

The Hawbridge School Policy Manual

2019-2020

Mission Statement

The Hawbridge School community engages in a learning partnership. Students develop the skills, values, and strategies required to master the challenging curriculum and to pursue lifelong learning and personal growth. Relationships based on mutual respect honor individual learning preferences and create an environment that is intellectually, emotionally, and physically healthy.

Vision Statement

Our vision is of an enduring, intimate and caring community of educators, parents, and students, working together to create an environment where all students thrive. A school of excellence built on a foundation of inclusiveness, mutual respect, personal attention, exploration, an inspired and inspiring faculty, and community engagement, with special emphasis on environmental stewardship and the arts.

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Acceptable Use Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors on June 25, 2014

Electronic research skills are fundamental in the preparation of citizens and future employees. Thus, The Hawbridge School provides internet access to its students and staff. The goal of providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovative lessons and discoveries, connections to global companies and libraries, discovery through information news services, and communication through electronic mail. These goals are consistent with the State of North Carolina and The Hawbridge School.

The internet is a global network that is in a constant state of change, and it is difficult to predict what will be available from day to day. Making electronic information available to students does not imply endorsement of that content. Personnel will make every effort to monitor students' use of the internet to ensure that materials accessed are appropriate. However, on a global network, it is impossible to control all materials and information. The benefits of the valuable information and interaction available on the worldwide network far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with educational goals. Students will, therefore, be given the privilege of using the internet along with the responsibility of using it properly. Ultimately, parent/guardian(s) of minors are responsible for setting and conveying standards that their children will follow when using media and information resources.

Access is a privilege, not a right. A student may earn this privilege by completing the signature page of the Student Handbook and returning it to the school. Use of the internet must be a part of a purposeful, planned educational endeavor.

Guidelines for appropriate use are stated below. In general, this requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of network resources as well as adherence to all school rules, regulations and policies. If a user violates any of these provisions, his or her privilege to use the internet will be terminated and future access possibly denied, revoked, or suspended. In a case where laws or school rules, regulations or policies are broken, further consequences may follow. Email messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the authorities. The signatures on the signature page of the Student Handbook are legally binding and indicate that the parties who signed have read the terms and conditions carefully and completely understand their significance.

Internet Guidelines Acceptable Use: Transmission of any material in violation of any US or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is generally not acceptable. Use of product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

Privileges: The Hawbridge School acknowledges that the internet can play a vital part in bringing information and ideas to students. However, the use of the internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of that privilege. Students are as responsible for good behavior on school computer networks as they are in a classroom or a

school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The administration, faculty and staff of The Hawbridge School may request system network administrators to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges. School network storage areas (hard drives, flash drives, school email accounts) are subject to inspection at any time. Network administrators may review files and communication to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school equipment will always be private.

Public Records: Users are advised that all material in any form in The Hawbridge School's network may be considered a public record as defined by Chapter 132 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the Public Records Act. Under the Public Records Act, certain material (outlined in the aforementioned Chapter 132) is considered the property of the people of the State of North Carolina, which may be inspected, copied, used, republished, and otherwise made public. Users are further advised that public records may not be destroyed, altered, defaced, or mutilated.

Monitoring: Files stored on the Hawbridge School's server, electronic mail, and other school equipment are not private and may be subject to inspection and/or monitoring. Users of the internet/intranet are hereby informed that there can be no expectation of privacy, as designated Hawbridge staff reserve authority to monitor and examine all system activities to ensure their proper use.

Warranties: The Hawbridge School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the services it provides. The Hawbridge School will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence, errors, or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the internet is at the user's risk. The Hawbridge School specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

Security Awareness: Information security awareness ensures that all employees of The Hawbridge School are familiar with information technology security policies, standards, and procedures. School administrators should lead by example and establish a climate that gives information security a high priority in all current and future activities and initiatives. The Hawbridge School shall provide relevant information regarding security awareness to all staff in multiple forms. All employees and contractors shall be provided with security awareness information to educate them regarding the range of information technology security threats and appropriate safeguards.

