



Parent Handbook

Bridges Public Charter School
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Welcome to Bridges Public Charter School. The Parent Handbook has been developed to inform you of the school's policies and procedures, answer questions about our educational program and inform you about parent participation opportunities and requirements. We invite all parents to become involved in the life of the school. If you have additional questions about the information found in this handbook please speak with

your child's teacher or the school's administration. At Bridges we believe schools are stronger learning communities when parents are active participants. Our goal is to have a collaborative relationship with all parents and we invite your questions and suggestions.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide an exemplary educational program that includes Students with special needs. Our developmentally appropriate, Student and family-centered educational approach nurtures students to expand their developmental skills, in order to build a foundation for lifelong learning.

Our Goals

Bridges, the name of our school, symbolizes an inclusive learning community that builds *bridges* of understanding, awareness and support by connecting students with a variety of abilities, needs, cultures and backgrounds. At Bridges we believe that including diverse learners in one school environment is beneficial to all of the students who have the opportunity to participate. It builds compassionate relationships among students, develops self-esteem in individuals, and develops the awareness that everyone has strengths and challenges.

The following are our primary goals:

- To provide students with a strong foundation for lifelong learning.
- To develop a nurturing, inclusive learning community that provides each student with a high quality education.
- To embrace the diversity of the students and families we serve.
- To work in partnership with families.
- To provide support and training for parents and the larger DC community.
- To serve as a training site for future teachers, social workers and related service providers.

Program Features

- Developmentally appropriate, individualized education:

Educational programs are tailored to meet each student's individual learning needs and developmental levels. In order to ensure education of the whole child, the academic and social emotional goals of the child are assessed and monitored.

- Transdisciplinary, family-centered approach:

Through transdisciplinary, family-centered planning and implementation of the educational program for children with special needs, students have increased opportunities to practice and learn developmental skills in home and school environments. Team planning fosters consistency and the continuity of learning opportunities, as well as promotes collaboration and peer training among staff members and families.

- Active, hands-on and inquiry-based curriculum:

Students learn from experience. Therefore, our classrooms are hands-on and academic studies are thematic and project-based. Students have daily opportunities to learn new skills through small group instruction, individual practice and whole group work.

- Student-centered learning:

Students actively participate in all aspects of planning, developing, and assessing their learning experiences. Teachers serve as facilitators, encouraging students to interact with peers, materials, and the environment in order to construct their own learning. With a small student to teacher ratio, teachers can consistently support each student's individualized learning.

Admission and Registration

Bridges Public Charter School is a free public school open to all District of Columbia residents.

Eligibility

Bridges is a preschool, pre-Kindergarten and elementary school. You are eligible to apply if:

- You reside in the District of Columbia.
- Your child is eligible to attend preschool if they will be 3 years old by September 31.
- Your child is eligible to attend pre-Kindergarten if they will be 4 years old by September 31.
- Your child is eligible to attend Kindergarten if they will be 5 years old by September 31.

Admission

Applications for admissions are accepted using the www.myschooldc.org on-line application and lottery process.

Registration

Preference in registration is given to 1) students who are already enrolled in the school and 2) siblings of children who are already enrolled in the school. The remaining spaces available are allocated through a random lottery.

Re-enrollment

Parents of current students wishing to attend Bridges Public Charter School for the following school year must complete a re-enrollment commitment form in March, followed by the enrollment forms required by OSSE by May 1. A reminder and the forms are sent to all families. The enrollment forms must be completed to secure your child's space for the following school year. There are 2 main steps to complete the enrollment of the student at Bridges PCS. First step is to complete the online enrollment form. The second step is to submit paper forms and required documentation to the school in person. If the school does NOT receive re-enrollment forms by the deadlines, your child will be withdrawn and the space offered to someone else on the waitlist.

Bridges PCS gives preference to siblings of enrolled students. Siblings only get this preference as long as the enrolled sibling continues to attend Bridges for the school year they are applying for. If the the sibling that was attending school withdraws, then their sibling will lose their preference for a space at the school.

Families who are re-enrolling into the school must provide the following information to complete the registration:

STEP 1 - Online Enrollment Form

1. You would receive an email that includes a 15 character Snapcode. You will not be able to complete the online enrollment form without this Snapcode.
2. After you have received the Snapcode, please begin filling out the online form by clicking this link: <https://secure.infosnap.com/family/gosnap.aspx?action=13676&culture=en>

STEP 2 - Paper Forms and Document Guidance

To confirm and complete the registration of the student at Bridges PCS please submit the following paper forms and required supporting documentation to the school in person. Find below the list of documents and paper forms to be submitted to the school:

- 1) DC Residency Verification Form & Supporting Documents
- 2) New students only - Records Release Form
- 3) New students only - If the student is enrolling in Bridges PCS after June 15th, please provide a Transfer / Withdrawal Form from previous school.
- 4) Health Insurance Policy card covering the student
- 5) Official Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization Form. This form has to only be completed by the primary legal guardian / parent.
- 6) District of Columbia Universal Health Certificate. This form has to be completed by the student's physician
- 7) District of Columbia Oral Health Assessment Form. This form has to be completed by the student's dentist

If there are any questions in regard to re-enrollment, please contact Daniel or Daniella by phone at (202) 545-0515 or send an email to enrollment@bridgespcs.org.



Attendance

Attendance Counts: Attend all day, every day, for the full day

Each student is expected to attend school every day for the entire school day unless there is an exceptional health or family reason that prevents their attendance. School begins at 8:20 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. On Fridays school ends at 1:00 p.m. After 8:45 a.m. a student is considered late to school. Students who have a doctor's note will be received at school up to 2:30 pm. Students who gave prior notice by phone call or email of tardy **arrival will be received up to 12:00 p.m.** without a doctor's notice. Students without a doctor's note or prior notice of tardy will not be received after 10 a.m.

Students should be picked up from school between 3:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. Monday - Thursday and between 1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. on Fridays. If a parent is going to arrive after the pick-up times, they must notify the front office. Students not picked up at the end of the school day will be held lobby until pick up by school staff. Parents / Guardians will be charged by the school one dollar per minute late pick-up fee for the student. Parents will receive a late fee invoice documenting dollar amount owed to the school for child care. Please be advised that not picking up your child from school is considered leaving a child unsupervised and can result in a referral to Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).

How do I report my child's absence:

Please report all absences to the front office staff as soon as the need for the absence is known. If we do not receive advance notice of an absence, we will call the students' parent/guardian to determine the reason for the absence. Please share notice of the absence preferably by 9:00 a.m. Otherwise, all notice of an absence must be given within 5 days of the student returning to school

Other Ways to Report an absence

All written notices should have the student's name, class, date of and reason for the absence. All absences are unexcused until a notice is given within 5 days of return. After 5 days of return without a notice the absence will be unexcused.

· Email the attendance line: attendance@bridgespcs.org

· Written notice submitted to the front office staff.

· The school can provide an attendance absence form at the front desk that can be completed to provide the documentation of the student's absence.

DC Law requires this written documentation of all absences from school.

An absence from school is considered unexcused until a written note or e-mail is submitted to the front office.

An absence is excused when a student (a) has a valid excuse and, (b) provides a written note from a parent/guardian or doctor within five (5) days of the absence. All excused notes are subject to monitoring and verification. Absences are only excused by the Principal or Assistant Principal.

The following are considered reasons for excused absences:

Student Illness

- Student **must** provide a doctor's note for absences over three consecutive (3) days
- Parents can provide a maximum of five (5) handwritten notes/emails/calls to excuse an absence due to illness if the student is too sick to attend school but does not necessarily require a doctor's visit.

- After five (5) handwritten notes are submitted, all other absences due to illness can only be excused with a doctor’s note. Otherwise the parent/guardian will be asked to meet with the Attendance Coordinator

Other examples of excused absences:

- Medical Appointments
- Students are expected to attend school before/after the appointment
- Religious holidays
- Death in the Family
- Family Emergency, such as house fire, flood, violence, proven utility outage, sudden illness of a family member
- Mandatory court appearance.
- Suspension or expulsion from school by an administrator
- Temporary closing of the school facility or suspension of classes due to severe weather or other conditions requiring the closing of the school facility or suspension of classes
- Other absences approved in advance by the Principal or Assistant Principal upon the written request of a parent/guardian
- Transportation provided by the school according to a student’s IEP not picking up a student.

If a valid written excuse is not provided within five (5) days of the absence, the absence may be considered unexcused.

Illness Excuse Requirements:

After an illness for three (3) days or more:

Students absent from school due to illness for 3 or more consecutive days must submit a doctor’s note verifying that the student has been cleared by a doctor and can return to school. Families are expected to schedule recreational activities and vacations during designated school breaks. A family vacation outside of school break time is not automatically an excused absence for a student.

If a parent disagrees with a decision made about whether an absence is excused or unexcused, they should request to meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal to address their concerns. If parent/guardian needs help in addressing challenges with attendance (i.e. transportation, sickness, etc.), they should request to meet the school’s Social Worker or Counselor.

When is an Absence Unexcused?

An absence is unexcused when a student fails to attend school without a valid excuse. The following are considered reasons for unexcused absences:

- Family Vacations within the school year
- Extended vacation before and after a school break
- Oversleeping
- Weather related concerns that did require school closing.
- Other absences may be deemed unexcused by the Principal or Assistant Principal, this list does not cover all issues or concerns.

Tardiness

Bridges PCS school arrival time is between 8:20 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. A student who arrives to school after 8:45 a.m. is tardy. Attendance and tardiness are recorded by each classroom shortly after the beginning of the school day.

If a student arrives **after 8:45 a.m.**, parents must sign their child in at the front desk in the tardy log. Students who are tardy miss important information and instructional time and disrupt the classroom’s schedule. If a student is repeatedly tardy, the following actions are taken:

Tardy Arrivals	Action Taken by the School
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Student arrives tardy, after 10:00 a.m.	School will not accept student for the school day <u>without prior notification about a tardy arrival past 10:00 a.m. With prior notification from parent about tardy arrival student will be accepted to school up until 12:00 p.m. (noon).</u>
Student arrives tardy five (5) days during the school year.	Attendance Coordinator monitors situation. Letter sent home to the family, reviewing the school's policies concerning tardy arrival, attendance and absences from school.
Student arrives tardy ten (10) times during the school year.	For 10 or more tardy arrivals, a letter is sent home requesting a family / school meeting to discuss attendance. Parent/guardian is advised that significant additional tardiness during the school year may be grounds for discontinuance from school the next academic year. A significant number of tardy arrivals may also be a factor in retention decisions. Problem-solving efforts and goal-setting is done by the family and school staff.
Student arrives late more than 20% of school days in the first three quarters of the year.	Arriving late for more than 20% of school days for the first three quarters of the year may be grounds for discontinuance from school the next academic year. A significant number of tardy arrivals may also be a factor in retention decisions.

