



**Middle School Student & 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 outlined 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 August orientation 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 has an extended school day and 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 3:50 PM; on Fridays, the school day is from 8:00 AM to 2:35 PM.

The school building will be open to students starting at 7:30 AM every day, but we strongly encourage families to drop students off between 7:45-8:00 AM. All students must arrive by 8:00 AM in order to submit homework and participate in morning advisory. Students arriving after 8:00 AM will, unless otherwise notified by the school (in cases such as inclement weather), be marked as tardy. For information on this policy, see **Incomplete Days: Lateness and Early Dismissal**.

All students should be picked up from Memphis Rise Academy Middle School by 5:30 PM, unless they are staying for an after-school club, sport, or school event that ends later than 5:30 PM. While we are happy to make an effort to accommodate families who have circumstances in which they cannot pick up a student immediately at 3:50 PM Monday-Thursday and 2:35 PM on Friday, but 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 5:30 PM, 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 we ask that this allowance for leeway in emergency situations is not abused.

### 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 Principal (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-3:50 PM (2:35 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 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.

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

Memphis Rise Academy offers seven classes of core curriculum each day to every student. It is important that students are present for all seven core classes to ensure they are able to maximize their learning time. If a student does not complete a full school day, they are assigned an Incomplete Day. This includes tardiness after 8:15 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.

Excessive Incomplete Days are a significant inhibitor to a student's academic success. In order to ensure that students show up on time and do not leave early unnecessarily, the school has clear consequences for tardiness and early dismissal.

- Every 3 Incomplete Days count as 1 absence within the attendance policy.
- At 10 Incomplete Days (or 5 within the first quarter), the Principal and Dean of Students may require a meeting with the student's family and adviser, during which an Attendance Pledge and subsequent advisory goal will be established aimed at ensuring these patterns improve.
- At 15 Incomplete Days, each subsequent tardy or early dismissal may result in a student meeting with the Dean of Students or a phone call to the family.
- At 20 Incomplete Days, Memphis Rise Academy may require a second family meeting to discuss the previously established Attendance Pledge and, if applicable, the possibility of retention.

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 3:50 PM (2:35 PM on Friday). A note or phone call asking for the student to be dismissed on his/her own cannot be honored.

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 **3:00-3:50** Monday-Thursday and **2:00-2:35** on Fridays in non-emergency situations. Parents needing to check students out during these times are asked to notify the school by phone in advance so that we can be prepared to dismiss your student.

If a student needs to be sent home due to a behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian must come to the school, meet with the Principal 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.

### **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, bus transportation is available on a first-come, first-served basis for the 2023-2024 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 busses 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 busses mirror the expectations and culture of our school, and that students who ride our busses understand that they have a responsibility to act within the confines of those expectations and that culture. All families with students riding the bus to and/or from school will be asked to sign and adhere to a Bus Transportation Agreement, outlining expectations for student conduct on buses and at bus stops.

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 the Principal.

## Car Transportation

Families are always welcome to transport their students to/from school. Drop-off and pick-up will happen in the parking lot in front of the school. Families can drop their students off as early as 7:30 AM. Students arriving prior to 7:30 AM should wait in their cars until 7:30, not outside the school door. We ask that no students are dropped off earlier than 7:30 AM without prior discussion with the school. Please make every effort to drop students off no later than 8:00 AM. For pick-up, families should plan to arrive at the school between 3:50-4:15 PM (Monday-Thursday) or 2:35-2:50 PM (Friday).

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.

For the purposes of student safety and operational efficiency, students being picked up by car will only be dismissed to the school parking lot. Students will never be permitted to be dismissed to cars waiting on Raleigh Lagrange Rd or on Wilfong Rd.

## 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 and will be walked either across Raleigh Lagrange Rd or to the edge of school property, depending on direction, by a staff member. 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 walk home, that they do so with high character, as they directly represent our school while they are in uniform in our community.

## Homework, Homework Club, and Make-up Policies

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### Homework and Homework Club

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. Students' core responsibilities related to homework are:

1. Write down all homework assignments in school planner.
2. Complete all homework assignments to the highest possible standard.

All homework assignments are collected in morning advisory unless otherwise notified by the teacher. If a student has not satisfactorily completed any given homework, or homework is completed in an unsatisfactory way based on the teacher's evaluation, they will be required to attend Homework Club during lunch.

