to protect the safety of all riders, please see the section below on School Bus Expectations and Conduct.

Student Hearing Office

Noble Minds complies with the policies of the Recovery School District Student Hearing Office (SHO). Please see the [SHO website](#) for more information.

Bullying

Noble Minds has a strict no-bullying policy. Any incident of potential bullying will be investigated and appropriate consequences will occur if confirmed. The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying with the Head of School. The highest level of confidentiality possible must be upheld regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying and the investigative procedures that follow.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying in good faith, who is thought to have reported bullying, who files a complaint, or who otherwise participates in an investigation or

inquiry concerning an allegation of bullying is prohibited conduct and is subject to disciplinary measures. Intentionally making false reports about bullying to school officials is prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary measures. The Head of School will promptly notify the parents/legal guardians of all students involved of any incident of bullying

Definition of Bullying: (As provided in Act 861 of 2012)

A pattern of one or more of the following:

- gestures, including but not limited to obscene gestures and making faces;
- written, electronic, or verbal communications, including but not limited to calling names, threatening harm, taunting, malicious teasing, or spreading untrue rumor;
- electronic communication including but not limited to a communication or image transmitted by email, instant message, text message, blog, or social networking website through the use of a telephone, mobile phone, pager, computer, or other electronic device;
- physical acts, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, choking, damaging personal property, or unauthorized use of personal property;
- repeatedly and purposefully shunning or excluding from activities; where the pattern of behavior is exhibited toward a student, more than once, by another student or group of students and occurs, or is received by, a student while on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related function or activity, in any school bus or van, at any designated school bus stop, in any other school or private vehicle used to transport students to and from schools, or any school sponsored activity or event.

The pattern of behavior must have the effect of physically harming a student, placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm, damaging a student's property, placing the student in reasonable fear of damage to the student's property, or must be sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough to either create an intimidating or threatening educational environment, have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's performance in school, or have the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Noble Minds believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the district have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully or intimidate any student through words or actions. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to direct physical contact, verbal assaults, the use of electronic methods, and social isolation and/or manipulation. The school district policy prohibiting bullying is included in the student code of conduct and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- School staff and/or administrators will promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the school principal, the student or the parent of the student should contact the local superintendent or his or her designee.
- The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation to the school principal or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school, or a school-sponsored activity, and during a school-sponsored activity.

Bullying and intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken following each confirmed incident of bullying. Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria or school bus
- Reassignment of classes • Detention
- In-school suspension

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying.

Students, parents/guardians and other school personnel may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor or other staff member orally or in writing by using the appropriate form

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- All staff, students, and their parents will receive a copy of the policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.
- The school will keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- Anyone who witnesses or experience bullying is encouraged to report the incident to a school official.

The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:

1. Investigation Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation of the incident. The investigation will begin no later the next business day in which the school is in session after the report is received by the school official. The investigation will be completed no later than ten school days after the date the written report of the incident is submitted to the school official. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s), and staff members separately. Physical evidence of the bullying incident will be reviewed, if available.
2. Notification Parents or legal guardians of the victim and accused student will be notified of the investigative procedure. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.
3. Discipline Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student will be charged with bullying and will receive age-appropriate consequences which shall include, at minimum, disciplinary action or counseling.
4. Follow Up Complainants will be promptly notified of the findings of the investigation and the remedial action taken.

5. Documentation Written documentation containing the findings of the investigation, including input from the students' parents or legal guardian, and the decision by the school official, will be prepared and placed in the school records of the victim and perpetrator.

DRESS CODE

The Noble Minds dress code is designed to allow students flexibility in dress, while maintaining a professional learning environment. Students are expected to follow the dress code whenever they are on school grounds or at a school function. Noble Minds does not require a uniform but we will have a number of T shirts and NM logo outerwear options which are mandatory for field trips and special events. Noble Minds faculty and staff asks parents to support all decisions by school staff surrounding the dress code. A student who is not dressed according to dress code policy will be sent to the office and then a parent or guardian will be contacted to provide appropriate clothing. Students who habitually disregard the dress code will receive a letter outlining specific consequences.

The dress code below does not cover every possible scenario. When in doubt, parents are asked to check with the school office for a definitive answer.

Boys

- Shorts or pants. Shorts must be at or near knee-length - not shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Noble Minds sweatshirts may be worn on cold days. Other outerwear may be worn to school and hung outside the classroom.
- Tennis shoes must be worn on days when students have Physical Education.
- Plain white socks.

Girls

- shorts, skorts, skirts or pants. Shorts, skirts, and skorts must be at or near knee-length - not shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Noble Minds sweatshirts may be worn on cold days. Other outerwear may be worn to school and hung outside the classroom.
- Tennis shoes must be worn on days when students have Physical Education.
- Plain white socks.

Clothing with illustrations and words are permitted as long as the content is not vulgar or offensive as determined by school personnel. These include:

- suggestive or revealing clothing, including bare midriff;
- clothing that includes profane or inappropriate words, symbols, pictures or signs;
- clothing that celebrates violence, drugs, alcohol, or sex;
- tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops and undershirts worn as outer garments;
- short shorts and mini-skirts;
- clothing that reveals undergarments, including pants worn below the waist; and
- sandals or other shoes without backs that interfere with active recess and/or physical education.

Other Clothing Worn at School

Throughout the school year, students will have an opportunity to have a “character or Special” dress days. On these designated days, the clothing your child chooses to wear to school should be comfortable, casual, and appropriate for a school setting. Examples of clothing considered inappropriate include:

- suggestive or revealing clothing, including bare midriff;
- clothing that includes profane or inappropriate words, symbols, pictures or signs;
- clothing that celebrates violence, drugs, alcohol, or sex;
- tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops and undershirts worn as outer garments;
- short shorts and mini-skirts;
- clothing that reveals undergarments, including pants worn below the waist; and
- sandals or other shoes without backs that interfere with active recess and/or physical education.

