



College for Certain

**STUDENT FAMILY**

**HANDBOOK**

**2015-2016**

**Memphis, Tennessee**

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## WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

We are excited to be a part of the Tennessee Achievement School District (ASD) and to build the possible for our students. ASD is people-powered, quality driven and ultimately about busting barriers. Their mission is to transform the educational paradigm in Tennessee by catapulting the lowest performing schools in the State into the top twenty five percent within five years. Aspire will be part of ASD's mission by creating a "College for Certain" culture that focuses on getting our students ready to graduate from college, supports teachers, and engages parents and the community. We thank you for being a part of our team of committed students and parents, joining us on this critical mission of delivering an outstanding education to the students here in Memphis, Tennessee.

### Annual Notification & Guidelines

Tennessee state law governs the basic operation of public schools, and the legislature regularly passes new laws affecting the quality and availability of education, as well as laws mandating that local school districts undertake new responsibilities.

These laws require that Aspire adequately inform parents of the opportunities and protection to which they are entitled. Aspire complies with this by providing families with this Annual Notification in the Student Family Handbook at the beginning of each school year and by issuing the same publication to new families as they enter Aspire schools during the year.

The following contains a summary of state law provisions with which all parents and guardians should be familiar. In some cases, the laws have been summarized, and the precise code number has been provided should parents require more detailed information.

The Student Family Handbook will be published annually. All registered families of Aspire Public Schools will indicate their willingness to be governed by the Student Family Handbook by signing annually a written statement to that effect. The Administration reserves the right to amend the Handbook at any time for just cause. Parents of Aspire Public Schools students will be notified of the changes, in writing, in a timely manner.

### Aspire Public School Mission & Vision

Vision: Every student is prepared to earn a college degree.

Mission: To open and operate small, high-quality charter schools in low-income neighborhoods, in order to:

- Increase the academic performance of underserved students
- Develop effective educators
- Share successful practices with other forward-thinking educators, and
- Catalyze change in public schools

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Enrollment procedures in Aspire Public School's Tennessee Schools are governed by state law, the ASD's policies, and Aspire's guidelines. Below is a summary of all enrollment policies.

### Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Aspire Public Schools requires students to be enrolled in and registered for school by their custodial parent or legal guardian or a person who provides the school with written permission from the custodial parent/legal guardian to register the child. Unless a Tennessee court specifies otherwise, the custodial parent or legal guardian shall be responsible for the education and welfare of that child.

### **Application, Lottery, and Waitlist Guidelines**

Nearly every ASD school is a neighborhood school with a designated attendance zone. The ASD guarantees enrollment to all attendance area students at either their assigned neighborhood school or **an equivalent placement**. ASD schools enroll all students in accordance with Tennessee legislation and civil rights laws. Enrollment is non-discriminatory on the basis on disability. The ASD also guarantees the continued enrollment of non-attendance area students (e.g. transfers) who attended an ASD school prior to the transformation.

In the event of additional capacity, ASD schools can serve other eligible, but not 'guaranteed enrollment' groups of students. The following policy outlines the application, lottery, and waitlist processes that govern enrollment in the ASD.

### **Student Eligibility And Enrollment Priority**

ASD charter and Achievement Schools have limited student eligibility. Generally, ASD schools can only enroll students zoned to attend or currently enrolled in a school that is eligible to be placed into the ASD. However, in accordance with T.C.A. 49-13-106(a), qualifying ASD charter schools may serve a limited number of non-priority zoned students:

Charter schools authorized by the ASD shall conduct an initial student application period of at least 30 days. During this period, all students zoned to attend or currently enrolled in a school that is eligible to be placed in the ASD may enroll. If, at the end of the initial student enrollment period, the number of eligible students seeking to be enrolled does not exceed the school's capacity or the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, then the charter school may enroll the child or children of a teacher, staff member, sponsor, or member of the governing body as well as students identified in subdivisions (b)(1)(C)(ii), (iii), and (iv) and in accordance with enrollment provisions contained in the charter agreement; provided, however, that no school's total enrollment of such students shall exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total school enrollment. An ASD charter school that has sufficient data to have received a TVAAS growth score in the prior year may not offer spaces to newly enrolling non-priority zoned students unless the school demonstrates student achievement growth at a level of "at expectations" or above.

The ASD has established an enrollment priority group structure to ensure that its schools serve certain students. Each transformation model carries certain requirements. Schools with attendance areas must serve all students assigned to their school. If a school has additional seats available after all students with guaranteed enrollment are offered seats, the school may offer enrollment to students according to the following Priority Groups.

## Application, Lottery, and Waitlist Guidelines Continued

FOR TRANSFORMATIONS (WHOLE SCHOOL) & PHASE-INS (GRADE(S) AT A TIME)		
PRIORITY GROUP	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1. Attendance area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with current, legal residence in an ASD school's attendance area</li> </ul>	Guaranteed
2. Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non attendance area students who attended the school the previous year (including students on transfer)</li> </ul>	Guaranteed
3. Sibling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brothers and sisters of enrolled students – either attendance area or continuity</li> </ul>	Not guaranteed
4. Other ASD zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with current, legal residence in <u>another</u> ASD school's attendance area</li> </ul>	Not guaranteed
5. Other priority school zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with current, legal residence in a non-ASD Priority School attendance area</li> </ul>	Not guaranteed
6. Other at-risk or children of staff, sponsor, or governing body (for qualifying ASD charter schools only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students meeting one of the following criteria:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eligible for free or reduced price lunch,</li> <li>○ Failed to test proficient on a prior year's TCAP or End-of-Course exam,</li> <li>○ Children of staff, sponsor, or governing body</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Not guaranteed (may be no more than 25% of student body)

FOR NEW STARTS		
PRIORITY GROUP	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
Sibling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brothers and sisters of enrolled students (from any priority group)</li> </ul>	Not guaranteed
Other ASD zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with current, legal residence in <u>another</u> ASD school's attendance area</li> </ul>	Not guaranteed
Other priority school zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with current, legal residence in a non-ASD Priority School attendance area</li> </ul>	Not guaranteed
Other at-risk or children of staff, sponsor, or governing body (for qualifying ASD charter schools only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students meeting one of the following criteria:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eligible for free or reduced price lunch,</li> <li>○ Failed to test proficient on a prior year's TCAP or End-of-Course exam,</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Children of staff, sponsor, or governing body</li> </ul>	Not guaranteed (may be no more than 25% of student body)

### Enrollment Process

The ASD's annual cycle of enrollment begins with conversations following the announcement of new ASD schools. ASD staff work with school operators to analyze current enrollment, attendance area student population, and building capacity for each ASD school. These discussions provide a perspective on various enrollment scenarios and an estimated number of preliminary seats available for non-attendance area students.

ASD school enrollment begins in early February. During the enrollment period, the ASD communicates to families about their school choices, student eligibility, the benefits of enrolling early and how to enroll in their preferred schools. Operators also directly communicate with surrounding families and communities to inform them of their school choices, share the experiences of students and families in their schools and create opportunities for school staff to

learn more about and prepare to meet the needs of students before the start of the next school year. At the end of the enrollment period, ASD operators review enrollment requests. If the number of eligible, but not guaranteed, students requesting enrollment exceeds the number of seats available at an ASD school, an enrollment lottery must be held by the operator. Operators must have their process approved by the ASD prior to implementation or have a law firm or accounting firm certify to the ASD after the fact that the lottery followed this process.

Lotteries proceed according to priority grouping. For example, if after all guaranteed students and siblings have enrolled, the number of students from other ASD zones exceeds the number of remaining spaces, a lottery would be held to determine which of the students zoned to other ASD schools may enroll. No other priority school zoned students or non-priority zoned students would be able to enroll.

### **Waitlist**

Openings may not exist for all students who participate in a school's enrollment lottery. If no opening exists, the student will automatically be waitlisted for his/her school choices. The order that a student is randomly identified in the lottery determines the student order on the school's waitlist. The process of admitting waitlist students from will be managed by the Operator. If a school would like to offer a seat to a student on the waitlist, it will select the highest ranking student, in accordance with ASD's Enrollment Priority Groups. Upon enrollment, the student is removed from the waitlist.

Waitlist policy differs slightly for students who live in an ASD school's attendance area, but apply to attend another ASD school. In the event that an opening does not exist for a student at the student's preferred school, the student will be placed on that school's wait-list and assigned to the student's neighborhood ASD school. In order to prevent unnecessary intra-district enrollment variability, ASD students can remain on other ASD schools' waitlists for the first two weeks of the school year. Following the first two weeks, those students will be removed from each school's waitlist. Students who live in the attendance area of other Priority Zone schools not served by the ASD may remain on waitlists indefinitely.

### **Transfers In**

1. Achievement School District TO Achievement School District
2. Other LEA TO Achievement School District

Ultimately, ASD school and operator leadership are responsible for deciding whether or not to receive a transfer student. The ASD would like to ensure that its schools are able to make transfer enrollment decisions with full information and context. Accordingly, the following process should be followed when a transfer student arrives at an ASD school:

1. Ask the family to provide the name of the student's previous school and school district.
2. If the student is transferring from Shelby County Schools, require the family to present a copy of the SCS Withdrawal Entry Form. An ASD school should not register a transfer student until it can confirm the student has been appropriately withdrawn from his/her previous school.
3. ASD schools are encouraged to call the student's previous school directly to confirm the reason the student is no longer enrolled in the school.

ASD schools can choose to enroll a transfer student, even if he/she has an outstanding expulsion.

However, administrators should always conduct the appropriate diligence before registering a student. Once a student has been registered at an ASD school, that school assumes responsibility for his/her education and placement.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

### **Transfers Out**

1. Achievement School District TO Achievement School District
2. Achievement School District TO other LEA

When a student transfers out of the ASD school, district and school/operator leadership must make an effort to understand a student's needs, attempt to address those needs in the current placement, and inform families of available school options. Transfers should always be requested by families. Under no circumstances should ASD staff directly 'counsel out' or advise a family to seek a voluntary transfer. In the event that an ASD school cannot adequately serve a student's needs or there are extenuating safety, discipline, or medical issues – school and operator leadership should work with ASD Support Team staff to find a suitable administrative placement. For questions or assistance with administrative placements, please contact the district's Special Education Manager for special education issues and the Manager of Student Discipline & Access for all other issues.

In the event that a family voluntarily requests to transfer a student to another school, the following process should be followed:

1. The family should contact the student's current school to discuss the transfer request process and receive a Transfer Request Form. The parent should complete, sign, and submit the form to the student's current school.
2. A follow-up meeting and exit interview is required for all transfer reasons other than moving/relocation. The school leader (or designee) will contact the family to arrange a meeting to discuss the transfer within 5 school days of receiving a completed Transfer Request Form. At the meeting, the school leader (or designee) will conduct an exit interview with the family, student, and other school staff as necessary. The exit interview ensures that the family has been adequately informed of options and that the ASD understands and documents the family's reasons for requesting a transfer. The Exit Interview Summary Form outlines the information that should be captured.
3. The school leader should discuss available school options with the family. Potential options include another ASD school, the student's zoned school (if different), an SCS school, or a private/parochial school. The family should be given some time to make a decision. School leaders are encouraged to place a courtesy phone call to the student's new school to confirm capacity exists and the student will be registered upon arrival. Under no circumstances should a family be granted a transfer without some confirmation of capacity for that student at another school. For questions or assistance in securing a new placement for a student, please contact the Manager of Student Membership & Access.
4. Once a transfer has been granted, an ASD Withdrawal Form should be completed and the family should be issued a copy of the Transfer Request Form. Both ASD and SCS schools have been instructed not to register transfer students without the proper, signed withdrawal documentation.

5. Please scan and email copies of the completed Transfer Request Form and Exit Interview Summary to [enrollment@tnasd.org](mailto:enrollment@tnasd.org). ASD schools should also maintain a hard copy of all three transfer/withdrawal forms for their records.

Additional considerations for students receiving special services: Further processes exist to ensure both the ASD and LEA appropriately serve families of students with disabilities or special needs.

### **Transfers Out - Administrative Placements**

In the event that a certain school cannot meet a student's special needs, the ASD may recommend an administrative placement at another school, either inside or outside of the district. Additionally, families may raise special education related issues through the process outlined in the ASD's Parent Grievance Policy. These special education management structures exist to proactively resolve issues and solve problems before a family requests a voluntary transfer out of an ASD school.

