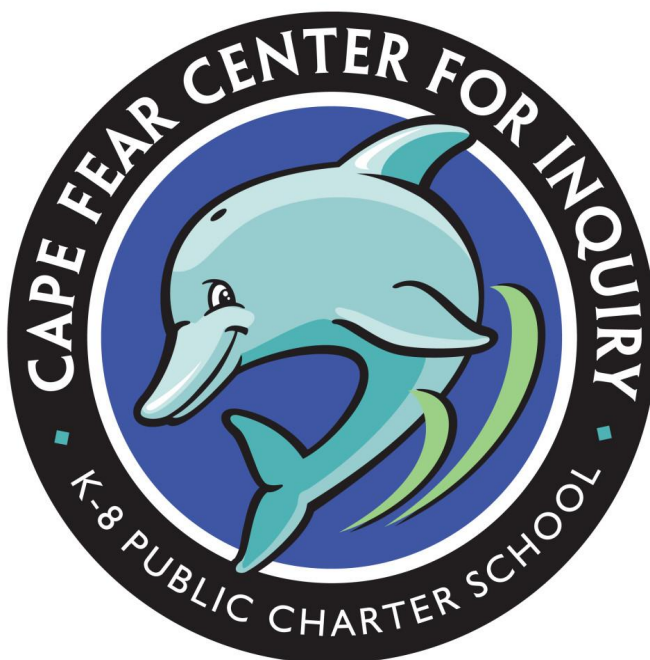


2023-2024
Handbook for
Students and Families



2525 Wonder Way
Wilmington, NC 28401
910-362-0000
www.cfc.net

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry Family & Student Handbook

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Part I: General Information

2023-2024 Student/Family Calendar

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry

2023-2024 Community School Calendar

July 2023						
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Board Approved 2/21/23

Mission Statement

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry is committed to promoting students' abilities to think and create in personally meaningful ways through an inquiry-based, integrated curriculum in a nurturing and empowering environment.

Vision Statement

CFCI will foster academic and social inquiry-based learning by enriching the state curriculum. We will facilitate research, communication, and action through:

- community partnerships
- environmental education
- global connection
- technology
- wellness

Mission, Vision & Beliefs - Who We Are

At CFCI, we believe that the whole child is more important than any single factor. We recognize physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development as integral parts of each child's growth and learning process.

Therefore, we:

- focus on student inquiry because we believe that all children have an innate sense of wonder.
- design and provide hands-on, integrated, and exciting learning experiences—through classroom and field experiences— because children learn best when they are actively engaged in making personally meaningful connections.
- are committed to a small student-teacher ratio because this is the best way to create communities of learners.
- nurture our students to be independent, lifelong learners
- appreciate diversity among learners because we value the uniqueness of each child.
- prepare our students to become effective communicators, critical thinkers and creative problem solvers because problem solving is a natural part of everyday life.
- implement a comprehensive social-emotional curriculum because children learn best in a safe and caring environment where every child is respected and valued.
- rely on mutual support of home, school and community. Open communication and family involvement are vital to ensuring student growth. We agree that nurturing and educating children are monumental tasks that require collaborative efforts.

Inquiry

CFCI teachers and administration work to implement methods such as inquiry-based instruction, providing student choices, as well as other innovative initiatives.

Students are actively exploring interests and taking ownership of their learning through:

- asking questions
- working together
- thinking and problem solving
- reflecting and sharing new understandings

Teachers are creating a safe environment and guiding student learning by:

- accepting mistakes
- respecting students' ideas
- sharing leadership with students
- knowing students well enough to address individual needs and interests
- helping students make new connections
- nurturing a sense of wonder
- encouraging students to create their own understanding

CFCI definition of Inquiry: *Inquiry is a rigorous discovery process driven by curriculum and curiosity that requires exploration, analysis and problem-solving.*

Part II: Student Attendance

The primary responsibility for school attendance rests with students and families. CFCI has the responsibility for properly recording absenteeism and tardiness, notifying families when needed, and discouraging excessive absences in accordance with state law. G.S. 115C-307(f).

