

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls

Parent/Guardian Handbook and Code of Conduct 2011-2012

**19 Hackett Boulevard
Albany, New York 12208
www.albanyleadershiphigh.org**

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls is a tuition-free charter public high school that prepares its girls for success in college and the career of their choosing through the development of academic and leadership skills.



ALBANY LEADERSHIP

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

School Mission: Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (ALH) prepares young women to graduate from high school with the academic and leadership skills necessary to succeed in college and the career of their choosing.

School Vision: Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (ALH) will honor its core values by operating with the beliefs that:

- ◆ Every girl **will** have the choice to attend a college.
- ◆ Every girl is valuable to our society; therefore, we will not give up on her (even when she has given up on herself).
- ◆ Every girl:
 - ◆ will succeed.
 - ◆ will empower others.
 - ◆ will hold herself and her community accountable.
 - ◆ will go to college.
 - ◆ will be a **leader**.

School Purpose: Girls in urban America have been negatively affected by a mediocre educational system, low expectations, and high drop-out rates. Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls is charged to eliminate this historical reality with the support of the ALH Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, families, and the community at large, whose core values influence student success.



ALBANY LEADERSHIP

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Dear ALH Family,

Welcome to our new and returning families! We at Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (ALH) appreciate your choosing the institution that will prepare your daughter to graduate from high school with the academic and leadership skills necessary for her to succeed in college and the career of her choosing. Being the first all-girls, public, charter high-school in New York State is quite a feat; and being the best at what we do will require your undying support. On behalf of my team, I am extremely grateful for your trusting us in making a profound impact in your daughter's life.

Our hope and expectation is that you will support our mission and our C.L.E.A.N. values as they are the foundation of what we believe and what we will achieve with the young women in our ALH community. We are obligated to create leaders in our girls. We need your unwavering support.

Finally, I must advise you of the hard work that is ahead in our journey together. Our expectations are high. Your daughter will have to invest a great deal of time, energy, thought, and work into her studies. Our girls will be required to read, write, study and serve beyond the scope of what they may be accustomed. Like you, we want a viable future for your daughter. The work must be done now.

It is an exciting time. We are making history. I look forward to *our* daughter's success.

Cheers!

Melissa Jarvis-Cedeno
Founding Principal

2011-2012 Academic Calendar

AUGUST '11

M	T	W	Th	F
	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29
30	31			

8-19 Staff Pre-Service
 19 Mandatory Parent Orientation (6pm-8pm)
 22-23 Freshman Orientation (1/2 Day Dismissal)
 24-25 Sophomore Orientation (1/2 Day Dismissal)
 26 Junior Orientation (1/2 Day Dismissal)
 29-31 First Day of Classes

SEPTEMBER '11

M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	

1-2 School Closed
 5 Labor Day (School Closed)
 6 All Classes Resume
 20-22 Terra Nova Testing
 22 Open House (6pm-8pm)
 23 Professional Development (School Closed)
 30 Progress Report (Mailed Home)

OCTOBER '11

M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	

10 Columbus Day (School Closed)
 15 PSAT Testing (10th Grade Only)
 28 Professional Development (1/2 Day Dismissal)

NOVEMBER '11

S	M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31			

4 End of Quarter 1
 11 Veterans Day
 17&18 Parent/Teacher Conferences (1/2 Day for Students & Report Card Distribution)
 24&25 Thanksgiving Break (School Closed)

DECEMBER '11

M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	

16 Professional Development (1/2 Day for Students)
 23 Progress Report Distribution
 26-30 Holiday Break (School Closed)

JANUARY '12

M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31

2 New Year's Day Observed
 3 Professional Development (School Closed)
 13 Quarter 2 Ends
 16 Martin Luther King Day (School Closed)

FEBRUARY '12

M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28
29	30			

9&10 Parent/Teacher Conferences & Report Card Distribution (1/2 Day for Students)
 20 President's Day (School Closed)
 21-24 Winter Recess (School Closed)

Instructional Days = 16
 Total Days = 16

MARCH '12

M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	

16 Progress Report Distribution
 23 Professional Development (1/2 Day for Students)

APRIL '12

M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31

6 Good Friday (School Closed)
 9-13 Spring Break (School Closed)
 13 Quarter 3 Ends
 16 Regents Prep Classes Begin
 24-26 Mock Regents Exams

MAY '12





M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31				

3&4 Parent/Teacher Conferences & Report Card Distribution (1/2 Day for Students)
 15-17 Terra Nova Testing
 25 Professional Development (1/2 Day for Students)
 28 Memorial Day (School Closed)
 29 School Reopens

JUNE '12

M	T	W	Th	F
				1
2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31

13-22 Regents Testing
 15 End of Quarter 4
 22 Last Day of Classes (Report Cards Mailed Home July 7th)

-  Professional Development 1/2 Day for Students
-  School Closed- No Staff or Students
-  Parent/Teacher Conferences 1/2 Day for Students
-  Service Learning 1/2 Day for Students

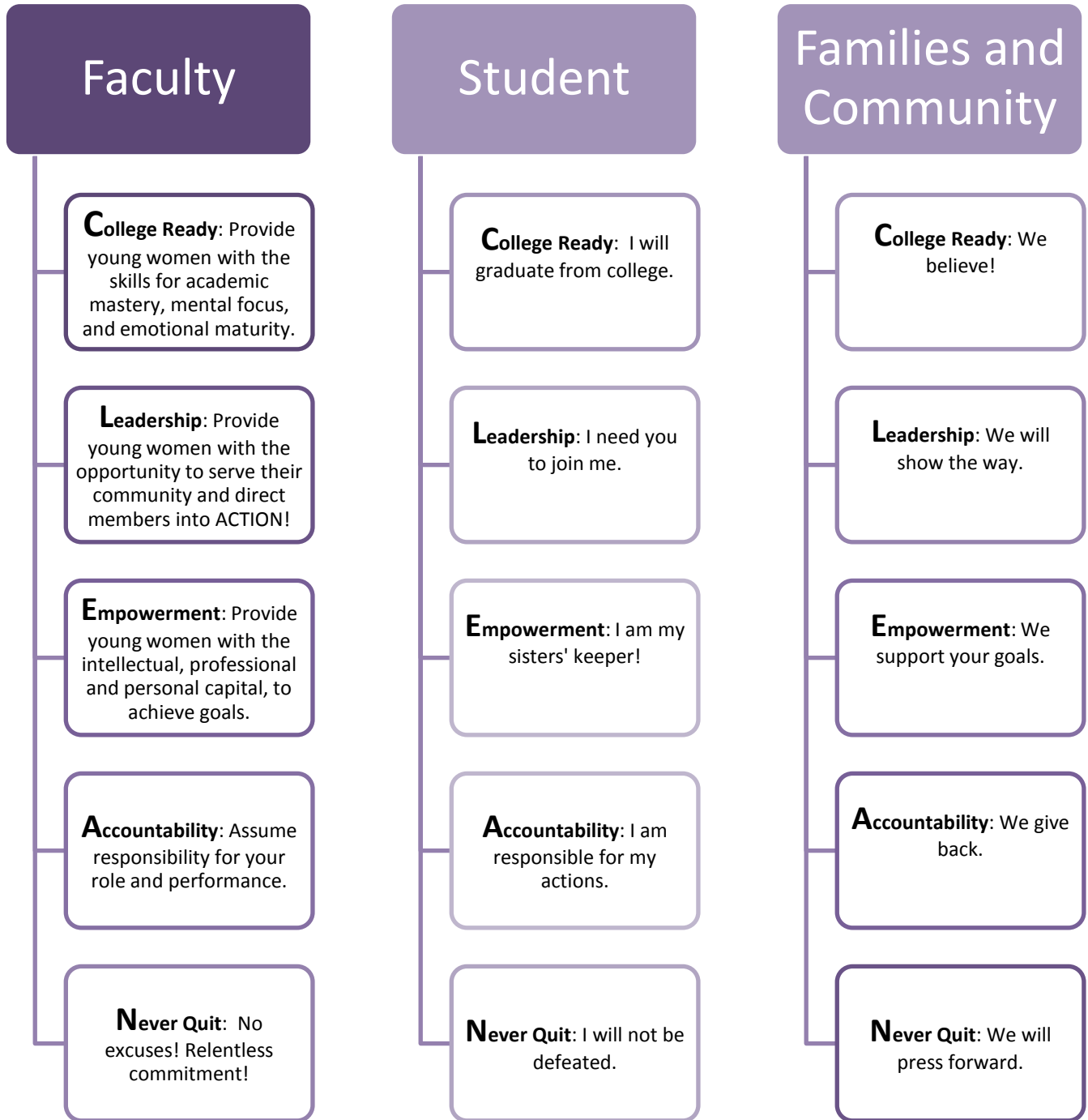
Instructional Days = 203
 Total Days = 211

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The ALH C.L.E.A.N. Approach: Our high academic standards are embedded in our *Core Values*. These values are the foundation upon which every administrator, faculty member, student, family and community member must acknowledge and practice in order to achieve our mission:



The ALH C.L.E.A.N. approach can only be achieved when all stakeholders understand their role in our high school community.

Students' role in the ALH community: Each student is expected to honor our C.L.E.A.N. core values; come prepared and ready to learn each day, on time. In addition to our focus on academics and respectful conduct, the school expects that each student will take a proactive role in making ALH a better place. Students will be active participants in *service learning*, where every student's service to the community is two-fold: she will strengthen our communities through service, and she will learn the meaning of leadership.

Families' role in the ALH community: ALH needs the support of parents in order to successfully achieve our mission and to provide our students the maximum opportunity to succeed. We realize that ALH is a demanding place, not only for students but also for parents, and ask that parents remember that every rule, every policy and every decision is grounded in the mission, vision, and purpose of ALH.

ALH promises to keep an open relationship with parents by communicating via letters, emails, phone calls, and meetings. We also invite our parents to be leaders in the school through volunteering and mentoring.

Faculty's role in the ALH community: ALH employs competent, passionate, and hard-working educators who are equipped with the necessary skills and expertise to ensure that the ALH mission is accomplished.

Leadership Team's role in the ALH community: ALH employs an experienced, passionate, and competent leadership team with strong pedagogical, practical, and public education experience to ensure that each ALH member is held accountable for the academic success of every girl enrolled at ALH as the mission is achieved.

Non-Discrimination Policy: ALH, in accordance with its non-discrimination policy, does not discriminate in its programs, activities, facilities, employment, or educational opportunities on the basis of race, color, age, disability, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation, and does not tolerate any form of discrimination, intimidation, threat, coercion, and/or harassment that insults the dignity of others by interfering with their freedom to learn and to work.

We further consider LOW EXPECTATIONS based on race, color, disability, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation a form of **discrimination**. We believe all of our students can succeed in college, regardless of their background. Our "NEVER QUIT" ethic means **all** students will be expected to succeed academically and adhere to the Code of Conduct. Below are the non-negotiables which help us achieve and maintain high expectations and high performance.

NON-NEGOTIABLES for STUDENTS

In order to maintain our high academic, cultural, and college-bound standards, ALH students must:

1. Follow the ALH dress code.
2. Attend school daily. Arrive on time and remain in school for the entire day.
3. Honor and practice ALH C.L.E.A.N. Core Values.
4. Respect **all** members of the ALH community.
5. Be focused on learning and leadership-development in every class.
6. Reject and report any act of bullying.
7. Be prepared for every class by arriving with the necessary tools to effectively participate.
8. No electronic devices – including, but not limited to, cell phones – will be on any students' person, heard or seen while inside of ALH.
9. Always have a pass in the hallways.
10. Complete all assignments, on time, with academic honesty and integrity.

A. OPERATIONS

The School Day

The school will be open from 7:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday. The school day is divided into two sections to allow for students to enter the building in an orderly fashion. This “staggered schedule” also allows for athletes and students with outside obligations to have more flexibility with their class schedules. Schedules will be determined at the beginning of the school year with guidance from the scheduling counselor. The Principal may determine the eligibility for students to choose an earlier schedule based on previous attendance records. The class schedule options are as follows:

Option 1		Option 2	
Period 0	7:30-8:12	Period 1	8:15-8:57
Period 1	8:15-8:57	Period 2	9:00-9:42
Period 2	9:00-9:42	Period 3	9:45-10:27
Period 3	9:45-10:27	Period 4	10:30-11:12
Period 4	10:30-11:12	Period 5.1	11:15-11:39
Period 5.1	11:15-11:39	Period 5.2	11:42-12:06
Period 5.2	11:42-12:06	Period 5.3	12:09-12:33
Period 5.3	12:09-12:33	Period 6	12:36-1:18
Period 6	12:36-1:18	Period 7	1:21-2:03
Period 7	1:21-2:03	Period 8	2:06-2:57
Period 8	2:06-2:57	Period 9	3:00-3:42
Period 9	3:00-3:42	Period 10	3:45-4:27

Breakfast is served from 7:00am to 8:00am for both options.

