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**A C A D E M Y**

**H I G H S C H O O L**

**Student and Family Handbook  
2023-2024**

## **Memphis Rise Academy Charter School**

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### **Our Mission**

Memphis Rise Academy Charter School provides students in grades 6-12 with an excellent education, preparing them to pursue ambitious goals and succeed in college.

### **Responsibility, Excellence, Ambition, Commitment, Honesty**

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### **Our Core Values**

Memphis Rise Academy holds members of the school community—staff, families, and students—to the highest standards. To provide the very best education for Memphis Rise Academy students, all of us must work together to create an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence. To create this environment, we must collectively and consistently ensure that Memphis Rise Academy students meet five basic, but critical, expectations:

- **Responsibility:** There is no greater responsibility of our staff, students, and families than coming to school prepared to succeed each day.
- **Excellence:** Our staff, families, and students are expected to demonstrate excellence in their behavior and interactions with all members of the school community.
- **Ambition:** Our staff, families, and students show the desire to be positive members of our school community through words, actions, and demonstration of our core values.
- **Commitment:** Even when it is difficult, staff, families, and students persist in making decisions which create a culture of positive character and academic excellence.
- **Honesty:** Our staff, families, and students must remain honest with themselves and their school community at all times.

These expectations, known collectively as the REACH values, form the basis of our school, and therefore inform many of the policies outlines in this manual.

### **Responsibility and Accountability**

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#### **Students, Families, and Staff**

The Memphis Rise Academy Agreement of Mutual Support represents some of the most important responsibilities of being a member of our school community. For students, the Agreement, and this handbook, provides an overview of what being a Memphis Rise Academy student is, and how and why it is different from other schools. For families, the Agreement and Handbook outline some specific expectations the school will hold you to in order to provide the best possible education for your student. In exchange for what students and families do, the staff of Memphis Rise Academy will work tirelessly to provide students with a safe and respectful environment in which they can achieve academic success. This Agreement is provided to families during our July information sessions to encourage this partnership for excellence and ensure our mutual expectations are clearly stated prior to the school year.

## **School Calendar, Schedule, and Attendance**

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### **Hours of Operation**

Memphis Rise Academy High School hour of operation this year. Monday through Friday, students are expected to arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 AM. Monday through Thursday, the school day lasts from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM; on Fridays, the school day is from 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

The school building will be open to students starting at 7:45 AM every day. All students must arrive by 8:00 AM in order to prepare for their day in a timely fashion and participate in morning advisory, which is now only once a week. Students arriving after 8:00am will, unless otherwise notified by the school (in cases such as inclement weather), be marked as tardy. In the past, we have seen many students' progress be significantly impacted by consistent tardiness; this will be even more true in high school. Please ensure that your student arrives at school on time. For information on this policy, see **Incomplete Days: Lateness and Early Dismissal**.

All students need to be picked up from Memphis Rise Academy High School by 5:30pm, unless they are staying for an event scheduled to end later than 5:30pm.. Clubs and Office Hours will end no later than 5:30pm. Athletics schedules will normally end later than 5:30, and these schedules will be communicated with athletes' families prior to the season's beginning. While we are happy to make an effort to accommodate families who have circumstances in which they cannot pick up a student immediately at 3:30pm, we cannot stay with or monitor students on a regular basis later than 5:30. If a family is consistently leaving a student with us later than 5:30pm, our administration will request a family meeting to find a solution that works for our staff and the family. Please be mindful of this policy; school staff can be accommodating in the case of emergencies, but allow for our staff to maintain a work-life balance by being on time to pick up your students so that we can close the building for the evening.

### **Attendance Policy**

According to T.C.A § 49-6-3001, all students under 18 are expected to be in school. All students under the age of 18 will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in TCA § 49-6-3007 if the student does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, the Head of School (or designee) will investigate the situation. Memphis Rise Academy operates in compliance with TCA § 49-6-3007 requirements, which can include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

Given the fast pace and high rigor of our curriculum, any time missed at Memphis Rise Academy can be detrimental to a student's learning. Unequivocally, regular attendance is absolutely required for success. Parents are expected to ensure that their child is in school every day possible; please do not allow your child to miss a day of school except in the case of a serious illness or a family emergency.

We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time. This includes leaving early before our school's breaks, or leaving early for the summer before our final exams are complete. We encourage families to take advantage of our early Friday dismissal, as well as planned days off and breaks, to schedule appointments and travel.

An absence is defined as a school day in which the student is not present at the school at any time between 8:00 AM-3:30 PM (2:30 PM on Friday). In the past, Memphis Rise Academy did not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Given recent guidance from State policy, this now must change to an excused and unexcused absence policy.

Students absent for an excused purpose are required to provide documentation of their excused absence within two school days of when they return to school. Excused absences may include the following:

- Illness, injury, hospitalization, or inpatient therapy, with a note from a medical professional
- Death or serious injury/trauma within the student's family, accompanied with a note from a family member
- If a student is on a school-sponsored trip, college visit, or activity, in which case no documentation other than the permission of the family to attend is required
- Holidays for religious observance, accompanied with a note from a family member
- Court order, subpoena or legal summons, accompanied by documentation from the accompanying legal authority
- If a student's parent or legal guardian is a member of the active US Military or Military Reserves and is called to active duty—in this case, a meeting with the Principal will be held to determine appropriate suspension of student's enrollment status and attendance will be adjusted accordingly

Reasons for excused absence do not include:

- Family vacations or trips during the school year, even with prior notification to the school
- Absences for unauthorized extracurricular activities or sports not associated with Memphis Rise Academy
- Job-related or family work related absences that require a student to miss school because of their employment or the support of their family

### **Attendance Intervention Policies**

Due to the aforementioned changes, Memphis Rise Academy will now follow the following policies for attendance intervention, at the benchmarks listed below:

At 5 unexcused absences, a family will receive a letter from Memphis Rise Academy requesting a SART (Student Attendance Review Team) meeting, to inform the family of the student's attendance and generate solutions to ensure attendance policy adherence moving forward and/or rectify any absences that were marked in error as unexcused. These solutions will be recorded in a PSAP (Parent/Student Action Plan).

At 10 unexcused absences, a student has now crossed the threshold of allowable unexcused absences by law, and will therefore be required to submit to a truancy review by the school's SARB (Student Attendance Review Board). At this time, the PSAP will be reviewed and amended, if necessary, by the Board to reflect goals and reasons for the truancy. More requirements, including but not limited to mandatory repetition of courses or the grade, or mandatory in-home intervention, may be determined as necessary by the SARB at this time. If a parent or legal guardian does not attend the SARB review, their reasons for violating compulsory attendance law are deemed inadequate by the SARB, or the PSAP is continuously violated after the SARB hearing, then the case will be referred to the Attorney General and Juvenile Court. A court summons will be sent to the parent or guardian, and a SARB representative will also be mandated to attend the hearing as a witness to the interventions the school has put into effect thus far.

Students who miss five or more consecutive days of school without notification to Memphis Rise Academy of a reason for absence, excused or unexcused, will be recorded as truant, and a letter will be mailed to the family notifying them that, if no contact is made within 3 days of receiving the notice, they will be referred to the District Attorney General. Memphis Rise Academy will make at least one attempt to contact families this applies to proactively prior to recording the truancy. Students who miss ten consecutive days of school without notification will be withdrawn from Memphis Rise Academy.

