

# **The Hawbridge School Policy Manual**

## **2022-2023**

### **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 September 6, 2022*

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 (email). 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 this 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 directors to monitor The Hawbridge School Network equipment and users and notify administrative staff members when there has been a violation of the 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 directors 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 directors. 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 (email) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system have access to all mail. Email 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.

*Inappropriate Network Usage:* To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of The Hawbridge School online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

*Supervision and Monitoring:* It shall be the responsibility of all members of The Hawbridge School staff to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the directors or designated representatives.

## **Admission Policy**

*Approved by the Board of Directors September 24, 2014. Amended February 7, 2020*

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. Applicants should apply at <https://Lotterease.com>. If you need any assistance with the application, please see [thehawbridgeschool.org/admissions](http://thehawbridgeschool.org/admissions) for detailed information or contact the school.
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-218.45(f). 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.
  - e. Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the charter school in a previous year
  - f. Siblings who apply to the charter school for admission beginning in the same school year, such as when a sibling was not initially admitted due to grade level capacity
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.
  10. Priority enrollment given to children of staff and board members will not exceed more than 15% of the total student body.

## **Antidiscrimination 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.

## **Beginning Teacher Support Program Policy**

**BTSP Plan for NC SBE Policy TCED-016**  
**The Hawbridge School**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of The Hawbridge School's Beginning Teacher (BT) Program is to retain and facilitate the growth of new educators through relationships that encourage reflective practices, build their instructional "tool belt," and maximize student and teacher success.

### **Introduction**

In accordance with the NC State BOE Policy TCED-016, The Hawbridge School Beginning Teacher Support Program provides for new teacher orientation accompanied by a three year induction period; BT assignment within the area of licensure supported by a trained mentor; an annual Beginning Teacher Professional Development Plan; attention to teacher working conditions; training on the NC Professional Teaching Standards and the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers; and annual systematic evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Support Program through BT and employer surveys and the Peer Review Process.

### **Components**

1. A documented process for identifying and verifying all BTs
  1. Teachers with fewer than three years of experience
    1. Student services personnel, administrators, and curriculum-instructional specialists not required to participate
  - b. Follow NCSBE requirements for all required licensure tests

- c. Licensure Conversion Process: Eligible to convert to a continuing license once all required coursework has been successfully completed, all NCSBE approved exams have been passed, and three years of teaching have been completed.
1. Once continuing license is earned in one area, additional teaching areas do not require a BTSP experience
2. Beginning Teacher Support Personnel (primarily the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction) will design and administer training and support services for BTs and Mentors. Beginning Teacher Support will also monitor and document teacher participation in the three-year licensure process leading to a continuing license.
- a. Training and support including a formal three day New Teacher Orientation held prior to the beginning of the school year, and an abbreviated version of the New Teacher Orientation for new hires throughout the school year as needed.
    - Topics covered in New Teacher Orientation will include but are not limited to:
      - i. A copy of the Beginning Teacher Support Program Plan
      - ii. NC Teacher Evaluation Process
      - iii. The Hawbridge School's goals, policies, and procedures
      - iv. Guide to support services and professional development
      - v. Access to a copy of the Faculty Procedures and Employee Handbook
      - vi. Process for converting to a continuing license
      - vii. Access to the NC Standard Course of Study and district curriculum guides
      - viii. Training on the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint of students
      - ix. The Hawbridge School's Mission and Goals
      - x. The State Board of Education's Mission and Goals
      - xi. Documentation of participation in the New Teacher Orientation
      - xii. Collection of Beginning Teacher Data for the State of the Teaching Profession report
      - xiii. Working Conditions Guidelines
    - b. Teacher Orientation must occur within two weeks of a teacher's first day. The principal and/or the principal's designee are required to provide the BT with training on the Teacher Evaluation Calendar, the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers, and SBE Policy TCED-016. All of these items and supporting documents may be accessed through our common Google Drive.
    - c. Optimum working conditions for BTs as outlined by The State Board of Education (SBE) will be monitored by the Assistant Directors and the Executive Director. Optimal conditions include:
      1. Assigning mentors early and in close proximity
      2. Limited preparations
      3. Limited non-instructional duties
      4. Limited number of exceptional or difficult students
      5. No extracurricular assignments unless requested in writing by the teacher using the district form
    - d. The BT Support Personnel and mentors will conduct cycles of coaching and assistance; share instructional

materials, best practices, and relevant information; cultivate professional dialogue; and gather data to ensure that all BTs are receiving appropriate support.