Homework Club is a quiet, constructive place where students are able to complete their homework from the night before and then begin work on the next night's homework with the supervision of one or more instructional team members. We want our students to have every chance at success with homework, which is why this process is embedded within our school day. The goals of Homework Club include increasing completion rates, improving quality, and building academic confidence. Students may also opt into Homework Club on a day in which they would like further homework support.

### Make-Up Work Policies

Students who are not in school miss critical academic assignments and assessments. Our school make-up policy is designed to hold students accountable for all missed assignments and assessments, as well as to support timely make-up work such that students do not fall behind academically.

- **Classwork.** If a student misses a class for any reason (absence, lateness, and/or early dismissal), the student's missed classwork will be compiled by the school, and distributed to the student the day they return to Memphis Rise Academy during morning advisory. The classwork does not need to be turned in, although students are encouraged to review what they missed.

- **Assessments.** If a student misses a test or quiz when they were absent, they will take that assessment during advisory, focus, Homework Club, or other available time soon after they return to Memphis Rise Academy. The Operations and Instructional Teams will coordinate the administration of the missed assessment. If a student is absent for an extended period of time and misses multiple assessments, the school will work with the student to arrange a mutually agreeable schedule to ensure the completion of all missed assessments in a timely fashion.
- **Homework.** If a student misses a day of school, the assignments due on the day they were absent are due the day they return to school. Assignments given on the day they were absent are due during morning advisory the day after they return. Students who are absent for multiple days will work with their advisors to establish a homework return schedule that is both urgent and realistic.

## 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/outside 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

For every Memphis Rise Academy student, there are two possible school uniforms that may be worn and should be purchased: the Memphis Rise Academy Uniform and the PE Uniform. All students will wear the PE Uniform to school as the all-day uniform on days when they have PE, which will be one day per week for the duration of the school year. PE days will be communicated to families at Registration, once your student's Advisory, or homeroom, is assigned.

Families may order all Memphis Rise Academy-specific uniform items (polos, sweatshirts, sweaters, PE clothes) from **Globalschoolwear.com**. Additionally, some replacement items will be available for purchase as needed at Memphis Rise Academy, and Memphis Rise Academy can coordinate the order of additional uniform items from Globalschoolwear.com, to be paid for in advance by families and delivered to the school.



## School Dress Code Policy

- **Red or Black Memphis Rise Academy polo shirt**—each new student will receive one free of charge, and additional shirts may be ordered from [Globalschoolwear.com](http://Globalschoolwear.com)
- **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 or skirts may be purchased at any traditional clothing retailer, provided they meet these guidelines. **no shorts, drawstring pants, “joggers” without belt loops, spandex/yoga pants, legging-type or athletic materials pants, elastic waistbands, or jeans will be allowed.**
- **A black or brown belt is recommended with all pants. Students should not show bare stomachs or other skin, and a belt will help ensure this is the case** (all black or brown aside from buckle; not oversized or distracting; no large belt buckles)
- **Closed-toed shoes.** Slip-ons/Crocs are fine but must be worn with socks should have a back or backstrap (not worn as a “slide” sandal; laces or Velcro are also fine, but must be tied or fastened at all times. Students should not wear sandals, slides, open-toed shoes, slippers/”house shoes.” Examples of acceptable shoes include flats or sneakers/athletic shoes. Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to determine if a shoe follows our guidelines.
- **Solid colored socks** (no patterns or logos); socks, or any other uniform item, that depict inappropriate and/or illegal patterns will be grounds for an Out-of-School Suspension.
- **OPTIONAL:** 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 jacket with Memphis Rise Academy logo; white button-up Oxford shirt
  - 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, with the exception of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. 8<sup>th</sup> graders are allowed to wear the Memphis Rise Academy hoodie. Hoods are not to be worn in the school building, however.
  - 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.
- **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 words or patterns.
  - Short shirt sleeves should not show from under the uniform shirt.