Tardies

1. Students arriving after 7:30am or 8:15am (depending on which section they are in) are late and will be sent to class with a pass. Those students who arrive after the late bell without a written excuse or unaccompanied by a parent/guardian will be charged with an ***unexcused tardy***.
2. More than 3 unexcused tardies (late arrivals without formal communication from parent/guardian or medical documentation) in one week will result in a phone call to the parent/guardian and an immediate parent/guardian meeting.
3. For every three unexcused tardies, ONE unexcused absence will result.
4. If a student arrives after 1:00pm, she will be assigned an “absence” instead of an excused/unexcused “tardy”.
5. If a student’s tardy is unexcused, she will receive a zero for any quizzes or class work missed.

6. Traffic or a city bus being late is not an acceptable excuse for being late to school. The only exception is when buses on a route are late by at least 20 minutes and that delay can be confirmed by the Office and Relations Administrator or CDTA official.

Early Dismissal

- ◆ We realize that students have doctors', dentists' and other appointments. Every effort should be made to schedule these appointments during vacation days or other times when the student is less likely to have school. Missing too many classes may jeopardize a student's chances of promotion.
- ◆ If students are dismissed early 5 or more times in a single quarter, there will be a mandatory meeting scheduled with the parent/guardian and the student.
- ◆ In order to be dismissed early, students must have a note signed by a parent/guardian stating the reason for the early dismissal and a phone number where the parent/guardian can be contacted. All notes should be forwarded to the Office and Relations Administrator. The Office and Relations Administrator will call the parent/guardian to verify every note.
- ◆ A student who would like to leave because she is not feeling well must get an administrator's or nurse's approval **before calling home**. It will be at the administrator's discretion as to whether or not the student is allowed to leave early.

Absences

Attendance is crucial to every student's success at ALH. Consequently, we expect students to be at school every day for the entire school day. By 11:00am daily, our One Call system will notify families of their daughter's absence for that day.

In the case of an excused absence:

1. Parents/guardians should **call** the school **before** 8:00am if their child will not be attending school due to illness, religious observance, or a family emergency.
 - If you are unable to speak to someone at the front desk, please leave a message stating the student's name, the reason for missing school, a phone number where you can be reached and a convenient time to call you. Failure to do this will lead to an unexcused absence for your child.

2. Students who are absent or tardy due to medical appointments or illness must bring in a doctor's or parent's/guardian's note that includes the following:
 - Doctor's letterhead
 - Student's name
 - Date of the absence
 - Reason for the absence
 - Parent/guardian signature

The note must be turned in upon returning to school, no more than 24 hours after the absence.

3. Absent students should make every attempt to get their assignments for the day they miss by having someone contact the school to pick up assignments or by calling fellow students that evening.
4. **On the day of their return, students should be prepared to hand in any homework or assignment(s) previously assigned or to take any quiz or test previously announced.**
5. If students are late (after 1pm) or absent on the day of a school function or event, they cannot participate in that event or in any extracurricular activity that day.

Excused Absences vs. Unexcused Absences

To be considered for an excused medical absence, **the student must bring a written note from a doctor in the format prescribed above.** To be considered for an excused non-medical absence, a parent/guardian must provide a signed written note stating the reason for the absence. The Principal, at her sole discretion, may request additional information to verify the reason for the absence. Missing too many classes may jeopardize a student's chances of promotion.

Non-Medical Excused Absences Include:

1. A death in the family (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin)
2. Family member hospitalized
3. Court appearance
4. Medical or psychological tests with note from test provider. (All tests should be made after school hours if possible.)
5. Religious holy days as defined by a religious calendar
6. Other extraordinary situations approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Unexcused Absences Include:

1. Being sick at home without a doctor/parent note and phone call
2. Babysitting
3. Family vacation
4. Trips to homeland

5. Extension of a religious or cultural holiday beyond the designated day or days on the school/religious calendar.
6. Any other absence not approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal as excused.

Consequences for Unexcused Absences:

1. Loss of credit for assignments
2. After three absences, referral to T.L.C.
3. Parent/guardian meeting with Principal or Assistant Principal
4. Possible loss of course credit (see below).

Chronic Absenteeism and Tardiness

ALH has procedures in place to address persistent and/or unexcused absences. These procedures include:

- ◆ Letter from the Office and Relations Administrator to the parent/guardian
- ◆ Home visits
- ◆ Parent/guardian meeting with the Assistant Principal or Principal
- ◆ Referral to Child Protective Services (CPS) for educational neglect.

School attendance is both a right and responsibility in the State of New York. The compulsory education requirements in New York State Education Law, Article 65, §3205 requires every parent, guardian, or other person in this state having control and charges of a child from the ages of 6 to 16 to send the child to school regularly. The student must attend school the entire time classes are in session. Failure to do so will result in an investigation of the absences.

For a student to receive credit for a course, she must have a **90% attendance rate**. Twenty (20) unexcused absences (including absences from tardies), in any year will result in a student **being denied promotion**.

If your child is going to be absent for an extended amount of time, you should inform the Principal in order to discuss alternative instruction.

Please note: It is the responsibility of the student to get all make-up work from her teachers.

Release of Students

New York State Education Law states that we may release a student to someone other than the student's parent/legal guardian in the event of an emergency. This can only happen if the identity of the person requesting the release is verified against a list of names provided by the student's parent or person in parental relation at the time of the child's enrollment in the school. If someone whose name is not on the list attempts to obtain the release of a student, that student

may not be released, except in the case of any emergency as determined in the sole discretion of the principal or his or her designee (§3210(1)(c)).

Furthermore, a school can release a student to someone whose name is not on a list previously provided by the student's parent or person in parental relation only in case of an emergency. No situation will be deemed an emergency until the Principal or his or her designee verifies the facts of the situation, contacts the student's parent or person in parental relation, and the student's parent or person in parental relation agrees to the release. This procedure, however, does not apply to the release of a student under the protective custody of the Social Services Law and the Family Court Act Education Law (§ 3210(1)(c)).

Finally, a student may not be released to a non-custodial parent if the district has been provided with a "certified copy of a legally binding instrument, such as a court order or decree of divorce, separation, or custody" that indicates the non-custodial parent does not have the right to obtain such release (§ 3210(1)(c)).

Visiting ALH

Parents/guardians will be welcome in the school at all times, whether they are there to volunteer or simply to observe a student's learning environment. If any parent/guardian has an interest in sitting-in on her/his child's classes, all that will be necessary is a courtesy call beforehand. As long as these visits are reasonable in frequency and duration and do not interfere with any students' learning or specific classroom activities, s/he will be permitted, as determined by the Principal. Faculty will be open to these visits and recognize the significance that a parent/guardian, who has direct knowledge of what happens in the classroom, brings to the school.

School Security

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, public-access doors of the school building are locked at all times. Visitors must ring a bell at the front of the building where the front desk staff will "buzz" them in. Once a visitor has entered, s/he must stop at the main office to state her/his business. If a visitor wants to go to a child's classroom or meet with personnel, s/he is required to sign in at the front desk and get a pass from the front desk staff. Once the visitor has completed her/his visit, the visitor must return to the main office to sign out. The visitor is then observed, via video surveillance, exiting the building.

All staff have a pass card and identification card that allows them entry into the building. These pass cards are registered with the school and monitored periodically. Every classroom comes equipped with a phone and all teachers have a key to lock their doors in the event of an emergency that poses a threat to themselves and/or our students. Video surveillance is present throughout and outside the building to protect all staff, students, and anyone else on the premises.

ALH practices safety measures throughout the school year through fire and emergency drills. During these drills, the school is "swept" for missing students and the administrative team

communicates via “walkie” in order to “clear” the building and make certain that all teachers have their students before anyone is allowed re-entry. In the event there is a threat to the school environment, there is a protocol for addressing various emergency occurrences, including the contacting of local law enforcement.

Phone Numbers and Student Information

Each family must be diligent in providing the school with a list of current, working phone numbers – including cellular phones – for when the school needs to contact a student’s parents or guardians.

Similarly, it is imperative that any legal documentation indicating a change in family circumstances (custody, Order of Protection, PINS, restraining order, etc.) that is in effect and comes from the proper judicial authorities, be forwarded to the school as soon as possible. It is only with proper documentation that ALH personnel can respectfully and lawfully act in the best interest of the student and family.

Office and Relations Administrator

ALH employs a full time Office and Relations Administrator. When parents/guardians have questions about ALH, this is the first person they should speak to for direction. The Office and Relations Administrator is well informed about all aspects of the ALH programs and will be able to assist parents/guardians.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees ensures that ALH adheres to the mission, goals and all other terms and conditions of the school’s charter. The Board supervises and holds accountable the performance of ALH’s Principal, who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the ALH. Additionally, the Board approves the appointment of the ALH’s Director of Finance and Operations.

The Board of Trustees is also responsible for the establishment and maintenance of all policies governing the operation of ALH. It responds to complaints submitted to the Board pursuant to ALH’s complaints process, including matters of enforcement of the ALH’s discipline code which governs long-term suspensions and expulsions.

Trustees of the Albany Leadership High’s Board of Trustees include:

Name
Margarita Mayo
Thomas Carroll
Margaret Moree
Lillian Garland
Alexander Ma
James Vallee
Elizabeth Robertson

Parental Involvement – Parent Advisory Board (PAB)

A Parent Advisory Board will be created as a part of ALH's commitment to sustain a relationship with parents that is twofold: a) to keep families aligned with ALH happenings and b) to honor the voice and input of our families who support the academic, social and emotional development of our young women. This will be achieved specifically by increasing parental involvement through a variety of outreach efforts and organizing fundraising for the ALH C.L.E.A.N. Fund. The committee will meet the third Thursday of each month, 6:00pm to 7:30pm from September through June and will provide an important opportunity for all parents to become better informed and learn a variety of ways to become further involved in their daughter's school experience. The Parent Advisory Board's annual review will discuss the year's accomplishments and recommend modifications for the upcoming year to continue the goal to perfect parental involvement and student achievement at ALH.

***One parent or guardian from ALH will serve as a member of the ALH Board of Trustees, providing direct representation on ALH's governing body.**

Weather and Emergency Days

ALH may be closed at any time due to inclement or dangerous weather, or due to a local condition that prevents our operating ALH safely. In the event that ALH closes for any reason, including, for example, utility problems, ice, environmental threat, etc., updates will be on our website (<http://www.albanyleadershiphigh.org>) and the local media news stations will broadcast the information.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

All students and their families are entitled to apply for free/reduced cost meals through Prestige Services, Inc., our current food service provider. Parents/guardians who pay the full or reduced price for lunch will make their payment to ALH in a timely manner as billed. Breakfast and lunch will be made available to all of our students each day.

Nurse

ALH has a part-time, on-site nurse to assist students who are ill or injured. Parents/guardians will be notified whenever a student has been referred to the nurse's office.

Parents/guardians and students should keep the nurse informed of any concerns/changes in hygiene, nutrition/diet, substance abuse, depression, child abuse or neglect.

Medication

The school nurse should be informed of any prescription and/or non-prescription medication that a student is required to take at school. To dispense prescription *and/or* non-prescription

medication (this includes over-the-counter drugs like Tylenol, Motrin, and Advil) to students, ALH must receive a completed **Medication Permission Form** filled out by the student's physician. Parents can retrieve this form from the nurse's office, the main office or download from the ALH website.

Medication can only be administered by the nurse. Per New York State Law, "[o]nly health care practitioners licensed or certified in New York State (physicians' assistants, registered professional nurses and licensed practical nurses) may administer medication under Title VIII of the Education Law."

If the same prescription for a student is to continue beyond the present school year, a new **Medication Permission Form** must be filled out every year. In addition, please notify the nurse in writing if your child has a chronic illness that may affect her performance at ALH.

Accidents

The school nurse will administer initial treatments for minor injuries. The student's emergency contact will be notified immediately by phone whenever medical treatment is administered to a student, and an Incident Report will be kept in the student's permanent file. In such cases, it is especially crucial that ALH has working phone numbers for a student's parents/guardians and for alternative contacts in the event that a parent/guardian is unavailable.