Grooming

- Students are expected to come to school every morning ready to learn. Proper dress and hygiene are important to this effort.
- .

Headwear/Hair

- Hair should be neat, pulled away from the face, and not cover the eyes.
- Head coverings are not permitted in the building unless the covering is worn for religious reasons.
- .

Accessories

- Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building unless the sunglasses are worn for a medical reason and a doctor’s note is on file in the school office.
- Accessories disruptive to the learning environment are not permitted. This includes suggestive items and/or those that include references to drugs, alcohol, violence, or sex.
- Expensive jewelry should not be worn to school. Simple stud earrings are permitted.

TRANSPORTATION

Busing Students who ride the bus in the morning will be dropped off at school by 8:30 am. Students are escorted to the cafeteria for breakfast and morning meeting. Students are subsequently escorted to class for instruction, which begins promptly at 9:00am. Students who ride the bus in the afternoon have boarded the bus by 3:55 and are en route to designated bus stops by 4:00pm. Parents should be at the bus stop no less than 10 minutes prior to the established drop-off time each day. Parents have the option of picking up and/or dropping off their student each day. Busing is available to all of our students who live more than one mile from school in Orleans Parish, but it is at the parent’s discretion. Parents are asked to tell the school which method of transport the family prefers, either busing or parent pick-up/drop-off. If a parent wishes to switch from one method to the other, we can only accommodate three (3)

switches in a school year, and the school must be given advanced notice (a minimum phone call by noon). It may take up to a week for a student to be added to a bus route.

Car Riders and Walkers

If parents choose to drop-off their child in the morning, we strongly urge you to have them at school no later than 8:45 am, if breakfast is not required. Students who eat breakfast must be at school by 8:30am. Any student who arrives at or after 9:00 is considered tardy, and the parent must sign the child in at the front office. Parents who opt to drive their child back and forth exclusively need only tell the school once, and we will hold your child for pick-up each afternoon. Parents can begin picking up students no earlier than 4:00 pm, and parents are strongly urged to pick-up their child no later than 4:15 pm. The school day officially ends at 4:00, and all students must be off campus no later than 4:15pm.

Bus Policies

We are pleased to be able to provide free transportation to our families who live more than one mile from the school in Orleans Parish. We recognize that many of our families have limitations that prevent them from easily transporting a child to and from school. Considering the volume of students who ride the bus and the families who rely on transportation, we must strictly follow established policies. Our first priority is always the safety of the kids entrusted to us. Should we find that a student's or family's behaviors conflict with the bus policies we will be unable to continue to offer busing to that family. In addition to student behavior and parent expectations discussed in the few preceding paragraphs, the following policies will help ensure that the busing experience is an efficient, effective and safe one for all of our students and families.

1. Students must be well behaved when on the bus, and students must follow the instructions of the bus driver and bus monitor.
2. Student behavior infractions will be reported to the school by the bus driver. We will contact the parent regarding behavioral infractions and the consequences of such behavior. Please note that serious infractions and repeated minor infractions can result in loss of the privilege of busing.
3. Parents must be at the bus stop to assist their child to board the bus in the morning and exit the bus in the afternoon. When the bus pulls up, the parent or designated individual must already be standing at the bus stop.
4. Students should never be left alone at the bus stop in the mornings. Parents must wait at the stop with the child and assist the child as s/he climbs onto the bus.
5. If tardiness prevents a child from boarding the bus, it is the responsibility of the parent to find alternative means of ensuring that the student makes it to school and on time.
6. Students will never be dropped off at a bus stop where a parent is not at the bus's door, awaiting to assist the student as s/he exits the bus. The student will be returned to the school and we will attempt to contact the parent for up to an hour before contacting the local department of children and family services.
7. If ever a parent realizes that they will be unable to collect their child from the bus at the scheduled time, the parent should call the transportation parent line. You can make alternative arrangements to collect your child with the bus driver through the dispatcher.
8. Whenever a parent or other designee is not present at the bus stop when the bus arrives, the bus driver will complete and submit a report of the incident to the school. Being tardy to or absent from the bus stop is an infraction of our bus policy and creates safety issues. We will try to work with parents to solve issues that prevent the timely receipt of students. Please note that

multiple reports of being unavailable to receive your student will result in the loss of bus privileges.

School Bus Expectations and Conduct

Noble Minds provides free transportation to all students who live more than one mile from the school site. Transportation may consist of yellow school bus, Regional Transit Authority (RTA) bus, or other means. (RTA may not be used for students under the age of 10). Students must comply with the Noble Minds behavior expectations while traveling on a school bus to and from their homes or school-sponsored activities. If a student commits an infraction covered in the Student and Family Handbook on a school bus or at the school bus stop, the school bus driver/monitor will notify the principal who will complete an investigation and documentation as needed. Based on the severity of the consequence, the principal's discretion for consequences include regular school-based consequences, as well as a bus break and/or assigned seating. If a child has to take a break from the bus, it is then the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the child gets to school on time. Noble Minds will also provide RTA fare for students who lose bus privileges. If a student with a disability who requires special transportation in their IEP needs a bus break, the school is responsible for offering an alternative form of transportation to and from school.

Bus Stop Pick-Up Expectations

It is mandatory that students in kindergarten through fourth grade are assisted by a parent when boarding the bus in the morning and exiting the bus in the afternoon. Parents are required to physically assist the child getting on and off the bus. This means being at the bus stop awaiting the bus's doors to open. We expect parents to be at the bus stop at least 10 minutes in advance of the bus's scheduled arrival time, and wait patiently for the bus to arrive, even 10 minutes are longer after the scheduled time. Bus schedules are estimates that are subject to traffic conditions, number of students, weather, street conditions and other factors beyond drivers' control. Though bus routes and their schedules will become more predictable during the school year, unexpected changes can happen at any time that cause a bus to either be earlier or later. Again, we expect each parent (or responsible designee) to be present at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the bus's scheduled arrival time, patiently wait for the bus's arrival even if the bus runs 10 minutes or more late, and assist the child with getting on and getting off the bus.