## Memphis Rise Academy PE Dress Code

- **Memphis Rise Academy PE T-Shirt OR any school-issued shirt OR Memphis Rise Academy crewneck sweatshirt OR Memphis Rise Academy black v-neck sweater**
  - PE shirts do not need to be tucked in, but must be an appropriate size/length for the student’s body (not too small or too large)
  - A PE t-shirt with the Memphis Rise Academy logo can be ordered from [Globalschoolwear.com](http://Globalschoolwear.com).
- **Sneakers/athletic shoes** (must be tied at all times). Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to place limits on the types of shoes that may be worn if needed.
- **Solid colored socks;** socks, or any other uniform item, that depict inappropriate and/or illegal patterns will be grounds for an Out-of-School Suspension.
- **Memphis Rise Academy athletic shorts or athletic sweatpants; or solid black athletic shorts or athletic sweatpants**
  - Shorts/sweatpants must be appropriately sized, remain at the waistline, and may not go higher than fingertip length.
  - Shorts that are deemed too short or tight, or shorts that are deemed too large to securely fasten around the waist, or any other reason they may be deemed not conducive to physical activity will not be allowed.
  - Sweatpants that are deemed too tight and/or not conducive to physical activity will not be allowed.
  - Students may elect to wear either shorts or sweatpants on PE days, but should choose appropriately for weather.
  - Tights, leggings, or yoga pants are not considered acceptable PE uniform bottoms

## 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.
- Shoelaces must be tied at all times. Velcro must be fastened at all times. Slip-ons/Crocs backstraps should be worn at all times.
- Clothing must be sized appropriately to fit the student. Clothes may not be too big or too small, ripped, frayed, or cropped.
- Students may not alter the Memphis Rise Academy uniform with writing, drawing, cutting, etc. No cuffs may be frayed.
- Students who consistently wear pants that are not in accordance to our dress code will be first given a warning then issued a daily demerit, and can be placed in detention if the pants are not corrected.
- Once students enter the school building, the wearing of hats, headphones, bandanas, or 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. Dyed hair or distracting hairstyles, as determined by the school, are not permitted.
- Sunglasses/non-prescription glasses are not permitted inside the school.
- Students may not wear the following accessories which may disrupt learning or interfere with health/safety/cleanliness standards, as determined by the school:
  - Excessive jewelry
  - Glitter makeup/glitter body paint
  - Purses/handbags, Fanny Packs, Backpacks, etc. (These items should be kept in cubbies/lockers during the school day).
- When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform. In the event that students do not wear proper uniform, a parent/guardian will be contacted to bring a change of clothes.
- Masks are optional but should be worn appropriately covering both the nose and the mouth. Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to modify the mask policy in accordance to health guidelines or prevailing health/wellness trends.
- Students who wear the wrong uniform for a given day (i.e. wearing the PE Uniform on a day which they should be wearing the school uniform or vice versa) are considered out of uniform and may be asked to have these rectified before entering class. Consistent issues adhering to our uniform policies can subject students to consequences such as demerits, detention, or in-school suspension, depending upon severity of consistency.

## 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 send 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.

### **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. 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, e.g. 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.

### **Cell Phones**

Because they are a distraction to learning, we advise that students do not bring cell phones to school. We do understand that many families prefer that their student has access to a cell phone. Therefore, we have put in place the following policies for the responsibility of cell phones at Memphis Rise Academy. Memphis Rise Academy is not liable for any missing items of value. Our policy is:

If a student chooses to bring a cell phone to school, it will be collected in the morning and returned by end of day fully powered off with no noise-making alarms set. Cell phones will be returned to students during PM Advisory. If a student is found to be using a cell phone in the school building, it will be confiscated by a staff member, and a parent or guardian will be required to come to the school to retrieve it from the Principal, and this student will receive an automatic detention. 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. Staff members will give all confiscated cell phones to the Principal or Dean of Students, who will keep them and alert the family of their possession of the item.

Students who choose to violate the cell phone policy more than once will be prohibited from bringing a cell phone to school for a set amount of time, as determined by the school.

### **Electronic Devices**

No other electronic devices (including, but not limited to iPods, MP3 players, iPads/tablets, video games, personal computers, non-activated cell phones, e-book readers, etc.) are allowed at Memphis Rise Academy at any time, and are not to be turned in to advisors for safe keeping. If a student is found to be using an electronic device in the school building, it will be confiscated by a staff member, and a parent or guardian will be required to come to the school to retrieve it from the Principal, and this student will receive an automatic detention. Staff members will give all confiscated electronic devices to the Principal, who will keep them and alert the family of his/her possession of the item.