Transportation

In the Albany City District, students who live 1.5 miles or greater from ALH receive a CDTA Swiper Card to ride CDTA (public transportation) as long as the transportation application has been submitted to the school by April 1st. Students living less than 1.5 miles or outside of the Albany area are not eligible for a CDTA Swiper. Many students are eligible to ride out-of-district buses. Riding buses is a privilege. Any student riding the CDTA or school bus to and from school must adhere to the rules and guidelines set forth by those governing bodies. A student's bus privilege can be restricted at any time at the discretion of both CDTA and the out-of-district school bus management companies. Disruptive behavior by students, parents or guardians that jeopardizes the safety of others will result in a suspension of bus privileges. If a student's bus privileges are taken away it will be the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide transportation to and from school.

B. ACADEMICS AND CULTURE

ALH DRESS CODE

Every student MUST be in compliance with the dress code upon entering and exiting the building for any reason at any time, 6 days a week, excluding Sunday.

In order to foster an environment where students focus on learning and to create a sense of community, ALH has a MANDATORY student dress code. Uniforms worn by students at ALH reflect a level of professionalism (which is expected in a formal work environment) we expect at ALH.

- ◆ Before walking into, during and upon exiting the school, students must follow the dress code. Students must also wear their uniforms to attend school-sponsored activities.
- ◆ Student uniforms should be neat and tidy **at all times**. This means that clothing is clean and pressed, shirts are tucked in, socks, if worn, are always pulled up and stockings/pantyhose do not have holes or tears.
- ◆ For activities requiring non-dress code clothing, students will receive permission from the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- ◆ Students are not permitted to wear non-dress code clothing that is visible under their uniform.
- ◆ The Principal and/or Assistant Principal reserve the right to determine the appropriateness of students' dress with respect to the dress code and the commitment to preserving a distraction-free environment. Students, at any time, are subject to being asked to remove/alter parts of their uniform in order to reflect the standard of professionalism expected at ALH.
- ◆ **A student will not be permitted to go to any classes if she is not in proper uniform. If the proper attire cannot be brought to the student within ½ an hour, the student will be sent home. Should the student come to school more than 2 days within one week out of dress code, a mandatory meeting will be set up between the student's family and the Leadership Coordinator. If the student continues to disregard the dress code after the family has been met with, the student will not be allowed to attend classes until the family meets with the Principal or Assistant Principal. If no resolution is established, the "non-fit" of ALH and the student will be considered.**

ALH DRESS CODE CHART

Item:	Acceptable Style:	Color:	Not allowed:
Pants	Slacks/dress pants.	Solid charcoal gray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeans/pajamas (this includes wearing under the uniform) • Designs or writing on pants • Skin-tight or inappropriately-fitting pants • Pants hanging below the waist • Linen pants • Cargo pants • “Jeggings”/Leggings • Sweatpants • Corduroy pants • Frayed, walked-on, or “worn” pants
Skirts	ALH-issued only.	Gray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-ALH-issued skirts (skirts are not to be hemmed or rolled at the top) to a length shorter than 1-inch above the knee/no slits)
Shirt	ALH-issued only.	Purple: 9 th Lavender: 10 th White: 11 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbuttoned or untucked • Waist -length, tight-fitting, or navel-revealing/midriff shirts • Blouses worn inside out or half/on and half/off. • Logos or designs visible beneath ALH shirt
Sweaters or fleeces	ALH-issued only.	Black: 9 th Gray: 10 th Purple vest: 11 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unkempt and unclean ALH sweaters or fleeces • Jackets/coats • Sweatshirts • Any sweater not issued by ALH
Shoes	Professional.	Solid black only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sneakers – sneakers must be brought in a bag for P.E. • Boots of ANY kind - In bad weather, snow/rain boots may be worn, but <u>must</u> be removed once in school • Open-toed or open-back shoes/sandals/flip-flops • Slippers • Slip-on canvas sneakers • Heels more than 2 inches • Unlaced shoes
Accessories	Socks/pantyhose/tights. Headbands. A decorative headband is allowed if any of the colors to the right are featured. Belt.	Solid black Solid gray Solid purple gray, brown, or black black	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate/multi-colored tights/stockings; fishnet or lace • Hats, curlers, rollers, shower caps, bonnets, scarves, or headgear worn inside the school building, except for religious reasons (parents please send a note) • Bandanas • Body piercings (including eyebrow/tongue rings/lowbret/studs) except earrings or a small nose stud • Large chains (including on pants) • Sunglasses • Silly bands/toys/stuffed animals • Purses

APPEARANCE/TOILETRIES

Hair should be groomed appropriately for the professional setting of ALH. Hair that is disheveled, unkempt, in pin curls or wrapped styles is deemed unprofessional in the ALH setting and is not acceptable. Students who enter the building in this manner will be asked to fashion their hair appropriately before they will be allowed to enter any class. If the student refuses to comply, she will be sent home.

Hair products and appliances (i.e., hair grease, flat irons, hair dryers, etc...) are not to be used during school hours. The use of combs and brushes is permitted only in the locker rooms after physical education classes and/or in the restrooms. If such products are seen outside of these parameters, they will be confiscated and discarded. Likewise, personal products like lotion, Vaseline, lip gloss, body sprays and the like should not be seen in the classrooms. Such items are distractions to the learning environment and will be confiscated and discarded immediately if seen.

ALH 101

The importance of setting an appropriate tone and articulating ALH norms at the beginning of the year is crucial. We have a lot of work to do if we are to ready our girls for college and accomplished careers. For many of our daughters, this is a *first* for them – a high school for **girls** with a rigorous curriculum, high expectations from an *extended family* of faculty and staff who are unyielding in their dedication to the academic, emotional and physical healthfulness of young women. We will not be able to reach our girls and tap into their talents if they do not understand or follow our expectations. Therefore, we spend a substantial amount of time at the beginning of the year focusing our students' attention, understanding and practice with procedures, systems and expectations. By doing this early, we eliminate distractions and impediments to our focus on rigorous academics.

This segment of our year is called **ALH 101**. During this time we will teach, practice and re-teach all of the structural, organizational, and behavioral components of our program. We believe students need to know what we expect of them to be successful at Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls.

Understand that although some academic content will be covered during **ALH 101**, the main focus of class time will be on the systematic and cultural components of our program. Therefore, it is likely that the work you see during the first two weeks of school will be a review of the previous grade.

ADVISORY

Advisory is a structured time during the school day for students to come together in a small group with a faculty or staff member to:

- ◆ hear announcements
- ◆ reinforce our C.L.E.A.N. values

- ◆ discuss issues concerning the school community and/or their personal life
- ◆ access the support of their peers and an adult
- ◆ submit important school documents
- ◆ participate in college bound activities
- ◆ address health and wellness needs.

The most important outcomes for Advisory are:

- ◆ Effectively expressing concerns, needs, or thoughts in words
- ◆ Carefully considering the likely outcomes or consequences of actions
- ◆ Successfully starting conversations, engaging in groups and connecting with people
- ◆ Appreciating how they are coming across or being perceived by others
- ◆ Efficiently organizing school related documents, homework, classroom assignments, etc.
- ◆ Successfully completing all college-bound assignments.

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STUDY HALL

All students are placed daily in a supervised study hall. Study hall is designed to provide students extra opportunities to work on homework, read, and/or receive extra help on assignments. The expectation during study hall is that students are silently working. Horseplay, talking, and/or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

HEALTH CLASS

New York State requires that every student take one health class before her junior year of high school is completed. The following includes some of the topics that will be covered in health class:

- ◆ Physical and Mental Health
- ◆ Sociological Health Problems
- ◆ Environmental
- ◆ Community Health and Safety

NOTE: The New York State Education Department Commissioner’s Regulations Section 135.3 (c) (2) (i) states that no pupil shall be required to receive instruction concerning the methods of prevention of A.I.D.S. if the parent or legal guardian of such pupil has filed a letter with the principal of the school which the student attends stating that the pupil will receive such instruction at home.

SERVICE LEARNING

Students are **required** to complete **150 hours** of volunteer service in order to graduate from ALH. The Service Learning Program is a partnership between ALH and various businesses and

organizations where opportunities are extended to our students to do volunteer work. Our partners will invite our students to learn about the career of their choosing while getting hands-on experience through volunteerism. ALH also offers volunteer opportunities within the school for students to build on their hours.

Because students’ academic success is our top priority, students who would benefit from tutoring and more scholastic practice, will more likely be assigned volunteer duties within the school.

No matter the service learning assignments, students will not be able to achieve the 150-hour requirement without taking advantage of prospects in the community on their own. Some other examples of acceptable service work include:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Feeding the hungry during the holiday breaks
- Community clean-ups
- Charity walks and runs
- Regular service assistance to a member(s) of the community

Students are required to obtain clearance from the Leadership Coordinator and the proper paperwork if they are to receive credit for their service learning efforts.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GRADING SCALE

<u>Numerical Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Achievement Level</u>
90 – 100	A	Mastery
80 – 89	B	Above Proficient
70 – 79	C	Proficient
0 – 69*	F	Not Proficient

*If your daughter receives a final grade of less than 70%, no credit unit will be granted for that course and she may be required to repeat the course in the following year.

RECEIVING CREDITS FOR A COURSE

Credit units are granted once a student successfully completes that course with a “C” or higher. Partial credit units are not granted to a student who leaves Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls midyear or who transfer to another class midyear.

COURSES WITH WEIGHTED CREDIT

A student who chooses to take an Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) level course will be weighted in recognition of the extra effort needed to meet their requirements. Consequently, Honors courses are weighted at 1.02% and AP courses are weighted at 1.05%.

STUDENTS WHO TRANSFER FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Students transferring to Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls *may* be able to carry their former institution's credits over. Students who transfer to ALH mid-year will have their exit grades considered for ALH quarter grades and final credit units.

STUDENTS WHO TRANSFER TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls does not give credits to students who transfer mid-year. We will forward an exit grade summary for that school year once the formal withdrawal form has been submitted to the Office and Relations Administrator.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

GPA is calculated using the 4-point scale and is calculated based on credit-bearing classes, factoring in any appropriate weighting. Pass/Fail classes will not be calculated into the GPA. A cumulative-weighted GPA is calculated at the end of a student's junior and senior year and reported to colleges.

PASS/FAIL CLASSES

For "pass" or "fail" classes, students must receive three out of the four "passes" in order to pass for the year.

PRINCIPAL'S LIST

Students who receive a 3.75 GPA in any quarter will receive the Principal's recognition.

HONOR ROLL

Students who receive a 3.5 GPA in any quarter will receive honor roll recognition.

LATE WORK

Students are expected to submit **all** assignments on time. **No** assignment will be accepted beyond the assigned due date (please review p.11 under *Absences* regarding students who are absent.) Students who do not hand in homework on time for 3 or more times within one week

will be assigned Saturday detention at the end of that week. Should a student “skip” Saturday detention, she will be subject to a suspension of at least one day.

REGENTS AND FINALS TESTING

Regents exams are state-mandated in varied subjects in order for students to obtain a high school diploma. Finals are cumulative exams that cover the year’s coursework. Exams are given for all courses. Students will either take a Regents exam or final exam in mid-June.

All exams are held in the gymnasium unless otherwise specified. Students are expected to be at the exam site at least thirty minutes prior to the start of the exam. Students are given 3 hours to complete an exam, but may be excused after 2 hours if they have finished. After an hour and a half has passed, a late student will not be allowed entry. Students who are late for an exam will not be given additional time to compensate for their lateness.

All students are expected to take their exams on the days designated on the exam schedule. Teachers will not re-administer or give any credit for an exam missed due to an unexcused absence.

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

Regents courses: Each of the four quarterly grades will be counted as 25% of the final average. The Regents score is not calculated into the final average.

Non-Regents courses: Each of the four quarter grades, in addition to the final exam, will be counted as 20% of the final average.

PROMOTION POLICY

Students need a certain number of credit units before they can advance to the next grade level. The minimum credit units needed to advance per grade level are listed below:

Grade 9	5.5 units
Grade 10	11 units
Grade 11	16.5 units
Grade 12	22 units

SUMMER SCHOOL

ALH does not offer summer school for students who have not passed a subject(s) for the year. ALH also does not accept credits from any other school should an ALH student wish to take summer courses elsewhere in order to pass a course taken at ALH.

