



176 Cumberland Avenue
Wethersfield, CT 06109
860-296-2090

Family Handbook

2023-2024



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Changing circumstances, such as the need for health and safety protocols, may cause the policies and guidelines in this handbook to be revised and/or superseded. Any such changes will be communicated as soon as the change is made.

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A VIEW OF THE CULTURE, CURRICULUM, AND COLLECTIVE EXPECTATIONS OF DISCOVERY ACADEMY

Description

CREC's Discovery Academy focuses on developing strong foundational knowledge in four interrelated domains of STEM literacy: science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The school uses a variety of teaching methods and instructional strategies which emphasize thematic, inquiry-based, and discovery learning. The 5E Instructional Model (i.e., engage, explore, explain, elaborate and evaluate) is used to help students build their own understanding and create new knowledge through experiences and ideas.

Vision Statement

The vision of CREC's Discovery Academy is to provide a collaborative, safe learning environment that nurtures scientific curiosity, encourages innovation, empowers critical thinkers and challenges students to explore the unknown.

Mission Statement

The mission of CREC's Discovery Academy is to engage students in problem-solving and inquiry-based learning experiences that will prepare students for life in a technology-oriented, interconnected world.

Our Goals

The goals of CREC's Discovery Academy are to:

- Promote racial integration and reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation
- Foster an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural diversity
- Provide a quality, integrated educational program focusing on science and technology in a cooperative, problem-solving environment
- Provide a high-quality, challenging elementary education so students reach grade level academic benchmarks and are prepared to exceed state and national standards of achievement

The STEM Theme

At the Discovery Academy, **S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering and **M**athematics (**STEM**) will be integrated across the curriculum. Using children's natural curiosity, our students will learn reading, writing, and collaborative skills in an integrated approach. In all classrooms, the overarching theme will be STEM. Our young scientists will study the world by carefully observing, recording, and analyzing their environment to test their ideas.

Students will be supported in their individual interests, abilities, and needs. As we help our children become scientifically literate, they will learn to solve problems by thinking creatively and critically. Through outdoor investigations, students will understand their environment and its problems. Further, the use of inquiry-based instruction will be infused into language arts, mathematics and social studies lessons. This comprehensive and integrated approach will more fully prepare our students to achieve success in a rapidly changing world.

Our STEM-based theme is developed from the *Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)*. Our students will **learn, not just memorize**, knowledge in physical, life, and earth science. The program fosters persistence, open-mindedness, and an appreciation of science and the beauty of nature in our daily lives. To support our learning objectives, teachers and students use information technology including laptops, SMART Boards, SMART Tablets and iPads. Like adult scientists and engineers, students will use creative methods to solve problems, design and make models, as well as revise their work.

The **inquiry process skills** that support students' learning include:

- Observing – using the 5 senses to find out about the world
- Communicating – sharing information (speaking, writing, graphing, sketching, photographing)
- Classifying – observing similarities and differences of objects in order to group them
- Estimating & Measuring – making observations using numbers, often with tools (rulers)

- Inferring – drawing a conclusion from observations
- Predicting – using prior knowledge to make an educated guess
- Defining Operationally – creating a definition based on experiences
- Making Models – making a physical representation of an idea or object
- Investigating – hypothesizing, collecting & interpreting data, graphing, controlling variables

The Instructional Model

Our core learning cycle is based on the 5E instructional model. This model is flexibly used and adjusted depending on the age of the child and the scientific problem being studied. The 5Es are a stepwise teaching and learning strategy: **Engage**, **Explore**, **Explain**, **Elaborate**, and **Evaluate**.

The 5 stages are:

- **Engage** – promotes interest and connections to past understandings
- **Explore** – involvement with phenomena and materials to encourage new understandings
- **Explain** – communicate what has been learned
- **Elaborate** – teachers and students determine how much learning has taken place
- **Evaluate** – teachers and students check student understanding of knowledge and concepts by using rubrics, teacher observation, student interviews, projects, science notebooks, and portfolios



The advantage of an inquiry model is that it allows students to be in charge of their learning and use their teachers as guides. Your child's classroom teacher, in collaboration with a STEM theme coach, will introduce, implement and evaluate their progress in scientific knowledge and skills. At home, parents can support the STEM theme by listening to, discovering with, and seeing the world through the eyes of their child. Working together, our students, their families, and the school can prepare the next generation to meet the challenges they will face in the future.

Community Science Partners

Discovery Academy collaborates with its community partners – **the Connecticut Science Center, the Children's Science Museum and the Roaring Brook Nature Center** – to maintain a hands-on, inquiry-based and developmentally appropriate STEM curriculum. These organizations support high quality science experiences and offer teaching training programs on integrating science into the curriculum. Discovery Academy students may participate in field studies at these locations, and outreach programs will bring these museum offerings into our classrooms. The association with these groups will enrich and deepen students' scientific experiences. Discovery Academy will keep families notified of our partners' offerings and how families can take advantage of their programs and exhibits on their own.

Discovery Academy PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)

Discovery Academy teachers and parents work together through the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Families are encouraged to join the PTO with registration opportunities at the Back to School Open House and throughout the year by contacting any of the officers listed in the **Appendix**. Meetings are held each month at the school. Agenda items and times will be emailed to families prior to each meeting. The PTO sponsors fundraisers, hosts presentations on topics of interest to families, provides assistance to the teachers, and organizes fun, community building events and activities. The PTO's Mission Statement is as follows:

1. Encourage a positive, supportive and diverse atmosphere to enhance the students' educational and extracurricular experiences;
2. Raise and expend funds to enhance and improve the educational quality of Discovery Academy, including, but not limited to, financial support to classroom teachers, purchase of books and materials, procurement of educational assemblies, and development and promotion of after-school enrichment programs;
3. Strive to achieve a closer working relationship between teachers, parents and

- community so that parents, administrators and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of the students; and
4. Keep abreast of local district objectives and acquaint or inform the committee on any school issues.

Discovery Academy Website and Media

Please visit our Discovery Academy website at <http://da.crecschools.org> for the most current information, resources, photos, blogs, and events. You can also find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CRECDiscoveryAcademy> and follow us on Twitter [@CREC_Discovery](https://twitter.com/CREC_Discovery). Our school utilizes Seesaw, an online tool that provides classroom and school updates. All families will receive login information at the start of the school year. Families will have the capability of messaging the classroom teacher through Seesaw.

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL'S (CREC) GUIDING BELIEFS

Every student can learn at higher levels and therefore must have access to all educational resources of the region through the system of public schools served by CREC. To that end, our mission is to work with boards of education in the Capitol Region to improve the quality of public education for all learners.

In order to achieve its mission, CREC will:

- Promote cooperation and collaboration with local school districts and other organizations committed to improved quality of public education
- Provide cost effective services to member districts and other clients
- Listen and respond to client needs for the improved quality of its services and its ability to identify and share quality services of its member districts and other organizations committed to public education. CREC schools strive to meet district needs and the needs of students

CREC believes that:

- All students can learn
- Administrators and staff can make a difference in the lives and learning of our students
- A comprehensive administrator evaluation plan, including a professional growth component, is essential to achieve our goal
- Learning is a lifelong responsibility

CREC's Core Values:

- Act With Courage
- Expect Excellence
- Demand Equity
- Embrace Collaboration

CREC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement:

“CREC is an intentionally diverse social justice organization whose members work to acknowledge, respect, and empathize with people of all different identifiers, such as race, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, education, age, ability, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, language, nationality, and religion. We commit to affirm and honor the lived experiences of others, to willingly challenge inherited beliefs and ideologies, and consequently learn, grow, and serve.”