Absences

Extensive absences from school negatively impact a student's learning and success in the school setting. Families are expected to schedule recreational activities and vacations during designated school breaks. Persistent absenteeism from school will result in the following actions being taken:

Absences	Action Taken by the School
For all absences	The classroom team will call parent/guardian for inquiry and support with attendance each time a student is absent from school. They will also review the attendance policies and protocols. The family will receive an automatic call from the school to notify you that your child was not in school today.
4 unexcused absences.	Front Office staff monitors situation. Letter is sent home to the family reviewing the school's policies concerning tardy arrival, attendance and absences from school.
After 3 consecutive unexcused absences from school.	Front Office staff will contact the family for inquiry and support around attendance. If absenteeism is due to illness, information must be shared with school so plans for providing school work to student can be made to maintain student's learning. <u>School requires medical documentation if a health problem is the cause of absenteeism prior to the student returning to school.</u> If Front desk staff cannot make contact with parent/guardian, the Attendance Coordinator will be notified and a meeting be completed.
5-9 unexcused absences	Attendance Coordinator will send a letter home requesting the parent/guardian to attend a meeting with the School' RTI (Response to Intervention) Team. Problem-solving efforts and goal-setting are done by the family and school staff. An attendance contract may be developed.

10 unexcused absences	Based on DC State Board of Education Truancy Policy, when a student reaches ten (10) unexcused absences, the school must make an immediate referral to Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). The referral by the school to CFSA must happen within two (2) days of the 10 th unexcused absence. Parents/guardians are advised that significant unexcused absences of 10 or more without adequate medical explanation may be grounds for discontinuance from school the next academic year. A significant number of absences may require that a student be retained. A letter is sent home requesting a family/school meeting to discuss attendance. Problem-solving efforts and goal-setting is done by the family and school staff. An attendance contract is completed outlining steps to be taken to support the student's everyday attendance.
10 consecutive unexcused absences	The family will receive an automatic home visit from the school counselor or Social Worker.
20 consecutive unexcused absences	Meeting will occur with family to review on-going attendance concern. Possible outcome may be the student being unenrolled from school. This will be with the exception for students who are identified as homeless.

Early Departure

Whenever a student must leave school during school hours, the parent/guardian must sign out the student in the Early Departure / Dismissal Log. Students should remain in class until the end of the school day. Students who are picked up early miss important information and instructional time and disrupt the classroom's schedule. If a student is repeatedly picked up early, the following actions will be taken:

Early Departure	Action Taken by the School
Student leaves early five (5) days in a quarter.	Teacher and Attendance Coordinator monitors situation. Letter is sent home to the family reviewing the school's policies concerning tardy arrival, attendance and absences from school.
Student leaves early more than ten (10) days in a quarter.	School requires medical documentation if a health problem is the cause of early departures from school. For more than ten (10) early departures in a quarter, a letter is sent home requesting a family / school meeting to discuss attendance. Parent/guardian is advised that significant additional early departure for three quarters may be grounds for discontinuance from school the next academic year. A significant number of early departures may also be a factor in retention decisions. Problem-solving efforts and goal-setting is done by the family and school staff.
Student leaves early more than 20% of school days in the first three quarter of the year.	Leaving early for more than 20% of school days for the first three quarters of the year may be grounds for discontinuance from school the next academic year. A significant number of tardy arrivals may also be a factor in retention decisions.

Parking when Dropping Off, Picking Up or Attending a Meeting

No onsite parking is available at school. When driving, please park your car in the neighborhood and walk to the building. Parking is available for parents of students with mobility needs. Please consult the Operations office for a designated parking pass. **The limited parking spaces at the school are assigned to the staff of Bridges PCS, Briya PCS, and Mary's Center.**



School Calendar

Please consult the Bridges Public Charter School's calendar for holidays, vacations, parent/teacher conferences days, and school closing due to teacher training. There is no school for students and no aftercare on teacher training days. The school calendar is available on the website or at the front desk.

Monthly Newsletters and Classroom Websites

Monthly Schoolwide and Classroom Newsletters

Bridges produces a monthly school newsletter that highlights upcoming events, activities and deadlines. The leaders from each instructional department will share an update regarding an instructional focus or upcoming event each month. As a parent within the Bridges PCS community, you will also receive a monthly Classroom Newsletter. The purpose of the Classroom Monthly Newsletter is to provide our families with information regarding the classroom curriculum and how to make connections at home with what your child is learning at school. All Classroom Monthly Newsletters will include the following information: Classroom Schedule, monthly instructional focus areas, classroom announcements (i.e. birthday party celebration day), upcoming events such as field trips, suggested resources for supporting your child at home and pictures of the classroom environment and/or student learning. We distribute the monthly whole-school newsletter via hard-copy and email.

Schoolwide and Classroom Websites

The Bridges PCS website can be located at the following web address: www.BridgesPCS.org and is consistently being updated with information. Information found on our website includes; the school's mission/philosophy of learning, history, Bridges PCS leadership team professional profiles and contact information, instructional and operational staff by name and email address, enrollment and registration information, before and aftercare information, and links to classroom web pages.

Each individual classroom has their own classroom web page. The purpose of the classroom web page is to provide families with information regarding the systems and routines within your child's classroom that primarily will remain the same throughout the school year. Information that can be found within the classroom web page includes: the names of the teaching team members, pictures and contact information, the monthly birthday celebration date, homework policies and routines, and the classroom schedule.



School Hours

Arrival for students begin at 8:20 am each day. On all days except Friday, the school day ends at 3:30 pm. On Friday the school day ends at 1:00 pm. **Students will only be released from school to adults authorized by the parent/guardian via the enrollment forms. The parent is responsible to keep this list accurate and up to date by notifying the front desk.**

Inclement Weather & Emergencies

Bridges PCS primarily follows the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) in opening late and/or closing due inclement weather and/or emergencies. This means if DCPS is open, Bridges is open; if DCPS is closed, Bridges is closed; if DCPS is delayed, Bridges is delayed.

It is important to note that on occasion, Bridges PCS will independently make a decision to close the school or implement a two-hour delay due to inclement weather and/or emergencies outside of the decision made by DCPS. When an independent decision is made, Bridges PCS will communicate this decision to families by posting the notice on the Bridges PCS website, sending out an email and calling all families using our automated robo call system. In order to ensure you receive all emergency communication from Bridges PCS, please make sure that the school has the most up to date contact information for your family including telephone number(s) and email addresses.

The school must have on file a current list of emergency contacts, in addition to parents/caregivers, who can be contacted by phone in case of emergency. Please notify the office when you have a change in address or telephone number.



Dress

Bridges requires students to dress appropriately for the weather and for learning activities. For PreK students, please send in two extra changes of clothes and dress your child comfortably and label all of his/her clothes with first and last name.

Students go outdoors for recess or neighborhood walks in most weather conditions. Extended indoor play is scheduled on days when there is extended rain, the temperature falls below 32 degrees (including the wind chill factor) or goes above 95F degrees (including the heat index). Classes may go for a walk when it is snowing in order to experience the unique weather of the season.

Please be sure that your child has clothing and outerwear that is appropriate for the season. Students should wear clothing and shoes that are appropriate for play, participation in art activities, and outdoor physical activity. Students are not permitted to participate in recess with flip flops for safety reasons.

Before and After School Care

Bridges Public Charter School offers before school care and after-school care through an outside organization. Before-school care is from 7:00 a.m. - 8:20 a.m. After-school care is from 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 pm on Monday to Thursday and from 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. on Friday. It is available on all school days for students but not available during vacations, Federal Holidays, or on teacher training days. Students will receive a healthy snack each day during after-school care. Extended day childcare service is offered until 6:30 p.m. each day at an extra cost. Please go to the school's website to get information about how to enroll and the cost using this information: www.bridgespcs.org. Direct Childcare contact: beyondthebasics@basicsaba.com or 202-290-7319

Hours

- Mornings: Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. - 8:20 a.m.
- Afternoons: Monday through Thursday 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Friday 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Extended Care: 6:00-6:30 p.m at an extra cost



Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast is available to all Bridges Public Charter School students free of charge. We also participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and Healthy Schools Act (HSA) provided by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). All qualifying families are invited to apply for free or reduced priced lunches and are encouraged to do so. Applications are available in July via the Back to School Packet and at the front desk beginning August 20, 2018. Applications are also available on our website. After submitting applications, parents will be notified within 5 business days in writing of eligibility status.

School lunch is available for purchase for those families who do not qualify for the Free and Reduced Meal Program but wish to participate in our lunch program. In order to ensure that we are able to accommodate all students for our lunch program, we ask parents enroll promptly and adhere to our payment policy requiring payment in advance. Lunch rates for SY 2018-19 are, lunch - \$3.41.

In order to meet our obligations to our meals vendor and maintain proper financial management, we have a strict policy on withdrawals from the lunch program. You must provide written notice at least two weeks before the end of the month to cancel meals for the upcoming month. No refunds are available. Should you decide to enroll in the lunch program at a later date, the same two-week notice will apply.

Students sit together for breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and for lunch each day in their classrooms. Menus for the month are posted on the website and lobby bulletin board. Breakfast is free to all students. Lunch is available to all students, and it is free for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Lunch is available for purchase for students who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch. Families may send lunch to school for

their child in lieu of the in-school lunch. Lunches cannot be placed in the microwave and must be packed ready to be consumed. To receive the meals for free, you must complete an application form for the National School Lunch Program, which the school can provide.

