



# Family Handbook

2009 — 2010

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# The Southwest Baltimore Charter School Handbook

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## **Introduction**

Southwest Baltimore Charter School was founded in 2005 as one of the original schools under the Maryland charter law approved by the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS). Southwest Baltimore Charter School is governed by Southwest Baltimore Charter School, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c) (3) under contract with the BCPSS. Southwest Baltimore Charter School is committed to implementing a high quality, community-based educational program for grades K-8.

The parent and teacher volunteers who founded Southwest Baltimore Charter School designed the school's program around the belief that the active commitment of family and community is essential for the success of our students both in and out of school. Therefore parent engagement in student achievement is at the core of SBCS's mission and a requirement for families of all students. The continued growth of Southwest Baltimore Charter School depends on the full participation of students, families, staff and community.

Parents are asked to help their students develop a sense of responsibility regarding the rules and policies stated within.

### **The Handbook**

The handbook will answer many of your questions and should serve as helpful reference. It is also the reference point for the Parent/Guardian Contract which is signed by all families as a condition of attending Southwest Baltimore Charter School. Please keep this handbook convenient so that you can add updates and policy changes to it as they are approved and distributed through the school year. The policies and procedures set forth here are those approved by the Board, the Executive Director, the Director of Instruction, the Middle School Director, or those mandated by the Baltimore City Public School System.

## **Vision and Mission Statements**

Vision: SBCS is a vibrant, rigorous school of active learners at the heart of a thriving Southwest Baltimore community.

Mission: To empower each student to achieve authentic academic success by harnessing the kindness, cooperation, and trust of faculty, family, and community.

The following tenets have guided our development of curricula and school culture:

- Differentiated instruction to meet children where they are and move them forward
- Expeditionary Learning to allow children to use all their senses to construct and retain knowledge through integrated units that allow for in-depth study of a topic from multiple perspectives
- Arts Integration to foster students' artistic skills and self expression through a multitude of art forms while deepening their understanding of academic content
- Choice Theory, an approach to behavior management that teaches children to be intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated, and guides them in making choices that will lead to personal success

Southwest Baltimore Charter School is a teacher-led school. As such, it is a vibrant, living organization that grows and changes as new people join the Southwest Baltimore Charter School community. We are all—staff, parents, students, community members--engaged in an ongoing dialogue about how to make our school better.

Southwest Baltimore Charter School: where academics, family, and community come together.

## What to do if you have a concern

- If you have a great idea or a general concern about the school, please put it in the suggestion box in the SBCS office.
- **If you have a concern about your child:**
  1. First, consult with your child's **classroom teacher**.
  2. If the problem persists, please consult with the **Director of Instruction or Middle School Director**.
  3. If the problem persists, please consult with the **Executive Director**.
  4. If the problem persists, please bring your concern to the **SBCS Board of Directors**.
- If you have a concern about the following areas, please contact the Director of Instruction, Middle School Director, or the Executive Director:

### **Facilities**

### **Office Management**

### **Academic Program**

### **Admissions**

- We strongly urge you to bring your concerns to us before you call the BCPSS headquarters at North Avenue. While calling North Avenue may eventually be the appropriate course of action, North Avenue refers all complaints from parents back to the school to resolve. Once you go through the steps above, if the problem persists, you should take your concerns to North Avenue.
- If your child is receiving special education services or you think that your child may need special education services, please discuss these issues with your child's classroom teacher or special educator. If you would like your child assessed for special education, **please put your request in writing and give it to your child's classroom teacher**.

## A. DAY TO DAY

### SCHOOL DAY

#### **Length of the School Day**

Our school day begins at 8:15 a.m. sharp in the cafeteria. Students are not to be in the building prior to 8:10 a.m. unless they are at breakfast, or with a teacher. Please give your children the opportunity to have a good start to the day by getting them to school on time. In order to be marked present and on time, each child must be in school and with his/her class by 8:15 a.m.

#### **Dismissal**

School dismisses promptly at 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Please pick up your child on these days at 3:00 p.m. There will be no supervision of children available after 3:15 p.m. Students are not to re-enter the building without a staff member. School staff may call the school police if your child is not picked up by 3:15.

On Friday, school dismisses promptly at 1:00 p.m.

#### **Drop off and Pick up Procedures for 2009-2010 School Year**

Your child may arrive for breakfast after 7:45 a.m. If you arrive before 8:10 a.m., please bring your child to the cafeteria. Please use the side door to enter the building in the morning.

Children are escorted to the parking lot door for dismissal by their teachers at 3:00 p.m..

*Failure to adhere to prompt delivery and pick up of students will result in a mandatory meeting with the family and the administration, at which time both parties will sign a separate contract of compliance. Failure to adhere to the contract may result in removal from Southwest Baltimore Charter School.*

If you need to enter the school for a meeting with faculty or staff, please pick up your children at 3:00 and keep them with you during your visit.

√ ***Make sure you have filled out a dismissal form for your child, so the staff knows if he/she is walking or being picked up and by whom.***

Students will only be released to authorized adults as listed on the dismissal form unless a note has been sent in.

## **Emergency Dismissal Procedures**

In the event of an emergency, BCPSS or Southwest Baltimore Charter School may need to close. The same procedures for inclement weather will be followed. An announcement will be made via radio, T.V. and, when possible, phone calls. It is **IMPERATIVE** that families keep current phone numbers and emergency contact information on file in the office.

All parents are required to complete an **emergency card** in the beginning of the year. It is **IMPERATIVE** that emergency cards be updated immediately if you have moved, your phone number has changed, or if any of the information on the card has changed

<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
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### **Early Pick-up**

Please refrain from requesting an early dismissal for your child except under emergency conditions. If an early dismissal should be necessary, please notify the school office in writing as soon as possible. Emergency cards and dismissal forms will be kept on file. No child will be released to anyone who is not on the dismissal form without written permission from the parent or guardian.

### **Absences**

The school maintains records of student absences and late arrivals. All absences are noted on each child's report card.