e. Mentor Requirements

1. The principal shall determine which mentor teacher best meets the needs of each new teacher and shall assign the most appropriate mentor teacher to the new teacher, with priority consideration for mentors rated as "distinguished" or "accomplished." If a principal determines that a teacher rated "proficient" or a retired teacher is the most appropriate mentor for a new teacher, the principal shall maintain records of the reasons for that determination.
2. The mentor will be rated at least "proficient" or higher on all five standards on the most recent summative evaluation, or on Standards 1 and 4 on an abbreviated evaluation (priority consideration for mentors rated as "distinguished" or "accomplished")
3. Retired teachers are eligible to serve as mentors.
4. LEAs may use the most recently available evaluation for teachers who lack an evaluation from the prior year. Teachers without evaluation data for two or more consecutive years shall not be eligible to serve as mentor teachers, unless the mentor is a retired teacher.
5. Any teacher who is assigned to be a mentor to a BT must meet eligibility requirements in the year of the assignment. No mentor whose evaluation falls below the "proficient" level may continue to serve as a mentor to a BT, regardless of existing mentor-mentee relationships.
6. A teacher may be a mentor at a different school building from which the mentor is assigned if the principals of each school and the mentor teacher approve the assignment, the mentor is rated at least "accomplished" (received ratings of accomplished or higher on three of five standards including Standard 4 on the most recent summative, or on Standard 4 on an abbreviated evaluation), and the BT's principal maintains a record of the reasons for selecting the mentor from a different school building.
7. Mentor selection criteria include input from a variety of stakeholder groups.
8. Mentors support BT orientation and provide logistical and emotional support.
9. Mentors focus their primary support on improving instructions and learning.
10. Mentors provide ongoing support and encouragement for the BT.
11. Mentors receive ongoing training to advance their knowledge and skills.
12. Mentors have opportunities to participate in professional learning communities of mentoring practice.

f. The Beginning Teacher Support Personnel will oversee Mentor Training in compliance with guidelines identified by the SBE. The Beginning Teacher

Support Personnel will conduct Mentor training utilizing the online NCDPI module “21st Century Mentoring.” Teachers will be invited to attend Mentor Training upon the completion of a district Mentor Application and recommendation of the principal in accordance with the Characteristics of Mentors from State Board Policy TCED-016. The ten hour training module created by NCDPI “provides mentors with the 21st century skills and knowledge needed to support beginning teachers. This module is built around the NC Mentor Standards which are aligned with the NC Professional Teaching Standards and provides direction in how mentors can support beginning teachers in each of the teaching standards. The module was designed to provide the official training required of all mentors in North Carolina.”

g. After the BT has completed the Self Evaluation rubric, the mentor and the principal will collaborate to support the BT in formulating a Professional Development Plan (PDP).

- The PDP must be based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and include goals, strategies, and assessment of their progress throughout the year in improving professional skills.
- The BT, Mentor and Executive Director (principal) will participate in formative assessment conferences held at the beginning, middle and end of each school year in accordance with HB 1030, Section 8.32 (h) and (1). During that time they will reflect on the teacher's progress in meeting their PDP goals.
  - The signatures of the BT, mentor and principal are required for each formative assessment conference.
  - Mentors may be assigned to complete peer observations as part of the evaluation process, but they should not be assigned to evaluate the BT which they mentor during the school year.
  - All formative assessment paperwork and personnel files will be secured in a locked filing cabinet in the Executive Director's (principal's) office.
- Additional support may be in the form of the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction, School Mentors, and other teacher leaders sharing instructional materials, best practices and relevant information; cultivating professional dialogue; and gathering data to ensure that all BTs are receiving appropriate support.

h. To ensure consistency and sustained support for BTs, the Beginning Teacher Support Personnel will create a school-level professional development plan specifically to address stages of BT growth. Teachers in their first year are required to attend meetings throughout the year to become familiar with the school, learn about best practices for management and instruction, and grow into reflective teacher leaders. Second year teachers will participate in effective strategies for differentiation and working with students with disabilities. Third year teachers will become acquainted with technology resources.