Permission to Walk Home

Permission for students to walk home without the escort of an adult is a sign of increased responsibility. Students in grades 5-8 will be permitted to walk home with their parents' written permission; students in grades K-4 will be permitted to walk home with their older siblings and with their parents' written permission. Written permission forms signed by the student's parents will be kept on file for the school year. It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of any changes related to walking home. All students who walk from school to home are expected to follow all school expectations during this transition, as they would be on a school bus. Respect for traffic, other pedestrians, and neighborhood homes and businesses en route to and from home is an important expectation of all students.

DROP OFF/DISMISSAL

Morning

Morning drop off with cars will begin before the buses/vans arrive. As a means to improve morning traffic at school and to ensure each child's safety, please drop off your children at the Willow Street entrance only, unless they are early/late. Students must exit the car on the sidewalk side and not in the street. Parents will need to come into the building and sign their child into school if he or she is early or late.

Louisiana law requires that all children wear seatbelts. In addition, most Noble Minds students must be in booster seats.

Greeters will open car doors and help your child get out. Please help us by ensuring your child is ready to exit the vehicle prior to pulling up to the curb.

Afternoon

Any student leaving school before the 4:00 p.m. dismissal time needs to be signed out in the office. Please do not go to the classroom to get a child without approval from the office.

Students who have not been picked up by 4:15 p.m. will be placed under the supervision of our office staff.

Parents are asked to follow these general guidelines at dismissal:

- Parents who prefer to park and pick-up their children should meet their children on the Willow Street 4:00 pm.
- Please do not park in loading zones, by fire hydrants, or in the driveways of our neighbors.
- Carpool drivers should line up along Willow Street. Please try to avoid blocking intersections and construction zones.
- Our carpool line is a cell-phone free zone. Please help us remain accident free by ending phone conversations prior to entering the carpool line.
- Please place your carpool sign on the front dashboard. This will help us to have your child/children ready by the time you come to the front of the carpool line.
- Stay in your car. Exiting your car slows down the carpool line. A teacher will open the car door for your child.
- For the safety of your child/children, we will ask for IDs if we do not recognize the parent/guardian who comes to pick up your child. This process may seem inconvenient and time-consuming and we apologize for any inconvenience.

All students in aftercare will go directly to the aftercare area.

Any request to modify a student's regular dismissal plan should be sent in writing to the school in the morning. Should a late change be needed, please call the office prior to 3:30 p.m. Please understand that every effort will be made to deliver the message to the classroom; however, it is not guaranteed.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS: ACCESS, PRIVACY RIGHTS (FERPA)

Privacy Rights

In compliance with the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), it is the policy of Noble Minds not to deny access to student educational records to any custodial or

non-custodial parent/legal guardian of a child unless it is stated in a court ruling granting custody that the non-custodial parent is not to have access to the child's educational records. In such cases, a copy of the papers should be on file at the school and the instructions of the court followed.

Parents/legal guardians may review a student's educational records at the school office upon request. If student educational records are inaccurate or misleading, the parent/legal guardian may request an amendment by contacting the school principal. Educational records are treated as confidential material, and the privacy rights of parents and students are safeguarded. Except as provided by law, no outside agencies or individuals may have access to a student's educational record without written consent of the parent/legal guardian. If records are copied, a minimal fee may be charged. Parents/legal guardians have the right to file a complaint with Family Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education for failure to comply with FERPA. Whenever a student transfers to another school, upon written request of the school, the scholastic and discipline record or a copy will be transferred to the new school.

We make every effort to abide by the tenets of Acts 837 and 677. An official policy pertaining to these acts will be completed by the end of September. In the meantime, our office has information on those companies with which we share student data. We also store data that may have personal identifiers in Google Drive.

EMERGENCIES AND SAFETY

Drills

Fire, lockdown, evacuation and severe weather drills will be held at regular intervals. When these signals are given, students, teachers and visitors will follow our established procedures in a quiet, orderly and respectful manner.

If a situation arises requiring a school lockdown, parents will be notified by email and/or text message. No one, including parents/legal guardians, will be allowed inside the building once the school is on lockdown. When the lockdown is over, parents may retrieve their children using the regular afternoon dismissal plan. Parents will not be allowed to go to classrooms to pick up their children.

Emergency Cards

We must have emergency information on file for all Noble Minds students. This information should be submitted during enrollment or registration. Students without emergency information on file will be allowed to attend school during the first week of school. Emergency information may not be changed over the phone. Changes must be made in writing.

Emergency Procedures

On occasion, we may need to unexpectedly close school or dismiss early. In these rare instances, parents will be notified via text, call and/or email. Local media will also be notified.

Evacuation of Buildings

We have established procedures for quick and orderly evacuation of the building. All visitors are asked to evacuate with the students and to remain quiet, allowing the teachers to supervise a calm and orderly evacuation.

Students and teachers practice evacuation and/or fire drills monthly in order to familiarize themselves with the routine.

If evacuation of the campus is required, parents will be notified by email and/or text message about time and location of pick-up. Students will only be released to adults listed on their emergency contact information sheet. Picture ID will be required.

Evacuation: fire drill, bomb threat, etc..

Evacuation Objectives

1. To move all students quickly and safely out of the building in the event of a fire or other emergency.
2. To secure the building to prevent spread of fire.
3. To account for all students and staff.

Evacuation Plan:

1. The signal to indicate a fire drill will be the continuous sound of a fire alarm horn.
2. On this signal, students shall be instructed to immediately walk to the proper exit following the hallway and line expectations.
3. During the fire drill all students and staff are required to exit the building.
4. All doors of the building should be closed after you leave the room.
5. The teacher should be the last person to leave the room.
6. Each class will proceed in a single file line to their designated staging area outside the building.

What Teachers Do:

1. Inspire calm urgency.
2. Get class in line and ready to move.
3. Coordinate with nearby teachers on traffic flow – don't let students bottleneck in stairwells or entrances. All classes closest to exits go first.
4. Make sure doors are closed on the way out.
5. Bring your class roster so you can take roll (included in your emergency bags).
6. Make note of students who are out of class in the bathroom, the office, etc. at the time of the drill or alarm.