Families will receive notifications via the Remind app from Memphis Rise Academy regarding daily absences, including a reminder to submit absence verification for excuse via phone or written communication.

### **Incomplete Days: Lateness and Early Dismissal**

Memphis Rise Academy offers six classes of core curriculum each day to every student. It is important that students are present for all six core classes to ensure they are able to maximize their learning time. If a student does not complete a full school day, he/she is assigned an Incomplete Day. This includes tardiness after 8:00 AM, or early dismissal for medical appointments, family emergencies, traffic, etc.

Memphis Rise Academy excuses Incomplete Days in the case of court-mandated appearances upon the provision of proper documentation. Late students must check in at the main office in our main building and receive a tardy slip before reporting to class. Students leaving early must check out with the front desk in our main building before leaving.

For their own safety, students must be picked up by a parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact person in order to be dismissed prior to 3:30 PM (2:30 PM on Friday). For students who drive to school, families must communicate that their student will be leaving school earlier than normal dismissal for an excused purpose in order for students to receive permission to leave early.

Additionally, due to the stretch of our staff during the late afternoon hours and the various placements of students, Memphis Rise Academy will limit or deny early dismissals between the hours of 3:00-3:30 Monday-Thursday and 2:00-2:30 on Fridays in non-emergency situations.

If a student needs to be sent home due to a behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian must come to the school, meet with the Head of School and/or Dean of Students, and remove the student from school grounds. Incomplete Day consequences apply in cases of suspension. Students being sent home for behavioral infractions will not be dismissed unless the parent/guardian has physically come to the school, unless certain rare exceptions apply.

Students who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission.

### **School Closing Procedures**

If Shelby County Schools closes for an emergency or inclement weather, Memphis Rise Academy will also close. Listen to the radio or television for announcements related to the closing of Shelby County Schools, as well as check our school Facebook page (if your family has access). We will also make every effort to confirm our closure with an automated phone call.

## **Transportation**

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### **Bus Transportation**

Memphis Rise Academy will offer cost-free bus transportation from selected common pick-up and drop-off points, in the areas where the bulk of our families live. As seats are limited, only students living in designated enrollment zones will be eligible for transportation during the 2022-2023 school year. Exact bus stop locations and stop times will be communicated to families prior to the beginning of the school year.

In the interest of student safety, it is of the utmost importance that families commit to bringing students to the bus stops only at the times indicated, and remaining with them until the bus arrives. Further, it is critical that families arrive at the bus stop by the indicated time in the afternoon to pick up their students. Failure to pick up students on time in the afternoon creates an incredibly dangerous situation, as bus stops are located in very public areas with no supervision from Memphis Rise Academy staff.

Providing bus transportation to our families is a demonstration of our commitment to our families and communities, but our bus transportation cannot be abused or become unsafe. We expect that the culture of our buses and bus stops mirror the expectations and culture of our school, and that students who ride our buses understand that they have a responsibility to act within the confines of those expectations and that culture. Therefore, Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to temporarily suspend or permanently revoke student bus privilege if:

- There is, on the part of the family, a repeated lack of timeliness and commitment to honoring bus stop procedures and safety.
- There is any kind of behavioral infraction on the bus that jeopardizes student safety or violates school or bus expectations, with criteria determined by administration.
- Students are refusing masking or other public health protocols on the bus, as noted by our bus vendor.

## **Car Transportation**

Families are always welcome to transport their students to/from school. Drop-off and pick-up will happen in the main parking lot in front of Memphis Rise Academy High School. Families can drop their students off earlier than 7:45am; students will be held in our gym prior to 7:45 and provided breakfast when released to their first period. We ask that no students are dropped off earlier than 7:15am without prior notice. For pick-up, families should be waiting at the school at dismissal within the time window provided to you by our Operations Team.

Please follow the guidelines established on the pick-up and drop-off information sheet, which is distributed at parent orientation, including respecting the right turn only policy for our parking lot during End of Day Dismissal.

## **Student Drivers**

Students are allowed to drive to school and park in our approved student parking lot if they have received a Memphis Rise Academy Student Parking Pass. Students wishing to park in Memphis Rise Academy's student parking lot will be presented with a document outlining the requirements to obtain a parking permit. Students and parents will be asked to sign a parking contract, and students will not be permitted to park in the student parking lot without all of these requirements being met and a parking contract being signed.

The Memphis Rise Academy student parking lot, though it is not located on Memphis Rise Academy property, should be considered an extension of the school. Students violating any parking-related policies may receive consequences including detention, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and/or vehicles being towed at student/family expense.

Please note the following:

- Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to revoke previously granted student parking privileges for any reason, including (but not limited to) consistent late arrivals to school, reports of dangerous driving or inappropriate conduct in the parking lot, transportation of non-Memphis Rise Academy students into the student parking lot, or failure to adhere to school-communicated arrival and dismissal procedures.
- Student parking permits may be correlated to a specific numbered parking spot, meaning that the student must park in that specific spot in order to be in compliance with parking policies.
- Demand for student parking may exceed parking availability, and students who do meet all of the requirements may be denied parking spaces based on lack of availability.
- Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to issue parking permits in order of seniority, with 12th graders who meet all the requirements being granted permits first, followed by 11th graders, etc.

## **Walkers**

Students are permitted, if the family deems our school location proximal enough to their home, to walk to and from school each day, with the same criteria for arrival times and tardiness. Our walkers, if applicable, will exit the school first each day and will be walked to either the crosswalk near the corner of Wilfong/Raleigh Lagrange or the eastern edge of the Memphis Rise

Academy property, depending on direction, by a staff member. Students will not be permitted to cross Raleigh Lagrange, if needed, at any location other than a designated crosswalk. We ask that families of walkers do make contact with the school if students are not at home/their walking destination within 10 minutes of their expected time. We also ask that, if students are patronizing local businesses on the ride home, that they do so with high character, as they directly represent our school while they are in uniform in our community.

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## **Academic Dishonesty**

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Because Memphis Rise Academy is a college-preparatory academic environment, we ask our students to engage in intellectually rigorous work in all classes. Students are expected to produce their own authentic work on all class assignments, including those completed inside and outside of school.

Forgery, cheating, misusing artificial intelligence websites or generators, and plagiarism are all considered acts of academic dishonesty. Specific examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Using writings, passages, and ideas of others and passing them off as your own
- Using an outside source without proper acknowledgment
- Submitting work generated from an artificial intelligence website or generator and passing it off as your own intellectual work
- Using solutions manuals or solutions published online as an aid or for the completion of assignments

Students who engage in academic dishonesty will receive a discretionary consequence, which might include a grade of 0% on the assignment, a family meeting, detention, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension.