3. The Beginning Teacher Support Personnel will ensure all teachers receive the required observations as outlined in SBE policy, General Statute, and HB 1030, Section 8.32 (h) and (1).
  - Each BT will be observed once per quarter.
    - Three observations will be conducted by the principal or one of the assistant principals.
    - One observation will be conducted by the mentor.
  - The observer will meet with the BT for discussion after each observation.
  - The principal will conduct a summative evaluation with every BT at the end of each school year.
4. In order to ensure quality, effectiveness, and efficient management of the Beginning Teacher Support Program, the Beginning Teacher Support Personnel will collect data from a variety of sources and provide documentation to meet the requirements of the Beginning Teacher Support Program Monitoring Process completed on a 5 year revolving cycle. Improvements to the program will be made based on the monitoring results to address any identified areas of concern noted by the Beginning Teacher Support Program Monitoring Team. Sources include:
  - Instructional Walk Through Form
  - Feedback from Mentor
  - New teacher orientation
5. The Beginning Teacher Support Personnel will participate in an annual peer review process developed by NCDPI soliciting feedback from regional facilitators and other LEA's in our region.
  - Documents will be shared electronically and discussions will occur in person, over the phone, or through an online conferencing system.
6. The BT will complete the recent graduate survey, and the principal of the school will complete the employer survey during the BTs first year of teaching as part of the requirements to measure the performance of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) stated in GS 115C-269.35. The surveys must be completed at the end of the first year of teaching.
7. The Beginning Teacher Support Personnel coordinate mentors and facilitate documentation for BT throughout the licensure process.
8. The Beginning Teacher Support Personnel provide for the timely transfer of BT files and documents and authorization of the BT.
9. The Beginning Teacher Support Personnel participate in the Peer Review Process with The Experiential School of Greensboro through email and phone conversations.

**Conclusion:**

The Hawbridge School Beginning Teacher Support Program and Mentoring Plan focuses on quality induction for new teachers with an emphasis on mentoring, sustained support, optimal working conditions and professional growth. The mission and plan is aligned with the NC Professional Teaching Standards, the NC Mentor Standards, and the vision and mission set forth by The Hawbridge School.

Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction:

Date:

Executive Director:

Date:

School Board Chair:

Date:

Approved by School Board on (date)

Submitted to DPI on (date)

Approved by DPI (date)

## **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](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 November 17, 2021*

- No Board member should send a message on behalf of the Board without explicit approval from the Board.
- Any message sent to an individual Board member must be shared with the Board unless it is clear that the communication is meant only for the individual.
- Board members need to be aware that they are in a position of authority and thus must be thoughtful about how and when they send messages to faculty or community members.
- Board members often fulfill other roles within the Hawbridge community, such as parents or community members. As such, each communication should focus solely on matters pertaining to a single role. For example, an email should not discuss both a concern related to that Board member's particular child as well as a matter to be discussed during a Board meeting.
- All communications pertaining to Board matters should take place using the Hawbridge email account. This account should not be used for non-Board matters.
- Board members should be aware that even when trying to speak as a parent or community member, messages have a tendency to be over-interpreted. As such, Board members should take all due precautions to avoid unintentionally implying that a personal perspective represents the position of the Board.
- Board members should not speak for one another, even if they think they know or remember what another person thinks or has said.
- Votes are public record, so any dissent is already noted. Once a decision is made, Board members should support Board decisions regardless of how they vote. Board members may maintain their individual voice but should work together to make Board decisions 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.)

## **Child Sexual Abuse and Sex Trafficking Training Policy**

*Approved by the Board of Directors February 19, 2020*

It is the intent of this policy to comply with North Carolina law with respect to child abuse and sex trafficking, including N.C.G.S. 115C-218.75(g). Those laws require that The Hawbridge School adopt and implement a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program in accordance with N.C.G.S. 115C-375.20. Specifically, N.C.G.S. 115C-375.20, states as follows:

- (1) School personnel – Teachers, instructional support personnel, principals, and assistant principals. This term may also include, in the discretion of the employing entity, other school employees who work directly with students in grades kindergarten through 12.
  - (a) Each employing entity shall adopt and implement a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program for school personnel who work directly with students in grades kindergarten through 12 that provides education and awareness training related to child sexual abuse and sex trafficking, including, but not limited to, best practices from the field of prevention, the grooming process of sexual predators, the warning signs of sexual abuse and sex trafficking, how to intervene when sexual abuse or sex trafficking is suspected or disclosed, legal responsibilities for reporting sexual abuse or sex trafficking, and available resources for assistance. This training may be provided by local nongovernmental organizations with expertise in these areas, local law enforcement officers, or other officers of the court. All school personnel who work with students in grades kindergarten through 12 shall receive two hours of training consistent with this section in even-numbered years beginning in 2020.