If a child misses 3 or more days a quarter, the parents will be required to meet with the classroom teacher and the administration.

If there is a second instance of a child missing 3 or more days a quarter, the child will be put on enrollment probation. The parents will again be required to meet with the classroom teacher and the administration.

If there is a third instance of a child missing 3 or more days a quarter, the school will recommend to BCPSS that the child be reassigned to his or her zoned school. The child's case may also be referred to District Court.

SBCS families are asked to plan family trips when school is not in session. Withdrawing a child for a family vacation is disruptive to the child's educational experience. Consistent attendance helps children develop a responsible attitude toward school and show support for the educational program. Parents are asked to

provide written documentation when a child is absent from school due to a family trip.

### **Illness**

Children who are ill should not be sent to school until they are able to participate fully in the program and are no longer contagious. Illnesses such as the flu, strep throat, stomach viruses, ringworm, conjunctivitis (“pink eye”), lice and childhood illnesses (i.e. chickenpox) spread quickly through the classroom. Our students will stay much healthier if parents will take a responsible attitude toward this problem by keeping their children home until the symptoms are gone. Please wait 24 hours after a fever or vomiting ceases before sending your child back to school. When your child has to be absent due to an illness, please notify the office before 8:00 a.m., leaving a message if necessary.

At the discretion of the administration a doctor’s note may be required after a child has been absent for highly contagious conditions such as conjunctivitis or ringworm.

### **Tardiness**

**The school day begins at 8:15 a.m. sharp.** In order to be marked present and on time, CHILDREN MUST BE IN SCHOOL AND WITH THEIR CLASSES BY 8:15 a.m. **Please give your child the opportunity to have a good start to the day by getting them to school on time. A student arriving at school later than 8:15 a.m. is required to obtain a late pass from the office and will be marked tardy for that day.** Failure to obtain a late pass may result in a student being marked absent for the day. Continuous tardiness will require a meeting with the classroom teacher and/or administration to discuss prevention. All students need to begin the day on time and ready to learn.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE**

Please see the Executive Director for more information.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Southwest Baltimore Charter School follows the policy of Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) for school closings due to inclement weather. On days when we are experiencing or anticipating the arrival of inclement weather, the BCPSS Chief Executive Officer will make one of the following decisions regarding the opening of schools for the day:

- Schools open and on schedule.
- Schools closed for the day.

- Schools open – two hours late.

The decision to close schools for the day, or to open school two hours late will be announced to the local radio and television stations by 6:00 a.m.

The decision to delay the opening of school by two hours may be followed by an announcement that schools are closed for the day. This follow-up announcement will only be made when travel conditions have not improved and/or are not expected to improve during the remainder of the school day. Any subsequent announcements to close schools following the initial announcement of a two-hour delay will be made to the local media by 8:00 a.m.

If it is necessary to close schools for the day, the regular school session, as well as all extended day and after school programs will be canceled. If it is necessary to close schools early after school is in session, an announcement will be made to the news media by 10:00 a.m.

Summer-like weather may also force the closing of school. On days that call for unusually hot temperatures BCPSS may decide to end the school day prior to 3:00 p.m. If the temperature reaches 85 degrees by 9:00 a.m., BCPSS *may* close schools. A school closing of 2 ½ hours early means Southwest Baltimore Charter School will dismiss students at 12:30 p.m. Please listen to your radio on very hot days.

Southwest Baltimore Charter School has a full day kindergarten program. In the event of a delayed opening the kindergarten students should report at the same time as the rest of the school. Southwest Baltimore Charter School's kindergarten will not be canceled due to a delayed opening of school.

## **RECESS WEATHER POLICY**

We believe that children are better learners when they have time for play, every day.

All students at SBCS are expected to go outside for recess every day. If a child is well enough to be in school, we believe s/he is well enough to go outside. Exceptions are made only with a written note from home or if a student needs to complete work for a teacher.

All students should come to school with outerwear that allows them to spend at least a half hour outside each day. On rainy days, appropriate dress includes boots, a raincoat, rain pants, and a hood or hat. In the winter, the children should be equipped with boots, snow pants, snow jacket, mittens, scarves, and hat. Children **will not** go outside in thunder or lightning.

It is important that children be well protected against the cold when they are outdoors. Areas of the body that are most vulnerable are fingers, toes, head, and abdomen. Girls wearing dresses in the late fall, winter, and early spring need to have their legs adequately covered. All children may need sweaters to wear in the classroom on cold days.

## **DRESS CODE**

**THE DRESS CODE IS TO BE FOLLOWED MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY.** Students do not need to wear uniforms on *Fabulous Fridays*.

Shirts must be purchased from Flynn and O'Hara at:

Burwood Village Shopping Center  
Baltimore Annapolis Blvd. & W. Furnace Branch Road  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061  
(410) 684-2816

The dress code consists of the following:

### **For Boys:**

- Undecorated tan khaki pants or knee-length shorts
- The official Southwest Baltimore Charter School Logo T-shirt or polo shirt
- Plain navy sweater, any style
- Closed-toe shoes and socks

### **For Girls:**

- Undecorated tan khaki jumpers, skirts, knee-length shorts, or pants
- The official Southwest Baltimore Charter School Logo T-shirt or polo shirt
- Plain navy sweater, any style
- Closed-toe shoes and socks
- It is recommended that girls wear shorts under dresses, jumpers or skirts
- Functional hair accessories, such as hair bands that prevent hair from falling in a child's face, are permitted

*Inappropriate items not requiring a change of clothing will be confiscated and may only be retrieved by parents or guardians.*

### **Consequences for Non-Compliance with the Dress Code Policy**

Each student is required to follow the Southwest Baltimore Charter School dress code every day, unless otherwise formally notified. This is a school of choice, and if you choose to send you child to Southwest Baltimore Charter School, you are choosing to send them to school in uniform. If you do not wish to send your children to school in uniform, you are, in effect, choosing to send them to a non-uniform school. If you need financial assistance to purchase a uniform shirt, please see the Executive Director.