Students who wish to purchase lunch at the regular price must order meals in advance on a monthly basis. Meals provided by the school are ordered through Revolution Foods and dietary restrictions that can be accommodated include vegetarian, dairy-free, and/or gluten free.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint alleging discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call, toll free, (866) 632-9992 (Voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal Relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The District of Columbia Human Rights Act, approved December 13, 1977 (DC Law 2-38; DC Official Code § 2-1402.11(2006), as amended) prohibits discrimination on the basis of marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, familial status, source of income, place of residence or business, genetic information, matriculation, or political affiliation of any individual. To file a complaint alleging discrimination on one of these bases, please contact the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights at (202) 727-3545.

Junk Food Free School

We are a school that believes the research that shows all students function better and are happier and more attentive if they eat well. We provide a free healthy breakfast to all students and give students in after-school care a healthy snack. When packing your child's meals from home please do not send sweets, chips, donuts, cookies or soda.

Nut Free School

Bridges PCS is a nut free school. Several students have severe peanut and nut allergies. It is our policy to not allow students to share food that is sent from home and we ask all parents not use peanut butter and almond butter in their child's breakfast or lunch if they are sending food to school for their child to eat. There are alternative nut spreads that you can try - soy and sunbutter (sunflower seed butter). Otherwise please send other types of sandwiches for your child to eat.

Parties at School / Birthday Celebrations

Children love to celebrate their birthdays with their school friends. We encourage these celebrations. For birthday celebrations occurring outside of school, invitations should not be distributed within the school setting. We ask if more than five children from a classroom are invited, please host a party that can accommodate the entire class. Children feel awful when their friends come to school talking about a birthday party they were not invited to.

At Bridges we celebrate the birthday for students once a month for all students whose birthday occurs during that month. The birthday celebration occurs on the last Thursday of the month 12:30-12:50 pm in the classroom. Parents are invited to work together with the teacher to plan the celebration.

For birthday celebrations at school the following items may be served - fruit, fruit juice, baked goods/cake or ice cream. Candy, soda and goodie bags are not permitted. Celebrations are just the sharing of food and singing happy birthday to students. Only store bought foods are allowed at the birthday parties.



Health Issues

A health record is kept about your child and updated yearly. Health files are confidential and kept in a secured file in the nurse's suite. Bridges PCS complies with D.C. law that require physical, dental and immunization records to be updated yearly. All parents are required to submit completed health forms on an annual basis of documentation of immunization, and return these forms to school before the first day of school.

Parents/guardians should make every attempt to give medication to students before or after school. In order for the school to dispense any medications, we must receive a document authorizing the school to do so, signed by the treating physician. It is unlawful for minors to have medications, including aspirin, cough drops, topical ointments or any over the counter medications. The administration of any over the counter medication, including ointments, creams (including items listed above) will require a doctor's order.

Students with contagious conditions may not be at school. For your child's welfare and the protection of others, it is important to keep your child home if he or she has:

- A fever over 100 degrees during the past 24 hours
- A cold in the active stages
- A sore throat and/or swollen neck glands
- An undiagnosed rash or skin eruption
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Head lice or ringworm that has not been treated
- Pink eye

In order to rest and regain strength and to avoid getting other students sick, a student should be kept home an additional 24 hours after his/her fever breaks. Students absent from school due to illness for 3 or more day must submit a doctor's note verifying that they have been cleared by a doctor and can return to school.

If you find that your child has either head lice or ringworm, please notify the school immediately, so that preventive measures can be taken. Students with head lice must begin treatment in order for the student to return to school. The student must be seen by the school nurse before going to the classroom with proof of treatment. Students with ringworm must be seen by a physician and may not return to school until treatment has begun. Please provide the school with a doctor's note to verify the date of the doctor's visit and that treatment has begun.

If a student is diagnosed with head lice during the school day, the following sequence of events will occur:

- Authorized staff checks scalp of child and diagnosis the child with head lice
- Child is sent back to class
- Authorized staff checks the scalps for head lice for all students in the classroom
- Letter is sent home to parents informing parents of the incident of head lice
- Student(s) with diagnosis of head lice must be treated and show evidence that head lice was treated prior to returning to school.

If a child develops symptoms of a contagious illness or condition while at school (for example vomiting, diarrhea, suspected hand foot and mouth disease) the school nurse will notify a parent/guardian immediately. Parents/ guardians are expected to pick up their child within two hours of being notified that their child is sick with a contagious condition. The school nurse, Principal or Assistant Principal are the only persons who may send a student home due to an illness.

Parents who need to make contact with the school nurse or need medical records should do so at: nurse@bridgespcs.org

No Smoking and Drug Free Environment

Bridges Public Charter School is a non-smoking building and a drug free environment. Parents, students, and staff are prohibited from using any tobacco products, e-cigarettes or drugs in the building, on a school sponsored field trip or event and/or on the school grounds at any time.

Assessment and Report Cards

Assessments and Data Collection

Data is an essential component to the planning process when preparing intentionally designed lessons to best meet the needs of all of our students. Teachers use data to better understand the needs of their students. Data collection methods are outlined below and are implemented throughout the school year

Grade Level	Assessment Type/Name	Purpose
Pk3-5 th (Only for Students with IEPs)	Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)	It is a criterion-referenced assessment curriculum guide and skills tracking system designed specifically for children with autism and other individuals who demonstrate language delays. Scores are communicated to the Public Charter School Board when measuring academic growth for our students learning in our non-categorical classrooms. Since the VB-MAPP is a criterion-referenced assessment, this means that it measures how well an individual performs against an objective rather than another student. It provides a baseline assessment prior to intervention as well as opportunities for follow-up assessment periods, such as every 4 to 6 months. It allows us to see the progress of the student over time and identify areas of deficit and strength.
K-5 th	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT Literacy Assessment)	To demonstrate student academic progress in the area of literacy to the Public Charter School Board. The PPVT is given at the beginning and end of the school year.
K-2 nd	Test of Early Mathematics Ability (TEMA Math Assessment)	To demonstrate student academic progress in the area of math to the Public Charter School Board. The TEMA is given at the beginning and end of the school year.
2 nd -5 th	ANet Math & Literacy Assessment	The ANet assessment is given quarterly to assess student understanding of common core standards taught within the marking period. ANet data is NOT shared with the Public Charter School Board.
3 rd -5 th	PARCC State Assessment in Math and Reading	The PARCC State Assessment is given in the Spring. The PARCC assesses students' current performance, and pointing the way to what students need to learn to be ready for the next grade level and, by high school graduation, for college and/or a career. Student performance data is shared with the Public Charter School Board.

3 rd -5 th	Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)	Eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities will take the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA). This assessment is used to determine what a student knows and how well he or she can perform in core academic skill areas. Student performance data is shared with the Public Charter School Board.
K-5 th	F&P Reading Benchmark	This assessment is given at the end of each quarter to gain data on students reading level assessing both oral reading, fluency and comprehension abilities and needs.
K-5 th	Math Unit Assessments	Math Unit assessments are given at the end of each unit to assess student understand of the standards and teaching points taught within a particular unit. Math unit assessments are given throughout a marking period.
K-5 th	Show What You Know Weekly Formative Assessments in all content areas	This is a formative assessment given each week to assess student understanding of the teaching points taught within a 5 day period. Previously taught content may be included within this formative assessment to ensure students are retaining previously learned material as well as enrichment questions.

Bridges uses written progress reports and portfolios to document student’s work and development throughout the school year. Elementary report cards and Early Childhood progress reports are developed four times a year at the end of each quarter. Students with identified special needs also have an Individual Educational Program (IEP) that sets yearly learning and developmental goals for each area of concern within the IEP document. Parents are required to attend all parent/teacher conferences to review their child’s progress report with the classroom teacher.

Below you will find more detailed information regarding report cards, progress reports, IEP progress reports and parent teacher conferences.

Progress Reports & Report Cards

For students in Pre-K3 and Pre-K4, a Progress Report is written by teachers and shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences. The Progress Report profiles a child’s classroom performance based on assessment tools, anecdotal notes, the developmental checklist and their portfolio. The Progress Reports is in place of a traditional report card. Students in Elementary School receive a quarterly report card reviewing the student’s academic work in the areas of English Language Arts (reading and writing), Math, Social Studies, and Science.

For students in Kindergarten-5th Grade (both in a General Education Setting and Non-Categorical Setting), a report card is written by the teachers across all academic subjects as well as specials that include PE, Art and Music. The report card provides your child with a grade along a 1-4 scale.

Below is the scale:

Scale Number	Percentage
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1	0%-59%
2	60%-74%
3	75%-89%
4	90%-100%

The report card grade is composed of formative and summative assessments, along with additional teacher created assignments that all have the same weight of 30% towards the end of quarter grade. Each quarter, the students earns an end of the quarter grade. The fourth quarter is not a final grade but an end of the quarter grade. Homework is NOT graded.

Students within the Non-Categorical classroom may receive a score of an “M” which represents the word “Modified.” A score of an “M” is used to communicate the high level of modified support this student required when accessing the grade level curriculum. We believe that this notation of” M” for modified, paired with the report card comment, provides a better reflection to parents of the individualized program that students are receiving in the non-cat classrooms.

The report card comment outlines the standards taught within the quarter to provide parents with an understanding of the content their child has learned. The report card then describes the child’s present levels of performance within the subjects of math, reading and writing by explaining their areas of strengths as well as the areas where they need continued development and support. It is highly recommended to parents to have a Parent Teacher Conference each quarter in order to best understand the report card and your child’s learning needs.

Individual Educational Program (IEP) Progress Reports

For students with Individual Educational Programs (IEPs), progress reports are written four times a year to document the progress a child is making on her or his individual plan. In accordance with Federal Law and DC Special Education Regulations, IEPs are reviewed annually to determine ongoing need for support services and to develop annual goals.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

At the time of enrollment parents will be asked to complete a Home Language Survey to identify the primary language or languages spoken in the home.

The purpose of Bridges PCS’ English Language Learning (ELL) support program is to:

1. Develop the language and literacy skills of non-native English speakers.
2. Ensure access to the general education curriculum for students who are still developing cognitive academic language proficiency in English.

To achieve these goals the school identifies all students who speak a language other than English and assesses them to determine if they would benefit from ELL services. Students in Pre-K are assessed using the Pre-IPT and students in Kindergarten to 5th grade are assessed using the WIDA ACCESS. ELL Services consist of direct instruction, consultation with the general education teacher and professional development for staff. Bridges’ ELL teacher creates a language development support plan for each student and monitors the progress of students throughout the year. In accordance with the guidelines determined by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Bridges use the annual ACCESS test scores to track the progress of students’ language and literacy development over time.