(b) No entity required to adopt a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program by N.C.G.S. 115C-47(64), 115C-218.75(g), 115C-238.66(14), or 116-239.8(b)(17), or its members, employees, designees, agents, or volunteers, shall be liable in civil damages to any party for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission relating to the provision of, participation in, or implementation of any component of a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program required by this section, unless that act or omission amounts to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose any specific duty of care or standard of care on an entity required to adopt a child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training program by G.S. 115C-47(64), 115C-218.75(g), 115C-238.66(14), or 116-239.8(b)(17).

(2) Such program shall be adopted and implemented by January 1, 2020, and training shall be required for school personnel beginning with the 2020-2021 school year. The Hawbridge School program under this policy shall be conducted in accordance with North Carolina law and supervised by the Executive Director.

## **Code of Conduct Policy for Families and Visitors**

*Approved by the Board of Directors February 19, 2020*

This Code of Conduct is an agreement between families, visitors, and The Hawbridge School. The purpose is to clarify expectations around the conduct of all families and visitors connected to our school in order for everyone to feel safe, respected, and valued. It is also important for families to make sure that any persons picking up their children or visiting Hawbridge are aware of this policy.

At The Hawbridge School, we are proud and fortunate to have a dedicated and supportive school community. We highly value our teachers and administration and have great respect for the warm, caring environment that they create so that all of our students can thrive. Similarly, we recognize and value the diverse cultures and identities that Hawbridge families bring to our school community. It is our desire to foster an environment in which all families feel they are part of our inclusive community and feel welcomed and valued. For this to occur, we ask that families participate fully in the life of our school, and we encourage families to communicate ways in which we can help their child to feel valued and supported within our school community. It is our belief that by working together and valuing one another, we can help everyone in our community thrive.

**Respectful communication is at the heart of our school values, and is an expectation from families, students, and school faculty and staff.** This is the most important component of our Code of Conduct and when followed, supports an inclusive and supportive school community.

We are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner, through open and respectful dialogue. If a concern arises, please contact your child's teacher. Where an issue remains unresolved, please follow the school's grievance procedure available in the school's Policy Manual.

Please note that we take seriously the following expectations to foster a supportive learning environment:

- **Our community is kind.** Threatening, disparaging, or disrespectful language or behavior toward staff, students, and visitors will not be tolerated on school premises or during any school-related activity.
- **Our community is inclusive and respectful.** Using insulting or demeaning language as it relates to race, religion, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or ability is unacceptable.
- **Our community is respectful of the spaces we inhabit.** Damaging or destroying school property is not allowed.
- **Our community is supportive of the school.** Any behavior that disrupts the school's normal operation or school-related activities will not be tolerated.
- **Our students, families, teachers, and staff are stewards of the school community.** Slanderous comments about school staff, students, or another family on social media or in person is unacceptable.

Should any of the above occur on school premises, online, or in connection with school events, administrators are authorized to ban offenders from being on school campus or from attending any and all school related activities, and/or to use any legal action necessary in order to ensure the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of Hawbridge students and staff.

**Thank you for abiding by this code in our school. Together we will create a welcoming and nurturing environment for our students and their families, employees, visitors, and board.**

### **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 § 115C218.15.

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.

## **Criminal Background Check Policy**

*Approved by the Board of Directors on January 22, 2020*

According to [NC General Statute §115C-332](#), all public school employees must undergo a criminal records check prior to beginning their new jobs. The Hawbridge School's criminal records check is conducted after the Executive Director recommends you for employment and before the contract for employment is offered. While state law permits school systems to require fingerprinting of new employees, The Hawbridge School does not require fingerprinting. An extensive criminal background check is conducted on each individual recommended for employment. If criminal violations are found in an applicant's history, the applicant may be disqualified from employment.

Criminal convictions against, or pleas of guilty or nolo contendere by an applicant or employee, will be considered in hiring and dismissal decisions. A criminal records check will be required of all newly hired employees, including substitutes. A criminal records check will also be conducted on a random or rotating basis of all annually rehired and current employees including substitutes. All newly hired and rehired employees will be temporary employees pending the review of the criminal records check. Applicants shall be required to answer completely and accurately questions on their applications with regard to previous criminal history. Failure to do so will subject the applicant to not being hired and an employee being dismissed.