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## **Homework and Make-up Policies**

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Homework is an essential component of Memphis Rise Academy's curriculum. Our students must display the commitment to extended practice in core subjects, especially literacy, in order to meet the expectations of our rigorous academic program. It is our students' responsibility to commit each night to completing all of their homework in a timely manner, as well as to keep track of their homework responsibilities in their designated school planner. As there is no Homework Club in high school, students' primary motivation and method of accountability around completing their homework will be the significant impact it will have on their grades and Grade Point Averages (GPA). Students who do their homework, as well as those who don't, will, in all cases, have no question about the impact of homework in our high school. All homework assignments are collected in student's core classes unless otherwise notified by the teacher. Students should expect that have somewhere in the range of 30 minutes to two hours worth of essential homework to complete each night.



## Uniform Policy

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### Dress Code

Memphis Rise Academy has a student uniform, which applies during all Monday through Friday school days. We have adopted our dress code to:

- foster a strong sense of school community
- ensure a focus on academic achievement
- prepare students for professional expectations of the adult academic and work world
- increase school safety by making the presence of visitors/outsideers more apparent
- reduce the cost of clothing for families and the need for continual shopping
- give our students the opportunity to show school pride in and out of the school building

### Enforcement of Dress Code Policy

Like all school policies, our dress code is strictly and consistently enforced. Although it may seem like small exceptions should not be a problem, we cannot allow deviations from our dress code. If an exception is made for one student, it would then have to apply to all students, and the code would change. It is in everyone's best interest—school, student and family—if we keep our dress code consistent for all students. We want our policy to be clear; families who have any questions or concerns about our dress code should feel free to contact the school immediately for clarification. For these reasons, we want to enforce our dress code policies with some flexibility and commonality in mind, so that all families and students can achieve our dress code standard without a high degree of cost or detail each day.

Students who enter our building fully out of dress code are not allowed to attend class. Parents will be asked to bring the proper attire to the school to ensure that the student can enter the classroom. In addition, dressing inappropriately or changing out of dress code during the day may result in disciplinary consequences. In the event that a student has a minor dress code violation, interventions may be anything from a note home to correct the infraction to a potential detention for ongoing infractions.

### Purchasing of Clothing

Families may purchase all Memphis Rise Academy-specific uniform items through our school website, through the uniform information link. Our vendor is Global Schoolwear.

### School Dress Code Policy for High School Students

- **Red or Black Memphis Rise Academy polo shirt**
- **Long pants or skirts that are either solid black, solid khaki, solid gray, solid brown, or solid navy blue (no denim with the exception of solid black denim pants).** Pants and skirts are not provided by Memphis Rise Academy. However, they may be purchased either at Charter School Uniforms or any traditional clothing retailer, provided they meet these guidelines. **All pants must have belt loops—no shorts, drawstring pants, or pants with elastic waistbands will be allowed. It will be mandatory, in all cases, that the family rectify any issues that may arise, which may involve buying new pants. Pants cannot**

**be pre-ripped or have unnecessary zippers/closures. No spandex/yoga or leggings-type pants are allowed in our dress code at any time.**

**\*\*\*A black or brown belt is recommended** in order to keep pants from “sagging,” which is not permitted. Sagging is defined as wearing pants that are too large, or worn low enough to show a student’s undergarments. This will not be permitted; if a student is consistently sagging, they will be given a belt or other solution by the school, and a call will be made to the student’s family requesting that the student wear a belt or otherwise fix the issue permanently. If sagging continues, students may be given school consequences or removed from class until the issue can be fixed. **Students should not show midriff or other skin, and a belt will help ensure this is the case.**

- **Secure tennis shoes, dress shoes or boots.** Crocs may be worn as long as they are worn with socks and have the backstrap in use (not used as a “slide” sandal). These shoes can be any brand or color, as long as they are closed and secure. Sandals of any kind are not allowed as shoes.
- **Socks** that depict inappropriate and/or illegal patterns will be grounds for an Out-of-School Suspension.
- **OPTIONAL OUTERWEAR: Red, black or gray crewneck sweatshirt with Memphis Rise Academy logo; black V-neck sweater with Memphis Rise Academy logo; red cardigan sweater with Memphis Rise Academy logo; black fleece full-zip jacket with Memphis Rise Academy logo**
  - We recommend all students purchase a cold-weather item from the list above; temperatures in class may fluctuate slightly, especially in colder months
  - Hooded sweatshirts are not allowed to be worn in school, but can be worn to and from school.
  - Other coats/jackets are not allowed in class and must be removed upon a student’s entry to their classroom—please purchase one or more Memphis Rise Academy uniform items to suffice as a student’s cold weather apparel. Memphis Rise Academy can assist in the ordering of these items at any time during the school year.
  - A Memphis Rise Academy polo shirt is required under all Outerwear items except the Memphis Rise Academy red crewneck sweatshirt. If a student is not wearing a polo as required under the outerwear items, they may be required to wear a school polo.
- **OPTIONAL: White, black, gray, or red undershirt (short or long sleeved)**
  - All undershirts must be white, black, gray, or red and not be oversized.
  - All undershirts must be solid-colored; no visible words or patterns.
  - Short shirt sleeves should not show from under the uniform shirt.
  - No other undershirt colors than these four will be permitted.

### **Extracurricular Organization Uniform Additions**

At the school’s discretion, students may be permitted to wear items that are associated with a club or sports team of which they are actively a part, indefinitely or for a selected portion of the school year. The school reserves the right to allow or disallow any item created by a club or sports team to become a part of the general uniform. Sports uniforms, eg jerseys, shorts, etc., cannot be worn as part of the general uniform, but may be allowed by school administration on the days of athletic events during the season.

## **General Clothing Requirements**

- Students may not wear clothing with logos other than the Memphis Rise Academy logo.
- Memphis Rise Academy polos, with the Memphis Rise Academy logo, are the only acceptable polo shirts to be worn with our uniform.
- Clothing must be sized appropriately to fit the student. Clothes may not be too big or too small.
- Students may not alter the Memphis Rise Academy uniform with writing, drawing, cutting, etc. No cuffs may be frayed.
- A second polo shirt worn under the shirt is not considered a uniform undershirt—only t-shirt, long sleeve t-shirts, or tank tops are allowed as undershirts.
- Students who consistently wear pants that are not in accordance to our dress code, primarily “joggers,” leggings, ripped pants, sweatpants or dark/colored jeans, will be first given a warning, then issued a daily detention, and can be suspended from school if the pants are not corrected. A phone call home to ensure families are aware of the situation will be made.
- Once students enter the school building, the wearing of hats, headphones, bandanas, or outside jackets is not permitted unless it is in accordance with a religious observation and previously messaged to Memphis Rise Academy staff. Hats worn in the school building after entry will be confiscated. All outerwear must be school outerwear.
- Headbands are permitted for male and female students, but must be a solid color only. Headbands worn for the purpose of demonstrating affiliation to any group will be strictly prohibited and may result in changes to this policy.
- Sunglasses/non-prescription glasses are not permitted inside the school.
- The school reserves judgment to ask that any necklace worn outside of the shirt be tucked in if it provides a distraction, in the opinion of the school, from the uniform’s professionalism. Large chains are never to be worn to school.
- When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform. Students should not expect to be given an opportunity to change into uniform while in the school building.
- Students cannot carry school bags, i.e. bookbags, around with them during the school day, unless in the case of an injury or another school-approved reason. Students may carry a small purse or other small shoulder bag; however, bags that are too large or are otherwise not satisfactory may become subject to discretionary refusal by Memphis Rise Academy High School. Purses with two shoulder straps, resembling a backpack, are not allowed, per the requirements above.
- Students may not wear clothing that shows cleavage, private parts, midriff, or undergarments. Examples of unacceptable clothing include, but are not limited to: sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with ties only in the back, clothing made of see-through materials.
- Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to make discretionary decisions on all student uniform interpretations and accessories on a case by case basis.