What Teachers Bring With Them:

1. Work phones – on and fully charged
2. Clear emergency bags containing:
 - o First aid kits: bandages, gauze pads, alcohol wipes
 - o Updated class roster to take attendance
 - o Blue contact cards
 - o Color-coded cards for the "all-clear" signal
 - o Gloves
 - o Garbage bags

What Students Do:

1. Follow normal line expectations.
2. Line up quietly.
3. Move quickly.

4. Stay quietly in line when outside.
5. Follow teacher directions.

What Leadership Team Does:

1. Each member of the Leadership Team is assigned to sweep through a corner of the building and double check classrooms and bathrooms.
2. Leadership team will respond to any yellow or red cards shown by teachers that are in their staging area.
3. Leadership team will signal and all clear using their green card to inform teachers that they are allowed to return to the building.

A Successful Fire Drill and Evacuation is:

1. One where everyone accomplishes their roles
2. Everyone clears the building within 3 minutes

Fire Alarms/ Discharge of Fire Extinguishers

Our building has multiple fire alarm stations and fire extinguishers. These are to be used only during emergencies or scheduled drills. Any other use by students or guests is an interruption to our academic setting and can cause injury. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for inappropriate operation of our safety equipment.

Asbestos Management Plan

Noble Minds has a current asbestos management plan, in compliance with all state and federal laws available for review in the front office.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of our school curriculum. All parents are requested to sign field trip permission forms at the beginning of the school year and again prior to each field trip. We are not permitted to accept verbal permission.

Parents may be asked to help support the cost of field trips. In these instances, parents will be given specific dates by which they must pay the requested fee, at which point fees must be paid. As always, those with documented financial hardship may request a field-trip fee waiver.

In some cases, parents may be asked to chaperone. Only parents with background checks on file in the school office will be allowed to chaperone.

SCHOOLWORK

Grading

Each grade level has a grading policy that will be explained by the homeroom teachers. Report cards also vary by grade and will be explained by the classroom teachers and administration.

Promotion from one grade to the next is based on the pupil progression plan, available upon request.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Scheduled Parent-Teacher conferences are held over the course of the year. The office will send out information about dates and times with plenty of advance notice. Parents are encouraged, however, to schedule a conference whenever appropriate.

Homework

Homework is an important part of the learning process and students are expected to complete it when assigned. Our rough rule of thumb is that homework should take no more than 10 minutes per grade level to complete. In other words, a 1st grader may have approximately 10 minutes of homework, whereas a 4th grader would have around 40 minutes.

We understand that students are occasionally unable to complete their homework due to unforeseen circumstances. Illness, excused absences, religious observance, and family emergencies are all valid reasons for late homework. Make-up work should be arranged with the teacher. Participation in after school activities is not a valid reason for incomplete homework.

Pupil Progression Plan

The Pupil Progression Plan (PPP) is the comprehensive plan developed and adopted by each Local Education Agency (LEA). The plan includes information on student performance on state-mandated tests and is aligned to state laws and BESE policies.

The PPP includes criteria for promotion from one grade to another based on school attendance, course requirements, and scores on state-mandated and internal tests.

The plan also includes age requirements for entry into first grade (six years of age on or before September thirtieth of the calendar year in which the school year begins) and kindergarten (one year younger than the age required for that child to enter first grade).

Retention of a student is based upon the student's failure to meet the criteria established within the pupil progression plan.

MEDIA RELEASE FORM

The Media Release Form acknowledges permission for a child to be photographed and/or videotaped, and to have his/her image and/or name used in publications promoting Noble Minds such as newspapers, flyers, videotapes, and other general media for public school or educational purposes. A parent's decision does not affect a child's education at Noble Minds.

MEDICAL

Returning to School

When a student needs to see a physician due to illness the student must bring a doctor's note to school when he or she returns. The note should state that the student is able to attend school and list any limitations on activities.

A student must be fever free - without medication - for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Illness & Medication

In order for students to take medication during the school day, the following must occur:

1. All medication--even over the counter medicines-- must be legally prescribed by a physician or dentist.
2. Medication must be brought to school in the original, pharmacy packaged, container or in a suitable alternative that includes the pharmacy label.
3. The medication must have physician, dentist or pharmacist provided instructions that clearly state how the medication should be administered.
4. Medication must be brought to the school office by the parent or guardian.
5. A medication form must be filled out each year - for each medication - and the instructions must be verified with the office manager.
6. Students may not carry their own medication.
7. All medications must be stored in the office.

Medical Records

All students are required to have their medical history and immunization records on file in the office. The information provided is confidential and will be reviewed as needed by school personnel and/or consulting medical professionals.

Students without current immunizations may be excluded from school until records are obtained.

Allergies

Eight types of food are responsible for more than ninety percent of allergic reactions. There is no cure for food allergy and strict avoidance is the only way to prevent a reaction. Other allergic reactions are known to occur from insect venom, medications, and latex. An allergic reaction can occur within minutes or up to hours upon exposure.

Although schools cannot guarantee an allergy free environment, they can utilize strategies to greatly minimize the risks associated with allergies. These strategies focus on prevention, education, and emergency response.

To minimize risks and provide a safe school environment, Noble Minds Academy has implemented guidelines for the management of children with allergies. These guidelines include:

- Using a parent questionnaire to identify students with allergies.
- Development of health plans and/or 504 accommodations for students with severe allergic reactions.
- Training of staff in the identification of symptoms of allergic reaction and steps to take in an emergency.

Some students have extremely rare airborne nut allergies. If the school is aware of such a student, it will institute a school wide ban on nuts. If no students are identified with this condition, other measures such as limiting certain snack and foods in the classroom of students with nut allergies and providing a "nut free" table in the cafeteria where students with nut allergies and their friends who want to be nut free can eat.