Information obtained through the implementation of this policy shall be kept confidential as provided in the North Carolina General Statutes.

## **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 22, 2022*

This grievance policy does not apply to any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which a more specific Hawbridge Board policy applies, or for which The Hawbridge Board (henceforth "the Board") has no authority to act.

A grievance is a formal written claim that a student or parent/guardian has been adversely affected by a final administrative decision that violated state or federal law, State Board of Education Policy or local Board policy.

The Board recognizes that effective school governance requires that the primary responsibility for issues involving student discipline, curriculum, assessment, promotion and other day-to-day decisions regarding school management, lies with the faculty, staff and directors of The Hawbridge School (henceforth "School"), and that 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 grievance policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Executive Director.

### **Parent/Guardian or Student Grievances**

*Informal Procedures:* A parent/guardian or student should first attempt to resolve any issue through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved person(s). If a parent/guardian's or student's concern has not been adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher involved, the parent/guardian or student should next attempt to resolve the issue with an Upper or Lower School Director or Assistant Director, and that informal discussion may include the teacher(s) or other involved person(s). If a complaint cannot be resolved by such an informal manner, 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 grievance is a formal written claim by a parent/guardian of a Hawbridge student (henceforth "Grievant") identifying the concern, the resolution attempts, and any law, policy or practice that is implicated by the concern. No one shall retaliate against a Grievant who files a grievance under this policy. Failure of a Grievant to comply with timelines listed below may result in denial of a grievance request. Grievances will generally be handled on an individual basis, rather than as a group. If a request is made to be heard as a group, the Board and school officials may grant or deny that request at their discretion.

*Level One – Request and Conference with Director or Assistant Director.* A Grievant may, by written request, seek a conference with a Director or Assistant Director of the appropriate Upper or Lower School 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 Director or 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 (5) business days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the grievance. Grievances filed after five (5) business days will be reviewed by the School as a complaint outside the grievance process.

Following receipt of the written request, the Director or Assistant Director shall, if feasible, conduct a conference with the Grievant within seven (7) business days of the written report. Within three to five (3-5) business days following the conference, the Director or Assistant Director will state in writing his or her position on the grievance and a copy will be given to the Grievant.

*Level Two – Appeal to the Executive Director.* The Grievant may appeal the Director's or 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 (5) business days following receipt of the Director's or Assistant Director's written Level One response to the Grievant. The Executive Director will review the grievance and conduct any investigation of the facts determined to be necessary before rendering a decision.

The Executive Director shall issue a written response to the Grievant and the Level One Assistant Director within fifteen (15) business days following the hearing and create a written record of the evidence received and determination made.

*Level Three – Appeal to the Board: Discretionary Appeals and Appeals of Right.* If a Grievant is not satisfied with the outcome of his or her grievance at Level Two, the Grievant may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice of the decision or recommended action from the Executive Director, submit a written request to the Board Chair to appeal the Executive Director's decision or recommendation and to request a formal hearing.

If there is an appeal to the Board, a panel of the Board consisting of at least three (3) members shall hear the grievance within seven (7) business days from the date the appeal is received by the Board Chair, except when the Board panel agrees to extend the timeline. The Board panel will review the written documentation and decisions from Level One and Level Two and will allow the Grievant and the administration to make a brief oral presentation to the Board panel. The Board panel will share findings with the entire Board and will issue a final written decision within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal.

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. The Level Three written decision is considered final and cannot be appealed further.

### **Employee Grievances**

*Informal Procedures:* A faculty or staff member (the "employee") should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the other involved person(s). If an employee's concern has not been adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the other person(s) involved, the employee should next attempt to resolve the grievance with the facilitation of the Assistant Director. If a grievance cannot be resolved in such informal manner, the employee 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. An employee grievance is a formal written claim by an employee or group of employees

stating that there has been an intrusion on an individual's or the group's rights or interests afforded by law, policy, or practice. No one shall retaliate against an employee who files a grievance under this policy. Failure of an employee to comply with timelines listed below may result in denial of a grievance request.

If the employee's grievance involves an alleged action of an administrator, the duly elected Teacher Representative to the Board of Directors may accompany the employee to the formal grievance conferences, and another administrator will also be present at the conferences. If the Teacher Representative to the Board of Directors is party to the grievance, the grievant may select another faculty member to serve as his or her representative.