Response To Intervention

Response To Intervention Team

The Response To Intervention Team (RTI) is a school-based committee that serves as an early warning system to help Bridges PCS identify students who would benefit from academic, behavioral or personal interventions (e.g. academically not on grade level, chronically absent or truant, at-risk for grade level retention, etc.).

The RTI . . .

- Is chaired by the ECE and Elementary Curriculum Coordinators. Other members of the RTI include general education teachers; the requesting teacher; parent; counselor; school nurse; department chairs; staff specialists (e.g. literacy/numeracy coaches); any District government agency or government funded agency providing services to a family; and school administrator.
- Examines student data (e.g. quizzes, student portfolio) to develop six-week intervention plans for individual students and/or groups of students with similar needs.
- Collaborates with city agencies, community groups and parents to provide services to students beyond the school day, if necessary.

Research shows that Response To Intervention process improves student achievement and reduce unnecessary referrals to special education.

Retention

It is the goal of Bridges PCS to ensure that students progress academically in a manner that is developmentally appropriate with their peers. We understand that grade retention is often not an appropriate solution for academic issues and will often lead to impacts that are detrimental to the long-term academic outcomes of students. **Students in grades K-5 will only be retained when they have a total of 35 or more days of unexcused absences.**

Child Find

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Bridges PCS is responsible for conducting continuous efforts intended to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years of age enrolled in Bridges PCS, including children with disabilities who are homeless, children who are in the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) or committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency (DYRS), children who are making progress grade to grade, and highly mobile children, who are in need of special education and related services. These duties are called Child Find responsibilities. This policy establishes procedures for fulfilling Child Find responsibilities at Bridges PCS, and applies to all children enrolled in Bridges PCS and all staff employed by Bridges PCS. Bridges PCS staff is expected to know and act in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by this policy. Bridges PCS trains staff on an annual basis to ensure staff understand and execute Child Find responsibilities.

Bridges PCS carries out the following activities to identify students who are suspected of having a disability:

1. **Instructional baselines established:** When the school year begins baseline testing is done to determine students' skill levels for the grade they are in, preschool - kindergarten. Based on this data, interventions are put in place to assist students who are not at grade level and struggling. If students are not responding to intervention, the Student Support Team (pre-referral team) is notified and the student participates in a more formal intervention and progress monitoring process. Following the period of intervention monitored by the SST if the students are showing no progress, students are referred to the MDT team for a full special education. The MDT team is led by the SPED Coordinator and moves forward with evaluation of students only with parental consent. The SPED Coordinator is a full time member of the staff and is available at all parent events to talk with families who might suspect their child has a disability.

2. **Training:** The school conducts training for the whole school staff concerning “What is Child Find” and what to do if a staff person has concerns about a student’s development and learning? The training outlines the resources in the building to make referrals to and get support of working with the student.
3. **Public Awareness:** The school conducts an annual public awareness campaign for parents that includes: Sharing of information at the start of the school year parent orientation sessions concerning how Bridges PCS PCS can help a family if they have concerns about their child’s development and learning. Distribution of Parent Handbook is done at the parent orientation sessions and the handbook is available on-line of the school’s website. The Parent Handbook outlines special education services and how to access services these services The school’s annual ChildFind Awareness month in January. The awareness campaign includes having a section in the whole school newsletter about ChildFind and the school wide distribution of pamphlets about ChildFind. Pamphlets are available at the front desk year round. Posters are also displayed during January to highlight that it is ChildFind month. All information that is distributed is in English and Spanish. All meetings with parents are held in English and Spanish.
4. **Coordinating with stakeholders:** Following a parent’s referral and consent for evaluation, Bridges PCS Special Education Coordinator will contact all necessary team members (i.e. parents, advocates, attorney, special education staff, therapists, outside clinicians) to prepare for the IEP meeting. All necessary documents that will be discussed during the meeting will be available for team members review prior to the meeting.
5. **Monitoring Progress:** Quarterly special education report cards document progress on IEP goals is how student progress is monitored throughout the year. Quarterly parent-teacher conferences may include special education staff to discuss student progress in meeting IEP goals. As appropriate, parent-child communication log are consistently used during the year to ensure parents are aware of their students’ progress in specialized instruction and related services. If there is concern regarding progress, an MDT meeting will be arranged to further plan for the student.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Parents are encouraged to speak with any Bridges PCS staff if they have concerns about their child. Parents and other stakeholders should contact one of the following Bridges PCS staff to discuss Child Find, the referral process, and the availability of special education programming at Bridges PCS:

Judith Dorvil
 Director of Student Support Services
 Services
Judith.Dorvil@Bridges_PCS.org
 (202) 545-0515 ext. 2071

Nathaniel Ho
 Assistant Director of Student Support
 Services
nho@Bridges_PCS.org
 (202) 545-0515

TARGET POPULATIONS

This policy and Bridges PCS Child Find efforts apply to children between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years of age enrolled in Bridges PCS, including children who are:

- Homeless;
- In the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency;

- Committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency;
- Making progress grade to grade; and
- Highly mobile children.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

To ensure the local and school communities are aware of the availability of special education and related services for eligible children with disabilities and the methods for requesting such services, Bridges PCS provides public notice through a variety of methods:

- Bridges PCS provides information to parents and the school community at school events such as parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, summer enrollment events, etc.;
- Bridges PCS publishes information and relevant dates in school manuals, calendars, and on its website at <http://bridgespcs.org>;
- Bridges PCS staff provides information to parents during **quarterly** parent-teacher conferences;
- Brochures regarding special education services are available for parents and the public at the front desk;

COORDINATION WITH NON-EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT AGENCIES

To ensure coordination with appropriate District agencies to facilitate the identification, location, and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled in Bridges PCS, Bridges PCS maintains contacts with the following District agencies:

- Strong Start District of Columbia Early Intervention Program (DCEIP);
- District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Early Stages program;
- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA);
- Children and Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Services (CHAMPS);
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH);

Bridges PCS conducts annual meetings with representatives of the above agencies to ensure open and cooperative lines of communication regarding Bridges PCS's Child Find, referral, and initial evaluation processes and procedures, as well as continuously updating agencies of changes in appropriate points of contact.

Bridges PCS may establish agreements with other entities responsible for administering various education, health, and social service programs to children from birth through age 22. Those agencies include, but are not limited to: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS).

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parents may obtain information about the availability of special education and related services through this policy, information posted on our website at <http://bridgespcs.org/>, or by contacting Judith Dorvil, Director of Student Support Services. Bridges PCS also maintains written materials for parents, which can be found at the Bridges PCS front desk. Bridges PCS staff is required to provide information to parents upon request and at parent-teacher conferences.

REFERRAL PROCESSES

Bridges PCS is required to complete an initial evaluation and determine if a child is a child with a disability eligible for special education and related services under IDEA within 90 days of receipt of a referral (30 days from time of referral to gain consent and 60 days from consent to complete the evaluation). A referral is documentation provided by the child's parent, or other referral source, which clearly states why it is thought that the child may have a disability.

The 90-day requirement does not apply if:

- The parent fails or refuses to respond to a request for consent for the evaluation;
- The parent of the child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation; or
- The child enrolls in another LEA prior to the determination of eligibility.

If a parent or community member would like to request an initial evaluation to determine if a child is in need of special education and related services, please contact Judith Dorvil, Director of Student Support, 202-545-0515 (ext 2071), jdorvil@bridgespcs.org, 100 Gallatin St, Washington, DC 20011. All Bridges PCS staff must accept an oral or written referral for initial evaluation. Upon receiving an oral referral, Bridges PCS staff must assist any outside referral source in documenting the referral in writing, and must document the date of the referral within three (3) business days of receipt. Bridges PCS provides a referral form to assist parents and other parties in documenting a referral. To obtain this form, please contact Judith Dorvil, Director of Student Support, 202-545-0515 (ext 2071), jdorvil@bridgespcs.org, 100 Gallatin St, Washington, DC 20011.

Bridges PCS accepts referrals for initial evaluation from the following persons:

- A student's parent;
- The student, provided that educational rights have transferred to the student; and
- Employees of Bridges PCS who has knowledge of the student.

For children under the age of 6, Bridges PCS also accepts referrals from:

- Pediatricians or other medical professionals, including physicians, hospitals, and other health providers;
- Child development facilities, including day care centers, child care centers, and early childhood programs;
- District agencies and programs, including IDEA Part C programs ;
- Community and civic organizations; and
- Advocacy organizations.

Bridges PCS maintains regular contact with community-based referral sources, and works to collaborate with community-based service providers to provide information on the availability of special education and related services and the means through which parents or organizations may submit a referral.

After Bridges PCS has received a referral, Bridges PCS must make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation, which includes attempting to contact the parent at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) modalities. Bridges PCS shall conduct an analysis of existing data on the student to determine if additional assessments are necessary. Existing data that may be

considered may include but is not limited to teacher observations, classroom assessments, schoolwide screenings and assessments, state assessments, student grades and records, parent reports, health records, or data from other interventions. Bridges PCS will provide the parent of a child suspected of having a disability with information about the nature of any additionally required assessment.

SCREENINGS

Bridges PCS implements a comprehensive screening process to determine if a child should be referred for an evaluation, the result of which is provided to the child's parent. Screenings utilize assessments and tools that are generally applied across the entire student population. Parent consent is not required for Bridges PCS to conduct a uniform, school-wide screening. A screening conducted by a Bridges PCS teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation does not constitute an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services and does not require parental consent.

Bridges PCS screenings must not delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

TRANSITION FROM PART C to PART B

Under IDEA, Bridges PCS must ensure a smooth and effective transition for children transitioning from Part C early intervention services to Part B special education and related services. In furtherance of this responsibility, Bridges PCS:

- Identifies incoming children that were served by Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program (DC EIP) prior to enrollment at Bridges PCS, and participates in transition activities as appropriate at the request of DC EIP; and
- As applicable, regularly coordinates with DCPS Early Stages to ensure a smooth and transition for students served by DCPS Early Stages prior to enrollment in the Bridges PCS.