Lawful, Excused Absences

An email to office@cfc.net, or written note from a doctor or parent/guardian, excusing the absence must be provided within 48 hours of the student's return to school. **Please make sure that emails and notes are directed to the front office.** Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused.

Pursuant to state law G.S. 115C-378 and the rules and regulations of the N. C. Department of Public Instruction, School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual, the following shall constitute a lawful excused absence*, provided satisfactory evidence is given to the appropriate school official:

- **Illness or injury:** When the absence results from illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
- **Quarantine:** When isolation of the child is ordered by the local health officers or the State Board of Health.
- **Death in the immediate family of the child:** When the absence results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student. For the purpose of this regulation, the immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, guardians, brothers, and sisters.
- **Medical or dental appointments:** When approved by the appropriate school official in advance, except in the cases of an emergency.
- **Court or administrative proceedings:** When the absence results from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness. The Local Board of Education can be considered an administrative tribunal.
- **Religious observances:** When the tenets of a religion to which a child or their families adhere require or suggest the observance of a religious event unless the religious observance or the cumulative effect of the religious observance is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the child. . (S.L. 2010-112)
- **Student Educational Opportunity:** When it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid education opportunity, such as travel. Approval for such an absence must be granted prior to the absence. This would include, but is not limited to, a student serving as a legislative page or a governor's page.
- **Local School Board Policy:** LEAs may excuse temporary or occasional absences for other reasons in accordance with local school board policies, provided that the student has been in attendance for at least one-half of a school day during the current school year.

- **Absence related to Deployment Activities:** - A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting for the purpose of visiting said parent or legal guardian. (G.S. 115C-407.5 Article V (E))
- **Child Care:** Absences due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent/guardian are to be coded excused (lawful). (G.S.115C-375.5)

*Suspension is not included in this list of Lawful (excused) absences as is coded as an excused absence in the school’s student information tracking system.

Procedure for requesting an excused absence for a Student Educational Opportunity:

1. The parent or legal guardian should request a form entitled “Student Leave for Educational Opportunity” from the front office.
2. The parent or legal guardian should complete and return the form to the front office. Both the parent(s) or legal guardian and the student should sign the form. The front office administrator or assistant will stamp the form indicating the date received.
3. The form must be received by the front office at least 10 school days prior to the first date of the absence. If the form is received at least 10 days prior to the absence, the front office will forward the form to the student’s teacher.
4. The Director/designee will review the request and either approve or not approve the request based on the information provided on the form. If approved, the teacher will indicate the missed work to be completed and/or the inquiry project to showcase the educational opportunity.
5. The final determination of whether or not the absence is excused will be contingent on the student completing the assigned work listed on the makeup work form by the due date, as well as the teacher approving the work. Failure to do so will result in the absence being unexcused.

Unexcused Absences

Absences for reasons other than those listed above will be deemed unexcused. The Director/designee shall take appropriate action to prevent excessive absences and/or provide counseling for students with a history of excessive absences. Families must be notified of their child's excessive absences, and the student’s homeroom teacher, counselor and/or other appropriate staff member shall then work with the student and their family to analyze the causes or barriers and to determine the steps to eliminate the problem.

Notification of unexcused absences may be sent to families after 3 unexcused absences. For more specific information please see our Student Attendance Policy.

Excessive Absences: (§ 115C-378)

An Attendance problem-solving team may convene when a student reaches 20 total absences (excused or unexcused). The team will review all documentation provided by families and look at communication with the counselor and teachers to determine next steps.

Tardy Procedures

At CFCI, we believe that building a strong community in the classroom enhances learning and teaches children to care about others and the world around them. This belief is a cornerstone of our school's philosophy. Because one of the primary ways we build community is through morning meetings, we expect all children to arrive at school on time every day. Students are tardy if they are not in their classrooms by 8:05 a.m. If a child arrives at school after 8:05 a.m., a parent/guardian must come into the building to sign them in at the front office.