Lice

School policy states that students must be lice/nit free to attend school. It is your responsibility to treat your child's hair and remove nits. The school performs periodic lice checks, and you will be notified if necessary. If your child is sent home with head lice, before returning to the classroom your child must be declared lice/nit free by the office. If you have any questions concerning treatment, the office has information available. Frequent and regular examination as well as immediate treatment at home is the best prevention for outbreaks.

SENDING MONEY TO SCHOOL

Parents may be asked to send money at various times throughout the school year. Acceptable forms of payment are check, money order and cash (for field trips only).

Please follow these guidelines:

- If paying in **cash**, send exact payment. The school cannot make change. Place money in an envelope marked with the student's full name, student number, grade, homeroom teacher and purpose of payment.
- If paying by **check or money order**, write the student's full name, student number, grade, and purpose on the payment. We cannot process payments without this information.
- Please do not combine payments for different purposes (i.e. field trip and childcare). We are unable to process combined payments, and **they will be returned to you**.
- A **returned check fee of \$35.00** will be charged for payments returned by the bank. A second returned payment will result in the loss of personal check writing privileges to the school. Failure to respond to correspondence regarding returned payments may result in the school pursuing legal action through the court system.

Please note that payments sent to school with a child are easily forgotten in the bottom of a book bag. If you send money to school with your child, check to make sure it has been delivered to the school. The school is not responsible for lost or delayed payments.

Unless requested by the school, students should not bring money - or other valuables - to school.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

All clothing must be marked with the student's first and last name (**no initials, please**). Names on lunch kits should be marked on the **outside of the kit**.

Students are asked to leave their valuable possessions at home. The school cannot assume responsibility for personal items lost or damaged. Expensive toys, trading cards and electronic equipment are not appropriate to bring to school. Skateboards, roller blades, hard balls and any type of weapon (even play ones) are too dangerous in a school setting where many children are playing.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

If a parent has a problem, the following procedures should be followed:

1. If the problem concerns a child, call the school or email the teacher for an appointment.
2. If the problem concerns the school, call the Head of School.

Protection of Employees

Noble Minds encourages parents to participate in their children's education. However, it is the right and responsibility of the school to determine when the conduct of a parent and/or visitor is disruptive. Any individual, including any parent/legal guardian of any student attending Noble Minds, who physically assaults, displays extreme disrespect, or threatens harm to any teacher, staff member, employee of the school or persons contracted by the school, i.e. cafeteria staff, security guard, will not be allowed to enter the campus without prior approval of the Head of School.

Weapons are not allowed on the Noble Minds campus unless carried by a law enforcement officer as part of his or her official duties.

Sexual Harassment

Noble Minds is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free of harassment. The Board prohibits the unlawful sexual harassment of any student by any employee, student, or other person at school or at any school-related activity. The Head of School or designee shall ensure that students receive age-appropriate information related to sexual harassment. Students shall be assured that they need not endure any form of sexual behavior or communication, including harassment because of sexual orientation. They shall further be assured that they need not endure, for any reason, any harassment which impairs the educational environment or a student's emotional well-being at school.

Any student who engages in the sexual harassment of anyone at school or a school related activity shall be subject to disciplinary action. For students in grades K-3, this disciplinary action shall depend on the maturity of the students and the circumstances involved.

Any employee who engages in, permits or fails to report sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. In addition, criminal or civil charges may be brought against the alleged harasser; sexual harassment also may be considered a violation of laws relating to child abuse.

Students shall be informed that they should immediately contact a staff member if they feel they are being harassed. Within 24 hours, staff shall report complaints of sexual harassment to the Head of School or designee or to another district administrator. Staff shall similarly report any such incidents they may observe, even if the harassed student has not complained. The Head of School or designee shall immediately investigate any report of the sexual harassment of a student. Any student may be gender specific when requesting another employee be present during any part of an investigation. Upon verifying that sexual harassment occurred, he/she shall ensure that appropriate action is promptly taken to end the harassment, address its effects

on the person subjected to the harassment, and prevent any further instances of the harassment. In addition, the student may file a formal complaint with the Head of School or designee in accordance with the district's uniform complaint procedures.

The district prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process. Information related to a complaint of sexual harassment shall be confidential to the extent possible, and individuals involved in the investigation of such a complaint shall not discuss related information outside the investigation process.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited under the Title IX and will not be tolerated at Noble Minds, Inquiries involving Title IX shall be made to the school's Head of School, Dr. Triplett, who acts as the Title IX Coordinator.

Notice of Discrimination

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Noble Minds will not discriminate against qualified individuals on the basis of disability, sex or gender, age, race or ethnicity, color, national origin or nationality, religion, limited proficiency in English, sexual orientation, or anyone associated with a person or group with one or more of the above actual or perceived characteristics in its services, programs, or activities. Anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on one of the above basis in the provision of services, programs, or activities by the School may do so by contacting: Dr. Vera Triplett, Noble Minds Institute for Whole Child Learning, 3819 Herschel Street , New Orleans, LA 70114, (ADD PHONE)

SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The statute ensures that a qualified student with a disability receives reasonable accommodations and/or related aids and services necessary for that student to access education or school-related programs and activities. Any child suspected of needing a Section 504 Plan should be referred to the school's Section 504 designee. The designee will then initiate the process for determining whether the student meets the qualifications under the federal law. **Contact:** The 504 designee for Noble Minds Academy is the Director of Clinical Programs.

Parent/Student's Rights Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students identified as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The intent of the law is to keep you informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

You have a right to:

- Have your child take part in and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disability;
- Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child;
- Provide written consent prior to your child being evaluated;

- Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the disabled student. It also includes the right to have the school system make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities;
- Have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided non-disabled students;
- Have the interpretation evaluation data and placement decisions based upon a variety of information sources and placement decisions made by persons who know the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and placement options;
- Have your child provided with an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the system;
- Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, education program, and placement;
- Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records;
- A response from the school to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records;
- Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school system refuses this request for amendment, it shall notify you within a reasonable time and advise you of the right to a hearing;
- Request and participate in a review or an impartial hearing, with counsel if desired, related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement;
- File a local grievance. The grievance procedures are located at <http://opsb.us/departments/exceptional-childrens-services/section-504/>.