### **The following are violations of the Southwest Baltimore Charter School dress code. Students are not permitted to wear these items to school and a Code Alert will be issued.**

- Flip flops or sandals
- Shoes without socks
- Sunglasses (indoors)
- Scarves, headbands or hats (indoors)
- Head coverings are permitted for religious or medical reasons only.
- Leather clothing
- Colored t-shirts or other underclothing that shows through the required uniform shirt
- Sweat pants or athletic wear
- Printed, plaid, striped or other patterned or ornamented clothing
- Patches, designs, frayed bottoms, holes or objects stuck in clothing

**Due to the high incidence of asthma, we ask that you do not send your child to school wearing perfume, cologne, aftershave, or any other scented personal care product.**

### **BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM**

Sharing a meal together is a very important way to demonstrate family and community values. Students can bring their own lunches or purchase lunch from the cafeteria. Students and mealtime participants will be expected to demonstrate their best manners as well as good safety and sanitary habits, such as hand washing, cleaning up tables, and throwing away trash. Southwest Baltimore Charter School will serve breakfast and lunch, provided by Baltimore City Public Schools. **Breakfast will be served to eligible students from 7:45 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.** Please inform the school staff if your child has any food allergies, or requires certain nutritional items. We expect parents to work with us to provide the particular food items that their children may require.

**All parents** are asked to fill out a confidential application for free and reduced price meals. These forms are used in order for Southwest Baltimore Charter School to

qualify for additional federal funding. If children have not been approved for free lunch or do not bring in lunch money they will be given cold cereal and milk. We encourage you to pack a lunch for your child or send in lunch money until you have received notice that your child is eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch.

## MEDICATION

Students who have prescription medications that must be taken during the day must have the proper documentation completed before having the medicine administered in school. Medicine is only to be administered by a school nurse. **Teachers are not permitted to administer medications to students.**

*√ Before you send your children to school ensure their safety by providing SBCS with accurate emergency contact information and information about medications the student needs!*

Prescription medication must be kept in the original bottle that reflects the current dosage requirements. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered and should not be brought to school. **It is the parents' responsibility to give their children medications in a timely fashion. Please inform your child's teacher and the school nurse of any changes in medications.**

## FEES

Parents are occasionally asked to pay for school-wide student activities, such as field trips and special programming.

## SNACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Parents are asked, one time each month, to bring a healthy snack for their child's class. If this is a financial hardship for you, please notify your child's teacher.

Each student should bring school supplies to school during the first week of school. Please ask your child's teacher for a school supply list if you need one.

Occasionally families will be asked to contribute other community supplies such as snacks, wipes, glue sticks, etc. Your child's homeroom teacher will inform you when and what supplies are needed. This is never mandatory, and parents should only purchase supplies for the school if they have the financial means and desire to do so.

**At home**

We recommend that each student have a supply box at home for school projects and homework. **The supply box should contain:**

- Pencils
- Crayons
- Erasers
- Ruler
- Colored Pencils
- Pens
- Glue
- Scissors

### **LICE**

If you discover nits in your child's hair, **DO NOT SEND** him/her to school. Contact the school office immediately so other students can be checked. Any child found to have nits in his/her hair will not be admitted into school even if the child has already been treated with specially formulated shampoo. Because there is no way to know if nits are dead, they must be removed at home by comb or hand before the child can be re-admitted to the school. If nits are discovered at school, the student will be sent home.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost and found items are placed in a bin in the Main Office. Unclaimed items will be donated to a charity periodically throughout the school year. Please check this bin on a regular basis.

## **B. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND DISCIPLINE**

### **DOOR SECURITY**

No SBCS student should open the exit/entrance door for anyone or any reason. If they do, they will be referred to the office. Parents and visitors must enter at the Main Office door. Please do not pull on the door. Ring the buzzer for entry. Parents and visitors must report directly to James McHenry's Main Office on the first floor, sign in, and receive a *visitor pass* to the third floor.

### **OUR NEIGHBORS: JAMES MCHENRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Our school is located within a zoned school. Be courteous to our neighbors by abiding by the rules of the school and all local parking regulations. Follow the drop off and pick up procedures. *Never* leave a parked car in no-parking zones. *Never* double-park near the school. We strongly encourage parents to park on the street rather than in the parking lot.

### **ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINING OF STUDENTS**

#### **Code of Conduct for Adults at Southwest Baltimore Charter School**

All adults associated with Southwest Baltimore Charter School (administrators, teachers, staff, parents and volunteers) will serve as role models for the students of Southwest Baltimore Charter School. They will demonstrate excellent manners, polite language and use a modulated tone of voice. They will respect other people's opinions and pledge to resolve problems within the governance structure of Southwest Baltimore Charter School. Adults who do not observe these tenets may be asked to withdraw their families from Southwest Baltimore Charter School.

#### **Parents Disciplining Students in the School**

From time to time it may be appropriate for parents in the school to correct behavior that they witness. Usually this takes the form of politely re-directing the child to a more appropriate behavior. At all times, parents are to keep a calm and low tone of voice, never swear at or belittle the children being corrected, and never lay an angry hand on a child. If a verbal altercation has taken place between two or more students, a parent may try to resolve it by letting each child speak his or her mind without interrupting and by finding common ground and initiating apologies as necessary. If the children seem angry, if a problem was not resolved, or if the correction was more than the most minor of re-directions, the problem and the parent's intervention should be reported to the teacher as soon as possible.

If you witness children hitting, swearing, threatening or engaging in some other serious violation, please report your observations to an appropriate staff member. At that point the staff will take over all disciplinary actions. Final decisions regarding all disciplinary actions are the responsibility of the staff.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The Discipline Policy, which follows, is the complete policy as approved by the Baltimore City Public School System and the Southwest Baltimore Charter School Board. Our goal is to help the child and family to change the behavior of disruptive students. The teacher can only do that with the cooperation and support of the families of SBCS.

When a student displays inappropriate behavior in the classroom, the other students are affected by such behavior. Constant disruptions have negative effects on the academic program being delivered by the teachers at SBCS. Every effort will be made to assist children and families to resolve behavior issues. Children who are continually disruptive in class or who engage in persistent fighting or violence toward others will not be permitted to continue their education at SBCS.