LITERACY FRAMEWORK

In order for our girls to mature into their prospective roles as prominent, powerful, and phenomenal women with exceptional academic strength and career flexibility, they must have exceptional literacy skills. ALH has designed the literacy academic program to include double-block periods for English every day, and writing and reading clinics, where students are focused on reading, writing, speaking and practicing their writing craft, fluency and analysis/comprehension strategies. The ALH Literacy Framework has, as a foundation, individual student growth goals that are monitored and evaluated several times throughout the year with a reading diagnostic assessment. The goal is for every student to be a critical thinker and to develop her intellectual and emotional command as it relates to her learning. ALH faculty members are committed to literacy growth in math, science, social sciences, performing arts and all electives.

ASSESSMENTS

Frequent assessment is a central component of our program. Assessments in every subject at ALH are used to adjust instruction and inform tutoring and enrichment programs in order to meet the needs of every student; hold students, faculty and staff accountable for student learning outcomes; and to track growth and progress so that every student is prepared to succeed and graduate from college. ALH uses the data from assessments on a daily, weekly, quarterly and annual basis. Assessments take many forms, including but not limited to, daily quizzes and homework, weekly tasks and projects, portfolios and presentations, unit benchmark assessments and New York State and national norm referenced exams.¹

Student attendance and participation in the assessment program is essential in order to fully understand each student's academic standing. Your daughter's performance and strengths and needs on assessments will be a routine part of parent- teacher conferences, as well as student-teacher discussions. Students who are absent for assessments will be required to make-up the assessment during school, after school or on a designated Saturday. ALH will provide multiple opportunities and communication tools for parents/guardians to have their daughter's most current assessment outcomes.

¹ NYS exams include NYS Regents Exams in every subject. National norm referenced exams include CTB Terra Nova, PSAT, and SAT exams.

HOMEWORK

Homework is not optional at ALH. It is essential that all of our students complete homework regularly to both reinforce what they are learning at school and to equip them for the increased demands of college. Homework will include, but is not limited to, a review of skills and concepts our students have learned that day in school and an extension for further learning. This will help students move toward mastery of the skills and concepts they encounter. Homework is checked for “**quality and completion**”.

What is meant by “**quality and completion**”?

- ◆ Homework has the ALH official heading
- ◆ Homework is written in black or blue ink only (pencil for math)
- ◆ Every question is answered/attempted and every activity completed
- ◆ Work is legible
- ◆ Presentation is neat and professional looking (no stains, wrinkles, or tears)

ALH Heading

NAME	DATE
CLASS	“One Leader Changes Everything”

Formal Typed Assignments:

- ◆ 12 font
- ◆ Times New Roman
- ◆ Double-spaced

Students who do not fulfill their homework requirement 3 or more times in one week will be assigned Saturday detention. Students who skip Saturday detention are subject to a suspension of at least one day.

SATURDAY DETENTION

Saturday Detention is held from 10:00am to 12:00pm at ALH.

Expectations for Saturday Detention:

- ◆ Students are to report to Saturday detention on time and in **full** uniform.
- ◆ Students who are late will be required to “make up” that time on the same day of detention.
- ◆ Any student arriving 10:30am or later will not be allowed to serve her detention that day and will be sent home. The student will have to attend Saturday detention on the following Saturday. If the student is tardy 30 minutes or more the next time, she will be subject to a suspension on the next school day.
- ◆ Students must bring all necessary work materials to detention: a pen or pencil; homework; and a book to read.
- ◆ No electronic devices are allowed in Saturday detention (including laptops).
- ◆ Students may not sleep, place their head on the desks or slouch.

- ◆ Students must work silently for 2 hours.
- ◆ If students finish before the 2 hours expires, they will be given material to read for the duration of the detention.
- ◆ Tutoring cannot replace Saturday detention.
- ◆ Students must refrain from any communication including passing notes.
- ◆ Students who skip Saturday detention or who refuse to follow the aforementioned expectations will be subject to a suspension on the next school day. A parent/guardian must come in for a meeting with the Assistant Principal, by 7:00am, on the day the student is allowed to return to school. The student will not be permitted to attend classes until this meeting has taken place.

How students know if they have Saturday Detention:

- Names are announced during Friday afternoon announcements.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)

The SST is a student-centered team and its members include knowledgeable staff and teachers to problem-solve the needs of any student who might have academic or behavioral concerns that interfere with the student's performance in school. Any teacher, staff member, or parent/guardian may request a SST meeting for a particular student. Should a parent/guardian wish to share concerns surrounding a student with the SST, s/he should contact the SST Coordinator to make an appointment. The team reviews the concerns in addition to collected data, develops a plan of action to include a timeline for review, informs appropriate staff and teachers of the plan, and determines the need for future interventions. Parents/guardians are notified if the SST deems it necessary to create a plan of action, and are invited to participate in future meetings. A plan of action may include, but not be limited to, academic or behavioral modifications within the classroom, mentoring, tutoring, counseling, crisis intervention, or other special services of either a temporary or permanent nature.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

RTI is a school-wide intervention model addressing academic or behavioral concerns of a student. There are three layers, or *tiers*, within the model. *Tier One* includes school-wide intervention using research-based curriculum and instruction. Student progress is monitored at least three times a year. Students who struggle at *Tier One* are moved into *Tier Two*. This tier includes evidence-based instruction provided to a small group of students (3-5 students) for at least 20-30 minutes three times a week *in addition to the regular classroom instruction*. *Tier Two* instruction lasts for approximately 9-30 weeks depending on student progress, which is monitored on a bi-weekly basis. Should a student require more support than what is offered in *Tier Two*, she will be moved to *Tier Three*. Instruction at this level is still evidence-based, but provided on an even more individualized level (1-2 students per group) during 30-minute sessions occurring at least four times a week. Progress is monitored on a weekly basis for 15-20 weeks.

A.L.E.R.T.

The acronym, A.L.E.R.T., is posted in every classroom. This is ALH's school-wide reminder to students of the behaviors expected in every classroom in order to meet our mission. A.L.E.R.T. stands for:

Align your body and mind for learning

Listen first

Eyes on the speaker

Raise your hand

Talk when summoned

Freedom of Expression

Students are entitled to express their personal opinions verbally, in writing, or by artistic expression. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express their beliefs. Written expression of an opinion must be signed by the author. Any form of expression that involves libel, slander, obscenity, personal attacks, or that otherwise substantially disrupts the educational process, or threatens the physical, emotional, spiritual or mental well-being of another individual is prohibited. All forms of expression also must be in compliance with the Code of Conduct and the school dress code. Violations are punishable as stated in the Code.

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

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

G.R.A.D.U.A.T.E.! (Girls Rock and Do Unbelievable, Amazing Things Everyday!)

G.R.A.D.U.A.T.E.! is ALH's college-bound initiative. Every student who attends ALH is a part of this program. **G.R.A.D.U.A.T.E.!** supports ALH's pledge to take the lead on ensuring that every one of our daughters is accepted and graduates from an institution of higher learning. **G.R.A.D.U.A.T.E.!** offers:

- College Counseling
 - Students are introduced to college as a realistic option

- Students are counseled individually and in small groups on college preparation and academic strategies
- College activities
- College application preparation
- Financial Aid Preparation (FAFSA)
- Parent meetings

- Test Preparation
 - PSAT preparation, registration and test administration
 - SAT registration for juniors and seniors
 - SAT preparation course

- College Exposure
 - Hosting college recruiters
 - On-site college fairs
 - College trips for students

- Workshops
 - Essay writing
 - Interview prep
 - Financial aid workshops for students and parents
 - College transition seminars

- Collegiate support
 - College partnerships
 - Mentoring from college students
 - Sister-to-Sister Social

- Career opportunities
 - Job and internship opportunities
 - Summer jobs
 - Career fairs

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CHEATING VIOLATIONS

Violations in this category threaten our ability to successfully fulfill our mission of college readiness and success. Cheating violations represent actions in which students **receive or give unauthorized help on any assignment**. Committing a cheating violation represents an act of academic dishonesty – essentially students are lying about the work that they or others are completing. Without academic honesty, we cannot be sure if students are making actual academic progress towards our learning goals.

Examples of cheating include:

- a. copying another person's work during an exam or assessment, or while completing an assignment including homework;
- b. allowing someone to copy work on an exam, quiz, assessment or assignment, including a "Do Now" or "Exit Ticket";
- c. using any unauthorized materials not specifically approved by the faculty member during any exam or for any academic assignment; including but not limited to the use of spark notes, cliff notes, grade saver and classic notes;
- d. providing assistance to another student on any individual assignment, including homework, quizzes, tests, papers or projects, without the direct permission of the faculty member;
- e. altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading;
- f. stealing, reproducing, circulating, or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the faculty member;
- g. intentionally continuing work on an exam or assignment after the allocated time has elapsed;
- h. citing a source that does not exist, attributing to source ideas and information that are not included in the source, or citing a source in a bibliography when the source was neither consulted nor cited in the body of the paper;
- i. inventing data or statistical results to support conclusions;
- j. asking fellow students for answers without teacher permission.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- a. copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own work;
- b. using any other person or organization to prepare work and then submitting it as one's own;
- c. quoting or paraphrasing the thoughts of another writer without acknowledgement;
- d. changing the words another writer wrote but still conveying the same thought without acknowledgement;
- e. copying and using information from websites or other sources without properly citing the source.

Procedure for cheating violations:

1. The staff member will initially meet with student regarding the potential cheating violation.
2. If the staff member deems necessary, the Principal or Assistant Principal will meet with the student(s) and the faculty member to discuss the circumstances.
3. The Principal or Assistant Principal will communicate with parents as soon as possible to let them know the process and to allow them an opportunity to come in and meet to discuss the situation.
4. The Principal will determine if the student(s) is responsible for a cheating violation and what the appropriate consequence should be using whatever evidence is available.
5. The consequence and violation will be recorded and the student's teachers and family will be informed.

Consequences for cheating or plagiarizing: Final consequences are at the discretion of the Principal. The history of a student’s cheating violations, the circumstances surrounding the cheating violation and whether the student was forthright and honest about the violation will be taken into consideration. Each offense remains with the student until graduation. A new academic year does **not** erase previous offenses. When a student reaches three cheating violations, she will be subject to a *long-term suspension* (as defined on page 40).

Any offense will result in all of the following consequences:

Zero for the assignment

Letter in permanent school file

Saturday detention

Parent meeting

A written letter of apology by the student to the faculty member on “*Why cheating hurts the community and the student*” to be placed in student’s file.

A second offense will result in the following additional consequences:

A “non-proficient” for the course and for the quarter

Suspension from all school activities for the remainder of the quarter

Suspension from school until a parent meeting has convened

A third or subsequent offense may result in the following additional consequences:

Suspension from school until a parent meeting is convened

Suspension from all school activities for the remainder of the year

Automatically denied promotion

SKIPPING CLASSES

Skipping classes is an egregious offense at ALH. If a student is 10 minutes (or more) late to a class **without** a valid late pass the student will be subject to a suspension of at least one day. Students who are late to class 3 or more times in one week will serve afterschool detention on the Friday of that week. If a student “skips” a Friday detention, the student will be subject to a suspension of at least one day. ALH stands firm in its obligation to exploit every minute of instruction for the academic development of every student. We cannot afford to waste time.

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM CONSEQUENCES FROM FACULTY AND STAFF

At ALH, faculty and staff actions determine the climate of the classroom and school. As great educators have different management styles, the exact nature of an educator’s consequence may vary, but will always be in compliance with the Code of Conduct. Possible consequences include moving students’ location within the classroom, one-on-one conferences with students, and phone calls/letters/emails home to parents/guardians, and class suspensions.

Cell Phones/Electronics

While we recognize that cell phones and many electronic devices are convenient and commonplace in our pop culture, as it relates to our sense of urgency in getting students where they need to be academically and competitively, these devices are a means of distraction and cause for disruption.

Absolutely no cell phones or other electronics should be used by a student for any reason during school hours. If a student needs to make an urgent call, she will be able to do so on an ALH phone. Should a student be seen using or handling a cell phone or electronic device (including cameras and iPods) by a staff member, the phone/device will be confiscated and held at the school until a family member comes to the school to retrieve it. If a student refuses to relinquish the cell phone/electronic device to a staff member, the student will be subject to a suspension of at least one day. A meeting between the family, student and Assistant Principal will need to take place before the student can return to classes.

Solicitation

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member on ALH property for any cause except those authorized by the Principal is strictly prohibited.

Money/Valuable Property

Students are encouraged to leave all money and other valuable property, including electronic devices, at home. ALH assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such articles.