The Office of the Deputy Superintendent must be notified when a school receives a voluntary transfer request from a family of a student currently receiving special education services OR if a family's transfer request cites not receiving special education services as rationale. Those individuals, or their designees, should attend the family's transfer request meeting/exit interview with the school's principal. If necessary, an investigation will be conducted to determine whether the school followed ASD special education policies and protocol.

The student should continue to attend the ASD school until the transfer is complete. If the family affirms the decision to seek a transfer after completing an exit interview, the school's office staff should issue an ASD withdrawal form.

### **Transfer Request Process**

In the event that a family voluntarily requests to transfer their student to another school, the following process should be followed:

1. The student's legal parent or guardian must contact the student's school at least 48 hours prior to withdrawal to discuss the transfer request. Students can only withdraw through the main office and must be done in person by the legal parent or guardian.
2. Students must return all textbooks and library books to the school before a request for withdrawal can be completed. If these items are missing, the parent will be asked to pay the replacement cost before final documents are released.
3. Parents are required to submit the name and address of the transferring school at the time of withdrawal.
4. Parents are encouraged to allow students to complete all major assessments before processing a withdrawal request.
5. The principal or designee will contact the family to arrange a meeting to discuss the transfer within 5 school days of receiving a completed Transfer Request Form for all transfer reasons other than moving/relocation. The exit interview ensures that the family has been adequately informed of options and that the ASD understands and documents the family's reasons for requesting a transfer. The principal or designee should discuss available school options with the family.

## ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS

Aspire Public Schools (APS) believes that only through daily participation in classroom activities can students succeed and progress in their academic and social growth. Research has shown that students with good attendance also perform well in school. Good attendance also includes punctuality. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance.

### Absences and Excuses

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused. Excused absences, which require documentation to protect parents in the event of a truancy hearing, shall include:

1. Illness or hospitalization of the student (*A physician's certificate may be required if such absences are frequent.*) If the illness or the hospitalization is to exceed ten (10) consecutive days, the parent/guardian should apply for homebound instruction.
2. Serious illness within the student's immediate family that requires the temporary help of the student
3. When the student is officially representing the school in a school sponsored activity
4. Death in the family (*Please provide a copy of the obituary or letter from the funeral home.*)
5. Special and recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of their faith
6. Validated court appearances of the student (*must have student's name on the summons*)
7. Circumstances, which in the judgement of the principal, create emergencies over which the student has no control
8. If a student's parent, custodian or other person with legal custody or control of the student is a member of the United States armed forces, including a member of a state national guard or a reserve component called to federal active duty, a public school principal shall give the student:
  - (1) An excused absence for one (1) day when the member is deployed;
  - (2) An excused absence for one (1) day when the service member returns from deployment; and excused absences for up to ten (10) days for visitation when the member is granted rest and recuperation leave and is stationed out of the country. The parent/guardian must provide documentation as proof of his/her parent's/guardian deployment.

### Procedure for Returning to School After an Absence

Written documentation from a parent or guardian **MUST** be submitted to the school's office describing the absence within **three (3) days of the student's return**. If the submitted documentation does not meet the criteria as listed in the Absences and Excuses section, it will be considered unexcused.

When a student is absent three (3) consecutive days, a doctor's note is required in order for the absences to be excused. A maximum of six parent notes will be accepted per semester.

All absences beyond that will require a doctor's note. If your child is going to be absent due to a medical illness please notify your child's teacher and the front office so we can get medical documentation from the child's physician.

The school is required to keep on file a note provided from the parent/guardian for every student absence. The note must be legible and should contain the following:

- Full name of the student

- Date(s) or time of absence
- Specific reason for absence
- Telephone numbers where parent/guardian may be reached (home, cell, work)
- Signature of parent or guardian

Make-up Work

The student is excused for the day(s) of absences, not the material covered in his/her class. Therefore, it is the student’s responsibility to request make-up work in all subject matter covered during his/her absence. Please see your child’s teacher to coordinate make-up work.

Students who are absent from school for any of the excused reasons stated under the excused absence section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests. Upon satisfactory completion, the student shall be given full credit for completed work. Local school procedures will guide, pursuant to the regulations of Aspire Public Schools, what assignments the student shall make-up and in what period of time the student shall complete such assignments. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the absence.

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled state mandated tests will be allowed to take the required test in the allowed testing window.

Excessive Absences

Any student who has been absent from school (excused or unexcused) for 10% or more of the total days of attendance for that school year may be required to provide an official medical or judicial verification in order to excuse an absence even if the future absences technically fall under other excused absence definitions. Students with such an excess of absences will be notified in writing of the official verification requirement. Furthermore, retention in the grade will be considered when a student has been absent from accumulated 10% or more of the total days of attendance for that school year.

Attendance and Assignments to Alternative Education Program

In the ASD, attendance is mandatory for students who have been expelled and remanded to attend alternative education programs.

**Aspire Public Schools Unexcused Attendance Policy Procedures 2015-2016 School Year**

<u>Unexcused Absences</u>	<u>Consequences</u>	<u>Parent’s Responsibility</u>
3	A warning letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian informing them of the truancy laws and consequences of noncompliance.	Adhere to the warning We recommend parents reach out to their child’s school for support if needed.
5	An official truancy letter will be mailed home to informing families of the consequences for failing to comply with compulsory state attendance laws and requesting their presence at a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) Meeting with school officials.  The SART is designed to identify the causes of the	Attend and participate in the Student Attendance Review Team (SART) Meeting with school officials at your child’s school.

	unexcused absences in order to bring the parent/guardian and student in compliance with the attendance laws. An Attendance Improvement Plan will be developed.	
7	A third official letter will be mailed home from the ASD informing them of the consequences for failing to comply with the compulsory attendance laws	Follow directives from the Achievement School District
8	A fourth official truancy letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian informing them of the consequences for failing to comply with the compulsory attendance laws for the state of Tennessee.  The parent/guardian will be required to attend a mandatory Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) Hearing with the truancy hearing official. An Attendance Contract will be developed.	Attend and participate in the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) Hearing with the truancy hearing officer and representative from the school.
10 or more	Follow up phone call from Student Attendance Review Board and/or referral to Shelby County Juvenile Court	Follow the directives from Shelby County Juvenile Court.

### **General Tardiness**

Any student who arrives to school after the opening-school bell has rung or the official start of the school day, yet less than 30 minutes into the instructional school day, will be considered “tardy.” Once the school day has begun, students who are not present and actively engaged in the learning activities at the start of a class period and/or when the opening class bell has rung are also considered “tardy.”

If tardy, a student should enter the school’s office and obtain a tardy slip to be given to the homeroom teacher. The school shall use any necessary interventions to promote regular and timely attendance to school and class.

### Tardies Over 30 Minutes

Every 5 unexcused tardies over 30 minutes equals 1 unexcused absence, and shall be subject to the same truancy rules and regulations stated above.

### Early Dismissal

Students are expected to stay in school until the end of the day. Early pickups are disruptive to the learning environment and require the teacher to stop teaching in order to release a student. Therefore, when an early dismissal cannot be avoided, an Aspire staff member will enter the classroom to get your child during a transition in the class. That may mean that a parent may need to wait in designated waiting area for up to 15 minutes until the class has reached a transition time. No early dismissals will be allowed one (1) hour prior to the school’s dismissal time.

You, as well as those listed on your child’s emergency card, must present a license when requesting to take your child out of school early. Likewise, when you call ahead and grant permission for an alternate person to take your child home, you must provide the front office personnel with your child’s birthdate and the alternative person will need to show a license upon arrival.

## **Attendance Compulsory Laws**

T.C.A. 49-6-3001- School Age-(c) (1) Every parent, guardian or other person residing within this state having control or charge or any child or children between six (6) years of age and seventeen (17) years of age, both inclusive, shall cause such child or children to attend public or non-public school, and in event of failure to do so, shall be subject to the penalties hereinafter provided. (The courts have rules that the word “inclusive” requires a child to attend school until the day before his/her eighteenth birthday.)

T.C.A. 49-6-3007-Attendance and truancy reports-(e) (1) It is the duty of the principal or teacher of every public, private or parochial school to report promptly to the superintendent, or to the superintendent’s designated representative, the names of all children who have withdrawn from school, or who have been absent five (5) days (this means an aggregate of five (5) days during the school year and not necessarily five (5) consecutive days) without adequate excuse. Each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences by a student shall also be reported.

T.C.A. 49-6-3009- Penalty for Violations- (a) Any parent, guardian or other person who has control of a child, or children, and who violates the provisions of this part commits a Class C misdemeanor. (b) Each day’s unlawful absence constitutes a separate offense.

T.C.A. 40-35-111-Terms of Imprisonment or Fines-(3) Class C misdemeanor, not greater than thirty (30) days or a fine not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute.

## **Driver’s License or Permit (T.C.A. § 49-6-3017)**

Aspire Public Schools will adhere to the state of Tennessee guidelines regarding attendance and driving privileges when applicable

In order to obtain a driver’s license or permit to drive in Tennessee, the Department of Safety requires each person between the ages fifteen (15) and seventeen (17) inclusive to:

1. Obtain a Certificate of Compulsory Attendance, and
2. Pass a Driver’s Education class or have a learner’s permit (for at least three months)

The Certificate of Compulsory Attendance is provided by the school to students who meet the legal requirements of compulsory attendance, in addition to currently passing three (3) full unit subjects or the equivalency. To maintain the driver’s permit or certificate, the student must continue to meet the legal requirement of compulsory attendance and the academic requirement of currently passing three (3) full unit subjects or the equivalency. (T.C.A. §49-6-3017(c))

## **Motor Vehicle or Permit License Revocation**

Any student fifteen (15) years of age or older who becomes academically deficient or deficient in attendance shall be reported to the Department of Safety for motor vehicle or license revocation.

A student shall be deemed academically deficient if he/she has not received passing grades in at least three (3) full unit subjects or their equivalency at the end of semester grading.

A student shall be deemed deficient in attendance when he/she drops out of school or has ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) days total unexcused absences during a single semester. Suspensions shall be considered unexcused absences. A copy of the notice sent to the Department of Safety by

school personnel shall also be mailed to the student's parent or guardian.

## **Dismissal and Pick Up**

### Late Pick-Up Policy

Student safety is the highest priority of Aspire Public Schools. Therefore, we make every effort to ensure that all students are under appropriate supervision until they return to their parent/guardian at the end of the school day. For this reason, we are concerned about students who are left after dismissal time or who are brought back to school because no one is there to meet the school bus.

When children are returned to school or not picked up within 30 minutes after school is dismissed, the child's parent or guardian will be contacted by school administrator. If parent contact is not successful, schools have discretion to contact local law enforcement if needed. Students who are frequently picked up late from school will be referred to local law enforcement and/or Tennessee Department of Children Services. If you would like options for after-school care programs near your child's school, please contact the school office for assistance.

### Changing Your Child's Dismissal Plan

It is crucial that we know ahead of time your child's dismissal plan. This should be done at the time of registration by completing the Dismissal and Transportation Clearance Form. In order to change your child's mode of afternoon transportation, you must either send with your child a written statement of the change or call the office no later than 1:00pm. You must provide your child's name, child's date of birth along with the plans for change in transportation. Sending a letter is the preferred method of notification; transportation changes by phone should only be for emergency situations. **Please avoid calling the office to make transportation changes after 1:00PM.**

## STUDENT SERVICES & SUPPORTS

### Student Transportation

The ASD is authorized to provide transportation services to and from school at no cost for eligible students. The provision of such services, although not required for students other than those receiving special education services as determined by a child's individualized education program (IEP), is provided as a service to the general population in accordance with applicable federal and State laws. Regardless of circumstance, students with IEPs requiring transportation services remain eligible for such services after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of suspension. Criteria for bus ridership eligibility for the general population are determined by the ASD. Student use of transportation provided by the ASD is a privilege and continued eligibility to use the transportation services provided may be suspended and/or revoked for violation of applicable policies and rules.