The administration and staff will make every effort to build into the school program opportunities for physical activity. The school recognizes the need for outlets for students who feel the need to compete with their peers on a physical level.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE CODE (BCPSS)**

Violations of appropriate and responsible student conduct are divided into three categories. A descriptive example of a violation is given for each category, but is not limited to the description. Level 1 violations may be reported as Time Out or Code Alert Notices. Level 2 and 3 violations are immediately referred to the Director of Instruction or Middle School Director.

### **Level 1 (Time Out and/ or Code Alert Notice)**

#### **Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom, Hallway, or Bathroom**

- Talking too much, making unnecessary noise, throwing objects, distracting others, running, yelling.

#### **Verbal Harassment**

- Verbal attacks on other students, taunting of another student.

**Damaging Property**

- Inflicting minor damage to, school property and/or the property of others (value of property is less than \$50).

**Repeated Dress Code Violation**

See pages for the Dress Code

**Cutting Class, Truancy or Tardiness**

- Missing any class, homeroom or study hall without a valid reason provided by the child's guardian or staff member. A student may not leave a class, the building or school grounds without permission from the supervising staff member.

**Possession of Electronic Games**

- Video or other electronic games shall not be used during the school day. Show and Tell or other teacher directed activities are excluded.

**Possession, Distribution or Use of Tobacco Products****Level 2 (Referral to Director of Instruction or Middle School Director and Possible Enrollment Review)****Possession of Electronic Devices**

- Wearing or carrying electronic devices that are not medically prescribed or court-ordered. This includes beepers, cellular phones, radios, and CD players.

**Damaging/Destroying School Property or Property of Others**

- Destroying books, articles of clothing, automobiles, bikes or other personal property. This covers the impulsive infliction of minor damage to property. Resulting damages are greater than \$50 but less than \$200.

**Theft**

- Taking property without permission of the owner or custodian of the property.

**Verbal Assault**

- Verbally threatening to physically harm another person.

**Fighting**

- Using violence, force, coercion, or threat of violence to disrupt or obstruct the education process and/or cause bodily harm.

### **Verbal Abuse, Ethnic Slurs, Vulgar Statements or Gestures, Including the Distribution of Obscene Material**

- Directing vulgarity to another person verbally, electronically, by written words, in photographs, in drawings or with obscene gestures.

### **Misbehavior on Bus, School Transportation or School Field Work Experience**

- Throwing objects, using vulgar language, fighting, insubordination and any actions that may jeopardize the safety of others or do not uphold the high standards set at Southwest Baltimore Charter School.

### **Disorderly Conduct**

- Incidents of disruptive behavior which prevent the teacher from starting, continuing or completing an activity or lesson.

### **Cheating/Copying the Work of Another**

- Plagiarizing or cheating on any, homework, quiz, test, paper, project or report assigned by a teacher.

### **Level 3 (Immediate Transfer to Zoned School)**

#### **Assault on School Staff**

- Any act intended to inflict harm including throwing objects, hitting, pushing, shoving, biting and/or kicking.

#### **Possession of Drugs/Alcohol**

- Possessing, offering to sell, or claiming to sell illegal drugs, controlled substances, dangerous drugs, prescription drugs, intoxicating substances, alcohol or counterfeit drugs. Prescription and non-prescription or over the counter medications must be kept and taken in the school office or school nurse's office, unless student is authorized by Director of Instruction to do otherwise.

#### **Alcohol and Drug Use**

- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on school property or at and activity sponsored by the school.

#### **Possession of Weapons and Explosives**

- Possessing, handling, transmitting, concealing, or using explosive devices and/or weapon (such as rifles, guns, knives, brass knuckles, chains, pipes, nunchuks, or

look-alikes.) This includes using any object as a weapon with the intent or in any manner likely to cause injury to another person.

### **Arson**

- Willfully causing damage to property or harm to any person or participating in the damaging of property or inflicting harm to a person by means of fire.

### **False Fire Alarm or Bomb Threat**

- Causing the fire alarm to be sounded, unless an emergency exists, or falsely communicating that a bomb is located in a building or on the premises of a Baltimore City public school or extracurricular event sponsored by the school.

### **Vandalizing, Damaging, Defacing, or Destroying School Property**

- Premeditated and willful destruction of school property and/or impairing the use of school property resulting in damages greater than \$200.

### **Violent Behavior/Assault, Vicious Fighting**

- Being in physical combat with another where blows are being delivered or exchanged. A student may not physically attack or fight with another person. Instigation or initiation of any fight.

### **Extortion, Coercion, Blackmail, and Robbery**

- Taking or attempting to take from another person property by force or threat of force expressed or implied. A student may not make another person do any act against his/her will by force or threat of force, expressed or implied.

### **Sexual Harassment**

- Unwelcome sexual advances, any request for sexual favors and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a student that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive enough to create a hostile or abusive educational environment and limit another person's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

- Indecent exposure unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, harassment, and/or public masturbation.

### **Sexual Assault/Rape**

- Sexually attacking or abusing another person.

## **Trespassing**

- Entering school property - either the building or campus - without permission when school is in session. This includes electronically accessing any computerized systems of the school without permission. Trespassing also includes: returning to school without permission while under suspension, expulsion, or removal; or entering the premises of a public school other than the student's assigned school, without authorization from the person in charge.

**Note: By mandate of the Baltimore City Public School System, all Level 2 and Level 3 violations, as well as all suspensions are recorded with the School System and become a part of the student's permanent file.**

## **STRATEGIES, CONSEQUENCES, AND DEFINITIONS (SBCS)**

### **Choice Theory Practices**

The school uses the principles of Choice Theory to govern classroom management and school governance. Choice Theory helps all participants to recognize the antecedents and consequences of their choices. It also helps children (and adults) become intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated. Choice Theory teaches that, in order to help children make good choices, we must help them meet their need for love and belonging; power; fun; freedom; and survival. Choice Theory, we hope, will help all the members of the SBCS community make positive, self-empowering choices. Training will be offered to parents and other school community members from time to time throughout the school year.