Vandalism and Harassment: Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt, degrade or destroy school equipment, software, or system performance. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses and altering school website content.

Harassment is defined as the persistent annoyance of another user or the interference of another user's work. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, sending unwanted mail, hate mail, discriminatory remarks, or language that offends or degrades others. Vandalism and

harassment must be reported to an administrator immediately.

Vandalism and harassment offenses will result in cancellation of privileges. Any instances of vandalism or harassment will result in punishment and may also result in the notification of legal authorities. Any student who maliciously damages any computer or computer equipment will be required to reimburse The Hawbridge School for the cost of the damages.

Network Security: The Hawbridge School uses filtering mechanisms that deny access to a large amount of much material that is obscene, lewd, indecent, inappropriate for, or harmful to minors. No system is foolproof in this regard. Consequently, as stated in the Acceptable Use Policy, students are equally responsible for avoiding and reporting such material.

It shall be the responsibility of The Hawbridge School staff designated by the Executive Director to monitor The Hawbridge School Network equipment and users and notify Administrative Staff members when there has been a violation of the AUP (Acceptable Use Policy). The administrators will perform a review of the incident and appropriate action will be taken. Students and employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors, in accordance with the Grievance Policy.

Management and administration of computer user accounts, usernames and passwords for identification and authentication, and regulating access to computer and networking systems, is the responsibility of the staff designated by the Executive Director. To preserve the security of The Hawbridge School's computer accounts, users are expected to act responsibly by:

- Adhering to necessary changes in network usage required by The Hawbridge School.
- Only accessing Hawbridge internet networks and not using available internet networks belonging to local merchants.
- Properly logging off computers when not in use.
- Not deleting files, email and other data belonging to The Hawbridge School.
- Reporting a security problem or risk immediately and discreetly to a teacher, supervisor or system administrator, as applicable, and not demonstrating the problem to others.
- Refraining from using high bandwidth resources, including, but not limited to, file sharing and music or video streaming, unless authorized by a school employee.

Network Etiquette: Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Be polite. Do not use abusive or obscene language in messages to others. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
2. Do not reveal your personal address, phone number or email addresses to others in social media communication situations.
3. Electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system have access to all mail. E-mail messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the authorities.

Be considerate of all network users. Any action that disrupts the use of network resources or

files by others is prohibited.

Admission Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors September 24, 2014

The Hawbridge School is a tuition free public school. Any child who is qualified under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to a charter school. To qualify to attend a North Carolina public school, a student must be a resident of North Carolina. County boundaries or school attendance areas do not affect charter school enrollment.

The Hawbridge School does not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion or ancestry.

1. Applications may be submitted in the following ways:

a. Applicants may print an application from our website and submit it in person, via fax, scanned to email, or mailed.

b. Applicants may apply online.

c. Applicants may stop by the school and pick up an application.

d. Applicants may request that we mail them an application.

2. Enrollment Period: March 1 through October 1. Any openings from the start of school through October 1st will be filled from the waiting list. Openings that occur after October 1st will not be filled.

3. The Hawbridge School shall offer enrollment to an applicant who submits a completed application during the application period and meets the legal admission requirements unless the number of applications submitted by eligible applicants during the application period exceeds the capacity of the grade level to which an applicant is seeking enrollment.

4. If the number of applications submitted by eligible applicants during the application period exceeds the capacity of the grade level to which they are seeking enrollment, then acceptance for any oversubscribed grade level shall be determined by lottery.

5. The School may give enrollment priority in certain instances as stated in G.S. 115C-238.29F(g). Priority will be given as follows:

a. Children of Hawbridge faculty or Board members

b. Students who were enrolled within the two previous school years but left the school (i) to participate in an academic study abroad program or a competitive admission residential program or (ii) because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent;

c. Siblings, half-siblings, and step-siblings of currently enrolled students who reside in the same household as the currently enrolled student

d. Siblings of students who have graduated from Hawbridge and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels offered by Hawbridge.