#### Eligibility

The following resident students are eligible for transportation on school buses:

1. To and from a Student's Zoned School
  - a. All students enrolled in elementary schools who reside one and one-half (1 ½) miles or more from their zoned/assigned school
  - b. All students enrolled in middle or high schools who reside two (2) miles or more from their zoned/assigned school
  - c. Students receiving special education services who have a current IEP indicating a need for special transportation services, regardless of distance
  - d. Students living within the designated miles for their assigned schools with a 504 plan that indicates a need for student transportation as verified by a physician (a completed Student Information Form must be on file at the school).
  - e. Students who reside in an area where traffic or other conditions make walking to and from school hazardous. Hazardous areas, as determined annually by an analysis conducted by the office responsible for student transportation services, shall be based on the following conditions:
    - i. Age of student
    - ii. Traffic volume and/or speed
    - iii. Roadway design/walkway conditions (i.e. curvy roads, sidewalks, ditches)
    - iv. Railroad tracks and crossings
    - v. River or waterway crossings
    - vi. Other conditions as deemed appropriate
2. To and From a School of Choice (any ASD neighborhood school or charter)
  - a. Parents/students electing to attend an ASD School not in their attendance zone, but are zoned to a "Priority School" (a school in the bottom 5% in the state of TN), can do so. However, parents shall be responsible for their child's transportation to and from the School of Choice (unless transportation is already being provided).
  - b. School of Choice transportation is defined as a student getting to a bus stop on an existing bus route where the bus, having room for the student, is already scheduled to go to a designated school(s). Students attending a School of Choice may be

transported by the bus, as tag-along transportation, upon completion of the district's School Choice transportation request form annually, and under the following conditions:

- i. The student can get to an existing bus stop by the established pick up time for a bus already going to the School of Choice;
  - ii. This School of Choice transportation would not cause a student overload on the bus or otherwise result in any additional cost to the district;
  - iii. This School of Choice transportation is merely a courtesy based on the aforementioned conditions. If any of these conditions change, tag-along transportation shall automatically terminate. The District will attempt to provide two (2) weeks' notice to parents prior to such termination when possible;
  - iv. The District's School of Choice transportation request form shall state that the School of Choice transportation is merely a courtesy and a privilege, subject to termination if any of the above conditions change
3. To and from an ASD "new start" Charter School
- a. Students enrolled in any ASD "new start" charter school where transportation is offered and students are able to get to an existing bus stop on an existing bus route
    - i. The provision for transportation is not an obligation for ASD "new start" charter schools and is based on each charter school's discretion and financial ability
4. To and From School-Sponsored Activities
- a. All students belonging to a class or activity group for which a field trip has been scheduled and for which transportation is to be provided, paid for, and approved by each school

The following adults are eligible for transportation on school buses:

- School employees in the line of duty and designated chaperones. This includes, but is not limited to drivers, driver trainees, bus monitors, mechanics, the Transportation Director;
- Director of Operations and/or other administrators when observing, supervising or acting as chaperones;
- Teachers when supervising or chaperoning student groups; and parents or other adults when authorized as chaperones of a student group.

#### Homeless Transportation Procedures

By federal law, students who lose their homes shall continue in the building they attend for that entire school year. Transportation must be provided, within reason, if requested. Transportation should be from a temporary residence, shelter or transitional housing. Foster placement also qualifies under the law. Contact Aspire Public Schools' Regional Student Support Coordinator to begin the process who will then, in turn, notify the coordinator for transportation services to set up transportation. It is important to notify all parties involved of any changes to the family's housing status.

#### Alternative Education Transportation Procedures

When students are remanded to an alternative education school that is not within the ASD, the sending school should ensure transportation accommodations have been made.

The receiving alternative school and/or district may have transportation services available, e.g., in the form of district school bus services with routes and schedules based on student addresses (elementary school) or bus passes through a local transit authority (middle and high schools). Access to those transportation services can be requested through the Manager of Student Access and Support Services. The manager will ensure the receiving school has the student information and arrange for transportation.

The sending school may also identify and make available other options for transportation services, including bus passes or parent transportation for middle and high schools.

## **Health Services**

### Immunization (T.C.A. § 49-6-5001)

No students entering school, including those entering pre-kindergarten, kindergarten or first grade, those from out-of-state and those from nonpublic schools, will be permitted to enroll (or attend) without proof of immunization. It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to have their children immunized and to provide such proof to the principal of the school which the student is to attend. A homeless child or youth should be enrolled immediately and have full and equal opportunity even if no records are currently available.

Proof of exceptions will be in writing and filed in the same manner as other immunization records. A list of transfer students shall be kept at each school throughout the school year in order that their records can be monitored by the Department of Health.

Students who do not comply with these requirements shall be excluded from school. If you have questions about your child's immunization record and/or admission status, please contact your child's school.

### Waiver of Immunization Requirements

Tennessee state law (T.C.A. §49-6-5001) provides waiver of immunization requirements under the following conditions.

1. Absent epidemic or threat of epidemic, parents may object in writing, when immunizations conflicts with the teachings and practice or a well recognized religious denomination to which the parents adhere. However, if an epidemic or threat of epidemic occurs, objections on the behalf of religious teaching are invalid.
2. Certification in writing from a physician stating that such immunization would be harmful to the child involved is provided to the school for the student's permanent file.

**\*Please contact the school nurse for questions related to exemption documentation requirements.**

### Communicable Disease

No student will be denied an education solely because of a communicable disease, and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to minimize the risk of transmitting the disease.

Parents or guardians of infected students shall inform appropriate school officials of the infection so that proper precautions for the protection of other students, employees, and the infected student shall be taken.

No student with a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals will enter or remain in the regular school setting. If a school principal has reason to believe a student has a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals in the regular school setting, the principal shall:

1. Assign the student to a setting which will protect other students, employees and the student himself; or
2. Exclude the student from school until certification is obtained from a physician or the County Health Department by either the parent or principal stating that the disease is no longer communicable.
3. If the superintendent/designee has reason to believe that the student has a long-term communicable disease, the principal requires confirmation from a physician or the County Health Department. If the student is confirmed to have a long-term communicable disease, the principal shall refer the student for special education services.

The superintendent/designee may request that further examinations be conducted by a physician or County Health Department and may request periodic re-examinations after the student has been readmitted to the school.

Expenses incurred from examinations requested by school officials shall be paid by the ASD. The names of all students excluded from school under this policy will be forwarded to the Office of the Superintendent.

#### Emergency Medical Care

All students must have an emergency information card filled out and signed by the parent or guardian at the beginning of each school year. The health information will enable Aspire to provide safe and appropriate health care if a child becomes ill or injured at school or on the bus. The information provided will be maintained confidentially and is limited to individuals within the school setting with a legitimate need to know. If you have any questions or would like to discuss specific health issues, please contact the school nurse.

#### Hospitalization

If a child has experienced hospitalization related to accident/injury, or chronic illness, parents are asked to notify the school nurse if accommodations are required. This will allow for smooth transition and seamless re-entry to school.

#### Medication in Schools

If, under exceptional circumstances, a child is required to receive medication during school hours and the parents cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the school nurse or the principal's designee will administer the medication in compliance with the regulations that follow:

1. General requirements - Only medicines which absolutely **MUST** be given during the school hours should be brought for dispensing at school. Please make arrangements for all other medicines to be given at home, either before or after school time. Most medications which need to be given one, two or three times a day, can be given during the hours outside of school hours. Your child's health care provider can give you guidance about whether or not a dosage schedule can be changed. All medication must be brought to the school by the parent or guardian. Under no circumstance shall a student bring the medication to school by himself/herself. All medication must be brought in its original container whether it is a prescription or non-prescription medication.
2. Over-the counter medicines- MAY NOT be given at school. Arrangements for exceptions

must be made with the principal and/or school nurse and will require documentation of necessity from your child's health care provider.

3. Bring only enough medication to school for a **TWO WEEK** period.
4. Original Containers- All medicines must be in their original containers and correctly labeled. Prescription medicines must have a pharmacy label or a label from the doctor's office or health care facility which includes the child's name, name of the medicine, strength of each unit of medicine, dosage amount, and time as well as the doctor's name. Over-the-counter medicines must be labeled with the child's name in a manner which does not cover up the original container label.
5. Parent & Physician Authorization- All medicines must have a Parent & Physician Authorization form completed, and the medicine container information must match the Parent Authorization. (A copy of this form can be obtained from the school nurse.)
6. Remaining Medication-Any remaining medication at the end of the school year should be picked up within five (5) business days. Remaining medications will be disposed of appropriately by the school.

#### Family Life Planning Curriculum (T.C.A. § 49-6-1301)

Tennessee requires schools residing in school districts with pregnancy rates above 19.5 per 1,000 females ages 15-17 to implement family life education. Because both Davidson County and Shelby County exceed this threshold, every ASD school provides an age-appropriate family life planning course that emphasizes abstinence until marriage and includes instructions for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. Parents and legal guardians have a right to examine the grade level instructional materials and confer with school leaders regarding any or all portions of family life. A parent or guardian who wishes to excuse a student from any, or all, portions of family life shall submit a request, in writing, to the student's principal. A student who is excused from any or all portions of family life shall not be penalized for grading purposes if the student satisfactorily performs alternative health lessons.

#### Hospitalization

If your child has experienced hospitalization related to accident/injury, or chronic illness, and requires accommodations, please notify the school nurse. This will allow for smooth transition and seamless re-entry to school.

#### **Special Populations (e.g. ELL, Homeless, Migrant)**

##### Student Study Teams (SSTs)

The Student Study Team is an efficient and effective way to bring together all resources, human and programmatic, to support students having difficulties in regular classes. This is a concentrated solution-seeking meeting where all the needed persons, including the student and parent, are present at the same time. The SST is an expression of the school's concern for students and provides a supportive atmosphere for students to become actively involved in determining their own needs and in implementing strategies designed to help them.

##### English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELL) are non-English language background students whose level of oral, reading, and written proficiency in English does not allow them to fully benefit from the curriculum and creates difficulty in regular classroom curriculum without specially designed modifications. ELL students have not yet met the definition of fluent English proficient (FEP). If the inability to understand, speak, read, or write the English language excludes a student from

effective participation in the educational programs offered by the school, the school shall take appropriate action to rectify the English language deficiency in order to provide the student equal access and participation in its programs.

The school shall develop and periodically update a local plan for providing ESL services for students whose native or dominant language is not English. The plan for implementation of appropriate instruction and ESL services for students who have limited English proficiency shall be in accordance with the current Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards of the State Board of Education, and state, and federal law.

#### Homeless and Migrant

Educational services will be provided for homeless or migrant students in accordance with local, state and federal guidelines (No Child Left Behind). Homeless students shall have equal access to the same free appropriate public education as provided to other students.

The McKinney-Vento Act (Section 725) defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds, or similar settings due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations);
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; or
- Unaccompanied youth, including youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, such as runaways and youth denied housing by their families.

The aforementioned youth have the following rights:

- The right to immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment (e.g., such as previous academic records, immunization records, proof of residency or other documentation);
- The right to attend 1) his/her school of origin, 2) last school attended, or 3) the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing, based on the parent’s request or views of an unaccompanied homeless student and where feasible to the District considering the best interests of the child;
- The right to receive transportation to his/her school of origin, if this is requested by the parent or District staff charged with assisting homeless students;
- The right to services comparable to those received by housed schoolmates, including transportation;
- The right to attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation based on a student’s status as homeless is strictly prohibited.

Aspire Public Schools ensures that homeless children and youth are provided equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth. For additional

information concerning services for homeless children and youth, please contact the Regional Student Support Coordinator.

### Social-Emotional Counseling Programs

This section provides general information about the counseling services at Aspire Public Schools. Please contact your school's counselor to determine specific protocols at your school site.

Social Emotional counseling is available on a limited basis through our counseling department. However, the scope of practice for a school counselor is much more limited than that of an outside therapy agency or provider. School counselors work with students on issues that are present during the school day, specifically working to ameliorate presenting problems' impact on a student's educational achievement. Counseling in the school setting is not meant to replace therapeutic interventions or treatment from outside agencies or providers for mental health concerns. Parents should not expect the level of counseling at a school site to be sufficient to support the needs of students with significant mental health issues. Additionally, counseling services are only available during regular school days and times.

Counseling services are not guaranteed for students. Additionally, Students referred for services will be placed on a waiting list until such time as the counseling staff has an opening. Students may be moved on the wait-list based on school discretion and applicable State and Federal laws. There is no charge for counseling support. As stated above, however, counseling resources are limited and counseling services are not guaranteed for every referral.

Counselors make every effort to pull students at times that are convenient for their students and are aligned with the academic needs of the student.