Candy, Gum and Toys

Students are not to bring or eat candy/gum in ALH. Toys are a distraction and therefore should not be brought into the school as well. Headphones, games, stuffed animals, virtual pets, cameras, iPods, etc...are not allowed.

Lockers, Search and Seizure

Every student is assigned a locker and combination lock in order to secure her belongings. Students are expected to keep their locker secured with their assigned lock at all times. Outside locks are not permitted. Should a student use an outside lock to secure her locker, ALH reserves the right to remove the lock and discard it.

Student lockers and desks remain the property of the school. Students have no right or reasonable expectation of privacy in their desks or lockers. ALH reserves the right to inspect desks and lockers at the school's discretion. The school is not responsible for books, clothing, or valuables left in lockers. A student shall not place or keep in a locker any article or material which is of a non-school nature and may cause or tend to cause the disruption of the mission of the school.

A student and/or the student's belongings may be searched by a school official if the official has a reasonable suspicion to believe that a search of the ALH student or her locker will result in evidence that the student violated the law or a school rule. Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from the student by ALH authorities. In some instances, law enforcement may be contacted. With this, students are strongly discouraged from sharing lockers.

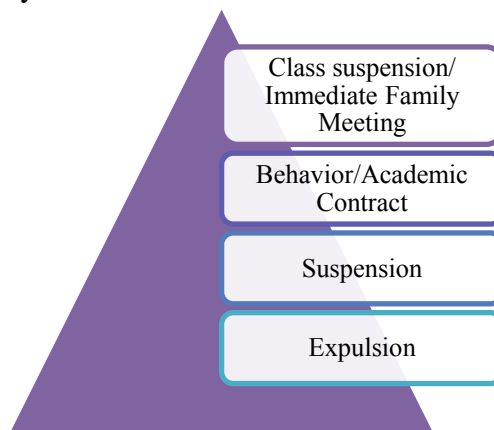
Substance Use Assessment

A student may be subject to a *Substance Use Assessment* should the student's behavior warrant suspicion of her being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or a controlled substance. The assessment is performed by the school nurse or authorized administrator to gauge the student's vital signs, orientation and coordination. The evaluation is strictly a superficial evaluation – no bodily fluids are drawn and nothing is done invasively. If this primary assessment indicates that the student is under the influence, the parent/guardian and/or law enforcement will be notified.

FORMAL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE (F.D.P.)

ALH is devoted to preparing our young women for success beyond our school walls. Strict enforcement of our expectations – from the smallest transgressions (gum chewing) to the bigger offenses (verbal disrespect of a faculty member) – is a position we will stand firm on. The Formal Discipline Procedure is a progression of steps ALH takes to re-align students who severely dishonor our C.L.E.A.N. values and/or continuously dismiss strategies (i.e., T.L.C./Drama Sessions) instituted for their success.

F.D.P. CONSEQUENCES may be limited to one or a combination of the following:



If a student commits any of the acts listed below, DRAMA, T.L.C., and F.D.P. will not be considered. Instead, immediate suspension or expulsion is warranted:

Suspension:

- ◆ Skipping class(es)
- ◆ Threatening any person (verbally or physically)

- ◆ Vandalism
- ◆ Theft
- ◆ Leaving school premises without permission
- ◆ Entering school premises under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Expulsion:

- ◆ Fighting on-campus or off-campus
- ◆ Possessing or using a weapon
- ◆ Possessing, using, selling or transferring drugs/paraphernalia
- ◆ Possessing, using, selling or transferring alcohol
- ◆ Arson
- ◆ Setting off false fire alarms

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities are available to students who are in good academic standing. For any extra-curricular activity, a student must maintain a 70% or above average in every subject – including electives.

Athletic Programs

ALH offers interscholastic sports programs in the fall, winter, and spring. Participation in, and eligibility for, these programs is determined first, by a sports physical and then, in most sports, tryouts. Maintaining eligibility for participation in athletics is contingent upon a student athlete’s academic performance and behavior in the classroom. Every student-athlete is expected to maintain a 70% or above average in all classes in order to participate in any of ALH’s athletic programs. The Athletic Department posts schedules for all athletic events, including tryouts, by sports season throughout the school building. The athletic programs offered at ALH include the following:

- ◆ Basketball
- ◆ Track and Field
- ◆ Double-dutch
- ◆ Cheerleading
- ◆ Volleyball

Off-Campus Events

College-readiness cannot be wholly accomplished if our students are not afforded the occasion to visit college/university campuses. It is ALH’s vision to have frequent trips to institutions of higher learning. Students at school-sponsored, off-campus events shall be governed by all the guidelines of the school and are subject to the authority of school officials. Failure to obey the lawful instructions of school officials shall result in a loss of eligibility to attend school-

sponsored, off-campus events and may result in additional disciplinary measures in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Off-campus events are a privilege at ALH and students who are not in good academic/behavioral standing at ALH will not be allowed to attend field trips.

In order to be in good standing, a student must:

- ◆ Not have been sent out of any class within the week prior to the event
- ◆ Not have been required to attend a DRAMA session within the week prior to the event
- ◆ Not be failing more than 2 classes
- ◆ Have all school forms/permission slips accounted for and turned in on time
- ◆ Attend school the day of the event

Loss of School Privileges

After notice to the student and parent(s) or guardian(s), a student may be suspended from participation in any or all extracurricular activities. The student and parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be given an opportunity to meet informally with the Principal or faculty member involved. If possible, the Principal or faculty member involved shall hold any requested meeting prior to imposing the suspension from participation in extracurricular activities.

T.L.C. (Talk. Learn. Collaborate.)

ALH believes that for every maladaptive behavior challenge, there exists a *lagging skill* behind it. When a student conducts herself in a manner that is not conducive to learning, is it our stance that the student may not necessarily have the skills necessary to be successful in that situation. It is our responsibility to equip our students with the tools to be successful – not just academically – but emotionally and socially as well.

When a student displays behaviors that disrupt, disturb, and/or disrespect the learning environment in a classroom or the culture standard within the school, she will be required to attend a T.L.C. session with a faculty member and/or an administrator so that an *Action Plan* can be discussed and executed. The *Action Plan* is not a one-meeting process. Rather, the *Action Plan* is a long-term, goal-oriented commitment between the two parties (student/faculty or student/administrator) to attempt certain practices and learn certain skills in order to be more successful in the school environment. This takes place by having daily meetings where a student's progress is recorded; but more importantly, where a student continues to receive guidance and shares in the decision-making of her own *Action Plan*.

Parents/guardians are informed when their daughter participates or is referred to a T.L.C session. We believe that in order for the student to be successful, the partnership between the school and the family must be intact and supportive of the objective: for the student to feel safe and competent academically, emotionally, and socially. T.L.C. is not a punishment. Again, it is a

necessary tool in *teaching* skills that will allow the student to thrive in the school environment and beyond.

Should a student demonstrate resistance to T.L.C. sessions and subsequent “action plans” and/or should a student continue the same behaviors that are being addressed in T.L.C. sessions, a parent meeting with the student and an administrator will be mandatory. Here, the *Action Plan* will be re-visited and the student placed on a “probationary period” for observation. A follow-up meeting (2 weeks) with the family will be scheduled in order to discuss the student’s progress.

If the student continues to exhibit the same behaviors despite the “probationary period” and family intervention, the Principal and family will have to decide if ALH is the appropriate fit for the student. Again, the objective is for the student to stay in class/school. Every attempt will be made by teachers and administrators to help every student gain the skills necessary to be an asset to the school community.

Below is a partial listing of those *lagging skills* most seen in our students – exhibited in various disruptive and/or destructive behaviors – especially when they are in environments where order and discipline are routine. These are the skills we will address in order for our girls to flourish within our school and beyond.

Assessment of Lagging Skills

©Center for Collaborative Problem Solving (2008)

- ❖ Poor sense of time
- ❖ Difficulty maintaining focus
- ❖ Difficulty considering the likely outcomes or consequences of actions (impulsive)
- ❖ Difficulty managing emotional response to frustration so as to think rationally
- ❖ Difficulty expressing concerns, needs, or thoughts into words
- ❖ Difficulty handling unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, novelty
- ❖ Inflexible, inaccurate interpretations/cognitive distortions or biases (e.g., “Everyone’s out to get me,” “Nobody likes me,” “You always blame me,” “It’s not fair,” “I’m stupid”)
- ❖ Difficulty starting conversations, entering groups, connecting with people/lacks other basic social skills
- ❖ Difficulty appreciating how her behavior is affecting other people
- ❖ Difficulty empathizing with others, appreciating another person’s perspective or point-of-view
- ❖ Difficulty appreciating how she is coming across or being perceived by others

When a student repeatedly disrupts the learning environment or prevents peers from learning beyond the scope of faculty member re-direction, the student will be subjected to the following T.L.C. process:

BEHAVIOR EVENT	FACULTY RESPONSE
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ In-class redirection
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Student sent out of class – immediate referral to T.L.C. session(s) ◆ “Progress” meeting after two weeks between student and faculty member
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Immediate FDP referral ◆ Family contacted ◆ Meeting with Principal/Assistant Principal

DRAMA SESSIONS

ALH stands firm in its commitment to protecting the physical and emotional well-being of all students. To that end, ALH will **not** tolerate the following forms of bullying or intimidation:

- Verbal threats of violence
- Instigating (verbal/written)
- Unwelcomed physical contact (pushing/bumping/pulling hair/etc...) ^
- Name-calling (verbal/written)
- Gossiping
- Stalking
- Written threats
- Cyber-bullying
- Text-bullying
- Taunting
- Trespassing (going into others’ lockers/belongings)

When students decide to “cross the line” by verbally and/or physically assaulting another student, we consider that to be an offense to the entire school environment. “Drama” thwarts academic and personal evolution. Our young women cannot and will not value themselves if they do not begin the practice of treating one another with understanding, compassion, empathy,

and sisterhood. These daily sessions constitute a means for our young women to resolve “drama” in a respectful, safe, and mature manner.

No matter where the “drama” occurs – even off of our school grounds – *any* teacher, staff member or administrator can and will refer the student(s) to a DRAMA Session. Like T.L.C., the objective of a DRAMA Session is a serious one: to tackle the behavior of the student(s) with a sense of urgency. The only difference is that participants in DRAMA Sessions reach a resolution by the end of one session.

Should a student disregard the resolution agreed upon and/or continue to behave in a way that threatens the well-being of another student, we will immediately refer the offending student to FDP.

^ Drama session will take place; however physical contact constitutes grounds for suspension

The DRAMA process is as follows:

DRAMA EVENT	FACULTY RESPONSE
1	➤ Referral to DRAMA Session (takes place on same day as offense)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Referral to FDP ➤ Family contacted

C. DISCIPLINE

DISCIPLINE CODE

In all disciplinary matters, students will be given notice and will have the opportunity of due process to present their version of the facts and circumstances leading to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions by the staff. Depending on the severity of the infraction, disciplinary responses include suspension (short or long-term), exclusion from extracurricular activities, and expulsion. Where appropriate, school officials also will contact law enforcement agencies.

Faculty and staff are well-informed about discipline code policies. During pre-service (2 week-period prior to the start of school where all faculty and staff is present for training), all staff is given a copy of the same disciplinary procedures that are given to parents within the Parent Handbook (which is given to families during the mandatory Parent/Student Orientation Night). Whole-group conferences are then scheduled for various procedures to be discussed so that the

practice of said procedures is in sync and uniform throughout the school. On every Professional Development day, the faculty and staff agenda includes at least, but not limited to, one item of interest as it relates to discipline so that staff can re-affirm the expectations and/or address issues of concern in order to better serve our students.

At the conclusion of our school year, administrative staff, select faculty members, and members of the Parent Organization will review the Code of Conduct in order to assert the present policies and/or to update said policies according to the changing needs of our students.

Further, the Code of Conduct is reviewed at least once a year via an open public hearing where parents, students, school staff and community members are invited to share their thoughts, views, concerns, questions and suggestions. Should there be any amendments, adoptions, and/or modifications to the Code of Conduct, those changes are forwarded to the ALH Board of Trustees for their review and approval. The newly-adopted Code of Conduct is then forwarded, no later than 30 days, to the Commissioner of Education and Coordinator of Safety (Safe Schools) offices located at 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234.

Discipline & Due Process

Prohibited conduct and acceptable school responses to such conduct are set forth in the Code of Conduct. In disciplinary matters, students shall have the opportunity to present their version of the facts and circumstances leading to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions to the professional staff member imposing such sanctions.