Students with smart watches are strongly encouraged not to wear them in the classroom. If a student is using a smart watch in a classroom for anything other than to check the time, it will be asked for by a teacher. If a student refuses to comply with the request, the same policies listed above for cell phone refusal will apply.

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

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### **Breakfast and Lunch**

Breakfast and lunch are provided by SLA Management, and are available to every student, every day, free of charge.

Breakfast will be served at the front door and eaten in Advisory classrooms between 7:45-8:00 AM. Breakfast will be available to late-arriving students until 8:05 AM. Students will have time during their morning advisory period to eat breakfast. Students are also welcome to bring breakfast items from home to be consumed during morning advisory.

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

## **Snacks/Breaks**

There will be two 10-minute breaks throughout the course of the day on Monday-Thursday, and one or two 10-minute breaks on Friday. Students are welcome to bring snacks from home to consume during these breaks. All food items brought from home must remain in a student's bag until the designated times.

## **Rules for Outside Food**

Memphis Rise Academy encourages that students stay alert and active throughout the day. For this reason, we allow students to bring small amounts of snacks throughout the day, to be eaten during our break times. Along with Shelby County Schools, Memphis Rise Academy encourages students to bring and eat healthy snacks during the school day. Students should not have fast food delivered to the school by delivery services (e.g. UberEats, Grubhub, DoorDash).

This policy will be amended in the event that any student makes Memphis Rise Academy aware of a food allergy.

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

- Soda/soft drinks—this includes sugary carbonated juices or flavored drinks such as Sprite, Faygo, Coca-Cola, etc.
- Energy drinks
- Candy, including Pixie Stix and other powdered sugar candies
- Abnormally large amounts of snacks (i.e. a full bag of potato chips, a full gallon of any beverage)
- Gum is not allowed at Memphis Rise Academy. Please help us keep the building in the condition that all students deserve and adhere to our gum policies in the building and parking lots.

## **Selling Food**

With the exception of school-sponsored fundraisers, students will not 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 detention, to be served on the day the infraction occurred.

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

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### **Grading Policies**

Memphis Rise Academy students take seven core classes during the school year (Math X and Math Y (or Pre-Algebra/Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade), Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Science and an elective in the middle school).

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.

Focus, our daily tutoring period, is also a graded class. Focus is a class where a student's effort can either greatly benefit or directly hinder their performance in related core content classes. Therefore, a student's Focus grade will be given primarily based on effort and growth, and will be contributed to by any teacher a student has for Focus that quarter.

All grades are based on a 0 to 100% scale. The grading scale is as follows:

A+ 99-100  
A 93-98  
A- 90-92

B+ 88-89  
B 83-87  
B- 80-82

C+ 78-79  
C 73-77  
C- 70-72

F 69 and below

### **Promotion and Retention 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.

Student promotion at Memphis Rise Academy is based on academic merit and commitment to attendance. We do not adhere to traditional “social promotion” standards. In the event that a student is in danger of retention for academic or attendance reasons, families will be notified by the Principal and Dean of Students well in advance of the retention decision to create a plan for the student to make the growth necessary to be promoted to the next grade level. However, we still anticipate a few circumstances in which retention will be the best decision for a Memphis Rise Academy student.

If a student passes all core subjects with a 70% or better and has not been absent for more than 15 days of the school year, the student will be promoted automatically to the next grade level.

Students who earn below a 70% in two or more core academic classes over the course of a four-quarter school year, and/or (b) miss more than fifteen school days without a documented and reasonable concern that prevented attendance at school during that year, will be, in many cases, retained. Memphis Rise Academy reserves the right to promote or retain students who fall into these criteria based on what is deemed best for that student’s academic progress.

In the event that a student does need to repeat a grade, the Principal will assemble a multidisciplinary team to plan an appropriate strategy for the following year. Based on an understanding of the reasons for the student’s lack of success during the previous year, the team will detail supports and processes for ensuring that they will be successful the following year. These interventions may include, but are not limited to, extra tutoring in August or after, a change in the student’s flexible ability grouping, or an effort to work with the student’s family to address personal or peer group issues.