As stated above, counseling services are not guaranteed. Services may be ended for a variety of reasons and with reasonable notice to parents/students. In these instances, referrals can be given, but the responsibility to follow up on these referrals falls with the parent/student. Additionally, students who repeatedly miss counseling service appointments for any reason may be dropped from counseling services permanently.

### Counseling Referral Process

Student can be referred for counseling from a variety of avenues, but the primary referral source is through school systems such as the SST, RtI or Special Education process. These referrals take priority over other referral sources. Parent referrals, self-referrals, etc. are evaluated on a case by case basis and may not result in counseling services. In some instances, students referred to the counseling team will be referred out for services and it is the responsibility of the student/parent to follow up on these referrals. Each counseling team makes referral determinations on a variety of factors, including applicable state and federal laws.

### Referrals to Outside Resources

The counseling department maintains a list of outside agencies and resources to which parents and students can be referred for services as necessary. Parents who are interested in receiving this list should contact the school's counseling department or main office. This list reflects agencies and resources in the geographic area of the school and does not imply an endorsement of these agencies and/or resources by the school or Aspire Public Schools.

### Crisis

Social-emotional crisis includes, but is not limited to, times when a student discloses or expresses homicidal or suicidal ideation, desire to hurt self or others (including self- injury) and instances of child abuse. In these instances, Aspire Public Schools follow a crisis protocol that may end with a student being evaluated by county mental health or other crisis response agency. Aspire Public Schools will make every effort to contact parents during crisis as appropriate, but must follow crisis protocols to protect the safety of all students and staff. Please contact the Regional Student Support Coordinator if you have questions or concerns about crisis response.

### Consent and Confidentiality

Aspire Public Schools complies with state and federal laws around consent and confidentiality for counseling services. Please contact the school counselor if you have questions or concerns about consent for counseling and confidentiality of the counseling record.

### Child Abuse Reporting

Any teacher, or other staff member, who suspects that a student has been subjected to physical injuries, neglect, sexual abuse or emotional maltreatment, is mandated by the Child Abuse Reporting Law to notify the proper authorities. For additional information about Tennessee's child abuse reporting requirements for teachers and other school staff, please contact the school counselor.

### **Power Of Attorney For Childcare (T.C.A. § 34-6-302)**

Parents of a minor child may delegate to any adult person residing in the state of Tennessee temporary care-giving authority regarding a minor child when hardship prevents the parent(s) from caring for the child. Hardships identified are:

1. The serious illness or incarceration of a parent or legal guardian;
2. The physical or mental condition of the parent or legal guardian is such that care and supervision cannot be provided;
3. The loss or uninhabitability of the child's home as the result of a natural disaster.

When one of the above hardships is applicable, the custodial parent(s) and the caregiver must make an appointment to meet with the Regional Student Support Coordinator or designee in order to complete the application for Power of Attorney. Hardships not listed above should be referred to Juvenile Court to change the custody.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The ASD is the local education agency (LEA) for all students with disabilities (including students eligible for IEPs or 504s) geographically zoned to attend schools operated by the ASD. Partner Operators offer a full continuum of service options to meet the needs of all students. Unless otherwise required by a student's individualized education program (IEP), all students with disabilities may attend the same zoned school as her or his nondisabled peers, as the vast majority of special education needs can be met in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) at any ASD school. In situations where an IEP team (including the parent/guardian) decides a placement outside the ASD is in the best interest of the student, the home school remains responsible for monitoring the service provisions and IEP compliance for the student. Each school shall provide access to a free appropriate public education to all disabled children ages 3-21, inclusive, residing within the jurisdiction of the school system.

The plan for implementation of appropriate instruction and special education services shall be

in accordance with the current rules, regulations and minimum standards of the State Board of Education, and State, and federal law. Administrators, principals and teachers are responsible for providing an IEP or 504 Plan for each disabled student and for adhering to all components of this policy. Parents are responsible for becoming knowledgeable of their rights and participating in the IEP or 504 process.

#### Section 504 Protections

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1975 guarantees students with disabilities the right to equal education opportunities. In order to qualify as a protected student with a disability, the child must be school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation or access to an aspect of the school program. 504 services are separate from those provided to students in special education. For further information on the evaluation and provision of services under Section 504, please contact the principal at your school or the Regional Student Support Coordinator.

#### Referrals for Special Education

Referrals for special education and services may come from teachers, parents, agencies, appropriate professional persons, and from other members of the public. Special Education referrals will be coordinated with school site procedures for referral of students with needs that cannot be met with modifications of the regular instructional program, including referrals from student intervention teams, such as the Student Study Team (SST). A student shall be referred for special education and services after the resources of the regular education program have been considered and, where appropriate, utilized. As of July 1, 2014, in order for a student to be found eligible for Special Education services as a student with a specific learning disability (SLD), a student's response to intensive interventions in the general education setting must first be considered. Please contact the principal at your child's school or Regional Special Education Manager for more information.

#### Child Find

Aspire Public Schools works to identify, locate, and evaluate children and young people, from birth through 21 years of age, who may have disabilities and be in need of interventions, special education, or related services. If you know a child who may need special services, please contact the Regional Special Education Manager for more information.

#### External Placement

Schools are expected to develop Special Education programs within their school to support the needs of enrolled students. In the rare case, when a student's needs are so extreme that the school is not equipped to provide the most appropriate services, Aspire Public Schools may externally place, or partner with outside Service Providers (e.g., SCS, MNPS, or private providers) to provide appropriate services with the cost to be billed to the Operator.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### Grading System: K-8

Each K-8 school in the ASD has the autonomy to determine the appropriate grading system for that school. A school-wide reporting system is used and it specifies consistent grading and reporting throughout the entire school. Each school has also established a consistent procedure for determining the equivalency of a student's grades transferring from another LEA and/or ASD school. The schools' grading policies are public and accessible.

### Promotion and Retention (all grades)

A student shall be promoted to the next grade or course level upon demonstrating proficiency in the current grade or course level standards. The student's teacher and other school staff and leadership may participate in the decision to promote or retain a student. Special consideration for promotion and/or retention shall be given to students with special academic, social, and emotional needs. Social promotion is not a practice of the ASD.

Factors to be considered in the decision to promote or retain a student may include, but are not restricted to:

1. Report card grades;
2. Current knowledge and skill level, as determined by formal and informal assessments;
3. Readiness to learn the knowledge and skills required at the next grade or course level;
4. Record of previous intervention;
5. Number of absences;
6. Previous retention;
7. Student conduct that may impact academic performance;
8. Extenuating circumstances that may have adversely affected the student's participation in either the required instruction and/or assessments; and
9. Expected benefits and risks of promotion or retention for the student.

Students experiencing challenges meeting grade level expectations will be identified early in the school year. An intervention plan will be developed and implemented in consultation with the parent or guardian. A student's parent or guardian will be involved in any discussion about potential retention well in advance of a decision being made.

If a student is retained, s/he will continue in the same grade level or content area for another term or school year. The student who is retained will also receive an individual learning plan specifying the intervention(s) and support(s) necessary to meet grade level or content area standards.

### Retention of a Student With A Disability

Below are guidelines for operators and schools to consider when determining if a student with a disability will be retained:

1. Retention is a change of placement and must be an IEP team decision.
2. The IEP team should consider the student's growth on IEP goals and the student's performance levels on cognitive assessments.
3. IEP teams should also consider the question: Will another year in the same grade lead to the student's ability to gain further access to and/or excel in the general education curriculum?

If no, retention is likely not appropriate for the student. If yes, retention may be appropriate for the student.

Appeals

The parent or guardian has the right to appeal the school’s decision to promote or retain a student. If a parent or guardian of a student attending an ASD school is not satisfied with the school-level decision pertaining to retention or promotion, the parent may direct concerns to the appropriate person or department identified in the school’s internal grievance policy.

**Assessment**

Testing Programs

Each school and/or external operator shall provide for a school-wide testing program, including any ASD-required assessments. State-mandated student testing programs shall be undertaken in accordance with procedures published by the Tennessee Department of Education. Any test directly concerned with measuring student ability or achievement through individual or group psychological or sociometric tests shall not be administered by or with the knowledge of any employee of the system without first obtaining written consent of the parents or guardians.

Other tests may be administered as necessary as determined and approved by the school or as requested by students, teachers or parents when approved by the principal. Results of all group tests shall be recorded on the student’s permanent record and shall be made available to parents and appropriate personnel in accordance with established procedures.

Except for situations where the Tennessee General Assembly has specifically provided the right to opt out in the law, such as the family life curriculum, parents and/or students may not opt out of state mandated content or instructional programs, including assessments.

Required ASD Assessments

Students shall take a series of assessments as outlined in the table below. These assessments provide educators with diagnostic information to assist in adjusting instruction, strengthening student supports, and identifying key supports and interventions to boost student achievement and prepare all students for college and career success. The results of such assessments shall be analyzed, reported, and discussed to determine next steps to facilitate student learning.

ASD 2015-2016 ASSESSMENT CALENDAR\*

ASSESSMENT	GRADE	DATES		PURPOSE
<b>TNReady (ELA, Math) Traditional Schedule</b>	3-11	Part I	Feb. 8-March 1	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	April 18- May 6	
<b>TCAP Social Studies &amp; EOC US History Traditional Schedule</b>	3-11	Part I	Feb. 29-March 4	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	May 9-13	
<b>TCAP Science &amp; EOC Biology, Chemistry Traditional Schedule</b>	3-11	May 4 – 10		TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered on paper.
<b>TNReady (ELA, Math) &amp; EOC History High School Fall</b>	9-11	Part I	Nov. 2-20	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	Nov. 30-Dec. 18	

<b>Block</b>				
<b>EOC Biology, Chemistry High School Fall Block</b>	9-11	Dec. 7-11		TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered on paper.
<b>TNReady (ELA, Math) &amp; EOC History High School Spring Block</b>	9-11	Part I	April 11-26	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	April 25-May 13	
<b>EOC Biology, Chemistry High School Spring Block</b>	9-11	May 2-6		TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered on paper.
<b>ACT PLAN &amp; EXPLORE</b>	8, 10	Sep. 14-Nov. 6		TDOE Requirement: diagnostic assessment of college readiness in preparation for the ACT.
<b>ACT</b>	11	April 19		TDOE Requirement: national college readiness exam that measures high school achievement and is used in the college admissions process.
<b>ACCESS (ELL students)</b>	K-12	March 7-April 8		TDOE Requirement: assessment of English proficiency for students who are English Language Learners (ELL).
<b>NCSC &amp; Portfolio (students with severe cognitive disabilities)</b>	3-12	TBA		TDOE Requirement: assessment of Reading, Math, and Science relative to TN learning standards for students whose disabilities prevent them from accessing standard summative achievement tests.
<b>Lexile Assessment</b>	K-12	Fall: Aug. 17-Sep. 4 Winter: Nov. 16-Dec. 4 Spring: May 9-27		ASD Requirement: progress monitoring of student reading growth measure by the Lexile scale

\*This chart includes all district assessment windows across all grades and subjects. Certain grades and subjects may be tested at certain times. Schools will have more specific schedules.

ASD 2015-2016 ASSESSMENT CALENDAR: GRADES 3, 6, & 7

<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>DATES</b>		<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>TNReady Reading</b>	3, 6, 7	Part I	Feb. 24-March 1	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	April 25-29	
<b>TNReady Math</b>	3, 6, 7	Part I	Feb. 10-17	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	May 2-6	
<b>TCAP Social Studies</b>	3, 6, 7	Part I	Feb. 29-March 4	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	May 9-13	
<b>TCAP Science</b>	3, 6, 7	May 4-10		TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered on paper.

<b>ACCESS (ELL students)</b>	3, 6, 7	March 7-April 8	TDOE Requirement: assessment of English proficiency for students who are English Language Learners (ELL).
<b>NCSC &amp; Portfolio (students with severe cognitive disabilities)</b>	3, 6, 7	TBA	TDOE Requirement: assessment of Reading, Math, and Science relative to TN learning standards for students whose disabilities prevent them from accessing standard summative achievement tests.
<b>MAP Reading</b>	3, 6, 7	Fall: Aug. 17-Sep. 4 Winter: Nov. 16-Dec. 4 Spring: May 9-27	ASD Requirement: progress monitoring of student reading growth measure by the Lexile scale.