When a child is transitioning from Part C to Part B services, Bridges PCS participates in transition planning conferences as appropriate, and ensures each child with a disability has an IEP developed and implemented by the child's third birthday.

PARENT PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS AND RIGHTS

Parents' legal rights during the Child Find process are defined by IDEA and District of Columbia law. In the event of a disagreement, parents may pursue dispute resolution and due process rights, including mediation, due process complaints, or state complaints. Parents can learn more about their rights under IDEA by referring to the Part B Procedural Safeguards located on OSSE's website <https://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards> or by contacting Judith Dorvil, Director of Student Support to obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards.

DATA REPORTING

In accordance with District of Columbia law, Bridges PCS counts and reports the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services count annually on October 5 or the date set for the annual pupil count required by D.C. Official Code § 38-2906.

Special Education

All academic and behavioral needs of students must first be addressed through regular education; therefore, we have our RTI to address concerns. If the student's needs are beyond what is available in regular education, either the school team or the parents may request an evaluation to determine if the student is eligible for special education services.

In order to receive special education services, students must qualify as having a disability and show a need for specialized instruction and/or support that is not available through regular education. These include students who have significant academic, social, speech-language, motor, and behavioral needs. The special education team, including the parents and the regular education teacher, develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student who receives special education services. The IEP is a written document that contains information regarding the student's academic and behavioral needs.

Special education services are offered along a continuum based on the individual needs of the student, and must be offered within the least restrictive environment. Service options available include special education support in the general-education classroom, special education instruction in a non-categorical classroom, speech-language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school social worker services, and behavioral support. The special education staff works with teachers to design a support network allowing each child to progress academically.

504 Plan

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibit discrimination against persons with a disability who seek admission. Section 504 and the ADA define a person with a disability as anyone who has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Bridges PCS has the responsibility, to the best of its ability, to provide adjustments, modifications, and necessary services to eligible individuals. Bridges PCS acknowledges its responsibility under Section 504 and the ADA to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its students. No discrimination against any person with a disability will be permitted in any program or practice in school. Students, parents and/or guardians with questions regarding Bridges PCS's compliance with Section 504 should contact the Bridge's 504 Coordinator:

Nathaniel Ho
Assistant Director of Student Support Services
nho@Bridges PCSpcs.org
(202) 545-0515

Order and Student Discipline

Bridges has school-wide behavior and conduct expectations for all members of the learning community. These expectations encourage each student to conduct his or her self in an appropriate way, behave in a cooperative manner that supports learning, and treat other members of the community with respect. The Bridges' curriculum emphasizes the development of social skills, such as conflict resolution, collaborative problem solving, and expressing emotions through words rather than actions.

School Wide Values and Expectations

Bridges PCS students and staff will REACH for success by taking care of ourselves, our friends and our school through the implementation of PBIS, Responsive Classroom, and Second Step.

REACH - Responsibility, Engagement, Acceptance, Creativity and Honesty

Whole School Rules

1. Show Kindness
2. Be Safe
3. Always do your best

To support students in meeting these expectations each classroom utilizes a consistent approach to behavior management. This includes: having a regular and predictable classroom schedule, teaching students how to use classroom materials, assisting students with conflict resolution, role-playing positive social interactions, and a thinking chair. Rules and expectations are also paired with visual cues and posted in each classroom, as well as throughout the school building. On-going and open communication with families through parent-teacher communication books, phone calls and conferences, will provide opportunities to compare behavior in the home and school environments.

The Bridges PCS Behavior Department supports students to eliminate or replace disruptive, unsafe, or challenging behaviors with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Behavioral intervention draws on multiple disciplines, including community health, social work, counseling and education. Our staff are trained in the use of de-escalation, momentary physical intervention, and physical and emotional management techniques. In addition, our Behavior Support Team assists school staff in conducting functional behavioral assessments, collecting and analyzing behavioral data, and delivering behavior programming using the principles of ABA and PBIS.

Behavior Team members observe and interact with our students to assist with the healthy functioning of our classroom communities. These professionals focus on specific behaviors that disrupt, exclude or otherwise negatively impact our students. Because behavior intervention is aimed at modifying challenging behaviors through implementation plans, the Behavior Department works closely with the Special Education Department and the Department of Student Support Services to refine, change, and further modify academic and behavior programs to best support the children and families with a variety of different needs, cultures, and backgrounds.

Behavior Department Flow Chart

Our behavior team is made up of the following individuals:

- Director of Student Support Services
- Assistant Direct of Student Support Services
- Behavior Intervention Lead
- Behavior Specialist
- School-Based Mental Health Clinician(s)
- ABA Coordinator

Prior to the involvement of the behavior team (listed above), our staff has received different levels of training in Responsive Classroom to support with management of the classroom behaviorally and building a positive classroom culture. Responsive Classroom is a research-and evidence-based approach to education that is associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school

climate. Different Responsive Classroom techniques include Teacher Language and Logical Consequences that support our staff with behavior management prior to the involvement of the behavior team.

Within each classroom, teachers follow the ladder of consequences using least invasive behavioral approaches including the following:

- ★ Nonverbal Intervention: Gesture or eye contact
- ★ Positive Group Correction: Quick verbal reminder to the group about what students should be doing
- ★ Anonymous Individual Correction: “We need two people”
- ★ Private Individual Correction: Privately and Quietly
- ★ Lightning-Quick Public Correction: “Kristine, I need your eyes. Looking, awesome back row!”
- ★ Take a break with reflection in the classroom (each classroom has a designated “take a break” area)
- ★ Communicate need for observation from Leadership Team Member or Behavior Intervention Lead through the use of the phone or walkie talkie.
- ★ Take a break outside of the classroom in designated location by campus

When taking a break outside of the classroom, a member of the behavior team is called for support by the use of the walkie-talkie to implement this last step within the ladder of consequences.

After the student incident occurs and the student is supported with getting back on task, a behavior team member will send an incident report to be completed by the staff member who asked for assistance using the walkie-talkie. In order to ensure incident reports are well-written and include all needed information, the team will review the report prior to sending it home. **At this time, the incident report will be sent home to families within 48 hours.**

Should a behavior escalate and a student's safety is in question, a member of the behavior team will deem what Safety Care strategies are necessary to de-escalate which may or may not include a restraint. Safety Care is a training program for staff working with children who may exhibit challenging or dangerous behavior. Safety Care is used to prevent behavioral crisis, reverse the momentary escalation and intensity of crisis behaviors, teach and strengthen behaviors that are incompatible with crisis behaviors, safely and therapeutically manage crisis without injury or trauma, and crises as quickly as possible, decrease the future likelihood of behavioral crises, and physically manage behaviors when necessary.

***For all incidents that are de-escalated using Safety Care strategies that include restraint (as documented within a child's behavior intervention plan), communication will be made by phone within the school day and the incident report documenting the incident will be sent home the same day or the next day following.**

All behavioral incidents will always be followed up with a phone call/email/text/in-person communication to the parent by the Lead Teacher. Behaviors that include support from a member of the Behavior Team will also include a phone call from a member of the Behavior Team based on the behavioral incident in need of support.

PURPOSE OF SCHOOL RULES

Educating students at Bridges Public Charter School represents a significant commitment of financial and human resources. The benefits a student derives for this investment depend very much on the student's attitude toward learning and the student's adherence to high standards of behavior. This handbook provides information and direction to students and parents regarding the expected standards of behavior as well as possible consequences for misconduct. The rules set forth in the Student Handbook apply to any student who is on school premises, in a school-related vehicle, at a school-sponsored activity whether on or off campus, or whose conduct at any time or place directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school.

REACH VALUES

Bridges PCS believes that each and every student and staff member can REACH for success. REACH is an acronym for the Bridges PCS expectations and values. By encouraging students to REACH Bridges PCS focuses on maintaining a strong positive school culture that cultivates citizenship and encourages the development of character.

- **Responsibility-** I listen to all voices in my community and hold myself accountable to meet school-wide expectations
 - **(ECE/Non-Category Students)** - I will follow directions (Listening ears and Safe body)
- **Engagement** - I am committed to doing my best everyday.
 - **ECE/Non-Category Students)-** I will do my best
- **Acceptance-** I appreciate and celebrate the differences of others in my community .
 - **(ECE/Non-Category Students)** - I will be kind
- **Creativity-** I understand that challenges are an opportunity for me to grow.
 - **(ECE/Non-Category Students)** - I will try new things
- **Honesty-** I take responsibility for my actions through truth telling.
 - **(ECE/Non-Category Students)** - I will tell the truth (share my thoughts).

CLASSROOM RULES

In addition to the rules and regulations set forth this handbook, each teacher may also establish rules for his or her own classroom to help ensure maximum learning for everyone. Students are expected to abide by the rules established by the classroom teacher. These typically may include but are not limited to the following:

- To behave in a way that enhances and supports opportunities for students to learn and for the teacher to teach.
- To bring to class all necessary materials and assignments.
- To observe rules of common courtesy and respect in class.
- To make sure that furniture and equipment are not damaged, and that the room is kept clean.
- To observe the teacher's rules regarding food & drink.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INFRACTIONS:

The following list identifies potential administrative responses to infractions in the Student Handbook.

Range Of Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Conference with student.

- Problem solving meeting.
- Conference with student and parent/guardian.
- Intervention conferences.
- Peer mediation.
- Behavior plan/contract.
- Exclusion activities.
- Restorative Justice Practice.
- Agency referrals.*
- Police involvement.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- Recommendation for expulsion.

*The school district's provision of information or referrals to an outside agency is not an express or implied offer to pay, in full or in part, for any expenses, which the student may incur as a result of his/her participation with the agency.

A student placed on suspension is not allowed on school grounds or at school activities for any reason during the suspension period, unless authorized by an administrator. The suspension period officially concludes at 8 a.m. on the day the student returns to school.

Grounds for Suspension, Expulsion, Emergency Removal or Other Disciplinary Action

Violation on the part of a student of any one or more of the school's rules and behavioral expectations shall constitute misconduct and may result in in-school or out-of-school suspension, expulsion, emergency removal, or other discipline of a student. These Bridges PCS Student Code and Conduct regulations are applicable to conduct while school is in session, at school-sponsored activities or events whether on or off school premises, at events in which the Bridges Public Charter School participates whether on or off school premises, off of property owned or operated by Bridges PCS but that is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on property owned or controlled by Bridges PCS, on school premises whether or not school is in session, in any vehicle whose use is controlled, organized, or arranged by Bridges PCS, or at any time the student is subject to the authority of Bridges PCS personnel. In addition, a student may be subject to school disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for harassment, vandalism, physical abuse or other conduct directed toward school personnel and/or toward school personnel's property, during school or nonschool hours, regardless of where it occurs.