## **Dress Down Days**

Dress down days are special spirit days when students may come to school out of uniform. We ask that students adhere to the following guidelines:

- Shoes are required. Shoes can be any color, but cannot be sandals or house shoes (fuzzy slippers). Shoelaces must be tied.
- No clothes that are torn, ripped, or frayed. No mesh, no holes.
- Shorts can be worn but must be no higher than fingertip length.
- Skirts must be no higher than fingertip length.
- No backless, strapless, bare stomach or halter-style tops. No undergarments can show. No blouses or tops which expose the stomach when the wearer is in any position.
- No sleeveless t-shirts or tank tops.
- No profanity, obscenity, or inappropriate printing or advertising.
- If students choose to wear jackets or sweatshirts, the pockets must be completely empty.
- No costumes. No hats. No sunglasses. No excessive jewelry, piercings, chains/necklaces on the outside of the shirt, and no glitter.
- No purses or other auxiliary items may be worn.

When in doubt, choose the more appropriate outfit, and bring a back-up in the event that a student needs to change. If a student does not follow these non-uniform policies, the staff may contact a family member to bring a change of clothing.

### **Uniform Photo Policy**

As we know some of the above uniform guidelines, especially as they relate to shoes, can be interpretive, we encourage all families to take advantage of our school's Uniform Photo Policy. If you are at a store and are concerned whether a uniform item is or is not within our uniform guidelines, please text a picture to Principle Nick Fortunato (901-302-4526) Executive Director Gus Conelly (901-379-5752) or Dean of Students Mario Cole (901-335-9742) Antowine McClellan (414-379-7337). We commit to replying to all photos as soon as possible with either a yes or no, allowing you confidence that what you purchase is or is not within our uniform guidelines.

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### **School Health and Safety**

At Memphis Rise Academy, the health and safety of our students remains the most important priority. We are determined to be responsive to data, CDC guidance, recommendations of other health organizations, and the concerns of our stakeholders. As a result of the ongoing pandemic, especially new variants of the virus that have proven to be riskier for young adults and teenage children, we will follow Shelby County Schools policy in the following:

As situations change, as new recommendations are released, and as vaccinations numbers change, Memphis Rise will respond and adjust safety protocols as needed. Memphis Rise reserves the right to change its COVID-19/masking policies at any time

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## **Technology Possession and Use**

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### **Cell Phones**

In high school, it is typical for a student to have a cell phone, especially as our students become more independent in their outside of school lives. We have instituted a cell phone policy for years in our middle school that has essentially taken the ownership of responsibility around cell phone usage off of the students, and onto the school. This is no longer the case in our high school, and we expect our students to respond by meeting the respect that we are showing them with this policy change with the same amount of responsibility and respect.

Students may bring a cell phone to school, and they may keep the phone on their person during the day. However, cell phone usage of any kind is not permitted during class time at Memphis Rise Academy. Students are allowed to use their phones before and after school, as well as at lunch, and on transitions. However, if a student brings their phone to school, it must stay in their pocket, purse, or locker throughout class time. No cell phones are permitted to be used in restrooms at any time during the school day. Cell phones must be off, or on silent (not vibrate). Should a student need to use their phone to make a call, we will direct them to the front desk in order to make the call. Any emergency contact from parent to student should be directed through the front desk.

If a student is seen using a cell phone in class, our restrooms, or any other area of the school when/where such use is unauthorized, we reserve the right to take the student's cell phone. If a cell phone is taken, it is returned to the student at the end of the school day, it will be kept locked in a secure safe in the Dean's office, and can be retrieved after 3:30pm. This turn-in process will continue for a length of time determined by our Dean of Students. If a student is found with a cell phone during a window of time that a student is expected to be turning in the phone, we will take the phone and request a family meeting for the phone to be retrieved. If a student refuses to give a phone they are caught using in class to a teacher or administrator, an Out of School Suspension, accompanied by a phone suspension, will be issued.

If we determine that a student is abusing our phone policy in a way such as making a scene out of their phone in our hallways during transition, using the phone interruptly, affecting their urgency in class transition, using it to cause or participate in unprofessional social issues or bully students during the school day, or any other way that otherwise disrupts their focus on academics, we reserve the right to ask a student to follow the same turn-in policy described above until we believe a student can meet the expectations of professionalism and responsibility necessary for this policy change.

### **Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices such as mp3 players, **iWatches/smart watches**, tablets, personal laptops, or other network-ready electronic devices are not recommended for Memphis Rise Academy students; access to technology is available through the school's computers and laptops. If a student chooses to bring any of these items to school, they are not permitted to be used during class time and guidelines for not adhering to this policy will be the same as the school cell phone policy. Headphones are permitted to be used in building during school hours, with staff permission, but are not to be worn on the ears, head, or neck when not in use. Students must

remove headphones by 8am, and are not permitted during the day except in authorized classroom usage. Students may use headphones again after school.

If a student is using a smart watch in a classroom to text or perform any social function, the phone will be asked for by the teacher or administrator, as the phone is the driver of the watch. If a student refuses to comply with the request, the same policies listed above for cell phone refusal will apply.

### **Use of School Chromebooks and Computers**

Memphis Rise Academy High School often utilizes laptops in its courses for word processing, research, online testing, or presentation creation purposes. When using a laptop, it is our expectation that students remain focused on the task at hand, rather than using the device for their own personal purposes such as internet searches, social media, etc. Our school maintains a managed service plan with GoGuardian, which allows us to monitor student computer use. If a student is breaking school expectations for computer activity, consequences from a demerit to a potential suspension, based on the severity of the offense, will be issued. Additionally, if a student, due to negligence or irresponsible behavior, causes physical damage to the device or is responsible for a software issue such as a virus or malware, families may be responsible for reimbursing the school for the device.

During the day, any laptop issued to a student is the responsibility of the student. Any damage done to the laptop from misuse or carelessness is at the student and family's expense. Issues deemed accidental by the school will result in a sharing of responsibility between the school and student. In the event that a student is allowed to check out a laptop to take home, all loss, damage, or other harm due to negligence is the liability of the student and family. We encourage students to take care of the laptops and use them appropriately to avoid any consequence of this nature.

### **Personal Property and Safety**

All students at Memphis Rise Academy High School are provided with a working locker at the beginning of the year to keep their personal belongings secure. Should property be stolen or damaged due to (1) a student keeping their locker unlocked, (2) a student sharing a locker and/or its combination with another student or (3) a student breaking their locker, causing it to be unable to secure their belongings, without reporting the issue to Memphis Rise Academy administration, Memphis Rise Academy does not hold itself responsible for the investigation into or issuance of consequences to any party, nor does it hold itself liable for any personal property misplaced on school property. Our school will always work with a student to make an effort to track down lost items and work with the student and family, but we maintain no responsibility for the resolution of any property claims due to these aforementioned acts of negligence.