*Level One – Assistant Director Request and Conference.* An employee may, by written request, seek a conference with the 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.

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 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 employee 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 employee.

*Level Two – Appeal to the Executive Director.* If the grievance is not resolved, the employee 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 employee will be afforded the opportunity to present information in writing to the Executive Director in support of their alleged grievance. The employee shall have no right to have an attorney or other advocate present, other than the aforementioned Faculty Representative to the Board of Directors.

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

Decisions involving loss of pay, suspension without pay, or dismissal of an employee are not appealable because matters involving the employment of all personnel are vested solely with the Executive Director.

However, 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 an employee is not satisfied with the disposition of his or her grievance at Level Two or is subject to disciplinary action or recommendation for disciplinary action by the Executive Director, the employee 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 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.

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

The provisions in this said document are reviewable, amendable, and modifiable at any time at the discretion of the Board. That upon motion of a Board member, the provisions of this document with majority consent can be altered and modified. Any consented and agreed upon changes shall be immediately codified in writing and inserted in the appropriate section of the document. Notice of any changes to said document shall be announced in board minutes.

## **McKinney Vento Dispute Policy**

*Approved by the Board of Directors on January 22, 2020*

### **Disputes under the McKinney Vento Act**

In most cases, the Hawbridge School, the homeless student, and/or the unaccompanied homeless youth will be in agreement about what is in the student's educational best interest, including which school is in their best interest to attend. In some cases, however, the position of the school may differ from that of a homeless student/unaccompanied youth. In these instances, the parent of the homeless/unaccompanied youth may use the McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process to dispute the school's decision. Local liaisons must ensure that parents of homeless and unaccompanied children have access to the dispute resolution process and that the dispute is resolved promptly and in accordance with the law. The Hawbridge School policy below outlines the resolution process:

A parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth who disagrees with a decision of school officials with regard to eligibility, or enrollment of a student who is homeless (hereinafter, referred to as a "complainant") may appeal the decision to the Hawbridge School's homeless liaison in accordance with this section upon registering or attempting to register the child or youth at the school in which enrollment is sought.

Any employee who is aware that an unaccompanied youth or a parent or guardian of a homeless student is dissatisfied with a decision of school officials with regard to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment should immediately refer that individual to the Hawbridge School's liaison for homeless students.

As used in this section, "school days" means days when students are scheduled to be in attendance.

### **Notice, Stay Put, and Informal Resolution**

Upon learning of a complainant's disagreement with a decision of school officials, the homeless liaison shall take the following actions.

- a. The homeless liaison shall arrange to have the student immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought (either the school of origin or the school located in the attendance zone of the student's temporary residence) if enrollment is at issue. Once enrolled, the student must receive all services for which he or she is

eligible, and must be allowed to participate fully in school activities, pending resolution of the dispute.

b. Immediately, but not later than one school day after learning of the complainant's disagreement, the homeless liaison shall provide the complainant a copy of the school system's uniform statement of rights and procedures that is written, to the extent practicable, in a language that the complainant can understand. The written statement must include all of the following:

1. contact information, including business telephone number, e-mail address, and physical address of the homeless liaison and of the State Coordinator for homeless education, with a brief description of their roles;
2. notice that, within two school days of the school's decision, the complainant has the right to notify the homeless liaison that the complainant intends to appeal the decision;
3. an explanation of the appeal procedure, including the timeline and process for making the initial appeal and for pursuing a subsequent appeal to the Executive Director and Board, as provided by this policy;
4. a simple complaint form a complainant can complete and submit to the homeless liaison to initiate the dispute resolution process and to pursue any subsequent appeals to the Executive Director and board;
5. notice that the school board or a designated panel of the board will make the final decision on behalf of the school;
6. notice of the right to appeal the final decision of the school system to the State Coordinator within three school days and the option to request an extension from the State Coordinator, along with a step-by-step description of how to;
7. notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school located in the assignment area of the student's temporary residence or remain in the school of origin with transportation provided pending resolution of the dispute if such transportation is requested by the parent, guardian, or homeless liaison on behalf of the youth;
8. notice that immediate enrollment includes full participation in all school activities;
9. notice of the right to obtain assistance of advocates or attorneys; and
10. notice of the right to provide supporting written or oral documentation during the appeals process.

c. The homeless liaison shall attempt to informally resolve the matter. Complainants are encouraged to attempt informal resolution through discussion with the homeless liaison when possible.

d. If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the homeless liaison shall inform the complainant of the right to appeal the matter by initiating the dispute resolution process provided in subsection D.2, below.

e. If the complaint initiates the dispute resolution process, the homeless liaison shall expedite the process so that a final decision in the dispute is reached within 15 school days or 30 calendar days, whichever is less.