### **Code of Conduct**

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#### **Promoting Good Behavior**

Memphis Rise Academy promotes behavior which aligns to our REACH values for positive and productive character. We give students more opportunities to see the correlation between positive behavior and success than between challenging behavior and consequences. To achieve this, we provide the following supports for all students:

- **Advisory.** At the start of the school year, all students are assigned to an advisory classroom supported by two classroom teachers and/or administrators, termed advisors. Advisors develop close, motivation-driven relationships with their advisees throughout the school year. Families should expect to hear updates from their child’s advisor on a regular basis in Rise Reports, phone calls, or other written communication home.
- **Goal-Setting Initiatives and Community Meeting.** With the guidance of their advisor, students are instructed to set goals for themselves for the short term and the more extended (mid- and long) term. Students are rewarded through our merit program for hitting these goals and publicly celebrated during advisory and community meetings. Goals are focused on academic and behavioral success and should provide a structure for our students to be able to articulate their successes in a positive way to their school community.
- **Clubs and Organizations.** Students will have the opportunity to join various clubs and organizations that will be offered after school. More information regarding specific clubs and how to join them will be sent home during the first week of school.
- **Merits and REACH Blocks.** The Memphis Rise Academy REACH Block system is a class and school-wide positive incentive system. The system uses peer motivation and inter-advisory competition to encourage students to work together to meet high expectations. During every period of the school day, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are assessed on their performance as a group, earning between zero and five REACH Blocks. 6<sup>th</sup> graders can also earn merits, for behaviors and performance that meets or exceeds our standards at the discretion of our staff. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students can earn individual REACH Blocks, similar to merits, which count as both personal incentives as well as contributions to weekly team goals. Within every class period, there are multiple opportunities for our students to demonstrate each of our core values based on their individual and collective choices. Teachers measure student performance in each of the five core values per class period, award blocks for each value shown by the class, and discuss with students how they either showed or failed to show each core value at the end of every period. Advisories keep track of their REACH Blocks per week for group rewards and incentives at Friday Community Meetings.

## Code of Conduct

Memphis Rise Academy has created a Code of Conduct to ensure that our school is a respectful space for learning and to allow students the ability to focus on achieving their most ambitious goals. It is a primary goal and responsibility of our staff to make expectations for success clear to our students and to coach our students on how to meet our expectations. 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 Memphis Rise Academy 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 expect 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.

## **Individual Incentive and Accountability System: Merits/Blocks and Demerits**

Memphis Rise Academy has developed a system of merits and demerits to provide students, families and teachers with a frequent, comprehensive report of students' behavioral performance. A student's merits and demerits are impacted by his/her fulfillment of behavioral, academic, and attendance expectations.

All students receive Rise Reports every Friday. Rise Reports detail students' performance academically, behaviorally and towards their personal goals and includes a weekly newsletter with upcoming events and school news. These Rise Reports are expected to be returned to the school no later than the following Wednesday.

Students are expected to, at minimum, meet our expectations for behavior each day, as messaged clearly during Rise Week and throughout the school year. We encourage our students to exceed our expectations for behavior and performance, which we reward with merits. Students can earn merits or blocks from a staff member for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Volunteering to help another student or teacher
- Volunteering service to the school
- Exemplary classroom behavior (taking initiative, showing courtesy or patience, performing an act of kindness, providing an exemplary answer or exemplary work)
- Outstanding effort or improvement in core academic subjects
- Outstanding display of one of our five REACH values
- Accomplishing or making significant progress towards a goal

Merits and blocks are given to students by teachers for exceptionally strong behavior in adherence to our core values. Students are expected to show the responsibility to keep track of their merits and, as they are accrued, are able to spend their merits on prizes or use them for other incentives available throughout the school year. Merits and blocks should be a point of personal pride for students who have gone above and beyond to show the Memphis Rise REACH core values.

Students who do not meet the school's expectations for behavior or academic performance are issued demerits. For example, demerits are issued when students:

- Are out of uniform
- Arrive late to class or spend significant time out of class
- Are unprepared for class
- Exhibit poor conduct in class
- Fail to follow directions or procedures
- Talk out of turn
- Show low-level disrespect towards a member of the school community
- Show low-level disrespect of school property
- Display other behaviors deemed inappropriate by the school staff

Students who earn three demerits or more during the school day receive detention during that school day. The Dean of Students will be in contact for issues that require family support. 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, as determined by the Dean of Students. If we notice a pattern of being assigned detention, we will reach out to parents for a family meeting. Students who find themselves consistently in detention after the family meeting may be considered for in-school suspension as determined by the Dean of Students.