**ASD 2015-2016 ASSESSMENT CALENDAR: GRADES 4, 5, & 8**

<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>DATES</b>		<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>TNReady Reading</b>	4, 5, 8	Part I	Feb. 17-Feb. 23	TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered online.
		Part II	April 18-22	
<b>TNReady Math</b>	4, 5, 8	Part I	Feb. 8-12	
		Part II	April 25-29	
<b>TCAP Social Studies</b>	4, 5, 8	Part I	Feb. 29-March 4	
		Part II	May 9-13	
<b>TCAP Science</b>	4, 5, 8	May 4-10		TDOE Requirement: summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards. Administered on paper.
<b>ACT EXPLORE</b>	8	Sep. 14-Nov. 6		TDOE Requirement: diagnostic assessment of college readiness in preparation for the ACT.
<b>ACCESS (ELL students)</b>	4, 5, 8	March 7-April 8		TDOE Requirement: assessment of English proficiency for students who are English Language Learners (ELL).
<b>NCSC &amp; Portfolio (students with severe cognitive disabilities)</b>	4, 5, 8	TBA		TDOE Requirement: assessment of Reading, Math, and Science relative to TN learning standards for students whose disabilities prevent them from accessing standard summative achievement tests.
<b>MAP Reading</b>	4, 5, 8	Fall: Aug. 17-Sep. 4 Winter: Nov. 16-Dec. 4 Spring: May 9-27		ASD Requirement: progress monitoring of student reading growth measure by the Lexile scale

**ASD 2015-2016 ASSESSMENT CALENDAR: SCHOOLS WITH ONLY GRADES K-2**

<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>DATES</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>MAP Reading &amp; Math</b>	K-2	Fall: Aug. 17-Sep. 4 Winter: Nov. 16-Dec. 4 Spring: May 9-27	ASD Requirement: norm-referenced assessment of student Reading and Math performance and growth.

<b>ACCESS (ELL students)</b>	K-2	March 7-April 8	TDOE Requirement: assessment of English proficiency for students who are English Language Learners (ELL).
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EOC & TCAP Achievement Percentage of Final Student Grade

- Student scores on the TCAP tests will comprise **15%** of the student’s final grade for the spring semester in the subject areas of Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.
- Student scores on the EOC tests will comprise **25%** of the student’s final grade for the spring semester in the subject areas of Algebra I and II.

Local Test Security

Secure tests, including all test materials and test questions, are not to be reproduced in any manner. School personnel and proctors are not to disclose the contents of secure tests with each other or with students. In addition, excerpts from the tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in resource materials such as study guides.

Access to the test shall be limited to school personnel who have a legitimate need. Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use their access to testing materials for personal gain. Secure tests shall not be filed, copied, or used directly in instructional activities. Copying, reproducing, or paraphrasing test materials represent a breach of test security.

**Instructional Materials**

All instructional materials, including teacher’s manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any applicable (instructional) program shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of students.

Text Books

Students are responsible for all books issued to them. All textbooks are to be protected with sturdy book covers, no contact (adhesive) or other permanent book covers allowed. Students will be fined for unusual wear or damage to books.

Students will be charged a replacement fee for all lost books, including library books. Student grades, diplomas, and transcripts may be withheld from students and parents or guardians when a student has damaged, destroyed, or not returned loaned property of the school and restitution has not been made. The records are withheld from the student and parent guardian, but will not be withheld from a requesting school.

**Academic Integrity**

Aspire Public Schools believe in academic integrity. Students are expected to do their own homework, to test without external resources, and to submit original work for all assignments. Aspire students are expected to deny all requests to copy from their own work.

Consequences for Violating Academic Integrity

1. All test papers, quizzes, or assignments will be taken from the student(s) violating the policy.
2. A student found cheating may receive, at the discretion of the teacher, a grade of “F” or a zero

- for the test, quiz, or assignment. This may lower a quarter or semester grade substantially.
3. Parents will be notified and a parent conference will be arranged if the teacher deems it necessary.
  4. The Principal will be notified.
  5. An incident of cheating and or plagiarism will result in removal from the Honor Roll for that quarter.
  6. Repeated violations or a single serious violation may lead to more serious disciplinary actions.

## **CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT**

### Notice of Regulations

The Aspire Public School's administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies, rules and procedures. This handbook satisfies this requirement by describing expectation for student behavior, plans for managing student behavior and consequences for not adhering to expectations.

### **Prohibited Items**

**Cell Phones & Personal Communication Devices:** The increase in use of cell phones and personal communication devices by students during the school day has become far more than a distraction in the school environment. These devices are being used by students as a means of cheating on tests, taking inappropriate pictures and video of students and staff for sharing and posting across the internet, threatening and/or bullying other students, and engaging in an excessive amount of social interaction during instructional time. Therefore, **all students are banned from possessing any type of phone or personal communication device that is turned on or in visible/audible use at any time during the regular school day.**

Possession means being found in any article of clothing, purse, book bag, carry bag, or in any location on school property other than the approved storage location as written and approved by school administrators. Students who wish to carry a cell phone with them to and from school must have the cell phone in the off position and checked into the office daily.

A student found in unauthorized possession of any type of cell phone or communication device during the school day shall have the device taken from him or her and kept by the school principal or designee until the parent is notified. The parent may pick up the device at the time and location designated by the principal.

Any subsequent violation shall result in the device being taken from the student and retained until the close of the next school day following the day that the parent received notification or earlier at the principal's discretion. Thereafter, the parent may pick up the device by appointment. Moreover, for such subsequent violation of this policy, the student shall receive additional consequences in accordance with the school's discipline policy.

**Other Prohibited Items:** Students are not allowed to bring any games, toys, or trading cards to school for use during the school day (including break and lunch). MP3 players, personal handheld devices are also subject to be taken away. Prohibited items will be returned only to a parent guardian. Repeated offences will result in items being confiscated and not returned until the end of the year.

## **Dress Code**

Learning deserves an environment of respect and freedom from distraction. Aspire Board policy requires that all students enrolled in Aspire Public Schools comply with the school's uniform policy. Students who are out of uniform will be subject to disciplinary action.

- All uniforms should be marked with the student name.
- Uniforms (including shoes) are to be clean, maintained, appropriately sized, and worn as they are designed to be worn.
- The uniform reflects a positive pride in self and school. For safety reasons, students must wear close-toed shoes. No flip-flops or shoes with skates or roller blades are allowed. For the orderly and efficient operation of the school, the school administration may determine other attire to be inappropriate as situations arise.
- If there is a question as to whether an article of clothing is appropriate for school wear, the school administration should be contacted prior to wearing.

### Uniform Policy

The purpose of uniform dress at the school is:

- To focus students on school as a professional workplace
- To focus students away from clothing as a competition
- To symbolize our united effort on the road to college
- To develop and enhance a sense of school pride
- To enhance school safety

Outer garments must be appropriate for the comfort and normal activities of students while in school. All items must be worn in traditional and appropriate fashion. A top must cover a student's cleavage and midriff. Bottoms must cover a student's hips and buttocks. All clothing must be worn in the student's appropriate size.

Clothing must be in good condition and cannot be bleached, stained, ripped, torn, frayed, etc. If a color or item of clothing becomes a safety issue or a distraction from learning, the student may be asked to remove the article, or substitute with something more appropriate. This includes accessories such as shoes, shoelaces, hats, scrunches, etc. We reserve the right to update the dress code as needed at any time and provide a copy to families, students, and staff.

### Footwear

Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity. For the orderly and efficient operation of the school, the school administration may determine other attire to be inappropriate as situations arise. If there is a question as to whether an article of clothing is appropriate for school wear, the school administration should be contacted prior to wearing.

### Casual Free Dress Days

Casual Free Dress Days are determined by the specific Aspire School. In general "Casual Dress" means non-uniform. Dress may be casual, but should still adhere to the Dress Code policy and reflect personal and school pride. Clothing should be neat, clean, un-torn, and appropriate for school. Any student in non-uniform must ensure that the choice of dress covers at least as much of the body as would the uniform. Each Aspire school may have additional policies about standards for "Casual Dress" and will inform parents in writing of additional requirements to this handbook.

Students wishing to remain in uniform on non-uniform days may do so. Students whose clothing is inappropriate will be sent home for the remainder of the day. The administration reserves the right to determine which clothing is inappropriate.

## **Harassment Policy**

Aspire Public Schools supports and provides for a learning environment that is free from any type of harassment, bullying, intimidation, or cyberbullying. Harassment of any student or staff member by another student or staff member is prohibited. This type of misconduct is prohibited and students and staff member who engage in any of the aforementioned are subject to disciplinary action. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner.

### Definition of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying or Cyberbullying (T.C.A. 49-6-1015)

Tennessee law defines “harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying” as acts that substantially interfere with a student’s educational benefits, educational opportunities, or educational performance, and:

1. If the act takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop, the act has the effect of:
  - a. Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property
  - b. Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student’s property;
  - c. Causing emotional stress to a student or students;
  - d. Creating a hostile educational environment
- Or**
2. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, it is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment or a school environment that is hostile or intimidating because of the individual’s race, creed, color, national origin, physical disability, or sex. Harassment can occur any time during school hours or during school related activities. It includes, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:

### Cyber-Bullying

Any bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, personal digital assistants (PDAs), computers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and web sites. This includes social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Kik Messenger, ooVoo, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Vine, Burn Note, Snapchat, Whisper, Yik Tak.

### Verbal Harassment

Any written, verbal language or physical gesture directed at a staff member or student that is insolent, demeaning, abusive, implicitly or explicitly implied as a threat of bodily harm is totally unacceptable and shall be deemed harassment and will be dealt with as such.

### Physical Harassment

Unwanted physical touching, contact, assault deliberately impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement.

### Sexual Harassment

Includes unwelcome sexual advances and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when any or all of the following occurs:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's academic status or progress
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis of academic decisions affecting the individual
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

### Non-Discriminatory

Aspire Public Schools and the ASD does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or disability in its educational program, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Inquiries, complaints, or grievances should be referred to the Regional Student Support Coordinator, 3210 Raleigh-Millington Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38128, (901) 598-1579 and the ASD's Office of the Deputy Superintendent, 477 South Main Street, 4th Floor, Memphis, Tennessee 38103, (901) 260-9659.

### Reporting Harassment

Alleged victims of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or their parents or guardians shall report these incidents immediately to the principal or principal's designee. Any reports made to staff should be forwarded to the principal or principal's designee immediately but no later than 24 hours of the expressed concern. Anonymous reports may be made, however, disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report. Anonymous reports may be made, however disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report.

Any complaints of harassment, intimidation or bullying should include the following information:

- Identify of the alleged victim and the person accused;
- Location, date, time and circumstances surrounding alleged incident;
- Description of what happened;
- Identify of witnesses; and
- Any other evidence available.

### Retaliation Prohibited

There will be no retaliation against any person who reports harassment, intimidation bullying or cyberbullying or participates in an investigation. However, false accusations accusing another person of having committed an act is prohibited. The consequences for a person falsely accusing another person may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

### Responsibility of the School

It is the responsibility of the school to:

1. Implement this policy through regular meetings with all staff, ensuring that they understand

- the policy and its importance;
2. Make all staff, students, and parents aware of this policy and the commitment of the school toward its strict enforcement;
  3. Remain watchful for conditions that create or may lead to a hostile or offensive school environment;
  4. Establish practices designed to create a school environment free from discrimination, intimidation, or harassment.

#### Responsibility of the Student

It is the responsibility of the student to:

1. Conduct herself himself in a manner which contributes to a positive school environment;
2. Avoid any activity that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating, or harassing;
3. Consider immediately informing anyone harassing him her that the behavior is offensive and unwelcome;
4. Report all incidents of discrimination or harassment to the principal;
5. If informed he she is perceived as engaging in discriminatory, intimidating, harassing or unwelcome conduct, to discontinue that conduct immediately.

#### Unsafe School Choice

The ASD provides school transfer options to any student who attends a persistently dangerous school, or any student who has been the victim of a violent crime while at school.

#### **Safety Before and After School**

For the safety of students, parents or guardians are not to drop students off, nor are students to arrive at school prior to 30 minutes before the start of school, unless the student is involved in a regular school activity, meeting, or community program. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to arrange to have their student leave or be picked up right after school, unless the student is involved in a regular school activity, meeting, or community program or is staying at the request of school personnel. In case of emergency, all students should go directly to the school office at any time before or after school.