6. Applications received after February 28th will be added to the end of the waiting list for the grade level that they are applying for in the order in which they were received. If more than one application is received simultaneously, a lottery will determine placement. Lottery procedures will comply with the NC Open Meetings Laws provided in G.S. 143-318.10(a).

7. If, prior to the end of the enrollment period (October 1st), a position becomes available in the grade level for which a waiting list exists, then the school may offer enrollment in that program, class, or grade level to the next applicant on the waiting list.

8. Waiting List: The waiting list will remain in place for the applicable enrollment period. After such time, a new waiting list will be created based on the next year's applicant pool. The application process will start new each year with all interested applicants needing to reapply.

9. Once enrolled, students are not required to enroll in subsequent enrollment periods. In order to properly plan, the school may routinely inquire of parents in early spring through letters of intent to ascertain if students will return to Hawbridge the following year.

Antidiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy

No one at The Hawbridge School may be discriminated against for reasons of race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, intellectual ability, ethnic group, religion, disability, or sexual preference.

The Hawbridge School has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment of anyone in its community. Sexual harassment is defined as an unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or certain other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that is sexual in nature, if that conduct could offend another reasonable person, whether or not such offense was intended.

Board Operational Policy

The Bylaws of the Association for the Advancement of Education define the operations of the Board of Directors.

http://thehawbridgeschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/BYLAWS-Updated-6_29_18.pdf

Additional duties referred to in the bylaws are listed below:

Hawbridge Board of Directors Duties

1. Ensure the School's mission is the guiding focus of the school.
2. Properly manage and be accountable for the public funds (taxes) allotted to the school.
3. Create, approve and maintain school policies (with appropriate input from administration and other stakeholders).
4. Take responsibility for student learning and meeting the academic performance criteria set by the charter.
5. Take responsibility for facility acquisition or modification.
6. Create a strategic plan for the charter school and use the plan as a guide for decision making.

Specific Actions

1. Annually create a sound budget.
2. Monthly review financial statements and approve needed changes to line items.
3. Hire, supervise and evaluate the charter school lead administrator.
4. Formally approve the hiring of teachers who have been selected by the lead administrator or hiring committee.

5. Review and approve contract templates and lease agreements.
6. Ensure that the school is fulfilling its federal legal obligations to students with disabilities through its Special Education Program.
7. Ensure the school's admission and lottery policies are board-approved, legal, equitable and open.
8. Ensure the school is abiding by the NC state law for charter schools.
9. Ensure the school is meeting the requirements of the charter.
10. Fulfill the duty of loyalty (put the good of the charter school first / never use position, school's assets, or school information for personal gain or for gain of a family member).

Charter School Boards are NOT expected to manage day-to-day activities of the school. These day-to-day activities include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Curriculum development.
2. Teacher evaluation.
3. Class schedules.
4. Bus issues.
5. Dismissal.
6. Teacher management.
7. After school activities.
8. Enrichment classes.
9. Student placement.
10. Discipline.
11. Hiring of teachers or support staff (the Board approves the recommendations of the Executive Director).
12. PTO activities.

Board Communication Guidelines

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 24, 2019

- No Board member sends a message on behalf of the Board without explicit approval from the Board.
- Any messages sent to an individual Board member are shared with the Board unless it is clear it was meant only for the individual.
- Board members need to be aware that they are in a position of authority and to be thoughtful about how and when they send messages to faculty or community members.
- Messages can and will be over-interpreted, so we should not mix hats when sending messages.
- And we can never fully take off the Board hat, so we need to be careful even when trying to speak as a parent or community member. We don't want to unintentionally imply a Board perspective when it is just our own.
- Since Board members are individuals, we should not speak for each other, even if we think we know or remember what the other person thinks or said.
- We can maintain our individual voice but should support Board decisions regardless of how we vote.
- Votes are public record, so any dissent is already noted. Once a decision is made, we should work together to make it as successful as possible.

Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy

NC General Statute Chapter 115C Article 29C

§ 115C-407.15. Bullying and harassing behavior

Approved by the Board of Directors on May 22, 2019

"Bullying or harassing behavior" is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

- (1) Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- (2) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

- (b) No student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students.
- (c) No person shall engage in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior.
- (d) A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official.
- (e) A student or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report the incident to the appropriate school official. (2009-212, s. 1; 2009-570, s. 39.)

Conflict of Interest Policy

NC General Statute Section 4.3 Charter Agreement

GS Section 115C-218.15

GS Section 55A-8-31

Approved by the Board of Directors on June 27, 2018

A person shall not be disqualified from serving as a member of a charter school's board of directors because of the existence of a conflict of interest, so long as the person's actions comply with the school's conflict of interest policy as provided in G.S. 115C-218.15(b)(3) and applicable law. Reference § 115C-218.15.

No voting member of the governing board shall be an employee of a for-profit company that provides substantial services to the charter school for a fee.

SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

Directors shall avoid improper conduct arising from conflicts of interest and shall abide by all legal requirements governing conflicts of interests, including G.S. 55A-8-31. If any Director has or may have a conflict of interest in a matter pending before the Board, such member shall fully disclose to the Board the nature of the conflict or potential conflict. No transaction may be approved if it would constitute self-dealing.

SECTION 2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS.

Board practice regarding conflicts of interest shall be governed ultimately by G.S. 55A-8-31, as amended or replaced at any time subsequent to the adoption of this policy. Specific statutory requirements include the following.

(a) A conflict of interest transaction is a transaction with the Corporation in which a Director of the Corporation has a direct or indirect interest. A conflict of interest transaction is not voidable by the Corporation solely because of the Director's interest in the transaction if any one of the following is true:

(1) The material facts of the transaction and the Director's interest were disclosed or known to the Board of Directors or a committee of the Board and the Board or committee authorized, approved, or ratified the transaction;

(2) The material facts of the transaction and the Director's interest were disclosed or known to the members entitled to vote and they authorized, approved, or ratified the transaction; or

(3) The transaction was fair to the Corporation.

(b) A Director of the Corporation has an indirect interest in a transaction if:

(1) Another entity in which he has a material financial interest or in which he is a general partner is a party to the transaction; or

(2) Another entity of which he is a Director, officer, or trustee is a party to the transaction and the transaction is or should be considered by the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

(c) For purposes of subdivision (a)(1) of this section, a conflict of interest transaction is authorized, approved, or ratified if it receives the affirmative vote of a majority of the Directors on the Board of Directors (or on the committee) who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction, but a transaction shall not be authorized, approved, or ratified under this section by a single Director. If a majority of the Directors who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction vote to authorize, approve, or ratify the transaction, a quorum is present for the purpose of taking action under this section. The presence of, or a vote cast by, a Director with a direct or indirect interest in the transaction does not affect the validity of any action taken under subdivision (a)(1) of this section if the transaction is otherwise authorized, approved, or ratified as provided in that subdivision.

(d) For purposes of subdivision (a)(2) of this section, a conflict of interest transaction is authorized, approved, or ratified by the members if it receives a majority of the votes entitled to be counted under this subsection. Votes cast by or voted under the control of a Director who has a direct or indirect interest in the transaction, and votes cast by or voted under the control of an entity described in subdivision (b)(1) of this section, shall not be counted in a vote of members to determine whether to authorize, approve, or ratify a conflict of interest transaction under subdivision (a)(2) of this section. The vote of these members, however, is counted in determining whether the transaction is approved under other sections of this Chapter. A majority of the votes, whether or not present, that are entitled to be cast in a vote on the transaction under this subsection constitutes a quorum for the purpose of taking action under this section.

(e) The Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or a resolution of the Board may impose additional requirements on conflict of interest transactions.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

(a) Interested Person. Any Director, principal officer, or member of a committee with Board-delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

(b) Financial Interest. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

(1) An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement,

(2) A compensation arrangement with the Corporation or with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or

(3) A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

SECTION 4. PROCEDURES.

(a) Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Directors and members of committees with board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

(b) Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

(c) Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest.