Contact: The person at the school who is responsible for Section 504/ADA compliance is the Director of Clinical Programs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Needs/Student Assistance Team

At Noble Minds we view all children as learners with individual needs and abilities. Some children require services outside of the regular curriculum. These are provided on an "as-needed" basis. Parents always are notified when any special programming is suggested for their child and are an important part of all decision-making. Part of the process of referring students with special needs includes a meeting with the Student Assistance Team (SAT).

The SAT is a school team that meets to explore possibilities and strategies that will best meet the educational needs of students, and support teachers/parents through a positive, problem solving process. We encourage parents and teachers to talk together if either party notices a child having a difficult time in school. Parent-teacher partnerships are crucial in helping support school difficulties. Problems may involve reading, writing, math, work completion or various types of behavior. Often the teacher and parent will come up with a solution together. However, if additional support is desired, the teacher and/or parent may wish to meet with Noble Minds' Student Assistance Team (SAT).

The SAT also handles referrals for students who exhibit signs of being academically gifted. The SAT at Noble Minds may include school personnel such as the Head of School or designee, teachers, the support and appraisal representative, or a speech language therapist. Parents always are invited to be a part of the team since they know their child best. School personnel can help parents become aware of interventions or services that are available in the school system and the community.

Parents are expected to cooperate with teachers, administrators and the SAT to help their child succeed at school. Parents who are unwilling to work toward a solution may be referred to Families in Need of Services (FINS).

STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES

Noble Minds implements all federal and state regulations regarding the education of children with exceptionalities. Contact the Director of Clinical Programs or Special Education Director for further information.

Overview of Procedural Safeguards

A. General. Disciplinary actions give students with disabilities extra legal protections when the discipline constitutes a change in placement. If a student violates the Student Code of Conduct, before consequences or punishment are imposed, the principal/designee must consider whether the student:

- Has an IDEA or Section 504 disability; or
- Is a student who is “thought to have a disability.”

While all students may be disciplined, the placement of students with disabilities cannot be “changed” when the offense is directly related to his/her disability or when the IEP or Section 504 plan is not implemented, *except in the case of emergency circumstances (drugs, weapons, significant bodily injury).*

B. Determining Change in Placement. A change in placement is a legal term that applies to the situations described below. A student’s school suspension that occurred in a LA local education agency (LEA) during the same school year of transfer into another LA LEA “counts” and is added to any additional suspensions in the new school.

1. More than 10 Consecutive Days of Suspension, i.e., Expulsion

Any suspension that is for more than 10 consecutive days is considered to be a change in placement.

2A. More than 10 Total Days of Suspension in One School Year. Option 1

A series of suspensions with days that total more than 10 total school days in a school year is a change in placement. The special education chairperson, with assistance and documentation from the Administration/Disciplinarian, monitors

the number of days each student has been suspended. Students with disabilities who have not reached this 10-day threshold may be suspended under the procedures that apply to all students.

2B. More than 10 Total Days of Suspension in One School Year. Option 2

A series of suspensions with days that total more than 10 total school days in a school year may be a change in placement. The special education chairperson, with assistance and documentation from the Administration/Disciplinarian, monitors the number of days each student has been suspended. Students with disabilities who have not reached this 10-day threshold may be suspended under the procedures that apply to all students.

FACTORS FOR DETERMINING PATTERN OF SUSPENSIONS

Substantially Similar Behavior. Is the student's behavior substantially similar to the behavior for which the student has previously been suspended? (Factors may include same type of behavior, same victim, same class, same day of the week or same time of day, etc.) If the answer is **yes**, continue with the following analysis:

Other Pattern Considerations. Consider such factors as:

- Length of each suspension, e.g., 1 day, 4 days, etc.
- Total cumulative days of suspensions, e.g., 11 days, 20 days, etc.
- Proximity of (time between) suspensions, e.g., 1 week apart, 2 months apart, etc.

A pattern is more likely to exist when the facts in each factor are more extreme, e.g., longer suspension lengths, more cumulative days of suspension and fewer days between each suspension. Also, consider whether the suspensions are: from the same class on a regular basis; on the same day of the week; at the same time of day; for the same activity; involving same staff or other students.

Consistent Decision-Making. Determining whether a pattern exists is very subjective. Thus, school staff should consult with their central administrator to ensure that factors are considered consistently across schools.

The ***Determining a Pattern of Suspensions Worksheet***, Appendix A or B should be used to document consideration of this issue whenever a student's suspension has surpassed 10 cumulative days for the year.

3. Additional Considerations. The following considerations apply to in-school suspension; a suspension or removal for a portion of the school day; and for suspensions from transportation.

- a. In-school Suspension.** An in-school suspension will not be considered as a suspension for the above purposes as long as a student is given the opportunity to continue to: appropriately participate in the general curriculum; receive IEP specified services; and participate with nondisabled children to the extent (s)he would have in the current placement. Any in-school suspension that does not meet this standard must be considered as a suspension for purposes of these procedures.

- b. **Suspension/Removal for Portion of School Day.** Students sent home from school in the morning because of misconduct is considered to have a full-day suspension. Students sent home in the afternoon is considered to have a half-day suspension. These conditions apply unless the student's BIP specifically calls for the student to receive a shortened school day when certain behaviors are exhibited.³

- c. **Bus Suspension.** The following standards apply based on whether transportation is a related service on the IEP:
 - 1) **Bus Transportation Is IEP Service.** When transportation is an IEP service, a student's removal from the bus is considered to be a suspension **unless** transportation is provided in some other way. In this case, transportation has been determined to be necessary for the student to access educational services.
 - 2) **Bus Transportation Is Not IEP Service.** When transportation is not an IEP service, the student's removal from the bus is NOT considered to be a suspension. In this case the student/parent have the same obligations for the student to get to and from school as any nondisabled peers suspended from the bus. However, school officials should consider whether the bus behavior is similar to classroom behavior that IS addressed in an IEP and whether the bus behavior should be addressed in the IEP or through a BIP.