Early Checkouts

- Just as absent or tardy students cannot fully participate in all learning opportunities, students who are checked out early miss valuable instructional time. Families should consult the school calendar and make doctor's and other appointments after school or on teacher workdays when possible.
- Students checked out for the day before 11:30 am are considered absent for the day.
- To ensure a safe and orderly dismissal, checkouts are not permitted after 2:30 PM.

Student Release

Each student must have on file a list of people to whom they may be released from school. If students are to be released with someone not on their list of people to whom they may be released, a signed note or email MUST be sent by a parent/guardian giving permission. Any person picking a student up should be prepared to show ID.

Part III: Transportation

Transportation Plan

Per CFCI's charter, a student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is ultimately responsible for transportation to and from CFCI. Carpools are encouraged and fostered through our opt-in school directory. CFCI also partners with several afterschool programs who do provide transportation, in addition to our on-campus before- and after-care program. Please reach out to the Front Office for more information.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

- School doors will open at 7:45am. Students will be marked tardy if they arrive after 8:05am. Parents/Guardians must accompany tardy students into the building from upper/lower lots to sign them in.
- Students in grades **K-3** + any older siblings will be dropped off in the lower lot, utilizing the Wonder Way entrance.
 - Families are allowed to line up in their cars on the back side of the MPR beginning at 7:30am. Please do not arrive prior to 7:30am, as this will block the parking lot for our staff.
 - Cars begin pulling forward at 7:45am (please do not pull forward before this time).
 - We ask that you pull all the way forward before stopping to let your child out of the car. Car greeters will be stationed to assist your child.
 - All children will walk on the sidewalk (in one direction) and enter the building using the K1 doors (on the left side of the building).
- Students in grades **4-8** will be dropped off in the upper lot, utilizing the Shipyard Blvd. entrance.
 - Car greeters will be stationed to greet students.
 - Please do not let your child out of the car before 7:45am.
 - Students will walk down the sidewalk and enter the building through the Middle Grades door.
 - If you arrive at 8:05am or later, your child is tardy and needs to be signed in by an adult in the front office. You may park in the upper lot and walk down, or drive around and park in the lower lot. Please do not let your child walk down after 8:05am, as the middle grades doors will be closed and locked at this time.

Dismissal

- Students will begin exiting the building at 3:05pm.
- Students in grades **K-3** + any older siblings will be picked up in the lower lot.
- Students in grades **4-8** will be picked up in the upper lot.
- **Families of students whose last name starts with letters A-M, we kindly ask that you begin arriving at 3:00.**
- **Families of students whose last name starts with letters N-Z, we kindly ask that you begin arriving at 3:15.**

- We kindly ask that as much as possible, you do not arrive before your designated dismissal time. This helps us to prevent dangerous traffic stacking on Wonder Way and Shipyard Blvd.
- **Car Signs:** At Open House you will also receive car signs for your family, babysitters, etc. You will write the names of the child(ren) the car will be picking up in black marker. It is important that whomever is picking up keep this car sign posted **all the way** through the carline. Please do not take them down after the caller calls their name as all staff need to see the names of students being picked up to be able to quickly identify who should be in which car. In the lower lot, you will be asked to move to Wonder Way to wait for your child if a second call is necessary and a staff member will walk them down to the car.

Please direct any individual questions or concerns to Ben Rose (brose@cfc.net - 910-362-0000).