(1) An interested person may make a presentation to the Board of Directors or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

(2) The Chairman of the Board of Directors, or the chair of the committee if a committee meeting is appropriate, shall appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

(3) After exercising due diligence, the Board or committee shall determine whether the Corporation can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

(4) If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested members whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Corporation's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

(d) Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

(1) If the Board of Directors or one of its committees has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or a foreseeable conflict of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

(2) If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary or corrective action. The Board of Directors shall take appropriate disciplinary or corrective action that they deem reasonable in order to resolve the conflict of interest.

SECTION 4. RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS.

The minutes of the Board of Directors and all committees with Board-delegated powers shall contain:

(a) The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the decision of the Board or committee as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

(b) The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

SECTION 6. COMPENSATION.

(a) Board members shall receive no compensation for serving on the board and may not receive compensation from the Corporation for any services provided to the Corporation.

(b) Board members may be reimbursed for travel, accommodations, and meals when traveling on behalf of the school.

SECTION 7. ANNUAL STATEMENTS.

Each Director, principal officer and member of a committee with Board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement that affirms such person

- (a) has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- (b) has read and understands the policy,
- (c) has agreed to comply with the policy, and

- (d) understands the Corporation is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

SECTION 8. PERIODIC REVIEWS.

To ensure the Corporation operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- (a) Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- (b) Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Corporation's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

SECTION 9. USE OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS.

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in this Article, the Corporation may choose to employ outside experts. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Board of Directors of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

Fundraising Policy

If a club or organization wishes to sell any products, they must have the permission of the Executive Director.

Grievance Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors on June 25, 2014

The Hawbridge School seeks to promote harmony among its employees, faculty, students and parent/guardian(s) and to encourage equitable solutions to problems arising among them. The Hawbridge School believes that most concerns and differences are best addressed through open and honest communication conducted in an informal, respectful and civil manner and that effective resolution depends on direct, prompt and constructive dialogue. The following procedures are adopted to meet these goals.

The Board recognizes that effective school governance requires the primary responsibility for

issues involving student discipline, curriculum, assessment and promotion and other day-to-day decisions regarding school management, lies with the faculty, staff and Executive Director of The Hawbridge School, and these individuals are best suited to resolve conflicts that arise with respect to these issues. The Board has the authority to appoint, employ and remove the Executive Director, but primary responsibility and authority over faculty, staff and volunteer organizations of the School are vested in the Executive Director. The Board, therefore, will exercise any authority in this policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Executive Director.

Informal Procedures: A parent/guardian should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved person(s). If a parent/guardian's concern has not been adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher involved, the parent/guardian should next attempt to resolve the grievance with an Assistant Director, and that informal discussion may include the teacher(s) or other involved person(s). If a grievance cannot be resolved in such informal manners, the parent/guardian may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

Formal Grievance Procedure: In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the school offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent feasible and permitted by law. A parent/guardian grievance is a formal written claim by a parent/guardian or group of parents/guardians identifying the concern, identifying the individual or group's resolution attempts, and identifying any law, policy or practice that is implicated by the concern. No one shall retaliate against a parent/guardian or student who files or whose parent/guardian files a grievance under this policy. Failure of a parent/guardian to comply with timelines listed below may result in denial of a grievance request.

Level One – Assistant Director Request and Conference. A parent/guardian may, by written request, seek a conference with an Assistant Director to address an unresolved grievance.

The request shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated, and shall provide other relevant information to help the Assistant Director adequately understand the nature of the grievance. All parties mentioned in the grievance will be informed in writing.

The grievance shall be filed within five business days of the incident(s) or the last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such an attempt was made within ten business days of the last incident.

Following receipt of the written request, the Assistant Director shall, if feasible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved parent/guardian(s) within seven business days of the written report. Within three to five business days following the conference, the Assistant Director will state in writing his or her position on the grievance and a copy will be given to the parent/guardian.

Level Two – Appeal to the Executive Director. If the grievance is not resolved, the parent/guardian(s) may appeal the Assistant Director's decision in writing to the Executive Director if the Executive Director was not involved in the Level One Conference.