Student attendance at after school co-curricular events is a privilege. Any student may be removed from such events for engaging in disruptive conduct, for violation of the student code of conduct or for conduct posing a danger to persons or property. Any student removed from co-curricular events may be barred from attendance at future events for the remainder of the school year. The following is a list of behavioral concerns that the school may need to address and the consequences for those concerns.

1. Assault

A student shall not knowingly or with reckless disregard cause physical injury or threaten to cause physical injury to any person.

Consequence: may range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

2. Conduct on Buses

The Bridges PCS Student Code of Conduct expectations are applicable on buses as they are in our building. Bus drivers are responsible for safely transporting students to and from school and enforcing bus rules. Children are responsible for reasonable and acceptable behavior while riding the bus.

Consequence: student misconduct may result in the loss of bus riding privileges and/or other disciplinary actions.

3. Damage to Private Property

A student shall not knowingly or with reckless disregard cause or attempt to cause damage to private property.

Consequence: may range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion

4. Damage to School Property

A student shall not knowingly or with reckless disregard cause or attempt to cause damage to or deface school property including, but not limited to, buildings, grounds, equipment, materials, or computers or other technology. Parent(s) may be liable for payment for the cost to repair or replace any such property damage caused by the acts of their children.

Consequence: may range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion

5. Dangerous Weapons

A student shall not possess, transport, transmit, conceal or attempt to possess, transport, transmit or conceal a dangerous weapon, firearm, knife, explosive ordnance, stun gun, Taser gun, other dangerous instrument, or "look-alike" counterfeit weapon, firearm, knife, ordnance or dangerous instrument. "Look-alike" weapons, firearms, knives, ordnance or instruments include, but are not limited to, any object a reasonable person might consider under the circumstances a dangerous weapon, firearm, knife, explosive ordnance or dangerous instrument.

As used herein, "firearm" shall be defined as in 18 USC section 921 and shall include, but not be limited to, any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device as defined in 18 USC section 921 et seq. The definition of destructive device includes, but is not limited to, (1) any explosive, incendiary, or poisonous gas including, but not limited to, a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine, or a device similar to any of the devices described herein or (2) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described herein and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

As used herein, "knife" shall be defined as any instrument that possesses a pointed or sharp-edged blade of metal or other rigid material and that is designed or can be used for cutting, slicing or stabbing: this

definition shall include, but is not limited to, straight razors, utility knives, box cutters, ice picks, pocket knives, switchblades and buck knives.

Nothing in this provision is intended to, nor shall it, preclude Administration from suspending, expelling or removing a student in accordance with the law for otherwise possessing, transmitting or concealing a weapon, explosive ordnance, or other dangerous instrument that is not as just defined herein.

Consequence: may range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

6. Harassment, Bullying, Intimidation or Other Degrading, Disgraceful, Discriminating, and/or Racist Acts

A student shall not harass, bully, intimidate, degrade, disgrace, disparage, incite, urge, provoke, threaten, discriminate, or cause mental or physical harm against any other student or school employee or otherwise disrupt the school environment. For this purpose, harassment, bullying or intimidation includes, but is not limited to: slurs; displaying inappropriate images or text; profanity; written information; stalking; relational aggression; cyber-bullying; denigrating remarks or actions; obscene gestures; the wearing or display of inappropriate insignia, signs, buttons, clothing or apparel; or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct including, but not limited to, those based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, age or sex that are harassment as defined in the DCPS Bullying Prevention Policy or that have the purpose or effect of being severe, persistent or pervasive enough to create a situation of (1) causing or intending to cause any other student or school employee to be reasonably placed in fear of his/her personal safety; (2) reasonable fear of damage to students property; (3) causing or intending to cause a hostile, intimidating, threatening or an offensive/abusive educational environment for any other student or school employee; (4) causing or intending to cause material disruption of the educational process; (5) unreasonably interfering with a student's curricular , co-curricular or extracurricular performance or (6) otherwise adversely and unreasonable impacting upon a student's educational opportunities. These are violations that are disruptive to the educational process or may cause harm to other persons or property.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

7. Disruption

A student shall not knowingly or with reckless disregard act or urge other students or persons to act in such a way as to cause by use of repetitive disruption, violence, force, noise, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance or any other conduct, the substantial and material disruption of obstruction of any lawful mission, process or function of the educational process of the school district, but not limited to, curricular and extracurricular activities.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

8. Fighting

A student shall not engage in physically or verbally abusive or provocative activities or conduct directed toward another person which leads or, under the circumstances could lead, to harm to such person or

bystander. Spectators are subject to disciplinary action if they are viewed to instigate, prolong or heighten a situation.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

9. Frightening or Intimidating Acts

A student shall not engage in any act or conduct which, under the circumstances, a reasonable person would believe does or is intended to frighten, intimidate, bully, harass, or otherwise cause harm to the person toward whom the act or conduct is directed. Students are expected to be tolerant of individual differences. A student shall not knowingly or with reckless disregard engage in any act or conduct which causes another person to reasonably believe that such student will cause physical harm to the person or property of such other person.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

10. Insubordination

A student shall not disregard or refuse to obey reasonable requests or directions given to the student by school personnel.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

11. Leaving School Premises

A student shall not leave school premises before the hour of dismissal except where individual school policy otherwise provides or without first obtaining the consent of the principal, assistant principal or school nurse or their designee. In addition, a student shall not be in an improper area of the school away from proper supervision.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

12. Use of Profane, Vulgar or Abusive Language or Gestures

A student shall not use profane, vulgar, abusive, obscene or other words or gestures which, under the circumstances, are offensive to the sensibilities of ordinary people in the Bridges PCS community or which normal school activities. Such prohibitions include, but are not limited to, use of computers or other technology or communications.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

13. Other Conduct

In recognition that any list of prohibited conduct cannot, with specificity, encompass every conceivable action which may properly be subject to discipline, the Principal or Administration shall have the authority to suspend or expel a student for conduct not specifically set forth herein and which substantially and materially disrupts or interferes with the good order, discipline, operation, academic or educational process taking place in the school or which substantially and materially is or poses a threat to the safety of persons or property.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

14. Repeated Violations or Other Circumstances

These guidelines do not restrict school personnel from using judgment in interpreting and implementing consequences. The administration reserves the right to assign and establish procedures in areas where precedent has not been set.

Consequence: May range from Teacher/Student conference up to recommendations for out-of-school suspension/expulsion.

STUDENT DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Due process rights will be afforded each student before and/or during appropriate disciplinary action. Students will be given written or oral notice of the charges and an opportunity to respond to those charges.

For suspension of five (5) days or more, a written appeal may be filed with the building principal, within 24 hours, but the student will not be allowed to remain in school during the appeal.

When a student is considered for long-term suspension (6 or more days) or expulsion, the student's parent/guardian will receive written notification. The notification will contain:

- Charges and related evidence
- Time/place of the hearing
- Length of the recommended suspension or expulsion
- A brief description of the hearing procedure

Students being considered for long-term suspension or expulsion may or may not be immediately removed from school. A formal hearing will be scheduled with the BESST Team during which the student may be represented by his/her parents/guardian, legal counsel at his/her own expense, and/or by a person of his/her choice.

Grievance Procedure - Process to Appeal Decisions for Suspending and Expelling Students

Bridges PCS encourages each student to learn at his or her individual potential, behave in a cooperative manner that supports learning, and treat other members of the community with respect. The Principal or Assistant Principal may suspend or expel a student under circumstances when the health and well being of the student or others is threatened, or due to the seriousness of the behavior. Students may be suspended from school for a specific number of days, or expelled from the school for the remainder of the year.

The decision to suspend or expel a student shall be made by the Principal or Assistant Principal, with or without the recommendation of the student's teacher or other school employees. The Principal or Assistant Principal determines the number of days for suspension based on the severity of the infraction, and previous

infractions. The suspension or expulsion becomes effective immediately unless otherwise stated by the Principal or Assistant Principal. After three suspensions from school within the same school year, expulsion will be seriously considered. The decision to suspend or expel a student is made in writing and given to the parent/guardian. Ideally there is a meeting that the parent/guardian attends with the Principal or Assistant Principal and the student's teacher before the suspended student returns to school. It is not however a requirement that a meeting is held for a student to return to school at the end of the suspension period. The student's parent/guardian has five days to challenge the suspension or expulsion by submitting an appeal of the decision, in writing, to the Head of School who will provide it to the Board of Trustees for Bridges Public Charter School. The review of the appeal request made to the Board of Trustees will follow the timeline that is part of the school's Grievance Procedure outlined at the end of this document.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I. Purpose

If a student violates Bridges Discipline Policy, before consequences or punishment are imposed, a school must consider whether the student has a disability evidenced by an IEP or 504 Plan. While all students may be disciplined, it is both illegal and unjust to punish a child when the offense is directly related to his or her disability or when the IEP or 504 Plan is not implemented.

II. Legal Standard

Disciplinary actions give students with disabilities extra legal protections when the discipline constitutes a change in placement. A "change in placement" is a legal term that applies to the following situations:

- A suspension or expulsion for more than 10 consecutive school days. If a student has transportation on his IEP, then bus suspensions are also counted.

- Suspensions that may total less than 10 cumulative school days in a school year may be a change in placement if they appear as part of a pattern of suspensions. A pattern of suspensions may be found if the student is suspended for behavior that is "substantially similar" to behavior for which the child has previously been suspended. Factors may include same type of behavior, same victim, same class, same day of the week or same time of day. If the offense is a change in placement, the school team (including the parent) must advise parents in writing, provide a copy of the IDEA procedural safeguards, and hold a Manifestation Determination meeting to determine two issues:
 - Was the student's misconduct caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability?
 - Was the student's misconduct a direct result of the school's failure to follow the child's IEP?