A student may be suspended from instruction only after her rights to due process have been observed, and in all instances a student has the right to due process in other enforcement of the school's disciplinary code.

In the event an infraction does not lead to a short-term or long-term suspension, the following consequences may apply (not limited to one and may include a combination of most):

- Community Service
- Letter of apology to community to be read at community assembly
- Parent Meeting
- Contract
- Loss of ALL off-campus privileges for the academic year.

SUSPENSION

In some situations the Principal may decide that a student cannot return to school/classes because of her behavior/actions. Suspension, because it removes a student from classes, is a very serious consequence. It is instituted in cases where a student's future at ALH is in jeopardy and a parent/guardian meeting is required in order to determine under what conditions a student will be allowed to return.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of the Discipline Code:

"Short-term suspension" shall refer to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of five or fewer days;

"Long-term suspension" shall refer to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than five days; and

"Expulsion" shall refer to the permanent removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons.

Notification of Procedures for Short-Term Suspensions

A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a short-term suspension, unless the Principal or Board of Trustees determines that an exception should be made based on the circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record.

The Principal may impose a short-term suspension. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal shall verbally inform the student of the suspension and the reason or reasons for the suspension. The student shall be given an opportunity to deny or explain the charges.

The Principal also shall immediately notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing that the student has been suspended from school. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 24 hours of suspension at the last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident or incidents which resulted in the suspension and shall offer the opportunity for an immediate informal conference with whoever has imposed the suspension. The notification and informal conference shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s).

The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension or removal may be appealed first to the Board of Trustees of the charter school and next to the Charter Schools Institute of SUNY.

Disciplinary Infractions

- Engaging in conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity or endangering or threatening to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Skipping class(es)
- Attempting to/assaulting any student or staff member

- Endangering the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force which reasonably places the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury
- Instigating that leads to a physical altercation
- Failing to complete assignments, carry out directions, or comply with disciplinary sanctions
- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Religious/spiritual harassment
- Using obscene or abusive language or gestures
- Wearing inappropriate, insufficient, or disruptive clothing or attire, and/or violates the student dress code
- Committing any other act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a short-term suspension.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS

A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a long-term suspension, unless the Principal or Board of Trustees determines that an exception should be made based on the circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record.

Disciplinary Infractions

- Setting off false alarms or safety showers
- Assaulting any student or staff member
- Smoking or possessing tobacco
- Possessing or distributing alcohol
- Possessing or distributing illegal or controlled substances
- Fighting
- Committing any act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a long-term suspension.

Notification of Procedures for Long-Term Suspensions

The Principal may impose a long-term suspension. Such a suspension may be imposed only after the student has been found guilty at a formal suspension hearing. In extreme circumstances, the Principal may expel the student from school. Upon determining that a student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension, the principal shall verbally inform the student that he is being suspended and is being considered for a long-term suspension (or expulsion) and state the reasons for such actions.

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

provide a description of the incident or incidents which resulted in the suspension and shall indicate that a formal hearing will be held on the matter which may result in a long-term suspension (or expulsion). The notification provided shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s). At the formal hearing, the student has the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

If the suspension proceeding has been initiated by the Principal, the Principal shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the principal may accept or reject all or part of it. The Principal's decision after the formal hearing to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion may be appealed first to the Board of Trustees and next to the Charter Schools Institute of SUNY.

NOTIFICATION OF PROCEDURE FOR EXPULSION

A student who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject to expulsion in addition to, or in lieu of, a long-term suspension unless the principal or Board of Trustees determines that an exception should be made based on the circumstances of the incident and the student's disciplinary record.

Disciplinary Infractions

- Possessing, using, attempting to use, or transferring any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosives, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student at school
- Arson
- Possessing, using, or attempting to use or distribute drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Possessing, using, or attempting to use or distribute alcohol
- ONE fight within one school year ^
- Repeated offenses under short and long-term suspensions
- Committing any other act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants an expulsion.

^ Any time a student fights, an expulsion hearing will be scheduled during the long-term suspension.

In situations where ALH determines that a student is no longer able to remain in the school community, the ALH administration will follow the steps described below:

1. The Principal or another representative of the school's administration will notify the parent or guardian immediately of the incident.
2. The student will be removed from school.
3. The Principal will take all possible steps to ensure that the student and her parents or guardians are fully informed of their rights. These steps may include arranging a meeting between a representative of the school's administration, parents or guardians, and the

student to discuss the rights of the student before the hearing itself. The incident itself will not be discussed in this meeting. The meeting is to clarify the process and establish a date for the hearing.

4. A hearing date will be set by the Principal, and the student and his/her parents or guardians will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of the hearing at least seven days prior to the hearing. The student will have the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at the hearing and have the right to have an attorney present.
 - If parents request a hearing, students will continue in their current placement and program until such a hearing takes place, another program or placement is agreed upon by the parties, or a court order permits a change of placement based on a showing that the student's continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury to the student or to others.
5. After the hearing, the Principal will determine the appropriate course of action. A written decision will be made within three days of the formal hearing, and copies will be forwarded to the student, the parents or guardians, the school's Board of Trustees, and student's permanent record file.
6. A student who is expelled will have the right to appeal the Principal's decision in writing to the school's Board of Trustees within seven days of that decision, and will have the right to counsel (at families' expense) at that appeal. The ALH Board of Trustees will hear the appeal. A binding decision will be provided orally and in writing shortly thereafter.
7. In cases where a student is receiving special education services, ALH will:
 - a. Provide an alternative plan for the delivery of special education services during the period of suspension.
 - b. Obtain approval for the alternative plan by the New York State Department of Education.
 - c. Present the alternative plan and an explanation of parental rights to the student's parent or guardian prior to the plan's implementation. The failure or refusal of the parent to consent to the provision of services under the alternative plan will not prevent implementation of the expulsion.

The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, which applies to public schools and thus to this charter school, states that a student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school must be suspended for at least one calendar year. This suspension requirement may be modified by school administrators, however, on a case-by-case basis. Weapon as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC §§8921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §§3214(3)(d) effectuates this federal law.)

In the event a student commits an offense involving a gun or drugs, or acts in any way that can be interpreted as criminal, school officials, in the interest of the safety of others and in accordance of the law, will contact local law enforcement and said student's family immediately.

PROVISION OF SERVICES DURING REMOVAL

In appropriate instances, the ALH will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a student who has been suspended or removed to help that child progress in the school's general curriculum. For a student who has been suspended, alternative instruction will be provided during the period of suspension (2.0 hours of instruction between the hours of 2:00pm and 4:00pm, Monday thru Friday); for a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided until the student enrolls in another school or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) Petitions

PINS Petitions are referrals to Probation/Family Court when students under the age of 18 are "habitually truant, engage in conduct which makes them 'ungovernable, or habitually disobedient and beyond lawful control of the school' ... In addition, habitual truancy constitutes grounds for filing a PINS petition in family court (Family Court Act §§ 712(a), 732)." Per New York State Law, we are sanctioned to initiate said petition if a student's behavior falls under this definition; however, the school will take this position only after all school-based and outside (human resources agencies) intervention measures have been exhausted with the student and her family. The Director of Counseling Services, Assistant Principal and Principal will be responsible for determining a student's eligibility for this program. The Director of Counseling Services will also serve as the representative of contact for the probation department, child welfare, family court and the police department, who are active agents in the PINS process.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students, and as more fully explained below, may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses. In the event that this policy is inconsistent with federal law, regulations, or guidance, however, such federal law, regulations, or guidance shall govern. Discipline of a student identified as having a disability will be in accordance with the following:

1. Except for as set forth herein, students for whom the Individualized Educational Program ("IEP") includes a Behavior Intervention Plan ("BIP) which sets forth specific disciplinary guidelines will be disciplined in accordance with those guidelines. If the disciplinary guidelines appear not to be effective or if there is concern for the health and safety of the student or others if those guidelines are followed with respect to a specific infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the local school district's Committee on Special Education ("CSE") for consideration of a change in the BIP and these guidelines.

2. Except for as set forth herein, (when a student is suspended for ten days or more and a manifestation is found between the student's conduct and disability) students for whom the IEP does not include a BIP with these specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with standard school policy relating to each infraction. The school district's CSE shall be notified immediately of any suspension or removal from classes, and the school shall work with the CSE to arrange appropriate alternate instruction.

If there is a change in the student's placement in that the student has been or, as a result of this infraction may be suspended for ten (10) school days or more during any one school year, a referral shall be made to the student's resident school district to hold a manifestation determination. If a manifestation is found, no penalty may be imposed, and the school will work with the resident school district to consider what if any changes need to be made to the student's IEP, and conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless one has already been conducted by the resident school district before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child; or if a behavioral intervention plan already has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent, school and the resident school district agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If a student identified as having a disability is suspended during the course of the school year for a total of eight (8) days, such student will immediately be referred to the resident district's CSE to review the Student's IEP, including, but not limited to reconsider the student's educational placement.

3. The school will notify the resident district's CSE of any disciplinary actions taken in regard to any of its students. The school will notify the resident district CSE whenever a procedural safeguards notice is issued to a resident student's parents or guardians pursuant to 34CFR §300.523.
4. The school shall work with the resident district to ensure that the resident district's CSE meets within ten (10) school days, or if possible immediately upon notification of any of the following, for the purpose of considering a change in placement or any other changes to the IEP for the student involved:
 - a. The commission of any infraction which is a result of the student's disability.
 - b. The commission of any infraction by a disabled student, regardless of whether the student has previously been suspended during the school year if, had such infraction been committed by a non-disabled student, the principal would seek to impose a suspension or removal in excess of five days.
5. School personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability, if the child –

- (1) Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the school;
- (2) 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 jurisdiction of the school; or
- (3) Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the school.

On the date on which the decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the school must notify the parents of that decision, and provide the parents the procedural safeguards notice.

For the purposes of this section the following definitions apply:

- (1) **Controlled substance** means a drug or other substance identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812.(c)).
- (2) **Illegal drug** means a controlled substance, but does not include a controlled substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under that Act or under any other provision of Federal law.
- (3) **Serious bodily injury** has the meaning given the term “serious bodily injury” under paragraph (3) of subsection (h) of section 1365 of title 18, United States Code.
- (4) **Weapon** has the meaning given the term “dangerous weapon” under paragraph (2) of the first subsection (g) of section 930 of title 18 United States Code. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 141(k)(1) and (7).

Protection for Children Not Yet Eligible for Special Education and Related Services

ALH will adhere to the requirements of 34 CFR §300.534. In accordance with such section, students who have not yet been determined to be eligible for special education and related services and who have engaged in behavior that violated the charter school’s discipline code may assert any of the protections provided in Part 300 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations if the school had knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitates the disciplinary action occurred.

The school will be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred (1) the parent of the child expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the appropriate educational agency, or a teacher of the child, that the child is in need of special education and related services; (2) the parent of the child requested an evaluation of the child; or (3) the teacher of the child, or other school personnel expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to the director of special education of the agency or to other supervisory personnel of the agency.

However, the school will be deemed to have no knowledge if the parent of the child:

- (a) Has not allowed an evaluation of the child: or

- (b) Has refused services under this part: or
- (c) Has been evaluated and determined to not be a child with a disability.

If the school does not have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the child, the child may be subjected to the disciplinary measure applied to children without disabilities who engage in comparable behaviors.

If a request is made for an evaluation of a child during the time period in which the child is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation must be conducted in an expedited manner: until the evaluation is completed, the child remains in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services; and if the child is determined to be a child with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted and information provided by the parents, the school will consult with the student's resident school district's CSE to regarding the provision of special education and related services.

Provision of Services During Removal

ALH will adhere to the requirements of 34 CFR §300.121 to ensure that its students with disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education. ALH also will abide by the requirements for compulsory education as provided in §2854(1) (a) and §2854(1)(b) of Article 56 of the New York State Education Law. The charter school will provide related services to a child during his or her suspension or removal from school, regardless of the number of days of such suspension or removal, that are necessary to help that student progress in the school's general curriculum and towards the goals set out in the student's IEP.

In these cases, school personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, make the service determination.

As with all students, the Principal shall have final authority to suspend or remove a student with disabilities or suspected of having disabilities for up to five (5) days. The Principal also shall maintain all necessary records regarding the number of days a student with a disability has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Due Process

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student with a disability or suspected of having a disability, then (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with a disability shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504; and (2) as stated above, immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten (10) school days after the date on which such decision is made, a manifestation determination shall be made by the resident school district to review the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

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

Parents may request an expedited impartial hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement during the pendency of the hearing.