The appeal must be made within five business days following receipt of the Assistant Director's written Level One response to the grievant. The Executive Director will review the grievance and conduct an informal hearing, when feasible, within seven business days following receipt of the written appeal.

Either party may present witnesses and other evidence to help resolve the matter. The parent/guardian shall have no right to have an attorney or other advocate present.

The Executive Director shall issue a written response to the grievant and the Level One Assistant Director within five business days following the hearing and create a written record of the evidence received and determination made.

Decisions of the Executive Director are final, not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:

- Decisions involving an alleged violation by the school of state or federal law; or
- Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Executive Director in violation of law or school policy.

The Board retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a "final" or "appealable" decision by the Executive Director. The Board may consider all available evidence in the record established at the time of the decision and any other evidence it deems necessary for consideration.

Level Three – Appeal to the Board: Discretionary Appeals and Appeals of Right. If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with the disposition of his or her grievance at Level Two, the parent/guardian may, within five business days of receiving notice of the decision or recommended action from the Executive Director, submit a written request to the Board Chairperson to appeal the Executive Director's decision or recommendation and to request a formal hearing.

Within seven business days of receiving the written request for appeal, when feasible, the Board Chairperson or his or her designee shall issue a written notice to the grievant and the Executive Director indicating whether the Executive Director's determination is "final" in nature or whether the Board shall, consequently, by discretion or by right of appeal, grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time and guidelines by which it will be conducted, including whether the hearing will be based strictly on a review of the existing record, whether the grievant will have the opportunity to be present at the hearing, the type of evidence to be considered by the Board, and other relevant procedural details.

If a hearing is granted, a panel of the Board consisting of at least three members shall hear the grievance within seven business days from the date the Board Chairperson's notice is issued to the grievant, except when the parties agree to extend the timeline. Any appeal to the board panel will normally be on the written record only, unless the panel determines that additional information should be presented, including an appearance and presentation of information by the grievant. The grievant and Executive Director shall be informed in writing of the panel's decision within seven business days after the hearing, if feasible.

Extensions in appeal timelines may be granted if the board panel determines there is a reasonable need for such extension. The board panel may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Executive Director. Depending on the level, adherence to the established timelines will be enforced by the appropriate administrator or Board panel.

The Executive Director or Board may develop a grievance form to assist in recording each step of the grievance process.

Nepotism Policy

NC General Statute

Section 4.3 Charter Agreement

GS Section 115C-12.2

GS Section 115C-218.15

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 24, 2019

Purpose

The purpose of this nepotism policy is to protect the interests of The Hawbridge School when it is contemplating entering into an arrangement with an immediate family member of a member of the Board of Directors (the “Board”) or an employee of The Hawbridge School. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state laws governing nepotism applicable to nonprofit and charitable corporations.

Policy

The Policy shall be as follows:

1. Before any immediate family, as defined in G.S. §115C-12.2, of any member of the Board or a charter school employee with supervisory authority shall be employed or engaged as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise by the Board in any capacity, such proposed employment or engagement shall be:

- (i) disclosed to the Board and
- (ii) approved by the Board in a duly called open-session meeting.

The burden of disclosure of such a conflict of interest shall be on the applicable Board member or employee with supervisory authority. If the requirements of this subsection are complied with, The Hawbridge School may employ the immediate family of any member of the Board or The Hawbridge School employee with supervisory authority.

2. No teacher or staff member that is immediate family of the chief administrator shall be hired without the Board evaluating their credentials, establishing a structure to prevent conflicts of interest, and notifying the Department, with evidence, that this process has occurred.

The term “immediate family member” means a spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term includes the step, half, and in-law relationships.

References

North Carolina G.S. 115C-12.2, G.S. 115C-218.15; Section 4.3 Charter Agreement

Promotion and Retention Policies

Middle School

Middle school students who are struggling academically may be considered for retention. A variety of factors will be considered when making such a decision, including but not limited to:

- Number of classes the student has passed versus failed;
- The presence of external social/emotional factors;
- The presence of an IEP or 504 plan;
- Standardized testing results (both achievement and ability);
- The student's chronological age;
- Input from the student's parent/guardian(s);
- Input from the student's teachers;
- Potential for success in courses at the next level; and
- Short- and long-term impact of the decision on the student.