The Discovery Academy Learning Community

The learning community of Discovery Academy comprises the school, students, families, friends, contributing organizations and the greater community. As partners in this learning community, we are dedicated to the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of the whole person. Accordingly, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that we each can:

- Learn to the best of our ability
- Feel safe as well as be safe
- Be treated with respect

Each one of us as a separate person and all of us together, will:

- Care for ourselves, other people, all property and the environment
- Celebrate our achievements and have a positive attitude with a focus on growth and improvement
- Respect the viewpoints of every person
- Respect the culture and diversity of all members of the community
- Approach all tasks and each other with an open mind and a focus on solutions
- Work as a team to build a learning community
- Use good judgment and reflect on our daily practice
- Take healthy and positive risks that promote growth and achievement

Equal Opportunity

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such a basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Carlos Figueroa is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Contacting your School Nurse

Matthew Cushing

mcushing@crec.org

(860) 296-2090, select option for school nurse from the voice menu.

Discovery Academy promotes good health for all members of our community. It is strongly suggested that we all comply with the following to keep our students healthy and fit:

Administration of Medication in School

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the school nurse. All medication must be in the original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's, dentist's or advanced practice registered nurse's

statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an epipen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or epipen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the practitioner and parent/guardian is required.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a "qualified school employee" may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to his/her child.

A student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parents/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glucagon injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physician are required.

The district does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Communicable Disease Policy

If your child has a fever (100° or higher), please keep him or her at home until he or she has been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (such as Tylenol, Advil or Motrin). If your child has been vomiting and or has been having diarrhea, please keep them home until 24 hours after their last episode.

The following illnesses will require students to be sent home by the nurse:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea – student may return 24 hours after last episode
- Fever (100° or higher) – student may return after 24 fever free hours
- Severe or continuous cough
- Rash on body or face
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) – student may return after 24 hours on medication and a note from the physician ● Impetigo (bacterial skin infection) – student may return after 24 hours on medication and a note from the physician
- Strep – student may return after 24 hours on medication and a note from the physician ● Lice – student will be dismissed at the end of the school day and may return after receiving treatment for the lice.
- Scabies – student may return after 24 hours of treatment and a note from the physician. ● Ringworm on the body – student may be at school while being treated for ringworm at the discretion of the nurse. Antifungal treatment must be in place and the area must be covered while at school. ● Ringworm of the scalp – student may return to school after 24 hours on prescribed medication and a note from the physician.
- Fifth's Disease – student will be allowed in school unless has temperature is 100° or higher. ● Chickenpox and other childhood illnesses – school attendance will be determined in collaboration with the student's medical provider.

If your child has any other illness, please report it to the school nurse.

Emergency Medical Treatment

Parents are required to complete the emergency contact forms on a yearly basis. This form gives details of contact information as well as physician, hospital of preference, medical conditions and insurance company and numbers. It is important that a parent contacts the school if there are any changes to any of the information on the forms. **This form is of utmost importance for your child's safety.**



Health Registration Requirements

Immunizations & Physicals

State of CT Department of Education Health Assessment Record (Students in K – 12)

In order to provide the best educational experience, school personnel must understand your child's health needs. School health forms request information from you (Part I) which will also be helpful to the health care provider when he or she completes the medical evaluation form (part II).

State law requires complete primary immunizations and a health assessment by a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a registered nurse licensed pursuant to chapter 378, a physician assistant licensed pursuant to chapter 370, a school medical advisor or a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a physician assistant stationed at any military base prior to school entrance in Connecticut (*C.G.S. Secs. 10-204a and 10-206*).

State of CT Department of Education Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (Pre-K only)

In order to provide the best experience, early childhood providers must understand your child's health needs. The health form requires information from you (Part I) which will be helpful to the health care provider when he or she completes the health evaluation (Part II). State law requires complete primary immunizations and a health assessment by a physician, an advanced practice registered nurse, a physician assistant, or a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a physician assistant stationed at any military base prior to entering an early childhood program in Connecticut.

Parents of students attending Discovery Academy for the first time will need to present:

- A certificate of immunization;
- Proof of medical examination in the past 12 months (State of CT Health Assessment Record form).

Physical Examinations

Under state regulations, a student must have a physical examination prior to entrance into Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten or if the student is entering school from out-of-state or country. This physical examination must be within one year prior to entrance. The school must receive a physician's signed State of Connecticut medical form complete with immunizations prior to entrance into the school. If immunizations were denied due to medical or religious reasons, please submit a legal waiver form.

Vision, hearing and scoliosis screenings are conducted per state regulations for students in kindergarten through grade five. Results of these examinations are noted on the child's cumulative health record. The nurse will notify the parent if a child has not passed any of the screenings. The parent is always welcome to request additional vision and hearing screenings.

Psychotropic Drug Use

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

PROCEDURES

Admission / Lottery Process

1. Connecticut residents are eligible to apply for admission to Discovery Academy via a lottery. 2. A lottery will be held in the spring for all children applying to Discovery Academy. Children must turn 3 years old during the calendar year (January 1st through December 31st) for which they are applying (e.g., 2019 – 2020 must be 3 by December 31, 2020.) Race/Ethnicity/Gender data will not be used for admission purposes. Those accepted will be notified by mail. When an applicant is selected in the lottery, parents need to accept or decline the position within the time frame designated in the acceptance letter, or their lottery position will be given to the next applicant.
3. All applications must be received no later than the time and date designated on the CREC website (www.crec.org). No exceptions to the application deadline date will be allowed.
4. Preference will be given, but not guaranteed, to siblings of current students at Discovery Academy, provided the application is received before the application deadline. Current students are defined as students enrolled in the school during the same year in which the sibling is enrolled. Limitations based on class size will always take priority over sibling preference.
5. If there is a change in residency, the office must be notified. Any move from Hartford to a suburban district or from a suburb to Hartford or from one suburb to another may impact the child's placement.

Attendance

Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal (Full Policy: [5113](#))

Policy Summary:

Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education.

Time lost from

class is a lost instructional opportunity. The CREC Council requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent. Guidelines for addressing absences and tardiness are contained below.



“A student is considered to be ‘in attendance’ if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered absent.” (CT State Board of Education)

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the sending school district offices.

A student must remain in school until age 18, unless he/she graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on the sending district provided form to leave school at age 17.

Absences- How to report your child's absence from school

Regular attendance is essential for an effective school experience. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian, to maintain regular attendance. Pupils shall attend school regularly except under the following ***excused*** conditions (please see additional information in the **Excused Absence** section on the following page):

- personal illness,
- death or illness in the family,
- approved religious holidays,
- mandated court appearances,

In the event your child is to be absent, you must call the school at 860-296-2090 before 9:00 a.m. and follow the prompts to leave a message in the attendance mailbox or email discoveryoffice@crec.org. Please include in your

message:

- child's name
- teacher
- reason for absence.
- illness-related absences should also be reported to the school nurse, Matthew Cushing, at mcushing@crec.org.

Should a child be absent and the school not notified, an automated phone call will go out to the family. This absence will be considered "unexcused." Parents should contact the student's teacher to request homework assignments for the student who must be out for several days after contacting the office.

A written note is required for all absences that exceed 4 consecutive days. Additionally, a doctor's note is required in order to return to school for all illness-related absences that require more than 4 consecutive days.

If a student is absent from school for the day or leaves school during the day due to illness, s/he will not be permitted to attend any after school or evening activities that may occur on that school day.