If the team answers yes to either question, then the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. The student may not be suspended, expelled or transferred to a remedial disciplinary school as a punishment for misbehavior that is a manifestation of a disability. The team must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and create a behavior plan addressing ways that the school can help a student with a conduct issue. If the student already has a behavior plan, the plan must be reviewed and modified to address how the school can better assist the student with the conduct issue.

If all team members agree that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of his disability, then the student may be subject to the same consequences as all students. If a parent disagrees with the team's

decision that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student’s disability, the parent may request a due process hearing to challenge this finding. If the Hearing Officer agrees with the parent, the student will remain in the school where the offense was committed unless the parent and the school agree otherwise. However, during the period of expulsion or transfer to an alternative placement or remedial disciplinary setting, the student must continue to receive special education services prescribed by his IEP and a Behavior Plan must be created or revised to address the offending conduct.

If Bridges PCS orders a disciplinary removal that meets the definition of a change in placement, it must continue to make FAPE available to the student. This means that even if the child is suspended or expelled from a school, the LEA must ensure that the student continues to receive educational services.

III. Emergency Circumstances Involving School Safety: Weapons, Drugs or Serious Injury

If a student: possesses illegal drugs; is selling prescription drugs; carries a weapon; or causes serious bodily injury to another, either at school or during a school related activity, the school may immediately remove the student for up to 45 school days to an alternative or remedial disciplinary setting. To comply with the law, a 45 school day emergency removal for serious bodily injury must be serious, i.e., requiring medical treatment. Because drugs, weapons and serious bodily injury are so dangerous to a safe school climate, a school may remove a student under these circumstances for 45 school days regardless of whether a child has intellectual disability (formally MR) or even if the team believes that the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability. During the 45 school-day period, the school must convene a manifestation determination meeting. If the school determines that the conduct is a manifestation, the school may have the child re-evaluated, create or revise an existing behavior plan, or hold an IEP meeting to consider a more intensive special education placement upon the expiration of the 45-day alternative placement or sooner. If all team members determine that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student’s disability, then the 45 school day emergency placement may proceed to a disciplinary proceeding afforded to all students.

IV. Emergency Hearing/Dangerousness

If a school has solid reasons to believe that keeping the student in his current school is “substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others”, the school should consult with the Special Education Director who may request an emergency hearing to ask a Hearing Officer to transfer the student to an alternative setting for up to 45 school days. Dangerousness may exist even if there is no Code of Conduct violation. It is a consideration based on serious safety concerns for the student and/or the school community.

V. Notice to Parents

Any time a student with an IEP or 504 plan is removed to an alternative or remedial disciplinary setting, the parent must be given a prior written notice stating this decision and a copy of the procedural safeguards.

Communication and Paperwork

Bridges Public Charter School staff, teachers and administration are committed to being responsive to families’ questions and requests. Please be aware that the school’s standard response time for phone call or e-mail messages is two business days (48 hours). All school staff can be reached by calling the main telephone number (202) 545-0515. Classroom teachers are generally not available to speak on the phone during class time, 8:20 am - 3:30 pm. Messages for classroom teachers can be left with the front desk.

All Instructional Leaders, including but not limited to the Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Student Support Services, Curriculum Coordinators and Special Education Coordinators, have open office hours. All requests for meetings are made by appointment with the front desk or the staff person directly. Please schedule a meeting with the instructional leader you wish to speak to in advance to ensure the school leader is available to provide you with the time needed for the conversation.

All teachers are to communicate with parents twice per month regarding student performance and attendance using one of the following modes of communication - in-person, email, telephone, text or Classroom Dojo. Non-categorical Lead Teachers will provide parents with a daily form of communication such as a message through Class Dojo, a communication journal, afternoon journal, etc. The school has a school-wide communication log where teachers will document their communication with parents including the date, time and subject of the communication.

All medical and behavioral incidents are to be communicated day of by the lead teacher using phone and/or email depending on the severity of the situation. In addition to the phone/email sent by the teacher in regards to medical related incidents, families will also receive communication by phone by the school nurse only. All information regarding related services should be sent directly to your child's related service providers or the Assistant Director of Student Support Services. Classroom teachers will not be responding to questions regarding related services.

Requests for the completion of any paperwork or forms by the school must be done in writing and turned in to the front desk. Forms will be completed for pick up at the front desk two weeks after the submission of the request.

Parents / guardians are given a copy of all quarterly progress reports, quarterly IEP progress reports, and special education documentation completed by the school when they attend meetings at the school. It is a good idea to keep all school documentation in a safe and secure place in your home.

Requests for copies of any student records (e.g., progress reports, health forms, birth certificates) or any special education document (assessments / evaluations, IEPs, or progress notes) must be made in writing and turned in to the front desk. The copies will be completed for pick up at the front desk two weeks after the submission of the request. There is a \$2.00 fee per student record and a \$5.00 fee per special education document.

We provide written information and materials for parents in Spanish, and other languages when possible. This includes forms to be completed by parents/caregivers, report cards, and the parent handbook and school newsletters. School held meetings for parents have translators when possible.

Student Files Policy

The confidentiality of students' files is of the highest priority. Student files are secured in the Main Office and Special Education Coordinator's office. Health records are also secured in the nurse's suite. There are appropriate employees who have justifiable need for specific access to such files, and only the Principal or Assistant Principal may determine the right to examine any file.

Security Camera Policy

Bridges PCS has security cameras visually recording data throughout the building by which will be viewed by authorized designees only.

Camera Placement:

Camera installations will only be located in public areas, such as hallways, calming rooms, playground, parking lots and walkways. The purpose of these installations is to monitor public areas to provide a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The cameras shall not be placed in areas where there may be a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g. restrooms, classrooms, offices, conference rooms, staff

lounges).

Notification:

Signs are posted in public entryways to the buildings and at other conspicuous locations informing persons that the building and grounds may be under video surveillance.

Bridges shall notify students, staff, and the general public that video surveillance will occur on school property through the use of the signage and other appropriate notifications including a notice in the Parent Handbook.

Limited Access to Recordings:

- Only authorized designee(s) shall oversee video surveillance.
- Only individuals authorized by the designee(s) may view the surveillance recordings.
- Any law enforcement agency may be provided with a duplicate of the recorded materials in conjunction with an investigation by that agency.
- Under limited circumstances, parents may have a right to view footage of their child if that footage is maintained as part of the student's education record. Whether a parent will have a right to view the footage will depend on the events and images recorded, the purpose for which the recording has been maintained, whether other students are present in the footage, and other relevant factors. Bridges will consult with its attorney before determining whether a parent has a right to view the video footage.

Viewing:

- Reviewing the recordings will occur only when a suspected crime or violation is committed inside or outside the building (e.g., vandalism, graffiti, etc.), or there is a claim of an injury or an incident that raises safety or security concerns.
- A log book shall include the following details; the persons viewing the data, what event triggered the viewing, the date/time viewed, what was found on the recording, whether the data was copied or forwarded, and what consequences were imposed as a result of the recorded information.
- Information obtained through video surveillance may only be used for disciplinary investigations, security, law enforcement purposes, or in the course of any legal action or legal investigation. No sound is to be monitored or recorded in connection with the video surveillance system.
- Surveillance system misuse shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the Chief Operations Officer.

Short Term Data Storage:

- Security camera visually recorded data (with the exception of those segments that evidence a crime being committed, are related to a claim of injury or an incident that raises safety or security concerns, or are related to a disciplinary investigation (within the 20 day retention period) will be maintained for a maximum of twenty (20) calendar days and then deleted. At no time shall Bridges PCS be held liable for the failure to maintain any recorded data for any period of time. All such recordings shall be treated as confidential and shall not be released to individuals or agencies outside of the Bridge PCS except through subpoena or other court order requiring such release.

Parent / Guardian Involvement



Parent Classroom Observations - Policies and Procedures

Bridges PCS welcomes parent classroom observations and applauds the commitment to parental involvement in education that observations represent. However, because we wish to provide all students with the best instruction we can, we schedule observations in a way that will not distract students from the quality of instruction taking place in our classrooms.

Parent visits to the classroom should be approved in advance to avoid unnecessary disruptions such as overcrowding in the classroom or distracting parent-child interactions. Parents wishing to observe their child's class in action should contact the teacher in advance to set up a date and time for the observation, then complete a Parent Observation Request form. In the interest of protecting the privacy of all students in the classroom, the "Parent Observation Request" form includes a confidentiality requirement that prohibits parents from discussing with others what they observe concerning other students in the classroom, except when there exists a clear educational need to know.

Bridges PCS, in consultation with the relevant classroom teacher(s), retains both the responsibility and the authority to determine when and how often a parent may visit his or her child's classroom(s).

While present during a class in session, parents should refrain from communicating with either the instructor or any of the students in the class, including their own child, without the express approval of the instructor. Parents are also asked not to speak on their cell phones or text during the observation.

Home Visits

Home Visits are an incredible tool for teachers to utilize in many ways. In regards to building strong family relationships, our staff dedicates a great deal of time to setting up Home Visits with 100% of the families within their classrooms. Every single student is offered a home visit or time spent at an alternative location outside of the school setting.

Why do you dedicated time to Home Visits? Teachers at our school make an effort to visit the families of all of our students every school year. We want to get to know you better and give you a chance to know us better, since we'll be working together to help your child succeed. The more we can learn from you about your child, the better we will be able to teach him/her. You are the expert on your child, and we know that we can learn a lot from you!

Home Visits have to be conducted by at least two faculty members of the school, include specific dates and times that work well for both school and family. They can be conducted within the home of the family or at a comfortable location within the community such as a neighborhood playground, community center, library or local coffee shop, etc.

Parent/Guardian Volunteer Opportunities

Parents/Guardians who choose Bridges PCS for their children commit to active involvement in their children's education and to helping fulfill the mission of the school. Bridges PCS provides many opportunities for parents to be involved in school related events. Here are some ways to be involved:

- Board membership
- Parent / Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Fundraising campaigns
- Classroom assistance
- Field trips
- Office work and support outside of the classroom
- Family Meal of Thanks - a whole school multicultural Thanksgiving celebration
- Winter Extravaganza and Dessert Party
- Advocacy and advisory committees
- . . . and much, much more

Parents/guardians who are interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Principal or Assistant Principal or any of the classroom teachers for more information.