Transportation Changes

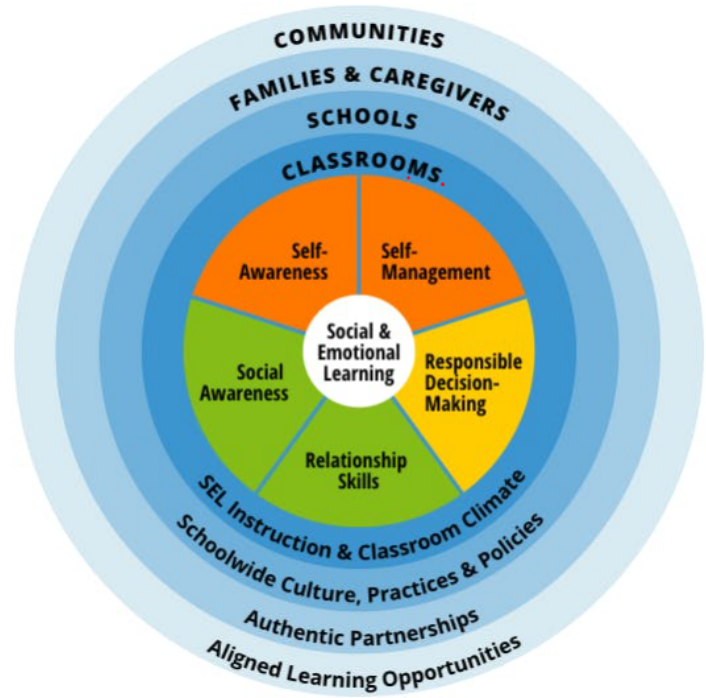
- Please notify the school **before** 2:30 PM if there are any changes in your child's method of transportation from school.
- After School Van - If your child will be riding a van to an after-school care provider, it is your responsibility to call the van service if your child will not be riding that day.

Part IV: Behavior Expectations and Social Curriculum (CFCI POLICY #3900)

Overview

Treating others with respect and being responsible for one's own actions are the goals of the social curriculum at CFCI. We want our students to learn how to interact in a supportive, cooperative learning environment. Through the social curriculum, [Responsive Classroom](#), students internalize rules and procedures and develop self-control and self-confidence. Students are taught and encouraged to learn the principles of cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and compassion as part of their social-emotional learning (SEL) and growth.

The [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) are leading experts in the field of social-emotional learning and define SEL as “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.” CFCI utilizes this framework in conjunction with the Responsive Classroom approach, as the foundation of our language and instruction when addressing student strengths and needs.



Proactive Strategies

Proactive strategies are designed to allow students to develop self-control and community within the classroom. All teachers use them in the course of their daily routines.

- *Morning Meeting* and/or *Responsive Advisory Meeting* is a daily opportunity for students to meet with their homeroom groups to develop community and build the necessary academic and social-emotional competencies that all students need to be successful.
- *Hopes and Dreams and the Social Contract*. Each student is invited to create hopes and dreams and/or goals for their school year. These goals are used to create a social contract within the community during our schoolwide Constitutional Convention. Students are asked to consider what expectations they should have of themselves and others in order to achieve their goals.

- *Take a Break/Time & Space* - Each classroom has a space for students to regain self-control, calm, refocus, and/or reflect, etc. This may be student or teacher initiated and is not considered punitive but an opportunity to reset and rejoin the group.
- Other proactive strategies include, but are not limited to, explicit use of: *Teacher Language, Interactive Modeling, Logical Consequences, and providing Academic Choice.*

Reactive Strategies

- *Restorative Practices*
- *Loss of Privilege*
- *Buddy Room* - At times, students may need a longer opportunity to reflect and regroup. In this case, a student may be sent to the Buddy Room, a designated classroom nearby. They will spend no longer than 10 minutes before returning to class.

Each of these strategies is intended to give the student the opportunity to regain self-control before the teacher steps in with additional external discipline. Students who continue to have challenges may be supported through a tiered behavior plan and/or may have conferences with teachers and/or parents to determine further support as needed.

Comprehensive Student Discipline Program

Consistent, fair and respectful discipline is essential to the educational process. Discipline must be taught just as any other content matter. Instructors are expected to be fair, consistent, and respectful in their handling of discipline related matters. Most discipline issues should be handled in the classroom. Good planning, active and engaging learning, and good classroom management are the keys to prevent student discipline problems. All staff members are expected to utilize Responsive Classroom as a classroom management model.