If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal regarding a disciplinary action relating to weapons or drugs to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and charter school agree otherwise. However, the child's CSE at his resident school district determines the interim alternative educational setting for services.

Maintenance of Public Order on School Property

The following rules shall govern the conduct of students, teachers, staff, licensees, friends and other invitees, parents, guardians, relatives, and other persons, whether or not their presence is authorized, on all property or facilities operated under the auspices of the ALH.

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

Prohibited Conduct

No person, either singly or in concert, shall:

1. Willfully cause physical injury to any other person, or threaten to use force which would result in such injury.
2. Willfully damage or destroy school property, nor remove or use such property without authorization.
3. Without permission, express or implied, enter into any private office or classroom of an administrative officer, teacher, or staff member.

4. Without authorization, remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed, nor without permission enter any building or facility prior to its normal opening.
5. Refuse to leave any building or facility after being required to do so by the principal or an authorized administrative officer or his or her designee.
6. Deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, lectures, and meetings or deliberately interfere with the freedom of any person to express his or her views, unless such disruption is necessary to maintain order of the educational process.
7. Possess on school property any rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver, knife, chain, club or other weapon, whether or not the person has a license to possess such weapon. Further, it is the duty of the principal to inform the police of the presence or use of any such weapon or implements used as weapons on school property.
8. Commit acts which threaten the safety and welfare of persons on school property.
9. Violate any federal or State statute or regulation, local ordinance or school policy.
10. Possess, use or distribute alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia.
11. Harass or coerce any person.
12. Refuse or fail to comply with a lawful order or direction of a school official in the performance of his or her duty.
13. Distribute or post on school property any written material, pamphlets or posters without the prior approval of the Principal.

Penalties and Enforcement

Penalties for violations of these rules include, but are not limited to:

- The withdrawal of authorization to remain upon school property;
- Ejection;
- Arrest;
- For students, suspension or other disciplinary action; and
- For school employees, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Staff members are required to report known violations of these rules to the principal and to make reasonable efforts to stop the prohibited conduct. Agents of the school, including the guidance counselors and/or social workers, are held just as accountable. Counseling and family outreach serve as reasonable efforts to intervene when conduct and/or the rationale behind the conduct is questionable. The Principal is responsible for the dispersal and enforcement of these rules.

D. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ALBANY LEADERSHIP CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

2010-11 PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

No Child Left Behind

Written Complaint and Appeal Procedures

For Title I, Parts A, C, and D or Section 100.2(ee) of Commissioner's Regulations Regarding Academic Intervention Services

As required by Title IX, General Provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has adopted the following procedures for receiving and resolving complaints and for reviewing appeals from decisions of local educational agencies (LEAs). Complaints concerning violations of ESEA Title I, Parts A, C, and D, or of the General Education Provisions Act; or of Section 100.2(ee) Academic Intervention Services of the Regulations of the Commissioner are covered by these procedures.

LEAs must disseminate free of charge, adequate information about the State Complaint and Appeal Procedures to parents of students, and appropriate private school officials or representatives. [General Provisions Regulations, 34 CFR Sections 299.10-299.12]

Procedures for Filing Complaints/Appeals with a LEA:

Who may submit a complaint?

Any public or nonpublic school parent or teacher, other interested person, or agency may file a complaint.

What must a complaint contain?

All complaints must:

- be written;
- be signed by the person or agency representative filing the complaint;
- specify the requirement of law or regulation being violated and the related issue, problem, and/or the concern;
- contain information/evidence supporting the complaint; and
- state the nature of the corrective action desired.

What must an appeal from a LEA's response contain?

An appeal must contain:

- a copy of the original signed complaint (see I-B);
- a copy of the LEA's response to the original complaint or a statement that the LEA failed to respond in 30 business days.

In New York City or rest of State outside of New York City, a copy of the LEA and the Department of Education's response to the original complaint or a statement that the Department of Education failed to respond within 30 business days; and a statement identifying those parts of the LEA's response which the party wishes to appeal.

Where should a complaint/appeal to the LEA be sent?

Complaints/appeals regarding the LEA's administration and implementation of its ESEA Title I Grant or Academic Intervention Services for students identified under Commissioner's Regulations Part 100 should be sent first to the School Superintendent of the LEA against whom the complaint is made. The LEA has a 30 business day period in which to resolve a complaint.

Procedures for Filing Complaints/Appeals with the New York State Education Department

The State Education Department will review complaints when the complaint pertains to:

- the State's administration of the ESEA Title I Basic Grant, Migrant Education, or Neglected or Delinquent Program;
- an appeal from the decision of an LEA regarding an action by the LEA.

Complaints that do not meet any of the above criteria, including complaints concerning the LEA's administration of its Title I Program, will be referred for possible resolution to the LEA against whom the complaint is made.

What timelines pertain to the State Education Department's review of complaints/appeals from an LEA action?

Within 60 business days of the receipt of the complaint/appeal, Department staff will complete an on-site review (if necessary) and/or records examination and will notify all parties of its findings. An extension of the 60-day complaint resolution period is permitted under CFR Part 299.11 (b), for exceptional circumstances.

Where shall complaints or appeals to the State Education Department be sent?

Complaints/appeals regarding Title I for LEAs outside of New York City local school districts/schools should be sent to:

New York State Education Department
Title I School & Community Services Office
Room 365 EBA
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Who shall conduct the review of complaints or appeals?

The Title I representative in the State Education Department office who is assigned as the program manager for the LEA against which the complaint is made and other Department staff as may be appropriate shall conduct the review of complaints or appeals.

What shall the State Education Department's response to the complaint contain?

The Department's response shall contain:

- the names of persons interviewed;
- the records or other evidence examined;
- relevant dates/times/locations/events;
- summary of findings; and
- nature of corrective action to be taken including applicable timelines.

How will State Education Department staff monitor the timely and appropriate implementation of the corrective actions called for in the complaint/appeal resolution?

Failure of the LEA to take corrective action within the time period stipulated in the complaint resolution shall be cause to withhold all, or a portion of, the ESEA Title I allocation to the LEA.

Does the State Education Department maintain a record of all complaints/appeals?

Yes. Copies of correspondence, related documents, investigative reports, and summary reports involved in the complaint/appeal resolution will be maintained by the State Education Department for five years. Records will be made available to interested parties in accordance with the provisions of the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Public Officers Law Sections 84-89).

What shall constitute exceptional circumstances for extending the 60-day limit for State Education Department review of complaints and appeals for relief from an LEA action?

The State Education Department has determined that exceptional circumstances may include, but need not be limited to, such occurrences as:

- illness of involved parties;
- cancellation of scheduled on-site reviews due to unscheduled school closings;
- the need for extended review activities beyond those specified in the written notification; and/or

- any other mutual agreement to changes in review scope or activity.

When exceptional circumstances are identified, the revised date for the completion of the complaint review will be provided in writing to all parties involved in the complaint or appeal. All parties to the complaint have the right to initiate a request for an extension beyond the 60 business day complaint resolution period based on exceptional circumstances. All such requests must be presented to the State Education Department.

Procedures for Adjudicating Appeals from the Decision of the State Education Department

May a person/agency dissatisfied with the State Education Department's complaint resolution file an appeal?

Yes, parties dissatisfied with the State Education Department's complaint resolution may file an appeal directly with the United States Department of Education at:

United States Department of Education
Compensatory Education Programs
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Room 3W230, FOB #6
Washington, D.C. 20202-6132



Notification of Rights under FERPA

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the ALH receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to **Ms. Rebekah Francis, Office and Relations Administrator, 19 Hackett Boulevard, Albany, NY 12208**, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. **Ms. Francis** will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. ALH will **not** make copies available to parents **for free**. **A charge of \$0.25 per page will be required if parents desire copies.**
- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask ALH to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to **Mrs. Jarvis-Cedeno**, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If ALH decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, ALH will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a formal hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- (3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or

student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, ALH will disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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



FERPA Procedures for Storage/Handling of Student Files and Release Procedure

All student files and a FERPA log are contained in a locked file cabinet located in the main office. Said files are under the guardianship of the Office and Relations Administrator, Ms. Rebekah Francis, who has sole access to the files.

Contact the aforementioned representative for documents for retrieval of FERPA files.

At the start of each academic year, parents are asked to sign the following documents either granting or denying the release of student photographs and/or student work:

- Photo/Media Release Form: *covers photo opportunities, news coverage and interviews, and or usage of personal images for various school and local media.*
- Student Academic/Art Work Release Form: *covers the display or posting of student academic work and art.*

Policy & Procedures for Compliance with Freedom of Information Law

Requests for public records must be in writing or electronically, and submitted to the Albany Leadership High's Director of Finance and Operations, Mr. Andres Vives, who serves as the Records Access Officer. Upon the receipt of a request for school records reasonably described, the request will be responded to in the following manner:

- Within five business days of receipt of a written request, ALH will depending on the requested record(s), will make such record(s) available at ALH during normal business hours to the person requesting the record(s), deny the request in writing, or provide a written acknowledgement of receipt of the request and a statement of the approximate date when the request will be granted or denied.

If ALH determines to grant access to the requested record(s), and if circumstances prevent disclosure within twenty (20) days of the acknowledgment of receipt of the request, ALH shall state in writing both the reason for the delay and a date certain, within a reasonable period of time, depending on the circumstances, when the request will be granted in whole or in part. Failure to conform to the provisions detailed above shall constitute a denial of the request for record(s).

If the person requesting record(s) is denied access to record(s), he or she may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees: Margaret Moree. Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, ALH will fully explain, in writing, the reasons for further denial or provide access to the record (s) sought. This will take place within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal. ALH will also immediately forward a copy of the appeal when received, as well as its ultimate determination, to the New York State Committee on Open Government.

In the event an appeal for records is denied, the person requesting the information may bring a proceeding for review of such denial pursuant to Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules. ALH may deny access to requested records on one or more of the following grounds as set forth in Public Officers Law §87:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- Such records are trade secrets or are submitted to the School by a commercial enterprise or derived from information obtained from a commercial enterprise and which if disclosed would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of such enterprise;
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law § 87(2)(e)(i) through (iv);
- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- If disclosed, would jeopardize the school's capacity to guarantee the security of its information technology assets;

- Such records are inter-agency or intra-agency materials that are not statistical or factual tabulations of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, or a final policy or external audits;
- Examination questions or answers which are requested prior to the final administration of such questions.

Additionally, ALH shall maintain:

- A record of the final vote of each trustee in every proceeding in which the trustee votes;
- A record setting forth the name, public office address title and salary of every employee of the education corporation; and
- A reasonably detailed current list, by subject matter, of all records in the Education Corporation's custody or possession.

Note: ALH will charge \$0.25 per page of a record for each page requested to be copied. Additional fees may be charged as authorized by law.

**ALBANY LEADERSHIP CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL for GIRLS
POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH
OPEN MEETINGS LAW**

Meetings of the Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls' Board of Trustees, including committee meetings, shall be open to the general public.

Public Notice

1. A calendar of all board meeting dates will be posted at the charter school at all times.
2. The school will provide notice of the time and place of any board meeting that is *scheduled at least one week in advance* to the news media and shall conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.
3. The school will provide notice of the time and place of any board meeting that is *scheduled less than one week in advance* to the news media (to the extent practicable) and shall conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at a reasonable time in advance of the scheduled meeting. To the extent possible, the school will publicly post notices of board of trustees meetings immediately after each meeting date is determined.
4. Trustees may participate in board meetings in person or by videoconferencing. The board of trustees shall provide an opportunity for the public to attend at any site where a member participates. If videoconferencing is to be used, then the public notice must say so, identify the locations from which members will participate, and state that the public has a right to attend at any of these locations.

Minutes of Meetings

1. The secretary of the Board of Trustees will take minutes at all open sessions. All minutes will contain the date of the meeting, a summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions and any other matter formally voted upon as well as a record of how each board member voted.
2. Minutes from open meetings will be made available to the public within two weeks of the meeting date. Minutes will be available at the school.

Executive Sessions

The charter school Board of Trustees shall conduct all executive sessions as part of an open meeting; they are not considered separate meetings per se. An executive session may be called upon a motion and majority vote by the board of trustees taken in an open meeting. The motion must specifically identify the general area or areas of the subjects to be considered. All board members may participate in executive sessions, and the board may authorize others to attend as well. An executive session shall only be conducted by the board of trustees for one or more of the following matters pursuant to Public Officers Law §105:

1. Matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;
2. Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
3. Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
4. Discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
5. When such law applies to charter school employees, collective negotiations that are within the scope of Article 14 of the Civil Service Law;

6. The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
7. The preparation, grading or administration of examinations; and
8. The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

In no case shall public funds be appropriated during an executive session.