Students who cannot comply with these requirements are placing all those at the school at risk by disregarding our safety considerations. Students placing themselves or others at risk by violating the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT & EXPECTATIONS**

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. Discipline includes, but is not limited to, advising and conferring with students, conferring with parents/ guardians, detention during and after school hours, use of alternative educational environments, alternatives to suspension, suspension and expulsion.

### **Behavior Expectation Guidelines**

Students must remember that they are responsible for their own actions and will have to abide by the consequences, both positive and negative, of those actions. Students will be held accountable for their behavior in school and during any school sponsored activity. Staff will be responsible for positive reinforcement, consistency, and modeling appropriate behavior. Students will learn to be effective decision makers and problem solvers who demonstrate elements of self-direction, responsibility, and self-discipline. This entire process is built on respect with every adult and student viewed as a person with dignity and worth as an individual.

Each school will be a safe and orderly place for our students to receive a quality education. Students, parents, and school staff must share equal responsibility for creating the best possible educational setting. Open, honest communication with students, parents, and school staff is the best way to achieve this goal.

In order to reach the goals and objectives of this school, students are expected to:

1. BE RESPONSIBLE, TO BE RESPECTFUL, AND TO BE SAFE by carrying yourself with respect and showing respect to others.
2. ABIDE by all Federal, State, County, and City Laws.
3. ABSTAIN from the possession, use or being under the influence of drugs (illegal or prescription) or alcohol.
4. REFRAIN from the possessing or using of tobacco products or cigarettes.
5. DESIST from the possession or use of firearms, weapons, explosives, fireworks, or any other item capable of harming any person or property (or any items that could create the impression of such harm).
6. KEEP AWAY from gang related activities, such as “throwing signs” and group intimidation or gang affiliation.
7. MAINTAIN A PEACEFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT by avoiding fighting, horsing around, hitting, loud noise, or threats towards any person.
8. PROTECT SCHOOL PROPERTY by not wasting, damaging, defacing, or destroying any school property or property belonging to another person. Graffiti is prohibited. Don't destroy or write on school buildings, grounds, or property.
9. RESPECT THE LEARNING SPACE by not littering on school property and keeping food, drinks, and gum out of classrooms and hallways. Eat only in approved areas and have only water in classrooms.
10. DESIST from carrying beeper devices, music devices, and cell phones.
11. FOLLOW ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES contained in the Student Family Handbook and as developed by the Advisory School Council.

12. FOLLOW RULES that apply to specific classes and subjects. These rules will be made known to students and parents, in writing, at the beginning of the school year.

#### School-wide Expectations for Student Success

Each school has adopted common rules that apply across all classrooms and at all times. These common rules are:

1. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS OF ALL STAFF AT ALL TIMES.
2. LOOK PROFESSIONAL AT ALL TIMES: No sagging, headwear, sunglasses, hoods, or hoodies.
3. USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE: No teasing, bullying, profanity, or insults.
4. KEEP HANDS, FEET, AND OBJECTS TO YOURSELF: No provoking or fighting.
5. BE PROUD AND TAKE CARE OF THE SCHOOL AND OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY: No littering, gum chewing, or defacing of property. Eat only in approved areas and have only water in classrooms.

#### Closed Campus

Each school is a closed campus. All students are required to remain on school grounds during the regularly scheduled school day, including lunch period. It is unlawful for anyone to take a student away from school during the regular school day without parent guardian permission and notification of the School Office.

#### Searches

A student's attire, personal property, vehicle or school property, including books, desks and school lockers, may be searched by a principal or a principal designee who has reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal items or illegally obtained items. These may include illegal substances, drug paraphernalia, weapons or other objects or substances which may be injurious to the student or to others. **Illegally possessed items shall be confiscated and may be turned over to the police. Student found using or in possession of controlled substances will be recommended for expulsion.**

#### Corporal Punishment

No Aspire Public Schools or contractor shall engage in corporal punishment, condone its use, or seek permission from another (including a parent) to administer it. Some examples of corporal punishment include, but are not limited to:

- Shoving, striking, grabbing, shaking or hitting a student
- Throwing objects at a student
- Directing others to engage in any of the activities above.

There may be times when an ASD employee may need to use physical contact with a student. This should only be done for reasons of self-defense or defense of another. Any action done for these reasons must be:

- Proportional to the student's conduct; and
- The most restrained means available to control the situation

Reporting to physical contact to protect oneself or another and/or regain/maintain order must be a last resort after all other reasonable means have been exhausted. Restraint and/or isolation of special education students are governed by relevant TN state law. Each situation will be reviewed by Aspire Public Schools.

### Safe Restraint and Relocation of Students

Employees who are directly responsible for a student's education or who otherwise interact within the scope of their assigned duties may relocate a student from the student's present location to another location when such relocation is necessary for the student's safety or the safety of others, or intervene in a physical altercation between two (2) or more students to end the altercation by relocating the student. Such employees may use reasonable force to physically relocate the student or intervene in a conflict if the student is unwilling to cooperate with the employee's instructions.

If an employee is unable to resolve the matter with the use of a reasonable or justifiable force are required, the student shall be allowed to remain in place until such a time as local law enforcement officers or school resource officers can be summoned to relocate the student or take the student into custody until such a time as a parent or guardian can retrieve the student.

In the event that physical relocation becomes necessary, the teacher shall immediately file a brief report of the incident with the building principal. If the student's behavior constitutes a violation of Aspire Public Schools and the ASD's zero-tolerance policy then the report shall be placed in the student's permanent record. Otherwise the report shall be kept in the student's discipline record, and not become a part of the student's permanent record.

The superintendent/designee shall create procedures to implement this policy, consistent with State Law. Each building administrator shall fully support the authority of the employees' authority under this policy, and fully implement the policy and procedures of the system.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Each student is expected to behave in a manner that exemplifies dedication, discipline, desire, honesty, loyalty and respect. Students will be held responsible and accountable for behavior that conveys these principles. Proper behavior is expected at all school-sponsored activities both during and after the regular school day. The ASD believes it is the role of educators to teach students proper behavior and to work with students who make poor decisions so they can become equipped to be college and career-ready adults. Students who consistently or repeatedly fail to uphold the ASD standards of conduct and behavior, however, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

For this policy, "suspension" means the removal of a student from the student's regular school program for up to 10 school days. This suspension may be in or out of school. "Expulsion" means removed from the student's regular school or removed from school attendance for 11 or more consecutive days.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion. Students who come to school during the term of their suspension or expulsion may result in further disciplinary action.

### **Suspension Process**

#### In-School Suspension Procedure

1. Students shall be assigned to the I.S.S. program by the principal or his/her designee.
2. After a student has been assigned to I.S.S. the principal or his/her designee will notify parents.

3. The regular teachers of students assigned to the I.S.S. program will supply class work for each day the student is assigned.
4. The I.S.S. teacher will check the work assigned and return to the regular teacher for evaluation.
5. At the discretion of the principal, early exit from the I.S.S. program may be granted for first offenders.
6. The early exit opportunity may not be allowed in the case of a repeat offender.
7. Students may be assigned I.S.S. on a repeated basis in any given school year.

### Suspension

Suspension is the temporary removal of a student from the student's regular school program for up to ten (10) days.

### Authority to Suspend

Any principal, assistant principal, dean, or principal designee of any public school is authorized to suspend a pupil from attendance at the school, including its sponsored activities, or from riding a school bus, for good and sufficient reasons. Good and sufficient reasons for suspension include, but are not limited to, the actions listed below in the "Grounds for Suspension" section of this handbook.

### Jurisdiction

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is 1) related to an Aspire school activity, 2) school attendance occurring at an Aspire school or at any other school, or 3) at an Aspire school's sponsored event.

### Suspension Alternatives

The Aspire CEO, CEO Designee, Principal or Principal Designee may use their discretion to provide alternatives to suspension or expulsion, including, but not limited to, counseling and anger management programs for students subject to suspension or expulsion. An additional alternative may be community service on school grounds or, with written permission of the parent or guardian, off school grounds during the student's non-school hours.

### Procedures in Cases Requiring Suspension

In addition to the above list of serious violations, the Principal or designee has the authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five (5) school days to further investigate an incident or because of an emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety of students or staff.

1. Incident Investigation- The principal or principal's designee investigates the incident and determines whether or not it merits suspension.
2. Determination of Length of Suspension- The principal or principal's designee determines the appropriate length of the suspension in conjunction with local school policy and school-specific disciplinary management plans.
3. Legal Notifications-Prior to the suspension or expulsion of any student, the principal or designee shall notify appropriate law enforcement authorities of any student acts that may involve the possession or sale of narcotics or of a controlled substance or possession of weapons or firearms or aggravated assault against school personnel which may have violated Tennessee Code Annotated 49-6-3401. Upon reporting such an incident, the principal or principal's designee with secure a written copy of the police report or report number and a copy of that report shall be placed in the private student files.
4. Suspension Conference- Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the principal or principal's designee with the student and his or her parent

and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the principal.

5. Notice of Suspension- The principal or principal's designee must complete an Aspire Notice of Suspension form. The parent will be given written notice of the suspension using this form. The Aspire Notice of Suspension serves as written notification of the student's suspension and indicates the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the student may return to school. A copy of this form is stored in the OnCourse discipline system—suspension notices should not be placed in the student's cumulative file.
6. Credit During Suspension-A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the student makes up work missed during the period of suspension within the same number of school days the student was absent on suspension.
7. Behavior Improvement Plan- The principal or principal's designee shall develop and implement a behavior support plan for improving the behavior of any student who has been suspended for more than five (5) days.

#### Suspension of Students With Disabilities

Schools may discipline students with disabilities using in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. During in-school suspension, the school provides comparable services to the student's IEP and allows opportunities for the student to participate in his or her general curriculum.

Students with disabilities have special protections provided through law against unilateral suspension and expulsion. While certain levels of behavior are expected of special education students, disabling conditions may impact the student's amnesty. It is imperative that school personnel be aware of which students are classified as disabled under with IDEA or Section 504.

A student with a disability shall not be unilaterally removed from school for more than 10 days before a Manifestation Determination is convened to determine whether the student's offense was caused by his/her disability. When there is no relationship between a child's behavior and his/her disability, the student can be suspended or expelled according to normal school policy; however, educational services are continued to the extent required.

#### Suspending Students with Disabilities Protocol

1. Student has demonstrated some type of rule infraction.
2. A manifestation determination review (MDR) must be conducted within the first 10 days of the student's removal.
3. Parents must be notified at least 24 hours prior to the MDR.
4. IEP team meets and determines if the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability:
  - a. The IEP team reviews all relevant information supplied by the parents of the child, the child's IEP and placement and determines:
    - i. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability;
    - ii. or if the conduct in question was the direct result of the local education agency's failure to implement the IEP.
  - b. Is the student a danger to himself and/or others? If "Yes", reach an agreement with parents through the IEP Team meeting or seek an injunction from the federal district court.

- c. School personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability in cases where a child:
      - i. Carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or at a school function
      - ii. 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;
      - iii. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.
5. If the IEP team determines that the offense is a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may not be suspended.
  - a. The student could be placed in a setting which more appropriately accommodates his/her needs
  - b. The behavior problems should be addressed through the goals and objectives of the IEP and/or behavior plan
6. If the IEP team determines that the offense is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may be suspended. The school may suspend, but educational services must continue.

#### Appeals Process

A student or the student's parents guardians may appeal those disciplinary actions, other than expulsion, imposed upon a student for his her school related offenses.

- Appeals must be made first in writing at the school level, and should be directed to the principal. The principal or principal's designee will attempt to resolve the appeal with a written response within ten (10) school days.
- After appeal at the school level, if further appeal is desired, the appeal should be made to the Aspire Home Office and should be directed to the CEO or designee (Regional Student Support Coordinator) for resolution with a written response within fifteen (15) school days.
- After appeal at the Aspire administrative level, if further review is desired, the appeal may be forwarded to the Aspire Executive Committee for resolution with a written response within 20 school days.

If any appeal is denied, the parent may place a written rebuttal to the action in the student's file.

#### Legal Notifications

Prior to the suspension or expulsion of any student, the principal or designee shall notify appropriate city or county law enforcement authorities of any student acts of assault which may have violated Tennessee Law. Upon reporting such an incident, the principal or designee will secure a written copy of the police report and a copy of that report shall be placed in the private student files held separately from the cumulative file.

The principal or designee also shall notify appropriate city or county law enforcement authorities of any student acts that may involve the possession or sale of narcotics or of a controlled substance or possession of weapons or firearms in violation of Tennessee Law.