Additionally, we do not encourage students to carry large sums of money at school during the day. Money at school would only be for the purchase of items from a vending machine, where nothing is more than \$1, or for paying for a field trip or school-sponsored activity, for which the transfer of money to a teacher can take place immediately upon arrival or during Advisory. Students carrying large sums of money in their locker or personal bag are fully responsible for it, and the school cannot maintain responsibility for the resolution of any perceived theft.

## **Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks**

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Breakfast and lunch are provided at Memphis Rise Academy, and are available to every student, every day, free of charge.

Breakfast will be served at the front door and eaten at the start of P1 in classrooms between 7:45-8:15 AM. Breakfast will be available to students arriving after 8:00 until 8:30 AM, even though those students are still considered tardy. Students will have time during their morning period to eat breakfast. Students are also welcome to bring breakfast items from home to be consumed during the start of the day.

Lunch will be served in the HS MPR at different times for all students in order to preserve spacing during unmasked lunch periods. Students will have the ability to advocate to eat lunch in a less crowded, monitored space if concerned about social distancing. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Students are welcome to bring lunch from home to consume during the lunch period.

## **Outside Food**

Students are allowed to bring snacks/outside food to school to eat during lunch time, but students are not permitted to eat food in our school hallways or in their lockers. We ask that students who bring food to school ensure they are kept safe in their lockers (eg, in a safe and/or unopened container) during the day and do not consume the food unless it is assigned meal time. If a student is abusing our school's common space food policies, they may lose the privilege of having a locker for a temporary period of time. This is to ensure that our school's facilities, including its lockers, are kept in clean and working order, and that unwanted smells, bugs, mold, or other issues of this nature do not occur. It also serves to limit any unmasking in hallway or other public spaces when masks are required. This policy also applies to any food provided by Memphis Rise Academy High School, such as that in the REACHPoint store, and any food purchased from a vending machine.

## **Rules for Outside Food**

Some foods are a detriment to our classroom environment, and are never allowed in the school. These foods include, but are not limited to:

- Energy drinks
- Abnormally large amounts of snacks (i.e. a "Family Size" bag of potato chips, a full gallon of any beverage)
- Gum is not allowed at Memphis Rise Academy. Because our buildings and furniture are all less than 7 years old, please help us keep the building in the condition that all students deserve, and adhere to our gum policies in the building and, even, the parking lots.

Our school serves lunch to all students every day free of charge, and students are welcome to bring lunch from home at any time. Additionally, when needed, parents are welcome to drop off

lunch food prior to their student's assigned lunch period. Because of the inherent operational challenges related to receiving food from app-based delivery services, we are not able to facilitate delivery of student food delivery orders.

- 1) Students are asked **not** to have food delivered to the school through app-based delivery services at any time (Uber Eats, DoorDash, Chick-Fil-A Delivery, etc.)
- 2) If any app-ordered food deliveries do arrive, the order will be held at the front desk and released to the student at dismissal.
- 3) If parents need to directly drop off food for their student's lunch period, those drop-offs should be left at the front desk with a note identifying the student the food is for by the start of that student's assigned lunch period.
- 4) If a parent orders food delivery for their student, it must be dropped off by the start of that student's lunch period and the parent must communicate with the High School front desk that they ordered the food for their student. If food arrives after lunch, it will be held at the front desk until the EOD.
- 5) If any students repeatedly break the food delivery expectation by ordering app-based food delivery, the school may ask for a family meeting to address the trend.

## **Selling Food**

Under no circumstances will students be permitted to sell any food or beverage item on Memphis Rise Academy property. Students caught selling any food or beverage items will have the items immediately confiscated, snack privileges revoked until further notice, and will receive an automatic In-School Suspension, to begin immediately on the day the infraction occurred.

## **Grading, Promotion, and Retention**

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### **Tennessee High School Diploma Requirements**

Memphis Rise Academy High School students take six core classes during a given semester. Each class that our students take counts as a credit-driver towards their Grade Point Average, and students will, over the course of their four-year academic careers at Memphis Rise Academy High School.

Students in the State of Tennessee must pursue and receive a minimum of 23 credits in the following breakdown to receive a high school diploma from Memphis Rise Academy:

**Math:** 4 credits, including Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and a fourth higher level mathematics course; students must be enrolled in a math course every school year

**English:** 4 credits, names English I-IV

**Science:** 4 credits, including Biology and Chemistry

**Social Studies:** 3 credits, including US History and Geography, World History and Geography, US Government and Civics, and Economics

**Fine Arts:** 1 credit



**Foreign Language:** 2 credits

**Physical Education, Health, and Wellness:** 1.5 credits

**Personal Finance:** 0.5 credits

**Elective:** 3 credits in elective math and science, career/technical education, fine arts, humanities, or Advanced Placement (AP)

Memphis Rise Academy will, each year, present students with a list of course offerings provided by the school to pursue the above credits. Students who attend our high school will meet and greatly exceed the requirements for graduation, as well as be provided the opportunities for honors and Advanced Placement courses which will, undoubtedly, help them stand out as future college applicants.

### Rise Reports and Report Cards

Students will receive a Rise Report each Friday with their grades in each core class. At the end of each quarter, students will receive formal Report Cards with detailed information about their performance in each core subject area, based on formal assessment and, when applicable, project performance written by teachers and administrators. Report Cards will include a numerical and letter grade for each core academic class, as well as feedback from teachers in all of which will be updated on a weekly basis in our Rise Report system. We encourage all students return their Rise Report, signed by both themselves and a family member who is invested in their education, the following Monday. Our grading and GPA calculation scale is as follows:

Memphis Rise Academy High School Grade Point Average Scale		
Grade	Averages	GPA Points
A+	100-99%	4.4
A	98-93%	4
A-	92-90%	3.6
B+	89-88%	3.4
B	87-83%	3
B-	82-80%	2.6
C+	79-78%	2.4
C	77-73%	2
C-	72-70%	1.6
F	69% and below	0

Honors courses are on a 5.0 scale, providing a +1.0 weight to GPA points in the scale above. AP courses are on a 6.0 scale, providing a +2.0 weight to the GPA points in the scale above.

### Focus Study

Focus Study is a quiet time midday on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for students to primarily use as a study hall, homework work time, independent reading time, or organizational period. However, also during Focus Study, the governing teacher may choose to work with individual students or groups of students in their Focus Study on academic remediation to help support students' learning. Because Focus Study groups are created on a bi-weekly rotational basis that

follows students' areas of academic need, similar to our middle school Focus, students should be with a teacher who can provide them support in a class where they are struggling most. Focus Study is not a class, but rather a time for students to get work done, practice good habits, and receive extra help; therefore, it is not a graded course.

### **Course Failure Policy**

Memphis Rise Academy is an extremely challenging, college-preparatory academic environment. With consistent homework, an extended school day, and frequent assessments, we ask our students for significant commitment to academic excellence. However, our school also commits itself to daily opportunities for academic support and our school staff is readily available for ongoing support as needed.