Monitoring Discipline – Noble Minds has a procedure in place to monitor and cumulatively total all disciplinary actions for students with disabilities.

C. Determining Manifestation Determination & Services.

- 1. **Manifestation Determination.** Within 10 days of any decision resulting in a change of placement the LEA representative, parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the LEA representative) must meet and determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability using the Manifestation Determination form. The procedures below are used to make this determination.
 - a. **Making the Decision**
 - 1) **Review Relevant Information.** The team participants review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP. If the IEP was not implemented, the team documents why it was not implemented and whether the failure to implement the IEP impacted the student's behavior.
 - 2) **Observe Behavior.** The team also reviews documentation of staff observations regarding the student's behavior. This should include an analysis of the student's behavior across settings and times throughout the school day.

3) Information from Parents. The team reviews any relevant information provided by the parents.

4) Ask Two Questions to Determine Manifestation. The team must consider the two questions below to determine if a student's behavior was manifested by his/her disability.

as an attenuated association with the disability:

- **Consistent Behavior.** Behavior that has been consistent across settings and across time may meet this standard.
- **Attenuated Association.** Behavior that is not an attenuated association, such as low self-esteem, to the disability would not have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability.

b) IEP Implementation. Was the conduct a direct result of the school's failure to follow the student's IEP? If so, the principal must ensure that immediate steps are taken so that the identified deficiencies are remedied.

d. Behavior Is Manifestation of Disability. If the relevant members of the IEP team answers yes to either question, then the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability.

1) Return to Placement. Unless the IEP team agrees to a change of placement as part of the modification of the BIP, the school must return the student to the placement from which (s)he was removed. Note: this provision does not apply to students involved with weapons, drugs or serious bodily injury. (See Section II.)

2) FBA & BIP. The IEP team must conduct or review a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and create a behavior intervention plan (BIP) addressing ways that the school can help the student with the conduct at issue. If the student already has a BIP, it must be reviewed and modified to address how the school can better assist the student with the conduct at issue. **Note:** If the FBA requires a new assessment of student behavior, parental consent is required.

e. Behavior is NOT Manifestation of Disability

1) Same Consequences. If the IEP team members agree that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of his/her disability, then the student may be subject to the same consequences as all students.⁴

2) Required Services. A student with a disability who is removed from his/her current placement must receive the following services beginning on the 11th day of *cumulative* suspensions during the school year. The IEP team:

- a) **Identifies Services.** Identifies and documents educational services the students will receive to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (e.g., an interim alternative educational setting (IAES), etc.) and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP; and
- b) **Develops/Reviews FBA/BIP.** Provides, as appropriate, an FBA and BIP services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.
- c) **Considers Need for More Restrictive Services.** May convene and modify the student's IEP.

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement, consistent with the requirements of this section, is appropriate for a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

Weapons, Drugs or Serious Bodily Injury: Emergency Procedures

In circumstances related to a student's use of weapons, drugs or imposition of serious bodily injury, school officials may remove a student for 45 school days by following the procedures below.

A. Criteria for Emergency Removal.

1. **Weapons.** A student carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the school's jurisdiction.

A weapon is a device, instrument, material or substance animate or inanimate that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury (excluding pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 ½ inches in length); firearms, including a starter gun; the frame or receiver of such a weapon; a muffler or silencer; any destructive device including any explosive incendiary or poison gas bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles and mines; does not include antique firearms.

- 4 If a parent disagrees with the team's decision that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability or with the interim alternative educational services or location, the parent may request an expedited due process hearing to challenge this finding. If the Hearing Officer agrees with the parent, the student will remain in the school where the offense was committed unless the parent and the school agree otherwise.

2. **Drugs.** A student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the school's jurisdiction;

A controlled substance is a drug or other substance in the Federal Code that does not include a substance legally used and possessed under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional.

- Possession of alcohol and tobacco does not fall under “controlled substance.” Therefore, the principal cannot move a student to an IAES for possession of these items under this section. Instead, the removal is subject to the procedural safeguards applicable to other types of misconduct.

- 3. Serious Bodily Injury.** A student inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the State or an LEA.⁵

Serious bodily injury involves substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

1. General. The school may immediately remove the student for up to 45 school days to an IAES. Because drugs, weapons and serious bodily injury are so dangerous to a safe school climate, a school may remove a student under these circumstances for 45 school days regardless of whether the team believes that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability.

The 45 school days do not include those days the school is not in session, e.g., Spring Break. The IEP team may specify a removal for fewer days than the maximum 45 days.

- C. Action during Removal.** During the 45 school day period, the school must convene a meeting to determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. (See Section I.C. above for more information about the manifestation determination process.)

1. Behavior IS Manifestation of Disability

- a. FBA/BIP.** As discussed above, the IEP team must conduct or review an FBA and create a BIP addressing ways that the school can help the student with the conduct at issue. If the student already has a BIP, it must be reviewed and modified to address how the school can better assist the student with the conduct at issue. Note: if the FBA requires a new assessment of student behavior, parental consent is required.

b. Reevaluation. The student may be referred for a reevaluation.

- c. More Intensive Services.** The IEP team may meet to consider more intensive special education services upon the expiration of the 45 day IAES or sooner.

2. Behavior is NOT Manifestation of Disability

- a. **Disciplinary Hearing.** If all team members determine that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the 45 school day emergency placement may proceed to a disciplinary proceeding afforded to all students.
- b. **FBA/BIP.** The student must receive, as appropriate, an FBA and BIP services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior related to the disciplinary violation so that it does not recur.

To comply with the law, a 45 school day emergency removal for serious bodily injury must be extremely serious, i.e., requiring medical treatment.