#### Steps in the Dispute Resolution Process and Related Timelines

##### a. Homeless Liaison Review

- i. If informal resolution of a complaint is unsuccessful, the complainant may initiate the dispute resolution process by making a formal appeal to the homeless liaison, either directly or through the principal of the school in which enrollment is sought. The appeal must be presented within five school days of the decision giving rise to the complaint.
- ii. The appeal may be made orally or in writing on the designated complaint form. If the complainant makes an oral appeal, the homeless liaison shall complete the written complaint form on the complainant's behalf without delay.
- iii. The complaint should include the date of the filing, a description of the disputed action pertaining to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the name of the person(s) involved and a description of the relief requested. The complainant must be informed of the right to provide supporting written or oral documentation and to seek the assistance of an advocate or attorney.
- iv. The local liaison shall inform the Executive Director, and the State Coordinator of the dispute immediately after the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth has initiated the dispute resolution process.
- v. Within two school days after receiving the formal complaint, the homeless liaison will provide a written decision, including the reasons for the decision, to the complainant and the Executive Director.

b. Appeal to the Executive Director of the Liaison's Decision

- i. Within two school days of receiving the liaison's decision, the complainant may appeal the decision to the Executive Director orally or in writing using the form designated for this purpose. Oral appeals must be made to the homeless liaison, who shall commit the appeal to writing on the designated form. The homeless liaison shall ensure that the Executive Director receives copies of the written complaint and the response of the liaison.
- ii. The Executive Director shall schedule a conference with the complainant to discuss the complaint.
- iii. Within two school days of receiving the appeal, the Executive Director shall provide a written decision to the complainant including a statement of the reasons for the decision.

c. Appeal to the Board of the Executive Director's Decision

- i. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's decision, he or she may file an appeal with the board within two days of receiving the decision of the Executive Director. The board's decision will constitute the final decision of the school. The written statement of the board's opinion will include the name and contact information of the State coordinator for homeless education and will describe the appeal rights to the State coordinator.
- ii. The appeal may be filed orally or in writing using the form designated for this purpose. Oral appeals must be made to the homeless liaison, who shall commit the appeal to writing on the designated form.
- iii. The board or a panel of at least two board members acting on behalf of the board will hear the appeal. The board or board panel will provide the complainant with a written decision with a written decision within five school days of receiving the appeal. In unusual circumstances the board or board panel may extend this time but will avoid exceeding the lesser of (1) 15 school

days from when the complaint was received or (2) 30 calendar days from when the complaint was received.

iv. The board or board panel's decision will constitute the final decision of the school for purposes of the complaint's right to appeal to the State Coordinator.

v. If the matter under appeal is a school assignment, a board panel decision will be a recommendation that must be submitted to the full board for a final determination as required by state law, School Assignment. However, in order to ensure an expedited appeals process for students who are homeless, the recommendation of the board panel shall be considered the final decision of the board for purposes of appeal to the State Coordinator if a final determination by the full board reasonably cannot be accomplished by the deadline described in the previous paragraph.

vi. The written statement of the final decision will include the name and contact information of the State Coordinator for homeless education and will describe the appeal rights to the State Coordinator. If the matter under appeal is a school assignment and the appeal was not heard by the full board, the written decision will also note that review of the matter by the full board as required by state law is pending.

d. Appeal to the State Coordinator of the Board's Decision

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the board or board panel, he or she may file an oral or written appeal with the State Coordinator for homeless education within three school days of receiving the board or panel's decision. The State Coordinator will issue a final decision on the complaint. The appeal must include:

- i. the name, physical address if available, e-mail address, and telephone number of the complainant;
- ii. the relationship or connection of the person to the child in question;
- iii. the name of the school system and the specific school in question;
- iv. the federal requirement alleged to have been violated;
- v. how the requirement is alleged to have been violated; and
- vi. the relief the person is seeking.

Within three school days following a request from the State Coordinator, the homeless liaison shall provide the record of complaint, a copy of the board or panel's decision, and any other supporting documents necessary to complete the record.