A student must average a passing grade (70% or above) in a course for the entire duration of that course, either a semester or a year, in order to receive the associated credit with that course (0.5 or 1 credit). If a student does not pass either the semester or yearly course with at least a 70% average, they will not receive credit for that course. If that course is a course specifically required for high school graduation, the course will need to be repeated or, in some cases, a credit recovery option will be available to students. Students should speak with Memphis Rise Academy High School administration and operations staff for more details should they believe this may apply to them. Memphis Rise Academy High School maintains an Advisory program designed to assist students in the tracking of their progress towards credit acquisition, such that students will remain constantly aware of their progress towards their credits and their grades.

### **Code of Conduct**

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Memphis Rise Academy High School students are some of the hardest working in the city, and we ask them to practice the types of professional character and values that colleges and future employers will expect. However, we also desire to provide a "normative" high school experience, where our students are treated with respect in all cases, even as they work to meet the rigorous expectations of our school and, transitively, the mature professional world they are about to enter.

Our policies have changed in many ways between middle and high school. While the consequences ultimately stay the same, the issuance of them becomes more responsive to our students' ages and maturity levels. Therefore, please know that, when we choose to intervene behaviorally at our high school, it is because we truly believe those interventions are essential to upholding the culture we know we must provide to put students into a position to compete academically with the best and brightest in our nation.

Without a firm and consistent Code of Conduct, none of what we envision for our school can happen. This is the basis of our student Code of Conduct.

### **Respect for Facilities and Community Spaces**

One of the MRA core values is Responsibility. We believe that we are all responsible for keeping our building and facilities clean. We also believe that a clean environment is necessary to support the academic success of our students. We encourage students to keep individual spaces such as desks, lockers, and cubbies and shared spaces such as the cafeteria, library, gym, art room,

hallways, stairwells, etc. neat and free of any scratches, drawings, and unnecessary trash. If a student notices any damage or graffiti, we ask that they report it as soon as possible to the nearest staff member—keeping in mind our core value of Honesty.

Restrooms are a shared space, and students should treat them with pride. Students should pick up after themselves, flush the toilets, and ensure that no paper products are left on the floor. Students should not bring anything with them to the restroom, including writing instruments. Students who do not behave appropriately in the restrooms or other shared spaces will be issued a consequence at the discretion of the staff.

### **Behavioral Expectations**

Students are expected to maintain Memphis Rise Academy Code of Conduct at all times when in contact with school grounds, staff or partners. This could include during the school day, during any school-sponsored activities and trips, all-school events, or any time off of school grounds which results in substantial disruption to the learning environment.

Enforcement of our Code of Conduct is based on a framework of progressive discipline. Specifically, minor infractions result in less severe consequences while larger infractions result in more severe consequences. Furthermore, first-time infractions result in less severe consequences while repeated infractions result in more severe consequences.

Students are expected to always respond respectfully to the authority and direction of school staff. Behaviors that are considered disrespectful include but are not limited to rolling one's eyes, making inappropriate remarks or sounds in response to a request, or questioning a staff person's action or authority in a disrespectful manner. Such disrespect will be met with demerits in low level cases or, in higher cases, automatic detentions or in-school suspensions.

Public displays of affection between students are not permitted by our school. Students are permitted to be in personal relationships and spend time with a significant other throughout the day; however, students must maintain professional behavior during this time. Extended physical contact, such as long hugging or cuddling in public, kissing of any kind, or any behavior beyond this will be given a discretionary consequence, most likely a detention, but scaling to in-school or out-of-school suspensions for continued issues. We ask students to please keep their personal relationships professional for the purpose of not making those around them uncomfortable and to help us achieve a focused setting that mirrors the expectations of nearly all workplaces, where this behavior is not permitted.

Exceptions to the above will be considered during school sponsored dances when chaperoned students are permitted to dance, but they will be monitored. Students will not be permitted to engage in grinding or full body contact or passionately long embraces during the dances. This will be discussed with students who attend these activities.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco**

The possession, use, or distribution of drugs and alcohol (or drug and alcohol paraphernalia) is strictly prohibited at Memphis Rise Academy. This includes, but is not limited to, tobacco products, illegal substances, and vape devices (nicotine-based or THC based). Prescription medications and

over-the-counter medications are to be administered by the school nurse with documented permission from parents.

As mentioned in the Uniform Policy section of the Handbook, students should not wear clothing items that promote the use of drugs and alcohol.

Students who are found to have drugs or alcohol in their possession will result in consequences, including out-of-school suspension and possibly expulsion depending on the seriousness of the offense. For information on this policy, see **Procedures for Disciplinary Action**.

### **Behavioral Accountability Contracts**

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In the event that Memphis Rise Academy's behavioral intervention team, a combination of our Head of School and Dean of Students, determine that a student's infractions of our school's code of conduct are in need of a more significant intervention, a Behavioral Accountability Contract may be designed. Our Behavioral Accountability Contracts are put in place in order to make our expectations for students as clear as possible for all parties-- school, student, and family-- so that we can work in tandem in getting a student's behavior back on track to academic success. These contracts specify which behaviors a student may be chronically struggling with, what our school needs to see in terms of growth in those behaviors, and mechanisms our school will use, including some that involve necessary family support, to achieve those growth goals. These contracts also will normally state potential consequences beyond daily detentions that students may receive if targeted growth goals are not pursued or met within a reasonable amount of time. The issuance of a Behavioral Accountability Contract requires a mandatory meeting with a parent or guardian. In extreme cases, a student may be suspended prior to the administration of a contract, and the student's return to school will be contingent upon the scheduling and execution of a family meeting to review these contractual goals.

### **Consequences for Behavioral Infractions**

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#### **Demerits**

Students who do not meet the school's expectations for behavior or academic performance are issued demerits, or a recorded consequence after a staff member has intervened and asked for a student to make a change to a now persistently disruptive or unprofessional behavior. For example, demerits are issued when:

- Students are out of uniform
- Students arrive late to class or spend significant time out of class
- Students are unprepared for class

- Student exhibit poor conduct in class
- Students fail to follow directions or procedures
- Students talk out of turn
- Low-level disrespect towards a member of the school community
- Low-level disrespect of school property
- Other behaviors deemed inappropriate by the school staff

Students who earn three demerits or more during the school day receive detention, to be served the following school day at lunch. Parents may be notified via a phone call home when a student is assigned detention. Students who receive three consecutive days of detention, either through demerit accrual or more serious offenses which garner automatic detentions, may be assigned to in-school suspension or other consequence, determined by the Dean of Students.