Within one school day after a student's suspension or expulsion, the principal or designee shall notify appropriate city or county law enforcement authorities, by telephone or other appropriate means, of any student acts which may violate TN Code, relating to the possession, use, offering or sale of controlled substances, alcohol or intoxicants of any kind.

When the Principal or other school official releases a student to a peace officer for the purpose of removing the student from the school premises (after the release), the Principal or other school official shall take immediate steps to notify the parent, guardian, or responsible relative of the student regarding the release of the minor to the officer, and regarding the place to where the minor is reportedly being taken. **Note:** The responsibility to notify the parent, guardian, or other responsible relative concerning the release of a student does not apply to the release of a student who has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse.

#### Student Conduct on Bus

In order to maintain conditions suitable for learning, no person shall enter onto a school bus except students assigned to that bus and authorized school/ personnel, unless otherwise provided by law. Parents of students are responsible for their child's supervision until the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day.

#### Suspension from the School Bus

A student receiving special education services shall not be suspended from school bus transportation if transportation services are required under the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

#### **Expulsion**

Public charter schools or schools operated by transformation partners in the ASD have their own expectations for students. In most cases, and unless otherwise specified in the charter or transformation agreement, their school policies will apply. However, in those cases in which a student is expelled from a charter school or a school operated by a transformation partner, the expulsion procedure outlined below will apply.

Expulsion: Expulsion is the removal of a student from the student's regular school program for eleven (11) or more days. Expelled means removed from the student's regular school or removed from school attendance all together. Nothing in this code shall be constructed to prohibit the assignment of expelled students to an alternative school. The ASD superintendent may modify expulsions on a case-by-case basis.

#### Serious Infractions of the ASD Standards of Conduct and Behavior

In order to assure a safe and secure learning environment free of drugs, violence, and dangerous weapons, any student who engages in the following "Zero Tolerance" behaviors may be subject to expulsion for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year.

1. Unauthorized possession of a firearm on a school bus, on school property or to any school event or activity
2. Being under the influence of a drug; or possessing a drug, drug paraphernalia
3. Committing **aggravated assault** of a "teacher, principal, administrator, and other employee of an LEA or school resource office

The following behaviors are also considered serious infractions and may lead to immediate suspension and/or expulsion.

1. Violence or threatened violence against the person or property of any personnel or any student attending or assigned to any school;
2. Possession of a pistol, gun or firearm on school property;
3. Possession of a knife or other weapons, etc., as defined in T.C.A. § 39-6-170, on

- school property;
- 4. Willful or malicious damage to the theft of real or personal property of the school or the property of any person attending or assigned to the school;
- 5. Unlawful use or possession of barbitol or legend drugs as defined in T.C.A. § 53-10-101;
- 6. Unlawful use or possession of alcohol;
- 7. The sale or distribution of drugs and alcohol;
- 8. Assault or battery on school employees; (includes physical/explicit verbal assault)
- 9. Willful and persistent violation of the rules of the school or truancy (with prior unsuccessful interventions)

Expulsion of Students in Pre-K Through Third Grade

Students in grades Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> may not be expelled/remanded to alternative education except for the following reasons:

- 1. Unauthorized possession of a firearm;
- 2. Possession or use of illegal drugs;
- 3. Committed aggravated assault against a student, teacher, principal, administrator, or any other employee of an LEA or school resources officer as defined in T.C.A.39-13-102;
- 4. Sexual offenses against another student that include sexual assault including aggravated sexual assault; or
- 5. Bringing and possession of explosive items such as a bomb, grenade, etc.

When determining whether an aggravated assault has occurred as defined in T.C.A. §39-13-102, the ASD defines “serious bodily harm” as injury to another student that requires immediate medical assistance and/or intervention. Examples would include bleeding, unconsciousness, or broken bones.

Expulsion Process

If Aspire Public Schools finds the most serious disciplinary consequences-expulsion from school to be required for a student, it should follow the steps below before applying an expulsion:

- A. Prerequisites to Expulsion:  
Prior to expelling a student, the Principal or designee must hold an informal conference with the student to:
  - 1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her;
  - 2. Allow the student to relate his/her version of the incident;
  - 3. Give the student a short-term suspension (5 days); and
  - 4. Notify the student and parent/guardian that the case is pending review for expulsion.
  - 5. If the Principal or designee determines the student’s conduct warrants expulsion, the person must send the case before the hearing panel.
- B. Hearing Panel:  
The Hearing Panel reviews the case, including supporting documents and witnesses. The Hearing Panel makes a determination to apply an expulsion or recommend a different response. The decision shall specify:
  - 1. Recommendation of expulsion and the length of the expulsion, if any OR the recommendation of a different response, if necessary
- C. Notification of Parents/Guardians:  
Following the expulsion hearing, the Regional Student Support Coordinator or designee will

notify the student and the student's parents/guardians within 24 hours in delivery of the hearing panel decision. The notification shall specify:

1. The effective date and length of the expulsion, if any OR the recommendation of a different response, if necessary;
2. The reason for the expulsion
3. Information about the parent's right to appeal the expulsion decision to the Office of the Superintendent.
4. Referral of the parent to the ASD's Alternative Education Coordinator in the Office of Portfolio Management, who will partner with the parent to assign the student to an alternative school, for which attendance is mandatory for the duration of the expulsion.
5. When expulsion is not recommended, the procedures for re-admittance to school.

D. Notification of ASD Office of Portfolio Management-Student Access and Services:

Following the expulsion hearing, the Regional Student Support Coordinator or designee will notify the ASD Office of Portfolio Management-Student Access and Services within 24 hours in delivery of the hearing panel decision. The notification shall specify:

1. All required submission components as specified in the ASD's Expulsion Protocol

E. Appeal to a Disciplinary Hearing Authority Appointed by the Superintendent:

Appeals of expulsions shall be heard by a disciplinary hearing authority, consisting of members appointed by the Superintendent. Each appeal shall be heard by a hearing authority with at least one licensed employee of the ASD or one of its authorized schools. The hearing shall be audio recorded.

1. The Superintendent or designee shall give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the parent or guardian, the student and the principal or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall also notify the parties that:
  - a. The notice shall include the reasons for the expulsion and state the same student rights as provided for suspension hearings, above.
  - b. The hearing will be held within 10 days of the beginning of the expulsion.
  - c. The hearing authority may affirm the decision of the school, or order removal of the expulsion unconditionally or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable.

F. Appeal to the ASD Superintendent or Designee:

The student or his/her parents/guardians may appeal the Disciplinary Hearing Authority's decision. The appeal process is as follows:

1. Parents may request a review by the ASD Superintendent by notifying him in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the date of receipt of the decision by the Disciplinary Hearing Authority.
2. The ASD Superintendent will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing.
3. The ASD Superintendent or designee will notify the student and his or her parents/guardians of the decision, in writing, within five (5) school days of the request for a hearing.

All expulsion appeals must be filed, orally or in writing, within five (5) days after receipt of the notice and may be filed by the parent or guardian, the student or any person holding a teaching license who is employed by the ASD or an ASD authorized charter or transformation operator if requested by the student. The notice shall also state that failure to timely request an appeal constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

## **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### School-Home Communication

At school we depend on our parents and guardians to work as our partners in supporting their children's education. It is always best to first contact your child's teacher to address any concerns which you may have. All staff at Aspire can be reached by email and phone provided by the school site.

### **Visitor Policy**

Guests are welcome! However, any visitor entering the school grounds must register in the Office, identify the nature of their business, and present a photo identification verifying the identity of the visitor. The identification will be scanned into the visitor management system. This system requires that all visitors provide a valid Tennessee driver's license or other state authorized identification which will be scanned and cross referenced with a nationwide sex offender data base. After verification, the visitor will receive a Visitor's Pass.

The principal or his/her designee has the authority to exclude from the school premises any persons disrupting the educational programs in the classroom or in the school, disturbing the staff or student on the premises, or on the premises for the purpose of committing an illegal act.

### School on Lock Down

When the school is on lock down due to a security or weather-related issue, the first priority is the safety of staff and students. Parents or other visitors to the building must follow the school emergency procedures under the direction of the principal or principal's designee until the lock down is lifted.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are integral to the success of Aspire Public Schools. In addition to the visitor policy, all volunteers must have the following before volunteering at a school site:

- A negative TB test on file in the school office within the past six months
- Department of Justice/Background Check The results of the background check are **confidential** and will not be discussed with other staff members and or parents.

Volunteer drivers must have the following prior to transporting a child in their vehicle:

- The driver must have a valid Tennessee Driver's License.
- The parent or adult driver must have a current "**Driver's Liability Insurance Statement**" on file in the school office with the following minimum coverage: \$100,000 per person, \$300,000 per occurrence, \$50,000 property damage (100 300 50).
- Vehicles for transporting children must be in a safe and operable condition. The number of passengers in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts. Cars with passenger

- side air bags **cannot** have a student occupying that space.
- Children weighing less than 40 pounds must ride in a car seat with seat belt.
- Drivers must have clear driving records. Drivers who have been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony drunk driving will not be authorized to drive students. Drivers cited with more than one moving violation within the past year will not be authorized to drive students.
- The sponsoring program will pay tolls and admissions. No mileage will be paid to parents.

### Family Effort Hours

Participating in your child's education and developing a strong relationship between the home and school environment is very important to Aspire Public Schools. Each family is expected to contribute at least 30 hours of volunteer time to help each child to become successful and prepared to earn a college degree. Some examples of activities include including attending Back to School Night, Saturday School, Advisory School Council Meetings, etc.

### **Surveys of Students**

Aspire Public Schools administers the following school surveys:

1. School Culture and Student Safety (*Required by the ASD, 3 times per year during the NWEA MAP assessment window*)
2. Parent Satisfaction/School Perception Survey (*Required by the ASD*)
  - a. Aspire has autonomy to vary survey content, but must include the following question: "Overall, what grade would you give this school? (choices- A, B, C, D, F)?"
3. Family Survey
  - b. Aspire gives this survey to understand family perception of teacher practice.

Surveys for research purposes shall be allowed by the ASD when the project is viewed as contributory to greater understanding of the teaching-learning process, the project does not violate the goals of the ASD and the disruption of the regular school program is minimal. All external party requests shall outline what is to be done, who is to be involved and how the results will be used and distributed. Aspire Public Schools shall develop administrative procedures for approving requests of external parties to conduct surveys that are consistent with the following requirements:

1. Parents shall have the right to inspect all instructional material that will be used for a survey, analysis or evaluation as part of a federal program.
2. No student may, without parental consent, take part in a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information covering:
  - a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
  - b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
  - c. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
  - d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  - e. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  - f. Legally privileged relationships;
  - g. Religious practices, affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent; and
  - h. Income.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

In the event of severe weather conditions or other emergencies, the ASD may be closed. Aspire Public Schools follows the decision of the Superintendent or his designee regarding school closings. To the fullest extent possible, the ASD attempts to coordinate Memphis school closures with Shelby County Schools. Parents/guardians should listen to the radio, watch local TV stations, or check the ASD's website and expect to be contacted directly to know the Superintendent's or his designee's decision for the particular day. In the event schools are closed due to inclement weather or other calamity, all extracurricular activities scheduled for those days will be canceled or postponed.

## **EXPANDED LEARNING & AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Aspire Public Schools' expanded learning program during afterschool hours provides our students with additional academic supports and access to enrichment activities such as music, art, sports, and other club extracurricular activities. Academic supports focus on English Language Arts and Math instruction for students performing below grade level, as well as daily homework assistance and college readiness supports for older students. Enrichment activities are designed to foster creativity, teamwork and physical activity, while reinforcing key academic skills and giving students opportunities to explore their interests and talents – and have fun.

### Alignment with the School Day

All aspects of our expanded learning programming are tightly aligned with the school day. Students are expected to follow Aspire Public Schools' student Code of Conduct and all school behavior rules and expectations apply during afterschool time. In addition, expanded learning program staff work closely with teachers to target instruction to meet your student's learning and development needs.

### Registration and Enrollment

The program is open to all students. However, funding limitations may restrict the number of students the program can serve. When more students wish to enroll than the program can accommodate, priority for enrollment will be given to students with greatest academic need based on assessment data along with teacher or administrator referrals. To join the program, students and families must complete a Registration Form. If accepted for enrollment, parents and students will be required to review the program's handbook and sign an enrollment contract.