Defining Interventions/Consequences

Adherence to the school-wide rules is expected. Failure by students to behave as required will result in specific logical consequences, further consequences, and/or interventions to aid with skill deficits and areas for growth. Different students need different interventions. Behavior related to a child's disability will be managed in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

Corporal Punishment ([per § 115C 390.4](#))

The CFCI Board of Directors prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any form. For the purpose of this policy, corporal punishment shall be defined as any kind of physical punishment inflicted upon the body of the student. Any employee shall be responsible for notifying the Director of any observed or suspected incidence of corporal punishment. Notwithstanding the prohibition on the use of corporal punishment, school personnel may use physical restraint in accordance with federal law and G.S. 115C-391.1 and reasonable force pursuant to G.S. 115C-390.3.

Disruptions to the Education Process

Students may not disrupt the educational process, and disruption of the educational process is an infraction and is subject to disciplinary action. Below is a list of actions that disrupt the educational process. This list is not all-inclusive; acts of misconduct not specified herein shall also be subject to discretionary action by appropriate school personnel. The criterion used for defining unacceptable behavior is whether or not it has the potential to disrupt the educational process. These guidelines follow state guidelines.

- **Substance abuse and tobacco:** The exchange, possession, or use of illegal drugs, alcohol, or any other illegal substance including tobacco is prohibited while participating in or attending school events held at or away from school. This prohibition applies to fake substances or facsimiles thereof.
- **Public displays of affection:** Inappropriate public displays of affection will not be tolerated.
- **Bodily Harm/Injury:** Administration will take all factors into consideration including age and the developmental level of students, when making determination as to the type and intensity of the consequences for bodily harm.
- **Threats:** A threat is an expression of intent to harm another person or themselves. Threats may be spoken, written, or gestured. Threats may be direct or indirect, and need not be communicated directly to the intended victim or victims. Once a threat is reported to a staff member, an investigation will be conducted by school administration to determine as quickly as possible if the threat is transient or substantive. Possession of a weapon on school grounds is presumed to be a threat. As part of the investigative process, a threat assessment could be conducted using a research-based tool. Based on the outcome of the threat assessment, law enforcement could be notified. Once the investigation is complete, a plan of action will be created by a threat assessment team, which consists of school leadership and designated staff members.

Multiple Referrals

CFCI is committed to creating a safe learning environment free of disruption and distraction. When behavioral concerns continue to occur after logical consequences and interventions, it may have the potential to be progressively more serious and/or problematic, warranting a higher level of intervention.

Disciplinary Considerations: Students with Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities are not immune from the district's disciplinary process once placement procedures are properly followed. Since the exclusion of a student with a disability from his/her education program for more than a total of ten (10) days during a school year may constitute a change in placement, the following considerations must be addressed:

- When considering a total number of suspension days that exceeds 10 school days, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team or 504 team as appropriate, must first determine whether the behavior of concern is a manifestation of the student's disability.

- If the outcome of manifestation determination determines that the behavior is *not* a manifestation of the student's disability, disciplinary actions may be taken in accordance with the procedures in this policy.
- If the team determines either that the behavior is related to the student's disability, then the student may not be suspended and a team meeting must be convened to discuss changes to the student's plan.
- Any suspension that excludes a student from his/her special education services must be counted when calculating the total number of suspension days.
- The decision to remove a student from his/her services will be made on an individual basis.
- Procedural safeguards outlined by the US Department of Education will be followed.
- All federal guidelines regarding the provision of education continuation services for suspended special education students will be adhered to.

Student Referrals/Incident Reports

When an office referral is needed, the teacher will complete an office referral form. The following consequences may be assigned. This list is not exhaustive. Consequences are given at the discretion of school leadership and teacher(s).

- **Loss of school privileges:** Students may be removed, at the discretion of school leadership, from any part or the entirety of school privileges. Participation in school activities is a privilege offered to and earned by students.
- **In-School Suspension:** This is defined as the removal from the classroom setting and/or loss of privileges to an alternative supervised area. Students are responsible for keeping their classwork current. The student will be allowed to make up classwork, homework, quizzes, etc. Students may or may not be allowed to participate in extracurricular/athletics during days of in-school suspension, at the discretion of the school leadership. Family contact and disciplinary notice will be issued.
- **Short-term Suspension:** This is defined as the removal from the entire school setting for a period of time not to exceed 10 school days. Short-term suspension will be at the discretion of the Director or designee and will address behaviors that disrupt the school environment. School leadership may impose interventions and/or consequences beyond the suspension in order to maintain the safety and security of the school population. In the event a short-term suspension is assigned, the Director or designee will provide written notification to each of the student's teachers and to the student's parents/legal guardians within one school day of imposing any form of suspension. The school leadership must keep on file a copy of the notification for any suspension occurring during a school year.