Excused Absence

The CT State Board of Education establishes two levels of criteria for an absence to be considered an "**excused absence**." **Level 1:** absences one through nine **Level 2:** absences 10 and above

****Please note the required documentation needed for absences to be excused.****

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

Total # of Days Absent*	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to Be Considered Excused	Documentation Required
One through nine	Any reason that the student's parent/guardian approves	Phone call, email, OR a note
10 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.• Student's observance of a religious holiday.• Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.• Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required.)• The lack of transportation normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason.)	Notify the school (phone or email) AND written documentation form*

Unexcused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered "unexcused" unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. The absence meets the definition for an excused absence (see Excused Absences) or
- B. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

Tardiness

Arriving for each school day on time is a critical component of each student's academic and social development. Students who arrive late to school or who leave early cause significant disruption to the teaching and learning process, not only for all staff and students but also for the student who is arriving late or leaving early. Students who are not in their classrooms by 9:00 a.m. are considered tardy. All students arriving after this time must be accompanied by a parent and report directly to the office in order to sign in and receive a pass to go to class. A student who is repeatedly

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tardy may be considered truant. Further, families of students that demonstrate excessive tardiness will be asked to meet with the Attendance Committee for solutions-oriented approaches to address the tardiness.

Truancy

- A student is considered ***chronically absent*** when 10% or more of the days he/she has been enrolled in school are missed.
- A student aged five to eighteen inclusive with ***4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year*** will be considered a truant. In some instances, the school may file a referral with the Department of Children and Families to enlist further support for a family.

If a pattern of truancy or chronic absenteeism is noted you will be notified by administration, and your child will be referred to the Early Intervention Process with an action plan where specific goals and strategies will be developed to improve attendance. A parent will be required to participate in this process.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. A referral to the Department of Children and Families may be filed by the magnet school in compliance with state regulations if the parent fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the student's truancy, or chronic absenteeism, problem.

Contact will be made with the parent(s)/guardian(s) at the following levels:

- 5 absences – letter sent home
- 9 absences – meeting with attendance committee
- 14 absences – consideration for Early Intervention Program

Before/After Care Program

Students enrolled in the Discovery Before/After Care Program are given specific policies and procedures implemented for the program. If enrolled in the Before/After Care Program, you will receive a separate handbook detailing these policies and procedures. The hours for the Before Care and After Care Programs are as follows:

Before school hours: 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

After school hours: 3:35 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

A registration form for Before/After care is included in the back-to-school packet. If you have any questions about the program, please contact our main office in order to direct you to our coordinator.

Contacting Teachers

At Discovery Academy, we know the importance of keeping strong communication between home and school, and we encourage families to contact teachers regarding any questions or comments they may have, either via email or by setting up a personal conference. Please note that in order to maximize the amount of instructional time, we will not interrupt faculty with phone calls during teaching hours. Parents and guardians are asked to leave a message or send an email or Seesaw message, and teachers will return the call/email as soon as they are able to do so. In case of emergency, call the main office at Discovery Academy at 860-296-2090, and the administrative assistant will contact the teacher.



Emergency School Closing/ Delayed Opening/ Early Dismissal (In Case of Inclement Weather)

In the event of an emergency early closing, notification to families will be made through the school's messenger system and/or available on all major television stations. Announcements for school delays or closings can be viewed on the following media: Television – WFSB, WVIT and WTNH, or by logging onto their websites. Please be sure that your child knows what to do and where to go in the event of an emergency school closing.

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Again, it is important for families to inform the school immediately regarding any changes in home or work telephone numbers or with respect to any changes in your emergency contact person(s).

The Before and After Care Program will adjust its hours in accordance with the delayed opening/early closing schedule. Example: if school is delayed 2 hours, the Before Care Program would begin at 9:30 on that day, instead of the normal 7:30 opening. The After Care Program will be in session on the afternoon of a Delayed Opening. If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, aftercare will not take place, and parents are requested to pick up their child at dismissal time.

English Language Learner Students

For those students for whom English is a second language, all CREC Magnet Schools have a program to assist in the development of speaking skills and literacy in English and in mastering the same academic content required of all other students, e.g. language arts, literature, mathematics, science and social studies. If you believe your child needs assistance with English as a second language, please contact Carmarie Otero, the English language teacher at Discovery.

Hours

Start and end times are as follows: 8:40 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.

Drop Off: For those students not in before care, or riding a bus to school, drop off valet service begins at 8:40 a.m.

Students being dropped off will not be allowed in the building before 8:40 a.m.

Pick Up: Students must be picked up at 3:25 p.m., unless they are signed up for aftercare, as we do not have the staff to supervise them. There is a fee of \$25 for students not in after care, who are picked up later than 3:50 p.m.

Early Dismissal Days

Per the school calendar, there will be scheduled occurrences for early dismissal. On those days, students will be dismissed at 12:10 p.m.

Aftercare will run its usual hours until 5:30 p.m. on these days, unless otherwise notified.

Students must be picked up by 12:10 p.m., unless they are signed up for aftercare as we do not have the staff to supervise them. There is a fee of \$25 for students, not in after care, who are picked up later than 12:35.

Pick up/Drop off Procedures

At the start of the school year (in the emailed back-to-school packet of information), families will receive the most current pick up/drop off procedures. These procedures are put in place to maintain the safety of our students and reduce the traffic congestion in the parking lots. Parents are expected to follow the procedures as outlined respecting the designated times and pick up/drop off areas. Should there be any changes in these procedures; families will be notified immediately in writing. Discovery Academy is currently using *School Dismissal Manager* for dismissal. Families will receive more information regarding this in the back-to-school packet.

To ensure the safety of students, please:

- Park in designated spaces only
- Drive through the parking lot slowly
- Obey all traffic signs and designed traffic patterns
- Never drive by or park in front of a bus
- Be vigilant – please try to avoid using your cell phone in order to stay alert for pedestrians
- Follow the teachers' instructions who are on duty
- Do not double park

****Students will only be released to persons listed on the authorized pick-up/emergency contact lists maintained in the office. Should someone other than those listed on the form need to pick up the student, notification will need to be received in writing by the school. School personnel will request proper identification.**

Changes in Pick-up/Drop off - Unusual Release from School

Guaranteeing the safety of our students during dismissal is of the utmost importance to us. A form will be sent home for you to indicate the primary way your child should be dismissed each day (i.e. picked up, bus, after care). Should there be a change in the transportation for a student, please send an email to discoveryoffice@crec.org informing the school of the change and corresponding/applicable dates for such change. While an email is the best way to ensure proper, timely notification to our staff of a change, we certainly understand that a situation may develop where this is not possible. **In these rare cases, email discoveryoffice@crec.org by 1:00 p.m. on full school days and by 10:00 a.m. on early dismissal days to report the transportation change for that day. All requests must be received in writing by an email or fax (860) 296-2087, and include your child's first name, last name, and teacher's name. In cases other than a true emergency, emails received after 1:00 p.m. cannot be accommodated.**

Leaving Early: Should families have a doctor's or other emergency appointment that could not be scheduled outside of school hours, we ask that families please email the office stating the time the child will be picked up and the reason for the early dismissal. Students will only be released to persons listed on the authorized pick-up/emergency contact lists maintained in the office. Should someone other than those listed on the form need to pick up the student, notification will need to be received in writing by the school. School personnel will request proper identification. Early dismissal should be kept to a minimum, as it does disrupt the classroom and the daily routine.