Hours of Operation and Location: The program operates every day that school is in session from the time of school dismissal until 6:00pm, this includes all early release school days, student led conference days, and field trip days. The program does not operate on days when school is closed, such as staff development days, weekends, school breaks and summer. All students are offered a snack every day. All students must be picked up and leave campus no later than 6:00pm. Program activities take place primarily on-campus with occasional field trips and community service activities. In addition, students may be offered opportunities to participate in off-campus enrichment activities led by partner organizations. Separate permission forms will be requested for any off-campus activities.

Attendance: All students are expected to attend the full program each day, unless they have a permitted reason for early release (see Early Release Policy in the Program Handbook). Partial program attendance is not allowed as it interferes with our ability to deliver quality instruction and inhibits the ability of students to fully benefit from the program offerings. Full day attendance is also a requirement of our grant funding for the program.

Staff: Expanded Learning programs are run by Afterschool Directors. Our program staff includes college students and adults from our local community. All have met the state requirements for expanded learning staff. . We provide ongoing training to staff and encourage small group instruction and individual tutoring to ensure students get the support they need. In each classroom, we must maintain a student-staff ratio of 20:1 or lower.

Funding and Fees: The program is supported primarily by state grants that are specifically designated for afterschool programming. These grants determine the number of students we can serve and our hours of operation. In addition, we may charge a small monthly fee that allows us to maintain key program features and instructional quality at a time of diminishing state support for public education. Information about fee rates is available in the Program Handbook. Scholarships are available for families for whom payment of fees poses financial hardship. Scholarship Application Forms are available from the Afterschool Director or the School Office.

## **STUDENT INFORMATION GUIDELINES**

### **FERPA and Tennessee Law**

What is FERPA? FERPA stands for the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act administered by the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA guarantees certain rights to families with respect to their children's education records. Tennessee's laws regarding open records, contained in T.C.A. § 10-7-504, further refine the requirements for handling student records and information.

What are education records? Education records include anything that contains information directly tied to a student (i.e. personally identifiable) and is maintained by a school or education organization. These records span formats and include both print and electronic information. The law distinguishes between "education records" and directory information.

What is directory information? Directory information includes things that would generally not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, such as name, address, photograph, and age. Directory information may not include things such as a student's social security number or grades. Schools are required to notify parents of what information they designate as directory information.

If appropriately designated, directory information can be disclosed to anyone. However, parents must have the right to 'opt out' of having their child's information released. Tennessee law does not allow for schools to identify student achievement as directory information. Therefore, schools cannot post honor roll or other academic information without consent.

### Annual Notification

Under FERPA, a school must annually notify parents of their rights. The annual notification must include information regarding a parent's right to inspect and review his or her child's education records, the right to seek to amend the records, the right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain circumstances), and the right to file a complaint with the DoE regarding an alleged failure by a school to comply with FERPA.

FERPA exempts disclosure of records to school officials with a legitimate educational interest from parental consent. Therefore, the school must also notify parents of its definitions of the terms

“school official”, and “legitimate educational interest.” The annual notification may be published by various means, including any of the following: in a student handbook, at annual registration, in a letter/notice to parents, or on the school's website. Additionally, the ASD recommends schools include their directory information notice as part of the annual notice of FERPA rights.

### Parent Access

Under FERPA, a school must provide a parent with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her child's education records within 45 days following the receipt of a written request. A school is required to provide a parent with copies of education records, or make other arrangements if necessary (e.g. the parent cannot travel to the school to view the record.)

Under FERPA, a school is not required to provide information that is not routinely maintained or to create new education records in response to a parent's request. Accordingly, a school is not required to provide a parent with special updates on his or her child's progress in school unless such information already exists in an education record.

### Amendment

Under FERPA, a parent has the right to request that inaccurate or misleading information in his or her child's education records be amended. While a school is not required to amend education records, it must consider all requests. If the school decides not to amend a record in accordance with a parent's request, the school must inform the parent of his or her right to a hearing on the matter. If, as a result of the hearing, the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent has the right to insert a statement in the record setting forth his or her views. That statement must remain with the contested part of the student's record for as long as the record is maintained.

The FERPA amendment procedure exists to challenge facts that are inaccurately recorded. It may not be used to challenge a grade, an opinion, or a substantive decision made by a school about a student. FERPA was intended to require that schools keep fair records, not to override the standards and procedures for making academic assessments, disciplinary rulings, or placement determinations.

### Confidentiality

Under FERPA, a school cannot disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education records unless the student's parent has provided written consent. However, there are a few important exceptions to that rule:

1. FERPA allows "school officials," including teachers, within a school to access personally identifiable information contained in education records provided the school has determined that they have "legitimate educational interest" in the information. School officials can include: teachers, administrators, support staff, nurse/health staff, etc. As mentioned previously, a school must define both “school officials” and what it deems “legitimate educational interest” in its annual notification to parents. A school official generally has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities.
2. Another exception permits a school to disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education records, without consent, to another school or district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. The sending school may make the disclosure if it has included a statement that it forwards education records in such circumstances in its annual notification of FERPA rights.
3. For students who are in state custody (including foster care), the Tennessee Department

of Children's Services may access a student's educational records without parental consent, and school districts are not required to notify the parents of the child before releasing the information pursuant to a court order.

4. Authorized school officials may release or permit access to a student's education record, without consent, in the following circumstances. School or district officials will make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent(s) or the eligible student before making a disclosure:
  - a. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - b. To comply with the requirements of child abuse reports to the extent known by the school officials including the name, address, and age of the child; the name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, and the facts requiring the report;
  - c. When certain federal and state officials need information in order to audit or enforce legal conditions related to federally-supported education programs in the school system;
  - d. When the school system has entered into a contract or written agreement for an organization to conduct scientific research on the system's behalf to develop tests or improve instruction, provided that the studies are conducted in a manner which will not permit the personal identification of students and their parents by individuals other than representatives of the organization and the information will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purpose for which the study was conducted;
  - e. To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions;
  - f. To financial institutions or government agencies that provide or may provide financial aid to a student in order to establish eligibility, to determine the amount of financial aid, to establish conditions for the receipt of financial aid, and to enforce financial aid agreements;
  - g. To make the needed disclosure in a health or safety emergency when warranted by the seriousness of the threat to the student or other persons, when the information is necessary and needed to meet the emergency, when time is an important and limiting factor, and when the persons to whom the information is to be disclosed are qualified and in a position to deal with the emergency;
  - h. To the Attorney General or his designee for official purposes related to the investigation or prosecution of an act of domestic or international terrorism. An educational agency that, in good faith, produces education records in accordance with an order issued under this Act shall not be liable to any person for that production;
  - i. To any agency caseworker or other representative of a state or local child welfare agency or tribal organization authorized to access the student's educational records when such agencies or organizations are legally responsible for the care and protection of the student.

The need to maintain confidentiality implies that records should be stored in a safe and secure location. Student records are kept in a locked file cabinet or another location with equivalent security.

#### **What If I Have Questions or Concerns?**

1. Consult the following resources:
  - a. FERPA General Guidance for Parents:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/parents.html>

- b. FERPA Revised Guidelines for State Educational Agencies and Local Educational Agencies: [http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/sealea\\_overview.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/sealea_overview.pdf)
2. Contact your child's school
3. Contact Aspire Public Schools Regional Student Support Coordinator
4. Contact the ASD's Office of the Deputy Superintendent

#### Complaint:

Families have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the ASD to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

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

#### Directory Information

The ASD may disclose "directory" information unless the parent/eligible student annually objects to such disclosure in writing to the Superintendent within two weeks of enrollment. Directory information includes: Name, address, phone number, date of birth, grade level, gender, participation in officially recognized activities, weight and height of athletes, dates of attendance and photographs.

#### Medical Information

Aspire Public Schools and the ASD may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

## **COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The Board of Directors of Aspire Public Schools ("Aspire") recognizes that Aspire is responsible for complying with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. Aspire shall follow uniform complaint procedures when addressing complaints alleging unlawful discrimination based on age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in any program or activity that receives or benefits from state financial assistance. Uniform complaint procedures shall also be used when addressing complaints alleging failure to comply with state and/or federal laws in adult education, consolidated categorical aid programs, migrant education, vocational education, child care and development programs, child nutrition programs, special education programs, federal school safety planning requirements and issues related to the imposition of pupil fees.

The Board acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. Discrimination complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts. This includes keeping the identity of the complainant confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation or proceedings, as determined by the CEO or designee on a case-by-case basis.

The CEO or CEO's designee shall ensure that employees designated to investigate complaints are knowledgeable about the laws and programs for which they are responsible. Such employees may

have access to legal counsel as determined by the CEO or CEO's designee.

The Board prohibits retaliation in any form for participating in complaint procedures, including but not limited to the filing of a complaint or the reporting of instances of discrimination. Such participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades or work assignments of the complainant.

The board recognizes that a neutral mediator can often suggest a compromise that is agreeable to all parties in a dispute. In accordance with uniform complaint procedures, whenever all parties to a complaint agree to try to resolve their problem through mediation, the CEO or CEO's designee shall initiate mediation. The CEO or CEO's designee shall ensure that mediation results are consistent with state and federal laws and regulations. This policy shall be disseminated annually to students, employees, parents or guardians of its students, school and district advisory committees, and other interested parties.

Aspire designates General Counsel as the compliance officer. The compliance officer shall receive and investigate complaints and ensure compliance with the law. A designee appointed by General Counsel may conduct the investigation.

#### Procedures

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints that allege that Aspire has violated Federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. Compliance officers shall maintain a record of each complaint as required.

- **Complaint:** A complaint shall be presented in writing by way of an Aspire Community Complaint Form and the complaint must be initiated no later than six (6) months from the date when the alleged discrimination occurred or when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, unless the CEO or CEO's designee grants an extension of time.
- **Mediation:** Within five (5) days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer or designee shall informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using non-binding mediation, and if the informal mediation does not resolve the problem within the parameters of the law, the compliance officer or designee shall proceed with his or her investigation of the complaint.

#### Investigation of Complaint

The compliance officer or designee shall hold an investigative meeting within ten (10) days of receiving the complaint or an unsuccessful attempt to informally mediate the complaint. The investigative meeting shall provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or his or her representative to repeat the complaint orally. The complainant and/or his or her representative shall have an opportunity to present information relevant to the complaint. Parties to the complaint may discuss the complaint and question each other or each other's witnesses.

#### Response/Resolution

An investigation shall be completed, resolved and decision rendered within sixty (60) days after receiving a request for direct intervention or an appeal request, unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of time. The complaint officer or designee shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the investigation and decision. The written report shall contain: Findings and disposition of the complaint; corrective actions (if any); rationale for such disposition; and procedures for initiating an appeal within fifteen (15) days of receiving the written report to

the ASD in Tennessee, as applicable. With regards to issues concerning pupil fees, if there is a finding of merit then a remedy shall be provided to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians, including reasonable efforts for full reimbursement.

#### Civil Law Remedies

Nothing in this policy precludes a complainant from pursuing available civil law remedies outside of Aspire's complaint procedures. Such remedies may include mediation centers, public/private interest attorneys, injunctions, restraining orders, etc. For discrimination complaints in California, however, a complainant must wait until sixty (60) days has elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the Tennessee Department of Education before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if Aspire has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of his or her right to file a complaint.

All forms may be mailed or delivered to:

Aspire Public Schools  
ATTN: Executive Director  
3210 Raleigh-Millington Road  
Memphis, TN 38128

Aspire reserves the right to modify locations for receipt of forms as necessary.



## COMPLAINT FORM

### Address

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### Telephone

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(Day)  
(Evening)

1 School site and person you are filing a complaint against:

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2 Has this been discussed with him/her? Y\_N \_\_\_\_ Date:

3 Has the complaint been discussed with the principal or supervisor? Y\_N \_\_\_\_ Date:

Description of Complaint: Please include all important information such as location, names, dates, who was present, and to whom it was reported. Please use additional paper if more space is needed.

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What remedy or action do you suggest?

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Signature

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Date

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Date received by Aspire Home Office

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## STUDENT FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Our signature below indicates that we have received a copy of the 2015-2016 Student Family Handbook and have or will read and understand the contents of this handbook which outlines policies and guidelines, including the attendance policy that pertains to my child's enrollment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade Level