III. Appeals

A. Reasons for Requesting an Expedited Due process Hearing

1. **Parent Disagreement.** Parents who disagree with the appropriateness of the alternative placement or remedial disciplinary setting or services may request an expedited due process hearing.
2. **School Considers Student to be Dangerous.** If a school has documented reasons to believe that keeping the student in his/her current school is **substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others**, the school should request an emergency hearing for the purpose of transferring the student to an IAES for up to 45 school days. *Note: this standard is not as high as serious bodily injury; it does not allow for an immediate 45 school day removal.*

B. Authority of Hearing Officer

- a. Return the student to the placement from which the student was removed if the hearing officer determines that the removal did not comply with these procedures or that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability; or
 - b. Order a change of placement to an IAES for not more than 45 school days if maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.
2. The school may repeat its request for an expedited hearing if it believes that returning the student to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

C. Expedited Due Process Hearing Procedures.

1. An expedited hearing must occur within 20 school days of the date the request is filed. The hearing officer must make a determination within 10 school days after the hearing.

2. Unless the parents and school personnel agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting or agree to mediate the dispute:
 - a. A resolution meeting must occur within seven days of receiving notice of the hearing request; and
 - b. The hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within 15 days of receipt of the hearing request.
3. Evidence not disclosed to the other party three business days before the hearing is excluded, unless the parties agree otherwise.

Expedited due process hearing decisions are appealable to state or federal court.

D. Placement during Appeal of Discipline Decision

1. **Weapons, Drugs or Serious Bodily Injury.** The student remains in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45-day or code violation time period (if less than 45 school days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.
2. **Behavior Not Manifested by the Student's Disability.** The student remains in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45-day or code violation time period (if less than 45 school days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.
3. **Behavior Is Manifested by Student's Disability but Belief Behavior is Substantially Likely to Cause Injury.**
The student remains in the placement (s)he was in at the time of the behavior in question unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.

IV. Students Without IEPs or Section 504 Plans "Deemed to Have a Disability"

In some cases, a student without a disability will be deemed to have a disability. The criteria for making this determination and the applicable procedures relevant to such a finding are discussed below.

A. Knowledge of suspected disability (Thought to be a student with a disability)

There are certain circumstances that would indicate a school had knowledge that a student might (or is thought to) have a disability prior to the violation of the disciplinary violation. The following three situations give rise to such legal evidence:

1. **Evaluation Requested.** The parent requested an evaluation.
2. **Written Concern.** The parent expressed concern in writing to the student's teacher or school administration about the student's need for special education and related services

- 3. Specific Concerns by Staff about Pattern of Behavior.** The student's teacher or other school staff told school supervisory personnel of specific concerns about the student's pattern of behavior.

If any of the three factors above are present, then school officials consider disciplinary action as if the student has a disability.

B. NOT Deemed To Have Knowledge. This provision does not apply if:

1. Parent did not consent to an initial evaluation of the student
2. Parent refused special education and related services for the student **or**
3. The student was evaluated and was determined not to have disability.

If any of these three circumstances exist, the student may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures applied to those without disabilities engaging in similar behaviors.

The US Department of Education's comments to the IDEA states: a public agency will **not** be considered to have a basis of knowledge merely because a child receives services under the coordinated, early intervening services of the IDEA law UNLESS a parent or teacher of a child receiving early intervening services expresses a concern, in writing, to appropriate agency personnel that the child may need special education and related services.

C. School Personnel Have No Knowledge and Parent Subsequently Requests an Evaluation

If the parent requests an evaluation for a suspected disability after the student is sent to an IAES, the school must conduct an expedited evaluation at parental request. However, the student remains in placement, including an IAES, during the evaluation. If the student is found to have a disability, an IEP must be developed. The IEP team must then conduct a **manifestation determination**. If the behavior is manifested by the student's disability, the team reconsiders the student's placement in light of the new information

V. Referral to and Action by Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities

- A. Reporting Crimes.** Nothing in this part prohibits school personnel from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a student with a disability.

- B. Transmittal of Records.** School personnel reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability must ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the student are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom the agency

reports the crime. Records must be transmitted only to the extent that the transmission is permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

VI. Application of Section 504 and ADA

Generally, students with disabilities eligible for services only under Section 504/ADA (i.e., need related and supplementary aids and services only) are entitled to the procedural safeguards specified in this section. An exception to this general rule applies to students with behavior that is not a manifestation of his/her disabilities. In this case, these students are entitled to those services normally available to nondisabled students who are suspended or removed pursuant to the school's *Code of Student Conduct*.

TEXTBOOK AND LIBRARY BOOK RESPONSIBILITIES

Students in our younger grades may not be issued textbooks. Those students that receive textbooks are asked to keep them in excellent condition. In order to ensure that each child has a 'like-new' book each year, we ask that parents and students cover their textbooks with paper covers. Please do not use any type of sticky paper to cover books. These covers frequently damage the books when they are removed. Brown paper bags makes excellent - and inexpensive - book covers.

Students are responsible for replacing lost or damaged books. Do not write or draw on the covers or inside pages of textbooks. Books with writing or drawing will be considered damaged. If a textbook is lost or damaged, notify your child's teacher as quickly as possible. New books will be issued when arrangements for payment have been satisfied. Books must be returned by the end of the school year. Once a book has been billed, the fee is owed whether or not the book is returned and no refunds are granted.

VOLUNTEERS

We encourage parents to volunteer at Noble Minds. Prior to volunteering all volunteers must bring the results of an annual background check to the office, conducted by the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information. In order to obtain the required background check, please contact the Business Administrator in the front office.

Parent Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Student Handbook and have read the policies pertaining to network use, harassment, safety, discipline and bullying.

I hereby release the school, its personnel, and any institutions with which it is affiliated, from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, the School's Electronic Network, including, but not limited to claims that may arise from the unauthorized use of the Network to purchase products or services. I will review with my child appropriate internet use and behavior. I will emphasize to my child the importance of following the rules for personal safety. I give permission to issue an account for my child and certify that the information contained in this form is correct.

Student Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____