Transportation Safety Complaints/Procedures

All complaints concerning CREC school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place. Complaints can be filed to the appropriate contact information below:

Company	Phone Number/ Contact
Hartford Specialty Transportation <i>Special Needs Students residing in Hartford</i>	860-695-8547
Wethersfield Transportation <i>Students residing in Wethersfield</i>	Michelle Conlan 860-571-8115 mconlan@wethersfield.me
RSCO Transportation <i>Non-Wethersfield Residents</i>	860-524-4077 rscotransportation@crec.org

Updating Student/Parent Information

Should families move or change telephone numbers (home, work or cell), please notify the school office immediately. It is important that parents keep their children's records up to date. Please follow grid below:

IF CHANGE IN: THEN:	
Telephone number or email address,	Notify school office <u>immediately</u> with updated information.
Address in the <u>same</u> town,	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notify school office immediately with updated information and date moved.2. Submit two proofs of residency <u>within 30 days</u>, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Driver's License● Copy of Mortgage/Lease● Copy of Utility Bill

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Address in a <u>different</u> town,	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notify school office immediately with updated information and date moved.2. Submit two roofs of residency <u>within 30 days</u>, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Driver's License● Copy of Mortgage/Lease● Copy of Utility Bill3. Complete & Submit Residency Change of Address Verification Form <u>within 30 days</u> (<i>excludes Hartford Residents</i>)
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POLICIES

Animals in School

In accordance with CREC policy (6163.3) as well as a directive from the CREC Medical Director, "no student shall bring any live animal, whether pet or wild, to any classroom without prior consent of the teacher and Principal, in order to protect both the animal and the students. Teachers may bring and maintain goldfish or tropical fish in suitable bowls or tanks, but turtles, birds, snakes or other animals which might present a health hazard shall not be allowed without prior approval of the Principal and then only for class observation and study for a limited period of time."

Asbestos

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the school office.

Birthday and Other Celebrations

Discovery Academy has introduced a practice of non-food celebrations. Not only does this help promote the idea of healthy eating in school, it helps reduce the potential for exposure to allergens for students with allergies or medical conditions. You are encouraged to touch base with your child's teacher to discuss options for celebrations; all plans

should be made in collaboration with the teacher ahead of time.

Cell Phones & Electronic Devices

Parents and students should be aware that bringing valuable items to school increases the risk that the item could be lost or stolen. Students should leave valuable items at home. **Children who carry cell phones for safety reasons must turn off the phone during the school hours of 8:40 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.** and keep it in their backpack or ask the office or a teacher to lock it in a safe place. Should the phone be lost, stolen or damaged, the school will not be liable for repair or replacement. If a student has a cell phone on his/her person during the school day, without permission from the Principal, the phone will be confiscated and the parent/guardian notified. Confiscated phones will need to be picked up by a parent.

Child Abuse

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect is also considered child abuse.

Directory Information (Full policy: [5145.15](#))

Policy Summary:

- Directory information or class lists of student names and/or addresses shall not be distributed without the knowledge or consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student or by the student who has attained majority status.
- Parents or students may choose to have their directory information removed from one or more of the specific activities without jeopardizing other activities.

Dress Code

Dress at Discovery Academy should be appropriate for an elementary school student. The following are prohibited:

- Hats
- Baggy pants, or low rider pants that leave your skin or underwear exposed
- Clothing with gang significance
- Shirts that are considered to be insulting or offensive; no drug/alcohol related language, themes or pictures
- Halter tops, or crop shirts
- Sneakers with wheels
- Flip flops

Student dress may be regulated and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive or contrary to law.

Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited.

Students Dress Code (Full policy: [5132.1-R](#))

Policy Summary:

- The decision to implement school uniforms shall be made by the Executive Director or his/her designee, with input from administration, staff, and parents/guardians. In schools where a school-wide uniform is implemented, the Principal with input from staff, and parents/guardians of the individual school shall select the specific uniform to be worn. Once selection has been made, the school uniform shall be mandatory for all students.

Early Childhood (PreK) Toileting Policy

The CT State Department of Public Health guidelines for early childhood education programs state that it is **expected that children attending a public school preschool program will be able to independently toilet themselves** unless there is a special education need. As a preschool program, we do not have the essential equipment or staffing to meet optimal health standards for diapering children. Therefore, families are strongly encouraged to ensure that their children are toilet trained **before** starting in the Early Childhood Program at the beginning of the school year. The exception would be if this is identified in an IEP or 504 Plan. We understand the transition to school may result in some initial toileting accidents. We will work with the child's family to ensure consistency both at home and at school. Children should be as self-sufficient as possible. Children are more successful when they wear pants with no snaps, buttons or zippers. Pants with elastic waists and underwear (not pull-ups) support children's independence with toileting. Early Childhood teachers will provide reminders to guide and support children who have had a toileting accident.

Family Life Education (Full policy: [6142.1](#))

Policy Summary:

- Family life education shall help students acquire knowledge, attitudes and values which will contribute to the well-being of individuals, families and society.
- Students and parents or guardians shall be informed of their right to exempt the student from the family life program.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed to extend the learning experiences of the students. Such trips are carefully planned and supervised by teachers and are frequently assisted by parents. Some admission fees and/or other costs are not covered by the school. Detailed information and a permission slip will be sent home for each trip to be signed by parents and returned. Permission slips must be completed in order for your child to participate. **Students who do not have a completed permission slip will not be allowed to attend the field trip.** Financial assistance is available upon request.

While on a trip, all students are considered to be "in" school and, therefore, will be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the school rules/policies/procedures and adhere to appropriate dress standards for the field trip activity.

Any student whose behavior is considered detrimental to the well-being of other students while on a field trip may be prohibited from participation by the principal.

Food Service-Charging Meals (Full Regulation: [3542.43](#))

Regulation Summary:

The goal of the food service program is to provide students with nutritious foods that will enhance learning. The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious meals in pleasant surroundings we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition. Although not required by law, because of CREC's participation in the Child Nutrition Programs, the CREC Council authorizes administration to establish a system to allow a student to charge a meal to his/her

automated prepayment account.

Health and Safety Protocols (Full policy/regulation: [3516.1](#))

Policy Summary:

Safety protocols will be established specific to COVID and are expected to be adhered to for all CREC sanctioned activities.

Holiday Observances

CREC schools welcome cultural celebrations as they help to strengthen bonds between school life, families and communities. While significant classroom time is generally not devoted to holidays, recognition of seasons and cultures from an educational point of view are integrated through our arts programming. Additionally, the CREC calendar honors particular national holidays throughout the school year.

Homeless Students

Under the McKinney Vento Federal Act Homeless students are defined as those lacking a “fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” Students meeting this definition are protected and have the right to maintain their educational placement, are eligible for free school meals and for Title 1A services. If you believe your family meets this definition, please contact the school Liaison for Homeless Students, School Psychologist, or the Discovery Community Liaison.

Homework

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student’s work in school. Direct any specific questions about homework to the classroom teacher.

Lost and Found

A lost and found area is maintained in the school. If your student is missing an item, please inquire about the lost and found at the main office. To avoid lost items, it helps to have student’s names on items and clothing brought to school. Please check the lost and found box if your child has lost an item. Items will periodically be donated if not claimed.