## **STUDENT ACTIONS AND SBCS RESPONSES**

At Southwest Baltimore Charter School we attempt to view and handle all student actions with the perspective that our children are unique individuals. We recognize that children have different needs, talents, and histories, and try to use this information when planning responses and proactive intervention. Still, in order to maintain a safe, cheerful, and nurturing environment that is conducive to student learning, we must hold all students accountable for certain standards of behavior. Following is a list of school responses for major breaches of school policy. Responses may be more severe if a child is particularly aggressive or continues to break school policy. This chart is not meant to take the place of BCPSS's Code of Conduct; rather, it is an accessible tool of reference for faculty, students, and parents.

<b>Student's Action</b>	<b>Typical School Responses</b>
purposely hurt someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• removal from classroom/sent home</li> </ul>
purposely threaten someone, use ethnic or gender slurs, make obscene or vulgar gestures toward someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• removal from classroom/sent home</li> </ul>
leave Southwest Baltimore Charter School property without permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• removal from classroom/sent home</li> </ul>
purposely vandalize school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• restitution</li> <li>• enrollment review if over \$200 damage</li> </ul>
bring a weapon or look-alike weapon onto school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• suspension</li> <li>• enrollment review</li> </ul>
bring tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances onto school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• suspension</li> <li>• enrollment review</li> </ul>
act in a disruptive manner that impedes other students' learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• temporary removal from classroom</li> </ul>
make purposeful, unwelcome sexual advances against someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent notification</li> <li>• suspension</li> <li>• enrollment review</li> </ul>

(Referral and classroom work must accompany a student who is referred to the office.)

### **The Student Support Team (SST)**

SST is another strategy used to help students at SBCS. It is used as a proactive intervention at the request of a staff member or parent. The purpose of the SST is to address academic and behavior problems early by having several members of the staff along with the family assess the child from multiple vantage points. The team then brainstorms to develop reasonable objectives and remedies for the student through positive behavior modification as well as by arranging for further support when necessary such as remedial help, tutoring, or counseling. In general the SST consists of the Director of Instruction or a designee of the Director of Instruction, the team leader, the classroom teacher, the parent or guardian of the child, the social worker and/or inclusion specialist, and any relevant staff member. Referrals to SST can be made by any staff member or at the parent.

### **In-Class Time Out**

When the child is separated from the group and given the opportunity to move back into the group as soon as possible.

### **Out-of-Class Time Out**

From time to time a student may need to be removed from the classroom due to frustration or other emotions that may prevent him/her from completing assignments or because s/he is exhibiting disruptive behavior that prevents the rest of the class from proceeding. The student may be sent to another classroom or with a Code Alert Notice to the administration offices to complete work, calm down, and/or refocus. Parents will be notified through written correspondence when their child has received a Code Alert Notice.

### **Loss of Privileges**

A student may be excluded from extracurricular and athletic activities.

### **Referral to Director of Instruction, Middle School Director or Student Support Coordinator**

Infractions of a serious nature, including but not limited to the Student Discipline Code, will result in the student being referred to the administrative team. The Director of Instruction, Middle School Director, or Student Support Coordinator will speak with all those involved and will make a determination as to the appropriate action to be taken.

### **Parental Meeting with Director of Instruction or Middle School Director**

At the discretion of the Director of Instruction and Middle School Director, parents may be required to meet with the administrative team to discuss a student's or family's situation in relationship to the school. In addition, no student can return to the school after a suspension until the parent/guardian has met with the Student Support Coordinator or his designee.

### **In-School Suspension**

A student's exclusion from the regular education program for disciplinary reasons by the school Director of Instruction or Middle School Director or their designee may occur as a result of a student violating school policy. The student is required to attend school but will not participate with his/her class. In-school suspension will not exceed more than ten days.

### **Short-term Suspension**

A student may be removed from school as a result of a violation. Short-term suspensions may not exceed ten days.

### **Enrollment Review**

Southwest Baltimore Charter School is a school of choice and not a zoned school for any child. For students and families who do not comply with Southwest Baltimore Charter School's policies, it may become necessary to review the appropriateness of SBCS as a school for that child/family. **Failure to comply with SBCS policies will result in a student being transferred to his/her zoned school as stated in the Parent Contract.** An Enrollment Review is conducted with the family by the Director of Instruction and/or a designee. A meeting will take place with the family.

Items to be considered but not limited to for Enrollment Review: completion of parent hours, homework completion, tardiness, attendance, Dress Code, Adult Code of Conduct, and student adherence to the Discipline Policy.

### **Alternative Placement**

This may be a program outside of a student's assigned school designed for at-risk and/or disruptive students, or a transfer to another school when a specialized program is not available.

### **Transfer to Zoned School**

**A student may be removed from Southwest Baltimore Charter School and transferred to his/her zoned school for disciplinary reasons or for reasons of non-compliance with Southwest Baltimore Charter School policies and procedures.**

## C. COMMUNICATION AND ROLES

### COMMUNICATION

#### How do we communicate with each another?

Southwest Baltimore Charter School has numerous mechanisms built into its structure to ensure that we communicate effectively and efficiently.

**Backpacks and Homework Folders** - Your child's backpack is your first line of communication to and from the school. Newsletters, permission slips, memoranda on various subjects, notes from teachers and staff as well as all homework assignments are put in your child's homework DAILY. Please check the backpacks every day. Stress to your child the importance of safely carrying messages to and from school.

*Anything other than classroom work and notices from the teacher must be submitted to the Executive Director by the previous Wednesday for approval before it can go home in the Homework Folder.*

☞ **Look for news!! Look for updates in:**

- **student backpack**
- **student Monday Folder**
- **SBCS Newsletter**
- **Info Packet**
- **Website**

#### **Parent Representatives** –Two Parent

Representatives for each homeroom are selected in the fall. Their job begins immediately after the election. Parent Representatives are required to keep in touch with the families in their grade on a regular basis. Your Parent Representative is a great first step in seeking to address your concerns, and the Reps help teachers communicate with families about classroom needs and special projects.