## **Bullying/Cyberbullying**

Memphis Rise Academy is committed to making our school a place that is comfortable and safe for all students to be every day. Anything defined or interpreted as bullying behaviors will never be considered acceptable; bullying behaviors will result in an automatic detention in all cases, with more severe consequences being applied in more severe cases.

Behaviors that fit in the category of bullying can include—but are not limited to—disrespectful or demeaning comments being made to or about other people, refusal to work with specific people, any form of disrespect based in any element of a student's identity, and anything that results in another student being made to feel uncomfortable.

We acknowledge that students may engage in social media-based interactions and conversation outside of school. We expect that students will choose to communicate only in a positive and respectful manner across social media platforms, just as we expect they do in school. Bullying that occurs outside of school over social media can have direct impacts on students' ability to meet expectations at school. While we are not always in a position to administer school-based consequences for activities that take place outside of school, we take all reports of cyberbullying seriously, and are committed to investigating all situations and supporting our students and families to reach a solution in the event that cyberbullying is reported to us. We strongly encourage parents to monitor their child's social media usage.

## **Technology**

Students will regularly use technology as part of various classes, including—but not limited to—calculators, computers, laptops, and tablets. Whenever technology elements are provided for student use, they will be accompanied with specific expectations surrounding their use. Memphis Rise Academy Middle 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 laptop 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.

In all cases, students are expected to use instructional technology items only for their intended instructional purpose. Any misuse or off-task use of technology may result in consequences, including loss of technology privileges or subject to a fine. Serious and deliberate misuse of technology may result in more serious consequences, including in-school or out-of-school suspension.

## **Public Displays of Affection**

Physical contact such as hugs, fist bumps, and high fives can help build a positive and warm culture at appropriate times. However, the following public displays of affection are not permitted during the school day or on the school bus:

- Holding hands
- Kissing of any kind or for any length of time
- Hugging or cuddling for extended periods of time
- Having a student's arms/hands around another student's waist or any other body part (head, neck, etc.)
- Sitting between the legs of another student or intimately interlocking legs or knees
- Rubbing up against another student from the front, side, or back or in any manner



Any of the aforementioned behaviors or others deemed inappropriate will be given a discretionary consequence, most likely a detention, but scaling to in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension for continued issues. 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 Principal, Dean of Students, and Grade Level Chairs, 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 towards 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.

### **Suspensions and Expulsions**

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#### **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
- Failure to commit to sustainable change in response to lower-level intervention

6th and 7th grade students on ISS sit in all classes during the school day at a separated desk in an advisory different from their own (or in a non-classroom space with instructional materials provided to them) and are not allowed to participate in class activities (i.e. turn and talks, group work, or peer tutoring). 8th grade students serve ISS in a supervised study format where they are separated from the entire grade and expected to complete their work in a non-classroom space. There are times when 6th and 7th grade students could possibly serve a supervised study ISS. ISS students are assigned automatic detention during their suspensions. ISS students must receive zero demerits during the school day and signatures from each of their teachers on a provided ISS Success form to fully earn their way back into the classroom community. Students stay in ISS until both of these are achieved.

### **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 tobacco products
- Disruption during ISS or detention through misbehavior
- Committing sexual, racial, or any other form of harassment or intimidation
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language to any individual
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Fighting, physically or, in some cases, verbally
- Lying
- 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
- Failure to commit to sustainable change in response to lower-level intervention
- Possessing a toy weapon or real weapon such as a toy gun/look-alike gun, switchblade, or weapon paraphernalia

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 Principal. TN law T.C.A. § 49-6-3401 provides the Principal 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.

In addition to any of these infractions, any breaches of Federal law, TN State law, or City of Memphis 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)
- Instigation of or participation in 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

## **Procedures for Disciplinary Action**

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The following section explains the procedures for determining consequences students may face for violation of this Code of Conduct. All students are entitled to due process commensurate with the disciplinary consequences to which they may be subject.

### **Detention**

Students who earn 3 demerits during the course of a single school day will serve detention, either the same day as the demerits were earned or the day after, depending on when the third demerit was earned. If a student is required to serve detention and Homework Club during the same day, they will only serve the detention.