Media Access to Students (Full policy: [1112.5P](#))

Policy 1112.5 Summary:

- School administrators shall be authorized to grant permission and set parameters for media access to students in their respective schools.
- Other than activities attended by the general public (i.e. sporting events), media representatives shall be required to report to the administration for prior approval before accessing students.
- Parental/guardian permission must be obtained for students to be interviewed, photographed or videotaped by the media other than for events attended by the general public.
- Parents/guardians who do not want their student interviewed, photographed or videotaped by the media shall inform the school principal.

Military Families

In June 2008, a memorandum of agreement was established creating a partnership between the Department of Defense and the Department of Education to support the education of military students. CREC recognizes that for those active duty members, Department of Defense civilians and those activated or deployed National Guard and Reserve members the phases of pre-deployment, deployment, reunion or post-deployment can be challenging to families and children. We can help. Please contact your school’s Community Liaison, Nicole Castro, if we may be of assistance to you.

Non-discrimination (Full policy: [5162 P/R](#))

Policy 5162 Summary:

- The CREC Council complies with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person

from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities because of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, pregnancy, disability, or on any other basis prohibited by federal or state law. The prohibition of discrimination in educational programs or activities extends to academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, including athletics.

- CREC strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for its students. Harassment, in any form, whether by students, staff members, board members, parents, vendors, contracted individuals, volunteers, employees or visitors - on CREC grounds or property or on property within CREC's jurisdiction; on buses operated by or for CREC; while attending or engaged in CREC activities - will not be tolerated.
- Any incident or complaint of discrimination or harassment will be given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources. Every student shall have a ready means of resolving any complaint of discrimination or harassment. (See full policy for Incident Investigation Form.)

Outdoor Recess Policy

Students will have recess outdoors provided the weather permits it. Recess times may be shortened in consideration of weather extremes (cold/heat). Please make certain your child comes properly dressed to play outside. If a child is well enough to attend school, he or she is expected to go outdoors for recess, unless there is a note from a physician stating that he/she cannot. If a child has been medically excused from physical education, then they will also be excused from recess.

Family Conferences

Parents and guardians are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational success. Family conferences are scheduled in September, December and March to discuss your child and report cards will be handed out in December and March. Additionally, conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors, or administrators, may initiate a conference.



A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Such conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

Parent Involvement/Communications

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged. Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs.

We welcome parents and families, and in order to maintain safety and security, we ask that interested family members contact their child's teacher or the main office to make arrangements for their visit. On the day of the visit, visitors will be asked to sign in and prominently wear a visitor's badge while in the building.

Pesticide application/management (Full policy/regulation: [3524.1](#))

Policy Summary:

- The Capitol Region Education Council has adopted an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy for pest control within our buildings and grounds.
- The intent of this policy is to ensure that students, employees and parents/guardians receive adequate notice, in conformity with applicable statutes, prior to pesticide application in school buildings and on school grounds.

Physical Activity

All students enrolled in elementary school shall be included in the regular school day time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total. This requirement may be altered by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for a child requiring special education and related services.

This daily period of physical activity for elementary school students can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities.

Students may not be required or restricted by school employees to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day. This does not apply to brief periods of respite/time-outs, referrals to a building administrator, or for safety reasons.

Promotion, Retention and Placement

CREC encourages and insists on the highest quality of academic performance from all students. It expects excellence from its faculty and supports vigorously the teachers' demands for serious, substantial scholarship from students commensurate with their individual abilities. Instruction and instructional programs must provide maximum opportunity for students to progress through school according to their needs. The intent of this policy is to ensure that all promoted students can benefit from the next level of instruction. Students normally will progress annually from grade to grade. Decisions regarding the promotion/retention and placement of students will be made on the basis of documented academic achievement in relation to the intellectual ability and overall physical, emotional, and social well-being of the student. All teachers must evaluate students' educational progress during the school year. This progress, or lack of progress, is communicated to the parent, through written progress reports and parent-teacher conferences. Parents must be notified by March 15 if retention or acceleration is being considered. ***The final decision regarding placement or retention will be made by the principal.***

Protection of Undocumented Students (Full policy/regulation: [5111.3](#))

Policy Summary:

- All students have the right to attend public school and enjoy access to equitable educational and programmatic services regardless of their immigration status or that of their family members.
- CREC personnel shall not take any steps that would deny students access to education based on their immigration status or that would impede the rights of any students to public education under the U.S. Supreme Court's 1982 ruling in Plyler v. Doe, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Connecticut General Statutes, and any other applicable state and federal law.
- If any member of the CREC community (including students, families, or staff) has questions about their immigration status, CREC employees shall not refer them to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office ("ICE") or any other government agency. Instead, employees shall refer them to state and/or local non-profit immigration law organizations.
- It is the general policy of CREC not to allow any individual or organization to enter a school site if the educational setting would be disrupted by that visit.

Report Cards/Progress Reports

The purpose of the Report Card/Progress Report is to give parents/guardians a clear understanding of how their child is progressing academically, socially and developmentally, as well as an understanding of the factors that may contribute to the child's success. A progress report is sent home three times a year in December, March and June.

Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program

Students in grades K-12 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

School Uniform (For elementary schools) (Full regulation: [5132.1-R](#))

Regulation Summary:

- The decision to implement school uniforms shall be made by the Executive Director or his/her designee, with input from administration, staff, and parents/guardians.
- The school shall communicate information to parents/guardians regarding the uniform policy, including its rationale, benefits to students, and specific information.

Discovery Academy does not require school uniforms. Please see the section regarding dress code.

Snacks – Approved/Healthy Choices/Peanut Butter

Approved Healthy Snack List (pre-packaged items please)

Any food items being provided to an entire class/group of students must be nut free. CREC discourages bringing any food items containing nuts into the schools.

Applesauce	Original or Whole Grain Goldfish	Sliced/Cubed Cheese
Cereal Bars	Popcorn	String Cheese
Fresh fruit	Pretzels	Whole Grain Cereal
Fresh vegetables	Raisins	Whole Grain Crackers
Fruit cups	Rice Cakes	Yogurt

Refer also to www.snacksafely.com for allergen-free snack suggestions

Nuts, Peanut Butter and Food Allergies: All school-provided meals are free of nuts. Students may bring nuts/peanut butter as part of their lunch if they so choose. Students bringing nut items as part of their lunch are expected to wash their hands after eating. Parents are encouraged to provide packaged hand wipes in student lunch boxes for this purpose. Please note that hand sanitizer is NOT effective in removing nut proteins from the hands and should not be relied upon.

For those students with severe allergies whose parents request, the school will maintain a nut-free table during meal or snack times in the cafeteria. Additionally, should a child in a particular classroom have a significant allergy, families may be asked to adhere to requests made by the school nurse regarding specific food items being eaten in that classroom.

Student Discipline (Full policy: [5144 P/R](#))

Policy Summary:

- The CREC Council believes that good student behavior in a school is extremely important in creating the kind of educational environment in which students will be able to realize their greatest opportunities for growth. Good discipline habits assume consideration for the rights and privileges of others, cooperation with all personnel in the school community, basic self-respect as well as respect for real and personal property, pride in one's work and achievement within one's ability.
- The purpose of this Discipline Policy is to encourage accountability for students' behavior and to assist them to recognize and learn proper decisions so they can become independent and productive members of our democratic society.

Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Full policy: [6142.10](#))

Policy Summary:

- In accordance with federal and state law, it is CREC's policy to provide students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require all meals served to meet or exceed the stricter of either the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the "Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools".
- In developing goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school based activities that promote student wellness, CREC will, as required, review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques.