**Monthly Update** is sent home at the beginning of every month. In it you will find calendar information, notice of upcoming meetings, agendas, summaries of meeting minutes, features, updates, and volunteer opportunities among other items.

**Southwest Baltimore Charter School Newsletter** is produced two times a year and is sent to parents, funders, community members, and other stakeholders. In it you will find features, accomplishments, student work, and articles by teachers.

**Southwest Baltimore Charter School Website** is found at [www.sbc school.org](http://www.sbc school.org). On the website you will find the calendar, staff information, agendas, minutes of meeting, links to teacher web pages and much, much more! Check the website frequently to keep up to date with SBCS news.

**Bulletin Boards** in the school provide general information and announcements from the administration, teachers, staff, Parent Representatives, the PTO, the Board of Directors,

and Parent Project Teams. Family members are encouraged to check all bulletin boards regularly.

**Calendars** are sent home monthly and are posted in the first floor hall. Calendars record all events, meetings, and committee activities and show what day each child will be bringing in snack for his or her classmates. This year, Southwest Baltimore Charter School will be on a trimester schedule. Report cards will be distributed three times during the year, which is different from the BCPSS report card distribution schedule. Please consult the SBCS website for report card dates.

**The Southwest Baltimore Charter School Family Handbook** contains reference information on school policies and procedures. Please read the entire handbook. Ask the staff or Parent Representatives for any items that may need clarification.

**Mailboxes** for all key personnel and committees are located in the office.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

At each grade level, students are expected to cooperate with staff members and other students in an appropriate manner. It is the responsibility of the staff and parents to help students understand the importance of rules especially in a community setting.

Students are expected to:

- ◆ Dress according to the dress code.
- ◆ Complete homework assignments.
- ◆ Walk quietly through the hall and stairways.
- ◆ Use safe and appropriate behavior in all play areas.
- ◆ Ask and receive permission to use the personal property of others.
- ◆ Maintain school property and the property of others in good condition.
- ◆ Exercise good manners and use proper language at all times, including lunch or other gatherings for meals and refreshments, play areas, and on field trips.
- ◆ **Refrain from bringing anything from home that is distracting in the classroom. This includes items such as candy, gum, toys, medicine, sports equipment, electronic devices and personal valuables unless approved by the teacher. Items that are confiscated by the teacher will be returned at his/her discretion.**
- ◆ Bring no play or real weapons to school at any time. Doing so will lead to an automatic suspension.
- ◆ Carry no money, unless it is for school related activities (lunch, breakfast, trips) and is in an envelope with the student's name and grade.

## TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers agree to:

- ◆ Provide an educationally challenging curriculum and instruction.
- ◆ Stay abreast of current educational practices and research.
- ◆ Create lesson plans based on the school-approved curriculum.
- ◆ Create a nurturing and supportive environment to foster each child's academic, social and emotional growth.
- ◆ Employ a mode of dress that models appropriate attire for students.
- ◆ Respect each child's individuality.
- ◆ Conduct regular assessments of their students and complete report cards in a timely manner.
- ◆ Communicate academic progress and concerns to the family and appropriate support staff in a timely fashion.
- ◆ Share work examples with parents regularly via the Monday Folders.
- ◆ Discipline students fairly and consistently. Follow established discipline policies and procedures.
- ◆ Hold meaningful parent and teacher conferences.
- ◆ Speak with parents on a regular basis about positive behaviors as well as problems.
- ◆ Respect parents' interests and concerns.
- ◆ Participate in Parent Project Team meetings and school functions.
- ◆ Encourage and facilitate parents' participation in the school.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and families agree to:

- ◆ Take an active and supportive role in their children(s)' education at Southwest Baltimore Charter School.
- ◆ Send children to school ready to learn each day. **A good night's sleep and healthy breakfast are essential.**
- ◆ Follow the student dress code.
- ◆ Be punctual in dropping off and picking-up your child.
- ◆ Avoid early dismissal.
- ◆ See that your child completes all required homework.
- ◆ Spend time reading with your children.
- ◆ Make certain that the student has adequate school supplies.
- ◆ Promote your child's participation in all programs that are a part of the complete curriculum including but not limited to foreign language, art, music, and physical education.
- ◆ Attend all parent/teacher conferences.
- ◆ Make certain that all medications are given in a timely fashion.
- ◆ Inform teachers of any changes in your child's medication.

- ◆ Comply with the school's discipline policy and the Code of Conduct for Adults.
- ◆ Complete and record all required parent hours in accordance with all Volunteer Policy and Procedures.
- ◆ Report to the office and sign in every time you enter the school.
- ◆ Attend orientation sessions and any additional parent meetings or workshops held during the school year.
- ◆ Read and respond to all communications that are sent home with the student.
- ◆ Keep and update the Family Handbook.
- ◆ Take care of financial obligations in a timely manner, including program fees and proceeds from fundraising activities.
- ◆ Resolve concerns and problems within the governance structure of Southwest Baltimore Charter School.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

### Philosophy

The involvement of parents in the operation of Southwest Baltimore Charter School is critical to the existence of the school. Parents who take an active part in their children's development also develop and strengthen their own skills. Teachers and other staff need help from volunteers. Staff and parents get better acquainted and learn from each other through volunteerism.

The purposes of involving the parents are:

- To make the school fiscally viable by providing an academically enriched program with limited funds;
- To empower parents by giving them a direct stake in the school's success;
- To develop a strong working community that contributes to the stability and renewal of the entire community; and
- To provide an example to the students that they can have a direct, positive effect on institutions that affect their lives.

See a need at the school? You are welcomed and encouraged to work with the teachers, staff, administration, and any governance bodies or appropriate committees to develop your own volunteer activities. Parents could create a peer mentoring/conflict resolution program, create Hospitality and Diversity Groups, organize and conduct a fundraiser for Artscape, etc. If you see a special need or have a special talent, work with the Executive Director to make your vision a reality!