High School

- To be promoted from 9th grade to 10th grade, you must pass English I or English I Honors and earn at least 5 credits.
- To be promoted from 10th grade to 11th grade, you must pass English II or English II Honors and earn at least 10 credits.
- To be promoted from 11th grade to 12th grade, you must pass English III, English III Honors, or AP English Language & Composition and earn at least 15 credits.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Approved by Board of Directors on 9/25/19

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law intended to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination. Section 504 protects qualifying students by prohibiting these students from being excluded from public schools, or being denied the benefits of the public schools, because of their disability. For more information visit:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

What is considered a disability under Section 504?

To be considered a disability under Section 504, it must meet BOTH of the following criteria:

- It must be a physical or mental impairment. The Department of Education describes "physical or mental impairment" as follows:

- (A) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive, genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or
- (B) any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, or specific learning disabilities. 34 CFR 104.3(j)(2)(i).
- The disabling condition must substantially limit one or more major life activity: A “major life activity” includes (but is not limited to) learning, concentrating, thinking, communicating, reading, walking, seeing, breathing, eating, lifting, bending, and major bodily functions/systems (neurological, immune, respiratory, etc.)

What is a 504 Accommodations Plan?

An Accommodations Plan is the primary mechanism used under 504 to provide equal access to educational services for students with a qualified disability. It is designed to make changes, as appropriate, to the classroom environment or the delivery of instruction to provide the student with equal access to the educational curriculum. This plan is individualized to the needs of the student.

Who should I contact if I suspect my child may have a qualified disability and is in need of a 504 Accommodations Plan?

Contact the designated 504 contact, the School Counselor, for assistance.

If your child's disability substantially limits a major life activity related to learning or classroom performance (i.e., concentrating, learning, thinking), The Hawbridge School's procedures require the school to first consider whether there is a basis to consider eligibility for Special Education Services prior to considering eligibility under Section 504.

If my child has a qualifying disability, will he/she automatically receive a 504 Accommodations Plan?

If your child is found to have a qualifying condition, your child's 504 team (including yourself and at least one of your child's teachers) will next determine if an Accommodations Plan is appropriate. The purpose of the 504 Accommodations Plan is to provide students with a qualifying disability equal access to his or her educational environment, materials, or program. Accommodations will be related to how the disability is currently impacting the student at school.

Not all children with a disabling condition under 504 are in need of a 504 Plan – some disabilities that substantially limit a major life activity may not be impacting a student while at school, may be a condition in remission, making a 504 Plan unnecessary.

Accommodations may be changes in the way a student accesses instruction/assessment such as:

- Specialized equipment and materials (ex: amplification, Braille, large print, assistive technology)
- Changes in setting for assessments (small group)
- Scheduling changes (extra time, more frequent breaks)
- Changes in student response requirements (marks answers in test book, scribe)
- Facilities accessibility (more frequent restroom use, use of outside ramp)

What if I suspect my child may be in need of specially designed instruction in order to make appropriate educational progress?

The Hawbridge School is obligated to provide a free appropriate public education to qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that your child may be in need of specially designed instruction, please notify either the 504 contact, the EC Coordinator, or an administrator at your child's school. An IEP meeting will be scheduled to determine if eligibility for Special Education Services is appropriate. If it is determined that your child is eligible for Special Education Services, specially designed instruction will be provided pursuant to an Individualized Education Plan rather than a 504 Accommodations Plan.

I've been told that students who used to have a disability, or students who are regarded as having a disability, also have protections under Section 504. What does this mean?

Students who have a history of having an impairment (as defined above) but do not currently have such an impairment, or students who are regarded by other students or employees in the school district as having an disability (but who do not have a qualifying condition), are protected under Section 504 from disability discrimination. However, because they do not currently have a disabling condition that substantially limits a major life activity, they are not eligible for a 504 Accommodations Plan.