Parent / Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO is Bridges' parent-community organization. No dues are charged, and all parents/guardians are automatically members. Meetings are held monthly. All parents are encouraged to attend these meetings, which offer the opportunity for parents to discuss common issues or concerns, share ideas, and plan activities with other parents, teachers and school administrators.

The PTO sponsors many school activities, projects and fundraisers. These activities are made possible by dedicated volunteers.

Support of the Classroom and School Fees

Parents receive requests to support the classroom and school programs in the following ways:

1. Request to purchase classroom materials and supplies at the start of the school year and once later in the school year. Examples of materials and supplies requested include markers, glue sticks, post-it notes, hand sanitizer and ziplock bags.
2. \$40.00 fee for the year for snack for the classroom.
3. \$15.00 fee to support the cost of classroom field trips that occur during the school year.

If purchasing the supplies, classroom snacks or the payment of the field trip fee is a financial hardship for your family please let the administrative staff know. You can speak with school Operations Staff - Director of Operations, Operations Manager or Business Manager.

Parent Training and Workshops

Workshops and training are offered throughout the school year in the morning and in the evening. Sessions are led by school staff and by staff from community based organizations. Examples of workshop topics are: supporting emergent literacy, managing a family budget, math and science activities that you can do at home, and supporting social skills development. Morning sessions run from 9:00 am - 10:00 am and evening sessions run from 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm.

Toilet Training

For students who are not toilet trained, all parents are required to work with the classroom teaching team to support their child's working on and mastering this independence skill. The school has workshops for parents on toilet training. **Parents of students who are not toilet trained are responsible for providing the school with all needed items - wipes and pull ups. The pull-ups must be the type that can open up on the side with velcro.**

Mandated Reporting

All Bridges PCS employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. A mandatory reporter is a person who is required by law to make a report of child maltreatment under specific circumstances. Individuals typically designated as mandatory reporters have frequent contact with children.

For the District of Columbia, the professionals (i.e. Mandatory Reporters) required to report are:

- Physicians, medical examiners, dentists, chiropractors, or nurses
- School officials, teachers, or daycare workers
- Psychologists or other mental health professionals
- Law enforcement officers (except an undercover officer whose identity or investigation might be jeopardized)
- Social service workers

Also, any other person who knows or has reason to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected may report.

Standards for Making a Report: When an individual knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child known to him or her in his or her official capacity has been or is in danger of being abused or neglected.

Also, when the individual has reasonable cause to believe that a child is abused as a result of inadequate care, control, or subsistence in the home environment due to exposure to drug related activity. Please visit www.childwelfare.gov for additional information regarding mandated reporting or consult our resource library that has copies of publications in both English and Spanish on the topics of the prevention and reporting of child abuse/neglect.

Notification for Families

Title I School

Title I of the Federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* is designated to help close the achievement gap between low income and minority students and their peers. Because more than 40% of Bridges PCS students are eligible for free and reduced lunch, the school is designated as a Title I school as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Parents' Right to Know Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualification

Parents of Title I students may request certain information from the main office on the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals providing services to the child.

Parent Notification Letter - English Language Learner Service

Upon enrolling in school, each family completes a Home Language Survey to determine if a language other than English is spoken by the student or used within the home. If a language other than English is indicated as being spoken in the home, the student is given a test to measure his or her proficiency in English. Students identified as Non-English Proficient or Limited-English Proficient qualifies for English as a Second Language (ESL) services through Title III, a Federal program, and the state.

At Bridges PCS, services are delivered to a student in one or more of the following ways:

1. PreK - Participation in a classroom that provides language support in Spanish, in addition to the English language instruction that occurs in the classroom. The use of Spanish in the classroom supports students who speak Spanish as a first language with the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Your child will be with both non-Spanish speaking students and native Spanish-speaking students.
2. PreK to 5th - Adaptations made by the teachers of the regular academic class to make the content understandable to the students as well as teach English.
3. PreK to 5th - Development of an individual language development plan and monitoring of development during the year.
4. PreK to 5th - Instructional support from an ELL teacher who is trained in working with students who are English as a Second Language Learners.

It is your right as a parent / guardian to decline the enrollment of your child in an ELL / ESL program. Furthermore, it is your right to withdraw your child from an ESL program at any point during the school year. Please contact the school's ELL Coordinator if you would like to schedule a parent conference to discuss your child's test results or discuss the support services put in place for ELL students.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may use the [Federal Relay Service](#).

Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

Grievance Procedures

A grievance is any significant concern that arises in the treatment of a student or adult. This policy should not be interpreted by any person as anything more than a method of solving problems before they reach damaging proportions.

Grievance Procedures for Parents/Guardians and Students

It is the policy of Bridges Public Charter School to treat all students in a fair and impartial manner. A student's parent or guardian or an individual student may submit a grievance to the Bridges Public Charter School to resolve a problem as quickly, fairly, and informally as possible.

A parent or guardian who believe that s/he or his/her child has been treated unfairly or discriminated against or a student who believes that s/he has personally been treated unfairly or discriminated against is encouraged to utilize the following grievance procedures:

Step 1. In the event a parent or guardian of a student believes that his/her child has been treated unfairly, the parent or guardian should discuss the situation with the student's classroom teacher. If a student him or herself has a concern, and believes that s/he has been treated unfairly, s/he or the teacher may arrange a meeting of all parties involved in the grievance to work out an informal solution to the grievance.

Step 2. If a resolution cannot be reached through discussion with the classroom teacher, the parent/guardian or student should arrange to discuss the situation with the Principal. The parent/guardian or student should provide information to the Principal about any efforts to resolve the situation with the teacher and the outcome. (If the problem is not a classroom issue, Step 2 (addressed to the appropriate administrator) would be the first step in the grievance process.

Step 3. If after Step 2 the parent/guardian or student is still not satisfied with the school's response, the parent or guardian of the student should put the complaint in writing—not e-mail—to the Principal. Complaints can be hand-delivered to the Principal's office or mailed to 100 Gallatin St. NE, Washington, DC 20011. The written document should state clearly that it is intended to initiate the grievance process and it should state the nature of the complaint, the date(s) of the occurrence, and the desired result.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Principal (or designee) will initiate an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of the complaint. Each investigation will include, as necessary, interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents and allowing parties to present evidence. All documentation related to the investigation will remain confidential. Within 15 school days of receiving the complaint, the Principal or designee will respond in writing to the complaint, summarizing the course and outcome of the investigation and any appropriate corrective or remedial action necessary.

Step 4. If the parent/guardian or student remains unsatisfied with the resolution reached by the Principal in writing, the parent or guardian of a student should submit a written statement of appeal to the Head of School, which should include the written material (his/her complaint and the Principal's response), within five school days of receiving the Principal's response. Complaints can be hand-delivered to the Head of School's office or mailed to 100 Gallatin St. NE, Washington, DC 20011. The parent or guardian of a student must notify the Principal of this action.

Step 5. The Head of School will review all relevant information and meet with the parties involved as necessary. Within 10 school days, the Head of School will issue a decision in writing summarizing the outcome of the appeal and any corrective or remedial action to be taken.

Step 6. If the parent/guardian or student remains unsatisfied with the resolution reached by the Head of School, the parent/guardian or student should submit a written statement of appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within five school days of receiving the Head of School’s response. The statement of appeal can be submitted to the Head of School who will provide it to the Board. The statement of appeal can also be submitted to the Board of Trustees via email at the following email address: BPCSboard@bridgespcs.org. The parent or guardian of a student must notify the Head of School of this action.

Step 7. Within 10 school days, the Board Chair will convene a meeting of the Appeals Committee of the Board to discuss the grievance and all relevant information. The parties and their representatives may be invited to participate in this meeting if necessary. Within 10 school days of this meeting, the Board Chair will issue a decision in writing summarizing the outcome of the appeal and any corrective or remedial action to be taken.

Parents and guardians of students are obligated to cooperate in good faith in the investigation and resolution of any grievance raised by them or against them. There will be no retaliation of any kind against individuals who file a complaint or participate in a complaint investigation. At their own expense, individuals may seek outside counsel or guidance to assist them in the grievance process. This grievance procedure does not bar individuals from filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law.

If you have any questions please use the chart below when reaching out to the appropriate contact:

Area of Focus	Staff Name	Email Address
School Wide Programming and General Questions, Elementary Program (1st-5th), Coaching & Supervision, EmpowerEd, Grade level team leads, Race and Equity work	Kay Elaster	KElaster@BridgesPCS.org
Early Childhood, Medication, Attendance, Aftercare Programs, Family Engagement, School Wide Programming and General Questions	Danette Dicks	ddicks@bridgespcs.org
Lunch Program, Carpool Pick Up Car Tags, Building matters, orders and supplies, email account set-up, additional operational questions	Georgia Vergos	Gvergos@bridgespcs.org
Student Enrollment Paperwork, Field Trips	Kristel Guzman	kguzman@bridgespcs.org
Student Support Services Special Education	Judith Dorvil Nate Ho Nichole Best Michael Dettloff	jdorvil@bridgespcs.org nho@bridgespcs.org nbest@bridgespcs.org mdettloff@bridgespcs.org
Early Childhood Program and Assessments	Erika Magana	emagana@bridgespcs.org
Elementary Literacy Program	Binta Garrett	bgarrett@bridgespcs.org
Elementary Curriculum Program & Assessments	Colleen Sullivan	csullivan@bridgespcs.org

Non-Categorical Self-Contained Classrooms	Shala Katongo	Ckatongo@bridgespcs.org
English Language Learning (ELL) Program	Joseph Egan	jegan@bridgespcs.org
Arts and Integration Program, Project Work, Website & Social Media	Kristin Nagy	knagy@bridgespcs.org
Behavior Department and Discipline Policies	Ryan Norris	rnorris@bridgespcs.org
Aftercare Program	Jamila Green Brianna McIntosh	jamila@basicsaba.com brianna@basicsaba.com

Bridges PCS - Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Page
(Please turn in to the main office)

As a parent of a Bridges Public Charter School student I will obtain a copy of the parent handbook and read it so that I am informed about school policy and procedures. The parent handbook is available at the front desk in hard copy or on the Bridges’ website via the following link <http://bridgespcs.org/handbooks/>.

(Print your child’s name)

(Print your name)

(Sign your name)

(Today’s Date)