- **Long-term Suspension:** This is defined as the removal of a student from the entire school setting and all school-related activities for more than ten days. Similar to a short-term suspension, the Director or designee will provide written notification to each of the student's teachers and to the student's parents/legal guardians within one school day. If the student/family would like to contest the long-term suspension, the student will be given the opportunity for a due process hearing prior to the 11th day of suspension. The student may, at their own expense, choose to be represented by an attorney at the hearing.
- **Expulsion:** This occurs as a result of a recommendation by a hearing officer at a Disciplinary Due Process Hearing. Expulsion is the removal of a student from all school-related activities for a period of 365 calendar days. A student must be given a due process hearing prior to expulsion. The student may, at their own expense, choose to be represented by an attorney at the hearing.
- **Reimbursements/Restitution:** Restitution will be sought from anyone for damage or theft of personal or school property. This includes damage to the school facilities (i.e. bathrooms, Chromebooks, desks, etc.), damage to personal property of school employees or students. Such matters may be referred to the police or other legal authority for further action.
- **Referral for Legal Action:** Evidence of any illegal act or action by a student will be forwarded to the appropriate authority or law enforcement agency.

The following are actions that could result in suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary action:

- **Weapons:** Use of or threatening with a firearm, knife, explosive, or other object, even if manufactured for a nonviolent purpose, that has a potentially violent use, or any look-alike object that resembles an object that has a potentially violent use, with intent to cause bodily harm. This specifically includes look-alike guns and knives, such as toys or the sale or furnishing of weapons (gun, sharp object, club, or an object that could inflict serious bodily injury).
- **Arson:** Starting a fire resulting in damage to property over \$100.00 to property or starting a fire resulting in injury to a person. (Category II)
- **Sexual Offenses:** Committed or attempted to commit sexual assault or sexual battery or repeated sexual harassment including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that can be deemed as a threat.
- **Acts of Violence:** Cause or attempt to cause physical injury to a student or staff member including but not limited to:
 - Bomb threats
 - Repeated fighting
 - Causing physical harm to another person
 - Rioting or gang fighting
- **Firearms:** The possession, selling or otherwise furnishing of a firearm or firearm look-alike or any explosive device as defined in general statutes.

- **Sale/Distribution/Use/Possession of Controlled/Illegal Substances, Alcohol, and Tobacco Products:** Possession with intent to distribute alcohol or drugs, other illegal substances or look-alikes or the use and/or possession of drugs, alcohol, or any intoxicant (including vaping).
- **Contract Violation:** The student’s refusal to comply with expectations, policies, and procedures as set forth in a contract and agreed upon by student, family, and school representative.
- **Bullying/Harassment:** Bullying can be physical, verbal, social/relational and /or sexual harassment. This includes cyberbullying. Reporting bullying is a CFCI and State Board requirement. See below, as well as policy 4320 for more details.

Disciplinary Hearing

- In the event a parent or guardian wishes to contest a long-term suspension or expulsion, they must submit, in writing, a request for a hearing within 3 days of written notification of the suspension. A hearing will be convened before a hearing panel, within a timely manner. A hearing panel will consist of three Board members, including one community Board member. Provided the parent/guardian makes the request within the 3-day window, the student long-term suspension will be pending the outcome of the hearing.
- The Hearing Panel must determine the relevant facts and credibility of witnesses based on the evidence presented at the hearing and choose to implement one of the following outcomes:
 - Uphold the school’s recommendation for a long-term suspension
 - Modify the long-term suspension
 - Reject the long-term suspension recommendation
- The following procedures shall apply to Hearing Panel hearings:
 - The right of the student to be represented at the hearing by counsel or a non-attorney advocate;
 - The right of the student to be present at the hearing, accompanied by their parents/guardians;
 - The right of the student, parent/guardian, and the student's representative to review before the hearing any audio or video recordings of the incident and, consistent with federal and state student records laws and regulations, the information supporting the suspension that may be presented as evidence at the hearing, including statements made by witnesses related to the charges except when the release of names or other information could create a safety risk for a witness;
 - The rights of the student, parent/guardian, or the student's representative to question witnesses appearing at the hearing;
 - The rights of the student to present evidence on their own behalf, which may include written statements or oral testimony, relating to the incident leading to the suspension, as well as the student’s discipline and academic history, the potential benefits to the student of alternatives to suspension, and other mitigating factors;