Exemptions

The following matters are exempted from the Open Meetings Law and therefore can be discussed closed to the public, without the need for notice or a motion or vote to convene in executive session:

1. Judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings (for example, suspension hearings and employee grievance hearings); and
2. Any matter made confidential by state or federal law (for example discussions regarding a particular student's records or children with handicapping conditions in violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act);
3. Attorney-client privileged communications.

Enforcement

Any individual wishing to assert a violation of the New York State Open Meetings Law has standing to bring a proceeding in accordance with Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules and/or action for declaratory or injunctive relief.



Complaint Policy

Formal Complaint:

Any individual or group may bring a formal complaint regarding an alleged violation of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act), the Charter Schools Act, or other applicable provisions of New York State Law to the principal, as the Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls Board of Trustees designee. If the complaint is against the principal, the complainant should direct the complaint to the Board of Trustees of Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls. Within one week, or as soon thereafter as practicable given the facts and circumstances of the complaint, the complainant will be provided with the following in writing:

- (a) findings and any subsequent action resulting from the investigation of the complaint
- (b) your right to appeal any decision or action to the Charter Schools Institute if the complaint involves a violation of law or our charter; and
- (c) a copy of the Charter Schools Institute's Grievance Guidelines (attached)

Informal Complaint:

Any individual or group may bring an informal complaint regarding faculty, staff, and/or administrator, a school procedure, etc. to the attention of the assistant principal. Upon review and investigation of the allegations and/or concerns, the assistant principal will provide, in writing, to the complainant, the following:

- (a) a decision and/or subsequent action;
- (b) the right to appeal to the principal; and
- (c) the principal's decision on an informal complaint is final; there is no right to appeal to the board of trustees or the charter entity from the denial of an informal complaint.

GUIDELINES OF THE CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS RECEIVED PURSUANT TO EDUCATION LAW §2855(4)

I. Introduction

A. Section 2855(4) of the Education Law provides that any individual or group who believes a charter school has violated its charter, the New York Charter Schools Act, or any other law relating to the management or operation of the charter school, can bring a complaint to the charter school's board of trustees (the "school board"). If the individual making the complaint, after presenting the complaint to the school board, is unsatisfied with the school board's response, then he or she has the right to present the complaint to the entity which authorized the charter school (the "Charter Entity"). The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the "State University Trustees") is the Charter Entity for the Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls.

Pursuant to a resolution of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the "State University Trustees"), the Charter Schools Institute has been authorized to handle complaints directed to the State University Trustees in their capacity as a Charter Entity. As such, the Institute will both receive and review complaints on behalf of the State University Trustees, and make determinations and issue appropriate remedial orders.

The Charter Entity, upon being presented with a complaint, has the authority to issue remedial orders when appropriate and necessary. If the complainant, after presenting a complaint to the Charter Entity, feels that the complaint has not been adequately addressed by the Charter Entity, he or she may bring the complaint to the Board of Regents, which also has the authority to issue remedial orders. In a sense, this establishes a two-step appeals process for complaints and grievances.

These guidelines replace guidelines adopted on April 30, 2001 and distributed to charter schools on May 1, 2001. The guidelines have been revised to reflect the Board of Trustees grant of increased authority to the Charter Schools Institute to handle complaints received by the Board of Trustees in their capacity as a charter entity.

The guidance that follows below explains how the Charter Schools Institute will handle and review complaints. It is in the form of answers to frequently asked questions. Please note that the words grievance and complaint are used interchangeably throughout.

II. General Requirements

A. When can a complaint be filed with the Charter Schools Institute?

Please Note: Because, as noted in the Introduction, complaints regarding charter schools authorized by the State University Trustees will be reviewed and acted upon by the Charter Schools Institute, the Institute (and not the State University Trustees), is referred to throughout the Q&A.

By law, the Charter Schools Institute cannot undertake the review of a complaint until the complainant has presented his or her complaint to a school board of a State University authorized school and the complainant has determined that the school

board has not adequately addressed the complaint. In general a group or individual should not file with the Charter Schools Institute until after a school board has acted on the complaint and provided a written response to the complainant. Each charter school, as part of its charter, has agreed to set up a process under which complaints must be reviewed by the school board. You have the right to be provided with a copy of that policy upon request of a charter school.

B. What if I file a grievance and the school board fails to act on my grievance?

If a school board fails to take any action on your grievance in a reasonable time, then you may bring your grievance to the Charter Schools Institute. What is considered reasonable depends on the circumstances. Some grievances may require prompt action by a school board while others may properly be resolved in a longer time frame. Thus, in certain instances where urgent action is required, it may be appropriate for a school board to call an emergency meeting. In general, however, it is appropriate for a school board to take action on your grievance at its regularly scheduled meeting. As most school boards meet monthly, you should not necessarily expect a school board to act immediately. However, you can and should expect that, at a minimum, a school board should take action on your grievance within the time frame set out in the school's grievance policy.

In most cases where the school board has not acted, you should wait at least until the period provided for by the school's grievance policy has passed before filing your grievance with the Charter Schools Institute. As explained more fully below, the Charter Schools Institute, in reviewing and investigating your complaint, will give the school board an opportunity to respond to your grievance. Accordingly, filing a grievance with the Charter Schools Institute, before you have given the school board a reasonable time in which to act on your complaint, may simply delay the Charter Schools Institute from undertaking its own independent review and investigation.

What does my grievance have to contain?

The law does not require that your grievance be in a particular format. However, in order to ensure that your grievance is thoroughly and quickly reviewed, you should provide the following:

1. A detailed statement of the nature of the complaint (including the law or provision of the charter that you allege has been violated), the names of the individuals involved, and the time, date and place the incident(s) at issue occurred;
2. What response, if any, you have received from the school board (a copy of any response should be attached) with any relevant dates;
3. Copies of any correspondence between you and the school or school board;
4. What action or relief you are seeking; and
5. Your name, address and telephone number.

Please note that while the law does not require you to submit your complaint in any particular format, it must include at least one allegation that the school or school board has violated a term of its charter or provision of applicable law. Where there is no such allegation (and a fair reading of the complaint does not involve any violation), the Institute will not review or investigate but limit its response to a statement that no valid complaint has been presented to it. In this regard, please remember that the Charter Schools Institute does not have the power to review complaints (and issue remedial orders) for any and all complaints that you might have about a charter school. Its review powers are limited quite specifically to those complaints alleging a violation of the charter or a provision of law.

To assist you in fashioning your grievance, the Charter Schools Institute has created a **Grievance Form** on its website, which you can use when submitting grievances to it. As stated above, use of this form is not mandatory and it is provided as a convenience to you.

C. Where and to whom do I submit my grievance?

Your grievance should be address to the Charter Schools Institute's Grievance Desk, 41 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, New York 12207. As noted above, the Charter Schools Institute will conduct the investigation of your grievance and issue any remedial orders on behalf of the State University Trustees. As also noted, grievances submitted to the Charter Schools Institute must concern a charter school authorized by the State University Trustees. Complaints involving charter schools authorized by other entities, such as the Board of Regents and local school districts, must be filed with those entities.

D. After the school board responds to my grievance, is there a time period in which I need to file my "appeal" to the Charter Schools Institute for it to be valid?

The law does not provide a time limit in which you are required to file your grievance with the Charter Schools Institute. However, you should be aware that the Charter Schools Institute, in reviewing your grievance, may take into account any unusually lengthy delays in filing your grievance. Such delays, in appropriate cases, may affect the Institute's determination, including the terms and scope of any remedial order it issues. In general, the Charter Schools Institute would not consider any grievance to be delayed that was filed with it within sixty days of the school board's response or the end of the time period in which the school board, under its grievance policy, has to act (but in which time no action by the school board has been taken).

III. Grievance Review and Action

A. How does the Charter Schools Institute process and investigate grievances that it receives?

Upon receipt of a grievance, Charter Schools Institute staff will review the grievance and all supporting materials delivered with the grievance. Staff will then contact the person making the grievance to confirm its receipt and, if necessary, request that additional information be supplied. The Charter Schools Institute will also contact the school board and, in most cases, give the school board thirty (30) days to respond. The Institute will forward to the school board a copy of the grievance along with

supporting materials. As noted above, if the Charter Schools Institute receives a grievance from an individual who has not given the school board a reasonable time in which to act, the Charter Schools Institute may defer its investigation until that reasonable period has passed. In such cases, and where the school board takes the opportunity to then act on the complaint, the Charter Schools Institute will consider the school board's action in fashioning its determination, including the scope and terms of any remedial order it issues.

In addition to the above steps, Charter Schools Institute staff will conduct whatever independent factual investigation the Institute deems necessary and appropriate. Such investigation may include, but is not limited to, requesting additional information from the grievant, the school board or other persons, conducting interviews, inspecting relevant documents, or visiting the school.

Upon completion of its investigation, the Charter Schools Institute will reach a determination as to appropriate remedial orders, if any. The Institute will provide a copy of the determination, which will include the terms of any remedial order to the person making the grievance, the school board and the Charter Schools Unit of the New York State Education Department.

B. In presenting my grievance, may I be represented by a lawyer?

You have the right, though you are not required, to retain an attorney to represent or otherwise assist you in presenting your grievance to the Charter Schools Institute and in any other phase of the review process.

C. Instead of having the Charter Schools Institute formally act on my complaint, i.e., issue a written determination, can I ask the Charter Schools Institute to assist me in resolving the matter with the school and school board?

The Charter Schools Institute appreciates that oftentimes, your complaint can be resolved without the Institute having to take formal action on it. The Charter Schools Institute stands ready to work with you to try to resolve your complaint in this way. Indeed, in many instances, the Institute may suggest that the dispute between the school and you be mediated. However, if you do not wish to try to resolve your complaint informally, you are not required to do so.

D. What kinds of remedial orders can the Charter Schools Institute issue?

The Charter Schools Act does not define, and generally does not limit, the remedial powers of a charter entity in regards to complaints. Accordingly, the Charter Schools Institute, acting for the State University Trustees, has wide discretion to determine the remedial order appropriate to a particular situation. There is, however, one clear limitation on the kind of remedial order the Charter Schools Institute can issue. The Institute may not place a charter school on probation or terminate a school's charter except under the specific grounds and pursuant to the procedures set forth at §2855 of the Education Law (The Charter Schools Act). Moreover, even if such grounds exist, remedial orders which involve placing a school on probation or terminating a school's charter, would require approval by the State University Trustees.

IV. After the Charter Schools Institute Has Acted

A. What if I am not satisfied with the Charter Schools Institute's response to my complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the Charter Schools Institute's response to your claim, you have the right to "appeal" to the Board of Regents. Complaints made to the Board of Regents may be filed with the Charter Schools Unit, 465 Education Building Annex, Albany, New York 12234. The State Education Department has its own guidelines and procedures for reviewing grievances. Accordingly, you should consult with State Education Department staff in the Charter Schools Unit before filing your grievance.

As a preliminary step to bringing your complaint to the Board of Regents, you may also, but are not required to, request that the Charter Schools Institute review its determination. You may find this step appropriate if you believe that the Institute has overlooked evidence before it, or if you have additional evidence that was not available to you at the time your complaint was under review. The Institute will review any additional evidence that you have and inform all parties in writing of the results of its review, including any modifications it determines to make to its original determination. Please note that requesting a review is optional and not a prerequisite to a further "appeal." As noted above, you may at any time after an initial determination by the Charter Schools Institute bring your complaint directly to the Board of Regents without having first requested a review of its determination.

B. If the Charter Schools Institute issues a remedial order but the school does not comply with that order, am I required to bring a complaint to the school board or can I immediately complain to the Charter Schools Institute?

If the Charter Schools Institute has issued a remedial order which in your view the school is not following, you need not file an additional complaint with the school board but may directly apprise the Charter Schools Institute of your concern. However, if your complaint involves new facts or circumstances which were not part of your previous complaint, you must, by law, first make your complaint to the school board. As always you may contact the Charter Schools Institute for assistance in determining whether your complaint is related to non-compliance with a remedial order or to a new grievance.

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The complaint and grievance forms you use for formal complaints – the *Complaint Form For Submission to Charter School Board of Trustees* and *Charter School Institute Grievance Form* are available in the main office of ALH.