### **Out-of-School Suspensions**

Students who act deliberately well outside of Memphis Rise Academy's expectations may earn Out-of-School Suspension (OSS). Actions warranting this consequence include, but are not limited to:

- Gross or harmful disrespect of a fellow student, staff member, visitor, or school partner
- Damaging, destroying or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing alcohol or tobacco products
- Disruption during ISS or detention through misbehavior
- Committing sexual, racial or any other form of harassment or intimidation
- Bullying, including cyberbullying on social media or via any other technology source
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language to any individual
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Fighting, physically or, in some cases, verbally
- Serious forgery, plagiarism or cheating
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Being charged with a felony
- Repeated offenses for which the student has already earned ISS

If a student with special instructional needs earns OSS, Memphis Rise Academy staff or external partners will work with the student and their family to ensure that all necessary instructional minutes are provided during the Out of School Suspension as is convenient for both the family and Memphis Rise Academy staff. Situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is defined as the exclusion from Memphis Rise Academy Charter School on a permanent basis at the discretion of the Head of School. TN law T.C.A. § 49-6-3401 provides the Head of School with the authority to expel students for good and sufficient reason. TN law requires

expulsion for no less than one (1) year for the following offenses, except for modifications on a case-by-case basis (e.g. students with special needs):

- Unauthorized possession on school property of a firearm
- Committing a battery upon a teacher, principal, administrator, or other employee
- Unlawfully possessing any drug, including any controlled substance as defined by T.C.A. §§ 39-17-403 through 39-17-415 and 53-10-101.

Note: this includes synthetic marijuana products, such as vape pens or edibles. Possession or use of these items is a 180-day expulsion in the State of Tennessee.

In addition to any of these infractions, any breaches of Federal law, TN State law, or Memphis City laws, may be handled in cooperation with the local police department and may result in expulsion. The school reserves the right to expel students for any other good and sufficient reason that it deems to be an unacceptable breach of its disciplinary policies, which may include:

- Threat of violence to students or staff in school or on a school bus
- Possession of or attempted usage of a weapon, defined as an item brought to school with the possibility of doing harm to self or others, or such an item attained on school grounds with the intention of use for the same purpose(s)
- Sexual misconduct in school or on a school bus, including the distribution of child pornography
- Instigation of or participation in fighting or other types of group violence, in school or on a school bus
- Persistent gross disrespect to school expectations and code of conduct policies, even after the steps of our discipline ladder have been taken or re-taken

Students who are expelled from Memphis Rise Academy are not guaranteed admission upon the termination of their expulsion. Students must reapply for their seat; however, our school does not enroll or re-enroll any students of any kind after the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. A student expelled during or after the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year will not be allowed to return to Memphis Rise Academy under this policy.

## **Procedures for Disciplinary Action**

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### **Detention or Alternate Behavioral Intervention**

Requirements: Detention is served during lunch and Focus Study Monday-Thursday, and during lunch on Friday with a continued lunch detention in many cases on Monday. Students who have earned detention on Fridays will be served the following Monday.

- **Student Notification:** If a student is required to serve detention, he/she will be notified during the last period of the day the detention is to be served.
- **Parent Notification:** Any time a student is assigned to detention, or a behavioral intervention conversation is needed, parents may receive a phone call home the same day.

Additionally, parents will be notified of a student's behavioral record on Friday Rise Reports, including all accrued detentions that week. If a detention phone call is missed, please return the call within 24 hours.

### **In-School Suspension**

At times, particular infractions warrant consequences that are more severe than demerits or detention. For these infractions, Memphis Rise Academy implements an In-School Suspension (ISS) model, ensuring that all students have as much consistent access to the curriculum as possible while at the same time ensuring that we have a consequence gradient appropriate for all degrees of infractions.

Specific infractions which may warrant ISS include, but are not limited to:

- Low-level forgery, cheating, plagiarism or dishonesty
- Skipping school or after school commitments
- Three or more consecutive days of demerit-based or automatic detentions
- Blatant or offensive disrespect or disruption

Students on ISS sit in all classes during the school day in our ISS Office and are provided their academic work; ISS students are expected to complete a longer-form reflection and engage in a productive and restorative conversation with the Head of School or Dean of Students regarding methods that they can positively re-engage with the school culture and pursue academic success. ISS issuances are on a 1/2 day basis; a student may be able to return to their normal course schedule either in the afternoon of an ISS day or the following morning, depending on their academic performance as well as their reflection.

### **Short-Term Out-of-School Suspension**

For suspensions between one and ten days, the following procedures will apply: When an infraction occurs, the student will be removed from the classroom and sent to the Main Office, Dean of Students' Office, or another designated school location. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident by the Head of School or Dean of Students.

Unless a student presents a danger or risk of substantial disruption to the classroom, the student shall receive notice and an opportunity to present her/his version of the relevant facts and events prior to receiving a suspension of one to ten days.

In the case of danger or a risk of substantial disruption, the student will be removed from the school building and provided notice and the opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts as soon as possible, provided this danger or risk is mitigated through the removal of the student from the school grounds.

In the case that a student is assigned an Out-of-School Suspension, the student's parent/guardian must immediately come to the school, meet with the Dean of Students and/or Head of School, and remove the student from the school building. If the parent/guardian cannot immediately come to the school building, the student will wait in a designated area until the parent/guardian arrives. Written notice will be sent home describing the incident and designating the length of suspension. Parents of those students who have been assigned an Out-of-School Suspension will be contacted

by the school within twenty-four (24) hours, notifying them of the suspension, the cause for the suspension, and the conditions for readmission.

If a student is assigned an Out-of School Suspension of more than five (5) days, the Head of School or Dean of Students must develop and implement a behavior plan for assisting the student to improve his/her behavior. Students are responsible for completing academic work missed during the suspension. The completed work will receive full credit, if submitted by deadlines in accordance with the school make-up policy. If a student does not complete this work, the student may face standard academic consequences (e.g., no academic credit).

### **Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsion**

If a suspension of more than ten days is assigned to a student, the following procedures will apply according to T.C.A. § 49-6-3401:

Parents or guardians of those students who have been assigned an Out-of-School Suspension longer than ten days or Expulsion will be contacted by the school within twenty-four (24) hours, notifying them of the suspension, the cause for the suspension, and the conditions for readmission. The student and the parents or guardians of the student will also receive immediate written or actual notice of the right to appeal the decision. Notices and proceedings will be translated into the student's/parent's primary language if necessary for their understanding of the proceedings.

A parent, guardian, or student may request a conference with the Head of School or a designee when the student has received an Out-of-School Suspension of greater than 10 days or expulsion. The school will provide due process by explaining the school's view of the offense, the information gathered during the investigation, and the length of the Out-of-School Suspension, if applicable. The school will allow the student to explain his/her side or view of the offense.

A student and/or parent, upon request, will have the right to review the student's records in accordance with applicable federal and state law, including 34 C.F.R. § 99.31 and T.C.A. §10-7-504.

Parents or guardians have the right to appeal a decision to suspend a student for more than ten 10 days or expel a student. All appeals of such a decision must be filed, orally or in writing, within five (5) days after receipt of the notice of the suspension or expulsion and may be filed by the parent or guardian, the student, or any person holding a teaching license who is employed by the school system if requested by the student. Failure to appeal such a decision within five (5) days waives any right to appeal. The appeal from this decision shall be to the Memphis Rise Academy Board of Directors, which may (through the Chair) appoint a disciplinary hearing authority comprising at least three members of the Board.

The appeal hearing shall be held no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the suspension. The Board of Directors or disciplinary hearing authority shall give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the parent or guardian, the student, and the school official who ordered the suspension or expulsion.

After the hearing, the Board of Directors may affirm the decision of the Head of School, order removal of the suspension or expulsion unconditionally or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable, or suspend the student for a specified period of time. Parents or guardians



will be notified by the Board Chairman of the committee's decision regarding the appeal in a timeframe determined by the Board Chairman.