## D. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

### THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The administration of the school is based on a team management approach that facilitates a shared consensus of the school's purpose and goals among parents, faculty and staff, community and Board Members.

#### **Southwest Baltimore Charter School, Inc.**

Southwest Baltimore Charter School, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization. The business affairs are managed under the direction of its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors includes parents, teachers and staff of Southwest Baltimore Charter School as well as civic and educational leaders from the local community. Board Members are elected by the Members of Southwest Baltimore Charter School at an annual meeting each July. Members of the SBCS board include teaching professionals, business people, community members, and parents of SBCS students. The Board of Directors selects its own officers.

The Board of Directors sets the broad strategic mandate for the school. The Board reviews and approves the School Improvement Plan, and makes fundamental decisions such as significant changes in the school facility or operating budget. Any changes to the approved plan that significantly affects the school's goals are reviewed and voted upon by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for hiring and evaluating the Executive Director. The Board of Directors is responsible for all contractual undertakings including the contract with BCPSS. The Board also takes the lead in generating sufficient funds and adequate facilities to carry out the mandate of SBCS. The by-laws are available for review by any interested party.

#### **Board Structure**

As stated in the by-laws of Southwest Baltimore Charter School, Inc. the number Director of Instructions that serve on the board shall consist of no more than 15 people and no less than 7. Members of the Board agree to:

- Attend regular Board meetings and serve on at least one committee;
- Support and participate in fundraising efforts; and
- Work actively in support of the goals and objectives of the school.

### ADMINISTRATION

#### **Executive Director**

The Executive Director is the administrative leader of the school. The Executive Director is responsible for implementing all policies and procedures approved by the Board, and for all decisions and actions required for the administration of the school.

As the liaison to the BCPSS, the Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that Southwest Baltimore Charter School meets all the requirements of a Baltimore City Public School, including special education.

The Executive Director and the Board of Southwest Baltimore Charter School, Inc. will evaluate the Director of Instruction in consultation with the Area Executive Office of the Baltimore City Public School System.

### **Director of Instruction**

The Director of Instruction is one of the academic leaders of the school. Reporting to the SBCS Executive Director, and the Baltimore City Public School System, the Director of Instruction serves as a visible, integral member of the school community and as a role model for students, faculty, staff and parents. Along with the Board of Directors and the Executive Director, the Director of Instruction shapes and upholds the school's mission, goals and standards.

The Director of Instruction is responsible for supervising faculty and staff, for recruiting well-qualified faculty and staff and for retaining them by implementing sound professional development and evaluation programs.

### **Middle School Director**

The Middle School Director is one of the academic leaders of the school, and her main responsibility is to support grades 4 and 5. The Middle School Director serves as a visible, integral member of the school community and as a role model for students, faculty, staff and parents. Along with the Board of Directors and the Executive Director, the Middle School Director shapes and upholds the school's mission, goals and standards.

The Middle School Director is responsible for supervising faculty and staff, for recruiting well-qualified faculty and staff and for retaining them by implementing sound professional development and evaluation programs. She is also responsible for creating the blueprint for the middle school.

## **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The School Leadership Team consists of parents, community representatives, teachers, administration and the board. The School Leadership Team consists of 4 subcommittees: Parent Involvement, Culture and Community, Logistics, and Pedagogy. These subcommittees also have members from all stakeholding groups.

## **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) of SBCS is comprised of SBCS parents and teachers. The PTO meets monthly. The purpose of the PTO is:

- to give parents a voice in the governance of the school
- to build school spirit
- to support the mission of the school.

## **PARENT REPRESENTATIVES**

### **Two Parent Representatives Per Grade**

SBCS is a small school with small class sizes and two classes at each grade level. One of our goals is to create a community within each grade level. In order to achieve this sense of comraderie, two parents from each classroom will be asked to serve as Parent Representatives. The Parent Representatives are the people to call when you need to know when the next PTO meeting it, or what homework your child missed, or what the next field trip will be. The Parent Representatives' responsibility is to talk to each family at least once a month to hear how things are going for your child at SBCS, and to keep you up-to-date on all school happenings.

Parent Representatives from each class divide their families into two groups of 10 families each, and share responsibility for maintaining regular contact with all families in the class. The teacher meets with the Parent Representatives at least once a month (this "meeting" can be conducted via the phone or through email) to address any matters that pertain to the whole class as they arise. When a family is low on parent hours, the Parent Representative will contact the family and assist in identifying involvement opportunities at the school. For instance, if the teacher needs materials for a special project, the Parent Representatives will communicate the need to their assigned families.