Student Records; Confidentiality (FERPA) (Full policy: [5125 P/R](#))

Policy Summary:

Educational records will be kept for each student and will reflect the physical, emotional, social and academic aspects of a student's development in the educational process. It is the policy of the CREC Council that staff will comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding confidentiality and access to all students' records. Procedures shall be implemented to ensure strict confidentiality of student records while providing proper parental and/or student access to records. Availability of these policies and procedures shall be made known annually to all parents/guardians of children within the district.

Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS, CODE OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

CREC Magnet Schools cultivate the mind, body and heart of each student. We have a shared vision and coordinated plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate. Each member of the faculty and staff understand their individual role while applying a systematic approach to developing an environment that fosters optimal academic engagement for all students.

CREC Magnet School *parents and staff* work together to:

- Promote a positive and successful educational experience for every child
- Embrace diversity
- Ensure students are college and career ready
- Foster self-confidence and self-discipline in our students
- Connect success in school to future successes in life
- Develop global awareness
- Guide students through conflicts, encourage them to restore trust and rebuild relationships
- Value and support students through disciplinary issues

CREC Magnet School *students* will:

- Demonstrate honor, respect and responsibility in their actions and decisions
- Embrace diversity
- Develop self-confidence and self-discipline
- Connect success in school to future successes in life
- Develop global awareness
- Reflect on conflict and seek ways to restore trust
- Work with teachers, administrators and parents when school rules are violated to restore environment and relationships

Our number one priority is to provide a safe and healthy environment in which students can learn and grow. All members of our learning community (students, faculty, staff, and parents) are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior at all times. Our code of conduct uses common courtesy and respect as its foundation with the expectation that students will make informed and responsible choices about their behaviors. Discovery Academy is responsible for students during the regular school day. Please note that this jurisdiction also includes to and from school, any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off-campus school-related activity.

Students are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, for misconduct which is seriously disruptive to the educational process and is violation of policy, even if such conduct occurs off school property and

during non-school time, including (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school, (2) whether other students were involved, or whether there was gang involvement, (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon and whether any injuries occurred, and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

Reference: PA 95-304, An Act Concerning School Safety and PA 96-214, An Act Concerning Revision to the Education Statutes, permit such action if covered by board policy (5131.8 OUT OF SCHOOL MISCONDUCT). Further revision by PA 98-139, An Act Concerning Student Suspensions and Expulsions (C.G.S. 10-233c).

See **Appendix** for more information and CREC Policy

Positive Behavioral Expectations

The Discovery Academy has a belief that strong academics are positively linked with appropriate learning behaviors while students are in school. The faculty also believes that school – home partnerships are critical for ensuring strong learning. Our philosophy is one that includes building community among students and all members of the school community, and the development of strong interpersonal problem solving skills, which a student will carry through life.

Positive behavior in schools is essential as it helps to create a secure, predictable learning environment for children and maximizes time utilized for teaching and learning. Consistently encouraging and acknowledging positive behavioral choices in children will have a strong impact on the school culture as well as the expected standards of behavior. Discovery Academy believes that this is a more effective approach to behavior management than sanctions imposed following poor choices. Therefore, we will continue the implementation of positive behavior supports, that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors. This school-wide approach to discipline focuses on building a safe and positive environment in which all students can learn. Accordingly, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that we will:

Be a Leader
Expect the Best
Encourage Others
Show Respect



For students at our school, the classroom is a smaller version of home and family. The classroom teacher is the primary person who structures routines and classroom management, which affects discipline. Students who violate the rights of others or who violate district or school rules shall be subject to disciplinary measures. The classroom teacher is the best person to handle school discipline, and in most cases, the discipline issues are managed well at the classroom level. However, there are times when student behavior warrants administrative involvement. Office referrals for discipline are a last resort. Tier 1 behaviors are defined as those that can be resolved by teacher intervention. Tier 2 infractions are behaviors that are persistent and significantly impact classroom instruction and student learning. Tier 3 infractions will result in an automatic office referral. In such cases, a copy of the office referral will be sent home.

In order for an office referral to be made, the teacher must fill out a “Discovery Academy Discipline Referral” in which the adult will describe the incident prompting the discipline referral and the steps taken to assist the student with problem solving. The adult will also record the intervention taken prior to office referral. The administrator will then determine the action(s) to be taken. **Note: the above steps will be bypassed if the student commits a Tier 3 infraction.**

Student Expectations

These expectations are based upon the statement in our Behavior Policy that “positive behavior in schools is essential as it helps to create a secure, predictable learning environment for children and maximizes time utilized for teaching and learning.”

Positive Behavior in the Classroom

To maintain calm orderly environment, children are expected and encouraged to:

1. Respect one another by keeping hands, feet and unkind words to themselves
2. Listen carefully while others are talking
3. Speak in a quiet voice
4. Take care of school materials, equipment and books
5. Clean up after themselves
6. Leave classroom/area tidy; put things away and tuck chairs under tables to create a safe environment

Positive Behavior in the Hallway

To maintain safety and respect the learning and working environment, children are expected and encouraged to:

1. Walk calmly and quietly
2. Line up in single file, keeping hands by their sides, when going to recess, lunch or different classes
3. Use quiet voices to prevent disturbing others
4. Show respect for the work and art displayed on walls

Positive Behavior at Recess and Lunch

Children are expected and encouraged to:

1. Play outside – weather permitting
2. Keep hands, feet and unkind words to themselves
3. Remember to throw trash in garbage cans and recyclables in bins
4. Always wear suitable clothing: in winter coats should be buttoned and boots, hats and mittens worn. Please be aware that flip flops are prohibited for safety reasons.
5. Play safely – throwing snow and ice, sand or wood chips is not considered safe play
6. Line up to transition when requested
7. Take turns playing with toys or bikes when there are only a few of them

Positive Behavior on the Bus

1. Face forward
2. Stay in your seat
3. Hands and feet to self
4. Kind words
5. Quiet voices
6. Keep it clean
7. Be a model student
8. Share your seat
9. Ears listening
10. Say, "Please and thank you"

Bullying, Harassment And Hazing

The CREC Council promotes a secure and positive school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. Any staff member, employee, or student who engages in an act that injures, degrades, or disgraces another student or staff member, disrupts the educational process, or interferes with a student's opportunity to obtain an education, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the CREC Council that bullying of a student by another student **either on school's grounds, on a bus, or outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school** is prohibited.

See **Appendix** for more information and definitions of bullying.

Cheating/Plagiarism (Academic Dishonesty)

Students are expected to pursue their school work with integrity and honesty. Cheating and plagiarism demonstrates a lack of integrity and character. That is inconsistent with District goals and values. All forms of cheating and plagiarism

are not acceptable. The misrepresentation by students of homework, class work, tests, reports, or other assignments as if they were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating and/or plagiarism. Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidents require disciplinary action. Consequences for cheating will take into account the grade level of the student and the severity of the misrepresentation.

Dangerous Weapons and Instruments

No guns, knives or any other objects, including martial arts weapons, capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. "Look-a-like" weapons which may evoke a response causing bodily harm are prohibited. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a weapon on school grounds or during a school activity will be expelled from school.

Reference: PA 94-331 amended C.G.S. 10-233d and requires expulsion of a student who brings a deadly weapon to school.

PA 95-304 amended C.S.G. 10-233a through 10233f and requires expulsion of a student for a calendar year if the student is found to be in possession of a deadly weapon on school grounds. PA 96-244 adds martial arts weapons possession as cause for expulsion (C.G.S. 10-233d)

Expulsion

Expulsion is the exclusion from all school privileges for more than ten days with limits to no more than 183 days. The Board of Directors may recommend to the sending school district to expel any student whose conduct endangers persons or property or is seriously disruptive to the educational process, or repeatedly violates any of the school's policies or procedures. A student is entitled to an expulsion hearing where the student and/or his or her parent or legal guardian will be able to respond to any of the charges placed on him/her.