A written record of the proceedings, including a summary of the facts and the reasons supporting the decision, shall be kept or prepared by the Board or disciplinary hearing authority. The student or Head of School may, within five (5) days of the decision, request review by the full Board of Directors, or, if the initial hearing was held before the full Board, request re-review by the full Board of Directors. Absent a timely appeal, the decision shall be final. The full Board, based upon a review of the record, may grant or deny a request for another hearing and may affirm or overturn the decision of the hearing authority with or without a hearing before the Board; provided, that the Board may not impose a more severe penalty than that imposed by the hearing authority without first providing an opportunity for a hearing before the Board. If the Board conducts such a hearing, this hearing shall be closed to the public, unless the student or student's parent or guardian requests in writing within five (5) days after receipt of written notice of the hearing that the hearing be conducted as an open meeting. The action of the full Board shall be final.

Whenever an expulsion hearing is recommended, the above-described procedural safeguards will be in effect. In general, the following will be provided:

The student shall receive written notice of the charges and a statement of the evidence, date, time and place of a hearing and notice of the right at the hearing. Notices and proceedings will be translated into the student's/parent's primary language if necessary for their understanding of the proceedings. A student and/or parent, upon request, will have the right to review the student's records in accordance with applicable federal and state law, including 34 C.F.R. § 99.31 and T.C.A. §10-7-504. All decisions by the Board of Directors regarding expulsion of a student will be issued to the student in writing.

In any case involving the possession or sale of illegal or unauthorized drugs, possession or usage of a weapon, or physical violence towards school staff or administration, Memphis Rise Academy will immediately pursue student expulsion, in accordance with the policies above. Memphis Rise Academy also reserves the right to pursue expulsion on a case by case basis for reasons beyond those described above, in conjunction with the Shelby County Schools Department of Alternative Schools.

### **Discipline of Students with Special Needs**

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of students who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon a disability. A copy of these rights is available at <http://www.teateachers.org/cms/IDEA/141.html>.

### **Student Searches**

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Memphis Rise Academy staff reserve the right to conduct searches of its students and their property when there is reasonable suspicion to do so. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the students is respected to the extent possible, and that students and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search to the extent possible. School cubbies and desks, which are

assigned to students for their use, remain the property of Memphis Rise Academy; therefore, students should have no expectation of privacy in these areas.

## **Confidentiality and Nondiscrimination**

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### **Student Education Records and FERPA Compliance**

Memphis Rise Academy fully complies with all requirements of the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA guarantees certain rights to families with respect to their children's education records. Tennessee's laws regarding open records, contained in T.C.A. § 10-7-504, further refine the requirements for handling student records and information.

### **Nondiscrimination**

Memphis Rise Academy is committed to inclusive education and providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities. Please refer questions about this policy to the Head of School.

## **Memphis Rise Academy High School Family and School Agreement of Mutual Support**

Memphis Rise Academy is grateful for the ambitious choice that its parents and guardians have made to enroll their students in our college preparatory environment. We know Memphis Rise Academy is a different type of environment, as evidenced in the Handbook you have just reviewed, but we believe we are the type of school that can and will produce amazing results for your child, if we can work in partnership with you to do so.

We are honored to provide our students with support when they are with us during the school day, but we know that support has to come just as much from the home setting as it does from Memphis Rise for our students to be in the best position to truly pursue success in college and life. For this reason, we ask our families to commit to the following guidelines to help us provide your student with the best education possible this year:

- 1) It is essential that our students arrive to school **on time every day**, and that they are in attendance whenever it is possible. We ask our families to fully commit to ensuring that students are here with us at 8:00am every morning, in their seats, ready to learn.
- 2) Our school also cares very much about its **uniform policy**, which is there to make sure that our students can be easily identified as a proud part of our school and show up every morning in clothes that are not a distraction to themselves or others. Every piece of our uniform is important, and is designed to be straightforward for our families to follow. Please make every effort to ensure that your student comes to school in our full and correct uniform every day, and that they have enough uniform pieces to be clean and comfortable throughout the week.
- 3) In high school, our students Grade Point Averages (GPAs) are defining for their post-secondary options, be that a collegiate track or a career track. To achieve a GPA that makes a student competitive in the options they want to pursue, students must study outside of school for tests, quizzes, and longer assessments. **Studying for 30 minutes a night**, whether a test is coming or not, is the replacement to our middle school's independent reading ask and, in combination with advice and skills driven by our school every day, we ask families to ensure students are studying and using their time productively outside of school.
- 4) In addition to study, the **priority of homework** becomes even more essential in homework because of the massive impact it will have on grades and, of course, GPA. Students are not being held to the standard of Homework Club in high school, but rather are asked to take full responsibility for their own homework and its impacts. We do ask that families not look over every student's shoulder, but remain a driving force in expectations and accountability for completion of that homework and its quality.
- 5) We will still send home a weekly Rise Report at the end of every week, no matter what, and we want you to read these reports and be aware of their content. The Rise Report is our primary mechanism of family/school communication, and we put a great deal of effort into preparing them every week to make sure you are informed. **Please return these Rise Reports**, signed by yourself and your student, each week, after reviewing them and using them as a tool to help your student prioritize their success.
- 6) There may be times when families and our school need to work together to find context and solutions for academic, disciplinary or other decisions that may happen in the school. We ask that these **requests for conversations are made with either the Head of School or Dean of Students**. We are honored to share the same goal that you have for your child—success in college and life—and will conduct all conversations with families with this in mind. We ask that all families do the same. Additionally, we ask that families do not call teachers on their personal phone numbers to resolve these issues, but rather go through the administrative channels above.
- 7) Sometimes, we will have to bring our families in for a **mandatory behavioral meeting**, especially in the case of an In-School or Out-of-School Suspension. These meetings will be essential to setting strong, clear next steps that everyone can agree upon about your student's progress at our school. Additionally, if your student receives special education services, there will be times that our Student

Supports Coordinator will need to legally conduct an IEP review with you present at the school. If any of these meetings are necessary, it is your responsibility to work with us to be present at a time that is convenient for both your schedule and the school's.

- 8) Finally, it is absolutely essential that our students are **picked up on time** at the end of each school day, **on time**. Our school day ends at 3:30 or 2:30, and our bus drop offs are all within forty minutes of that time at their respective stops. It is essential that our students are picked up at either our building or their bus stop in the timeliest fashion possible for their safety and security.

We ask that our families adhere to these guidelines so that we, as a school, can do everything we can on a daily basis to provide your students a truly excellent, well-rounded education. We are so excited for that opportunity and so honored by your trust. We ask that you **read our entire Student and Family Handbook** carefully to know all of our school's policies, and call our High School Principall Nicholas Fortunato with any questions you may have. Additionally, it is essential that you **read and sign this Family and School Agreement of Mutual Support**. Signing this agreement lets us know that you are committed to making this school year the success that we know it can be, one in which your student will take an ambitious step towards college preparation.

Once again, we are truly honored that you have chosen Memphis Rise Academy for your child's education. We look forward to working with you this year!

With great sincerity and pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Fortunato', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Fortunato  
High School Principal, Memphis Rise Academy