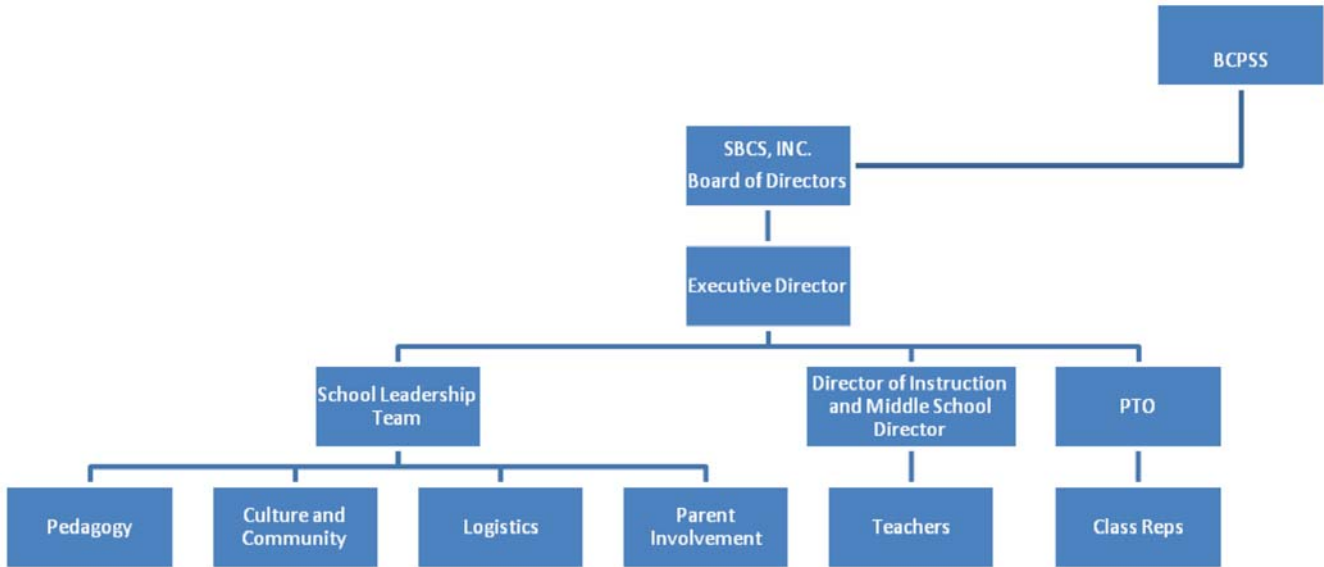
## **SUGGESTION BOX**

One way to improve the school or to resolve a problem you are experiencing at the school is to write down your thoughts and put them in the Suggestion Box. Out of the Suggestion Box come good ideas for handling a variety of concerns.

The Suggestion Box is not intended to replace direct communication with your child's teacher, the administration, or the School Policy Committee. The goal of the Suggestion Box is to implement creative solutions and resolve issues in a manner that reduces conflict and empowers all parties to constructively and civilly engage in problem-solving strategies.

All suggestions will be reviewed, logged and forwarded to the appropriate party (the PTO, a staff person, administrators, or the Board of Directors). Copies of suggestion are kept in a binder in the main office and are available for review at any time by all SBCS parents and staff. A status report of recently submitted suggestion forms is provided at each PTO meeting.

**GOVERNANCE CHART**



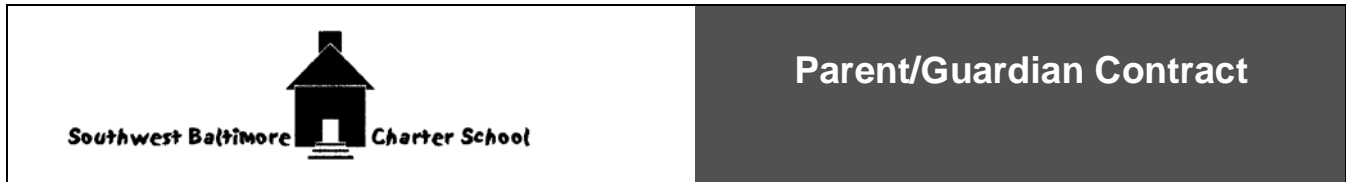
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Advises

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Reports to

## **E. PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT** **(For reference only. Please do not send in to school.)**



The success of Southwest Baltimore Charter School depends on the full cooperation and participation of every family. Parents and students are responsible for upholding the school rules, policies and procedures listed in the Southwest Baltimore Charter School Handbook and adopted by the Board of Directors, Executive Director and Director of Instruction throughout the year.

**Adults will adhere to all SBCS policies and responsibilities as described in the Southwest Baltimore Charter School Handbook. Adults who do not observe these tenets will be asked to withdraw their children from Southwest Baltimore Charter School.**

Parents and Guardians agree to:

### **Abide by the “Code of Conduct for Adults”**

All adults associated with Southwest Baltimore Charter School will serve as role models for the students of Southwest Baltimore Charter School. They will demonstrate excellent manners, polite language, and modulated tone of voice; will not hit their own or others’ children; will respect other people’s opinions; and pledge to resolve problems within the governance structure of Southwest Baltimore Charter School (outlined in the Handbook). Adults who do not observe these tenets will be asked to withdraw their children from Southwest Baltimore Charter School.

### **See that children complete and turn in all required homework**

Failure to complete homework impedes a student’s progress. Repeated violations may be addressed with academic and/or disciplinary action, as outlined in the Southwest Baltimore Charter School “Homework Policy.” Failure to complete at least 80% of assigned homework may lead to a student being required to transfer from Southwest Baltimore Charter School.

### **Comply with the Dress Code**

The uniform is to be worn every day. The Dress Code and consequences for Dress Code violations are described in the Handbook.

### **Comply with the school’s discipline policy**

Student conduct must support Southwest Baltimore Charter School's academic mission. Disruptive, violent, destructive, and unsafe behavior shall not be tolerated. The Southwest Baltimore Charter School Handbook includes our discipline policy and specifies unacceptable activities and behaviors. Children who are continually disruptive in class or who engage in persistent fighting or violence toward others will not be permitted to continue their education at Southwest Baltimore Charter School. Parents and guardians agree to explain the discipline policy and student conduct rules to their children and to actively support full and fair enforcement.

**Meet financial obligations**

- a) All fees for field trips, student activities, instructional programs, or extracurricular activities must be paid in a timely fashion.
- b) Money collected in fundraisers and related records of fundraisers must be turned in to the school by the established deadlines.
- c) Southwest Baltimore Charter School will pass any bank charges for insufficient funds, etc. back to the family who made the payment. These funds must be paid back to the school in order to be considered in "good standing."

**Additional parent responsibilities include but are not limited to**

- a) Dropping off and picking up children on time and following dismissal procedures
- b) **Ensuring that children have no more than 4 unexcused absences in a given school year**
- c) Providing up-to-date emergency contact information
- e) Ensuring that children attend school on testing days, unless excused by a doctor
- f) Attending report card conferences each trimester
- g) Reading and responding in a timely manner to all communications that are sent home with the student

I agree to follow all rules, policies, and procedures outlined in the School Handbook and adopted throughout the year by the Board of Directors. The Board has the right to amend these policies and procedures as needed. I understand that my commitment to Southwest Baltimore Charter School is voluntarily made, and that a decision to not sign the contract is a decision to enroll my children in a different school.