Student possession and/or use of weapons, including martial arts weapons, or other dangerous instruments in any school building, on school ground, in any school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity is cause for expulsion for a calendar year. Any student who offers illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds is also cause for expulsion for a calendar year. The Board may modify the expulsion period on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled will be included on the student's cumulative education record. The record will be expunged if the student graduates from high school and if the expulsion was not for weapon possession and/or for sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

Reference section 51114a, b, c of CREC's policy and regulations.

Out of School Suspension

A student may be placed on out-of-school suspension anywhere from one to ten days. During the duration of an out-of-school suspension, the student will not be allowed to attend school or any school activities or functions on school grounds. Following the completion of the suspension, a parent must accompany the student to school for a re-entry conference (if a parent does not attend the re-entry conference, the student will be placed in the main office until the meeting can take place). Schoolwork missed during the period of suspension is the student's responsibility and must be made up within the time limits prescribed by the student's teachers.

Sexual harassment (Full policy: [5145.5 P/R](#))

Policy 5145.5 Summary:

- The CREC Council does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, including employment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is forbidden, whether engaged in by students, supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers subject to the control of the Council. The Council is committed to safeguarding the right of all students of the school district to a learning environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment.

Title IX Coordinator

Name: Jessica Pepin

Email Address: jpepin@crec.org

Phone Number: Office-860-296-2090, ext. 5909

Definition

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to, insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct; threats or suggestions that a student's submission to or rejection of unwelcome conduct will in any way influence a decision regarding that student, or conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with the student's learning, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment, such as the display in the educational setting of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Procedure

It is the express policy of the CREC Council to encourage victims of sexual harassment to report such claims. Students are encouraged to promptly report complaints of sexual harassment to the Special Services or Executive Director. Complaints will be investigated promptly and corrective action will be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality will be maintained by all persons involved in the investigation and no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment.

CREC will provide staff development for district administrators and grievance committee members and will annually distribute its policy and grievance procedures to staff and students in an effort to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment.

Smoking

The possession and/or use of cigarettes is strictly forbidden on Discovery Academy property or while at a Discovery Academy activity. No person shall smoke or use tobacco products on school property or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law.

Substance Abuse

As stated in the Code of Conduct section of this handbook, the school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to the following disciplinary actions: immediate suspension which requires expulsion for up to one year, for students who sell or distribute a controlled substance, on or off school grounds.

Reference: PA 96-244 amended C.G.S. 10-233d and requires a one year expulsion for students who offer illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds.

Truancy (Full policy: [5113.2 P/R](#))

Policy Summary:

The Capitol Region Education Council believes that regular school attendance is essential to the academic success of students. The Executive Director is authorized to establish procedures for monitoring school attendance so as to identify students ages 5-18 inclusive who are truant and to enlist the cooperation of the LEA, of parents and, when necessary, the juvenile justice system, in order to address the problem when it arises.

APPENDIX

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS, CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

CREC schools serve a common purpose: to create learning environments that are uniquely designed to encourage innovation, exploration and excitement of knowledge. We believe that strong academics are positively linked with appropriate learning behaviors while students are in school. We expect school rules to be followed and will work in partnership with students and families should an issue arise, adhering to CREC Policy 5144 included below.

Article I - Disciplinary Procedures - Overview

1.1 When minor violations occur, the usual procedure will be a discussion of the problem with the student and counseling of the student to eliminate repetition of the violation.

1.2 Repeated minor occurrences or a serious violation should lead to a parental conference.

1.3 When these measures prove ineffective, other disciplinary measures (i.e. - removal from classroom, suspension or expulsion) may be warranted and imposed by the school principal, his/her designee, the Executive Director and/or the Council.

Article II - Removal

Removal - means an exclusion from a classroom for all or part of a single class period, provided such exclusion does not extend beyond ninety minutes.

2.1 The Council authorizes teachers, with the approval of the school principal, and the designee, to remove a student from class when such student deliberately causes a serious disruption of the educational process within the classroom. However, no student shall be removed from class more than six times in any one school year nor more than twice in one week unless the student is granted an informal hearing by the school principal or his/her designee in accordance with Article V.

2.2 Whenever any teacher removes a student from the classroom, the teacher shall send the student to an area designated by the school principal or his/her designee. The teacher should also advise the school principal or his/her designee of the name of the student against whom such disciplinary action was taken and the reason therefore.

2.3 Each teacher shall maintain an individual student log of disciplinary action in accordance with a designated form. The teacher shall provide the original copy of such log to the school principal when referring a student for disciplinary action. If removal from a classroom does not result in the disposition of the disciplinary case within ninety minutes, the school principal must consider the case an in-school suspension or suspension and follow the procedures set forth in Articles III or IV, whichever is applicable.

2.4 Any student who is removed from class shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work including, but not limited to, examinations which such student missed during the period of the removal.

Article III - In-School Suspension

In-School Suspension - means an exclusion from regular classroom activities for no more than five (5) consecutive school days. In-school suspension does not include exclusion from school. An in-school suspension shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the in-school suspension was imposed.

3.1 During an in-school suspension:

- a. The student must report on time to the in-school suspension room. Students who do not complete their assignments during their in-school suspension will be given additional time of in-school suspension up to an aggregate of five (5) consecutive school days.
- b. Special assignments must be completed by the student and returned to the Assistant Principal's office, or the school principal's designee.
- c. Except for lunch, no student is allowed to leave the in-school suspension room unless either an emergency exists or the student is granted permission by the teacher in charge of in-school suspension.
- d. Uncooperative students are to be reported to the office immediately.
- e. Additional classroom work may be assigned by the teacher in charge of in-school suspension when appropriate.

3.2 Students not complying with the in-school suspension rules indicated above, shall be suspended out-of-school after an informal hearing with the school principal or his/her designee as set forth in Article V.

Article IV - Suspension

Suspension - means exclusion from school privileges or from transportation services for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year. A suspension shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the suspension was imposed. For purposes of reporting, partial day removals are to be included when determining the number of days a student has been suspended.

4.1 Unless an emergency situation requiring the student's immediate exclusion exists, the school principal shall observe the procedures set forth in Articles V and VI, in all actions which may lead to suspension. In the event of an emergency, the procedure must be initiated as soon after the cessation of the emergency as possible, but no later than seventy-two (72) hours after the exclusion.

4.2 No student shall be suspended prior to having an informal hearing before the school principal or his/her designee, in accordance with Article V.

Article V - Informal Hearing Process

The following procedures shall be followed in the event that the school determines a suspension may be warranted:

5.1 Prior to a suspension, the student will be informed of the charges which have been posed. 5.2 The student will meet with the school principal or his/her designee to review the incident. 5.3 The student shall be granted an opportunity to refute the charges against him/her.

5.4 Based on the information provided to the school principal or his/her designee, the school principal or his/her designee shall make a decision. However, the school principal, if he/she deems it necessary, shall investigate the matter further prior to making a decision. Upon completion of the investigation, the school principal or his/her designee shall make a decision.

5.5 The school principal or his/her designee shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the disciplinary action imposed within a reasonable period of time.