## **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 Policy**

#### *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 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 10<sup>th</sup> grade, you must pass English I or English I Honors and earn at least 5 credits.

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

## **Reporting Alleged Violations of Law Policy: For Current Employees**

*Approved by the Board of Directors on January 22, 2020*

As employees of The Hawbridge School, all staff members are expected to observe and obey all laws and ordinances, in addition to all policies and procedures of our Board of Directors.

Any employee charged with or arrested for any violation(s) of a criminal, or serious traffic vehicular law (such as, vehicular homicide, hit and run, or any such law classified as a felony or for which a conviction could lead to incarceration) or ordinance, must report such fact in writing to the Executive Director no later than the next scheduled business day. In cases involving employee hospitalization and/or incarceration (jail) involving the stated violation, the employee shall report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his/her release. Such report shall include all pertinent facts concerning the alleged violation(s).

It is the employee's responsibility to keep the Executive Director apprised of the judicial process in the matter. Upon judicial action in the matter, the employee must report the disposition and pertinent facts, in writing, to the Executive Director no later than the next scheduled business day following adjudication.

Legal Reference: G.S. 115C-276(l), 115C-325(b)

## **Reporting and Consequences Policy**

*Approved by the Board of Directors on 2/19/2020*

### REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR BULLYING

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of this policy by any student, employee, or other person under the supervision and control of the school system, or any third person who knows or suspects conduct that may constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying, should inform a school official.

Any employee who has witnessed, or who has reliable information, that another person may have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or bullying in violation of this policy has a duty to report such conduct. Employees who observe an incident of harassment or bullying are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator and it is safe to do so. If an employee knows of an incident involving discrimination, harassment, or bullying and the employee fails to report the conduct or take proper action or knowingly provides false information in regard to the incident, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

Reports, except mandatory employee reports, may be made anonymously, and all reports will be investigated.

## **RESPONDING TO OCCURRENCES OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR BULLYING**

### **1. Consequences for the Perpetrator**

#### **a. Disciplinary Consequences for Students**

Students will be disciplined in accordance with the school's Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook. Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial actions ranging from behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion. In addition, the violation may also be reported to law enforcement, as appropriate.

Incidents of misbehavior that do not rise to the level of discriminatory harassment may violate acceptable standards of student behavior, including, but not limited to, the expectation that students will demonstrate civility and integrity in their actions and interactions with others, as described in the Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook. The consequences for such behavior will be consistent with applicable board policy and the Code of Student Conduct.

#### **b. Disciplinary Consequences for Employees**

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal. In addition, the violation may also be reported to law enforcement, as appropriate. Nothing in this policy will preclude the school system from taking disciplinary action against an employee when the evidence does not establish unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying, but the conduct otherwise violates board policy or expected standards of employee behavior.

#### **c. Consequences for Other Perpetrators**

Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate. A third party under the supervision and control of the school system will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate.

### **2. Consideration of Need for More Extensive Response**

School administrators shall consider whether the misconduct warrants more than just a response at the individual level. Given the nature and severity of the misconduct, the administrators may determine that a classroom or school-wide response is necessary. Such classroom, school-wide, or school system-wide responses may include additional staff training, harassment prevention programs, and other measures deemed appropriate by the Executive Director to address the behavior. The actions taken must be reasonably calculated to end the behavior, eliminate a hostile environment and its effects if one has been created, and prevent recurrence of the behavior.

### **3. Retaliation Prohibited**

The board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for (a) reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, (b) supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or (c) participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy.

After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and in accordance with applicable federal, state, or local laws, policies, and regulations, the Executive Director shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.

## **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

*Approved by Board of Directors on September 25, 2019*

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.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

*Approved by the Board of Directors on February 19, 2020*

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- 1) submission to the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic progress, or completion of a school-related activity;
- 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or in the case of a student, submission to or rejection of such conduct is used in evaluating the student's performance within a course of study or other school-related activity; or
- 3) such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of (a) unreasonably interfering with an employee's work or performance or a student's educational performance, (b) limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or environment, or (c) creating an abusive, intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual; sexual assault; sexual violence; or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials. Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex, but not involving sexual activity or language, may be combined with incidents of sexually harassing conduct to determine if the incidents of sexually harassing conduct are sufficiently serious to create a sexually hostile environment.

Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in the school system, whether or not the relationship is consensual. Such conduct is prohibited whether or not it constitutes sexual harassment.

Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment that violates this policy. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.