- **Student Notification:** If a student is required to serve detention, they will be notified at the beginning of lunch on the day that the detention is to be served.
- **Parent Notification:** Most times a student is assigned to detention, parents will receive a behavior slip and reflection form to be signed and returned the following day. Additionally, parents will be notified of a student's behavioral record on Friday Rise Reports, including all accrued detentions that week. In some cases, parents may be notified via call or text in addition to the written notification.

### **In-School Suspension**

Requirements: In the morning, students will need to check in with the Dean of Students who will reiterate the expectations of ISS. Students on ISS will: Attend all classes, receive instruction and complete class work; Not be permitted to communicate with other students in their advisory that day, including during breaks and lunch, unless specifically instructed by a teacher for an academic necessity; Not participate in selected class activities, as determined by teacher; Be assigned automatic detention as opposed to Homework Club; Not attend reward events including field trips, dances, community meeting, etc. Violations of these requirements may result in additional days of ISS or an Out-of-School Suspension. A student will be In-School Suspended until they meet their goal of 100% of teacher signatures and assigned work for approval on ISS Success form.

- **Student Notification:** If a student is assigned ISS, they will be notified by a staff member, usually the Dean of Students or Principal, the day before or the day of the beginning of their suspension period.
- **Parental Notification:** Parents of those students who have been assigned ISS 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. A parent meeting may be required or requested.

## **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 Principal 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 Principal, 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 Principal or Dean of Students may 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., Homework Club, 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 Principal 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 Principal, 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.

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 Principal 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. The school will record (by tape or other appropriate means) the hearing and a copy of such will be made available to the student upon request.

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 <https://tinyurl.com/bdz2cuxa>.

### **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 lockers, 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 Principal.



### **Memphis Rise Academy 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.

To provide that excellent education, we ask quite a bit of our students every day, such as their energized participation in an extended school day, their commitment to a positive school culture, and their efforts to pursue excellence of academics and character outside of the school.

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) It is absolutely essential that our students are picked up at the end of each school day, on time. Our school day ends at 3:50 or 2:35, 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.
- 3) Our school 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.
- 4) Our school is excited to make frequent communication with each of our families on a consistent basis. Many times, we will call just to provide an update or to tell you about a success your student had during the day. Other times, we will need to call to communicate with the family about growth we want our students to make, academically or behaviorally. It is the expectation of Memphis Rise Academy that all calls are answered or returned by our families in a timely manner, no more than 24 hours after the call is placed. We will always leave a voicemail or follow up with a text if we do not get ahold of you when we call.
- 5) In the same way, families will be provided with a weekly Rise Report each Friday, and a quarterly report card every quarter. It is essential that we know these documents are being given to the family, as they are our primary methods of Family Communication. We ask that families make a concerted effort to review, sign and return these documents each time they are sent home, especially the weekly Rise Report.
- 6) Our students will have homework every night in at least one subject, often more than one. All homework is expected to be completed to the best of the student's ability by the next morning. We ask that our families take an active role in supporting our students' homework effort and completion every evening.
- 7) Each student will always have a school-provided independent reading book. We encourage students to read from these books every day, and we also encourage our students to read newspapers, magazines, or online

sources in combination with those books to stay up to date on the world around them. We ask our families to ensure that our students read as often as possible to build their literacy skills and confidence.

- 8) 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 Principal 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.
- 9) 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.
- 10) Our students will often set ambitious goals in our Advisory setting and in other spaces within our school that are meaningful to them outside of the school, or require support outside of the school. We ask our families to be active participants in supporting their pursuit of those goals outside of the school, whenever possible, in combination with your student's advisor and our Dean of Students. It is our mission to create a learning environment in which ambition is encouraged and celebrated, and we know that this is most effectively done when all members of a student's community are working with them to develop and pursue these goals.

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 Principal Gus Connelly 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,



Gus Connelly  
Middle School Principal and Executive Director





**Memphis Rise Academy Family and School Agreement of Mutual Support Signature Page**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read both the Student and Family Handbook, as well as this Family and School Agreement of Mutual Support, and hereby commit to adhering to the expectations and policies within each to ensure the absolute best opportunity for my student's success. I am willing to work with Memphis Rise Academy in the ways described above, as well as all others that I can, to help my child take a positive step towards college in the 2023-2024 school year.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name(s) and Grade(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_