Article VI - General Procedure Governing In-School Suspensions and Suspensions

After an in-school suspension or a suspension, the following procedure shall be followed:

6.1 The school principal or designee shall make every effort to immediately notify the parents and/or guardians at the last phone number(s) provided to the school by the parents and/or guardians of the student about the student's action and state the cause(s) leading to the school action.

6.2 Whether or not telephone contact is made with the parent, the school principal or his/her designee shall notify the parents and/or guardians in writing at the most recent address reported on school records within one school day of the

action and shall offer the parent an opportunity for a conference to discuss the matter.

6.3 If a student is eighteen years of age or older, any notice required by this policy shall also be given to the student.

6.4 Any student who is given an in-school suspension or is suspended shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work including, but not limited to, examinations which such student missed during the period of in-school suspension or suspension.

Article VII - Expulsion

Expulsion - means an exclusion from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days and shall be deemed to include, but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which such student was assigned at the time such disciplinary action was taken, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond a period of one (1) calendar year. All expulsions are handled by the home school district.

7.1 The L.E.A. may expel a student from school if, after a hearing, the Board finds that his/her conduct endangers persons or property, or whose conduct on or off school grounds is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or is violative of a publicized school policy.

7.2 In the event that a school principal or other school personnel has reason to believe that the student has engaged in conduct that endangers persons or property, conduct, on or off school grounds, that is seriously disrupting of the educational process or is violative of a publicized school policy, the school principal or his/her designee shall conduct an investigation into the matter.

7.3 If, after completing the investigation, the school principal determines that grounds for expulsion exist, he/she shall forward such a request to the Superintendent of the local school district after consultation with the Assistant Executive Director within five (5) days of the conclusion of the investigation.

Article VIII - Actions Leading to Suspension or Expulsion

8.1 Any student whose conduct endangers persons or property or whose conduct on or off school grounds is seriously disruptive of the educational process or is violative of a publicized school policy shall be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion.

The following acts shall be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including, expulsion:

- a. Striking or assaulting a student or any member of the school staff.
- b. Theft or knowingly possessing stolen goods.
- c. Using obscene gestures, racial slurs or abusive language directed at a member of the school staff or other students.
- d. Participating in walkouts from, or sit-ins within a classroom or school building.
- e. Attempts at extortion or intimidating school staff or other students.
- f. Unauthorized possession, sale or consumption of illegal drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages.
- g. Possession of drug paraphernalia.
- h. Possession of cigarettes and/or other types of tobacco.
- i. Destruction of school property or personal property.
- j. Misbehavior on a school bus.
- k. Class truancy.
- l. Possession of electronic devices.
- m. Unauthorized use or misuse of computers or other technological equipment.
- n. Possession of a remotely activated paging device (unless the student obtains written permission from the school principal for possession and use of the device).
- o. Sexual harassment, harassment and hazing.
- p. Leaving school without permission.
- q. Misconduct of a nature that threatens the safety of school property or the welfare of the persons who work or study therein.

- r. Refusal to give name or giving a false name to teacher, refusal to obey or insolence towards a member of the school staff.
- s. Violation of smoking, dress, attendance or transportation regulations.
- t. Gambling.
- u. Accumulation of minor offenses.
- v. Throwing snowballs, rocks, sticks, food, etc.
- w. Failure to stay for detention.

The above noted list is not exhaustive and students may be disciplined, up to and including expulsion, for other forms of conduct that endangers person or property or whose conduct on or off school grounds is seriously disruptive of the educational process or whose conduct violates publicized school policies.

8.2 Students requiring special education and related services may be suspended in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

Article IX - Actions Leading to Mandatory Expulsion

In accordance with state law, whenever there is reason to believe that any student was in possession of a firearm or deadly weapon on or off school grounds, the Principal will recommend expulsion to the local Superintendent and LEA.

In the event that the Board finds, after a formal hearing, that the student possessed a firearm or weapon on or off of school grounds, the student shall be expelled from school for one (1) calendar year. However, the Board, on a case-by-case basis, may modify the expulsion period.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND HAZING

Bullying –Safe School Climate Plan (Full Policy: [5131.911](#))

Policy Summary:

The Capitol Region Education Council is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and CREC's Safe School Climate Plan, CREC expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by CREC; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by CREC.

CREC also prohibits any form of bullying outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including recommendation for expulsion, in accordance with CREC's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law. CREC does not expel students. CREC may recommend that the local board of education enrolling the student in a CREC program expel a student in accordance with the law.

Public Act No. 11-232 defines bullying as: (A) the **repeated** use by one or more students of a written, oral, or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or (B) a **physical act or gesture** by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that: (i) Causes **physical or emotional harm** to such student or damage to such student's property, (ii) places such student in **reasonable fear of harm** to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, (iii) creates a **hostile environment** at school for such student, (iv) **infringes on the rights** of such student at school, or (v) **substantially disrupts the education process** or the orderly operation of a school.

Public Act No. 11-232 clearly indicates that bullying may occur: on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, as well as outside of the school setting.

Physical acts or gestures, based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics are to be considered under the classification of bullying.

A Student and/or their parent may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and action. A copy of this school's safe school climate plan may be found at the school. The complaint procedure is also posted on the District's website and the school website.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Safe School Climate Specialist is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school.

"Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

"Electronic mobile device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text, messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital photographs are taken or transmitted.

"Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, writing, images, sound, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) that, if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else, he/she should report the behavior to a teacher, or administration. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the administration will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who engages in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension, expulsion or referral to law enforcement officials.

A bullying prevention program shall be implemented, which strives to develop a school and home environment:

- characterized by warmth, positive interest and involvement by adults;
- with firm limits to unacceptable behavior;
- where non-hostile, non-physical negative consequences are consistently applied in cases of violations of rules and other unacceptable behaviors;
- where adults act as authorities and positive role models; and
- where students are included in efforts to improve school climate.

ALL CREC Schools:

1. Permit anonymous reports of bullying by students and written reports by parents or guardians;
2. Require teachers and other school staff to notify school administrators of bullying acts they witness and students' reports they receive;

3. Require school administrators to investigate parents' written reports and review students' anonymous reports; 4. Require each school to maintain a publicly available list of the number of verified bullying acts that occurred there;
5. Require each school to have an intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying, including language and bullying in student codes of conduct; and
6. Require notice to parents or guardians of all students involved in a varied act of bullying. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.

Should a family member need to report an act of bullying or harassment, please contact the main office for CREC's Bullying Report Form.

Hazing (Fully Policy: [5131.91](#))

Policy Summary:

- No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing.
- No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate hazing.
- Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- Hazing activities are seriously disruptive to the educational process in that they involve students and violence or threats of violence. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and/or after school hours.
- A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to initiate another person or to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act. ● The school district will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

DISCOVERY ACADEMY PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization)

Discovery Academy PTO's Mission

The PTO is dedicated to the purpose of supporting the education and the educational experience of the children at Discovery Academy. To fulfill this purpose, the organization shall:

1. Encourage a positive, supportive, and diverse atmosphere to enhance students' educational and extracurricular experiences.
2. Raise and expend funds to enhance and improve the educational quality of Discovery Academy, including, but not limited to, financial support to classroom teachers, purchase of books and materials, procurement of educational assemblies and development and promotion of after-school enrichment programs
3. Strive to achieve a closer working relationship between teachers, parents and community so that parents, administrators and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of the students
4. Keep abreast of local district objectives and acquaint or inform the committee on any school issues

Email – discoveryacademypto@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/CREC.DA>



****Meeting dates and agendas will be emailed to families each month.****