- The right of the student to have a record made of the hearing;
- The right of the student to make their own audio recording of the hearing; and
- The right of the student to a written decision, based on substantial evidence presented at the hearing, either upholding, modifying, or rejecting the recommendation of the long-term suspension and containing at least the following information:
 - The basis for the decision, including a reference to any policy or rule that the student is determined to have violated.
 - Notice of what information will be included in the student's official record pursuant to N.C.G.S. §115C-402.

Actions to be Reported to Law Enforcement ([*per § 115C-288*](#))

When the Director or designee has personal knowledge or actual notice from school personnel that an act has occurred on school property involving: assault resulting in serious personal injury, sexual assault, sexual offense, rape, kidnapping, indecent liberties with a minor, assault involving the use of a weapon, possession of a firearm in violation of the law, possession of a weapon in violation of the law, or possession of a controlled substance in violation of the law, the Director or designee shall immediately report the act to the appropriate local law enforcement agency. Any of the above reportable offenses may result in suspension, long term suspension or expulsion.

Title IX Procedures

CFCI will respond to allegations of sexual harassment consistent with Title IX's prohibition against sex discrimination by addressing sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination in education programs or activities. School staff will respond promptly and supportively to persons alleged to be victimized by sexual harassment, resolve allegations of sexual harassment promptly and accurately under a predictable, fair grievance process that provides due process protections to alleged victims and alleged perpetrators of sexual harassment, and effectively implement remedies for victims.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

The CFCI Board of Directors acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. Any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities will not be tolerated.

- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying: Students, school employees, volunteers and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. Unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying are not tolerated. Students are expected to comply with the behavior standards established by Board policy and the student code of conduct. Employees are expected to comply with Board policy and school regulations. Volunteers and visitors on school property also are expected to comply with Board policy and established school rules and procedures. Any violation of this policy is serious, and school administration shall promptly take appropriate action when made aware of the behavior.

- **Students** will be disciplined in accordance with the school’s student discipline plan. 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 positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion.
- **Employees** who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, dismissal.
- **Volunteers and visitors** who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate.

When considering if a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, school administrators will consider the nature and severity of the misconduct to determine whether a classroom or school-wide response is necessary. Such classroom or school-wide responses may include staff training, harassment and bullying prevention programs and other measures deemed appropriate by the Director of Education/Coordinators to address the behavior.

- **Retaliation:** Reprisal or retaliation against any person for reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy or participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy is prohibited.

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 Directors shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.

- **Application of Policy:** This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying by students, employees, volunteers, and visitors. “Visitors” includes persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school. This policy applies to behavior that takes place:

- in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours;
- on any vehicle as part of any school activity;
- during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity;
- at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel; and
- at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- Discrimination - Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, ideology, physical characteristics or disability. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.
- Harassment and Bullying - Harassment or bullying behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:
 - places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to their person or damage to their property; or
 - creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits.
 - "Hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment or bullying. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic or motivated by an individual's association with a person who has or is perceived to have a 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. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying. It is possible for harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, to occur in various situations. For example, harassment may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

Sexual Harassment is one type of harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic progress or completion of a school-related activity;
- 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
 - such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work or performance or a student's educational performance, limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or environment, or 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, 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.

- Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment. 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.
- Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment or Bullying - Employees are required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy. Students, parents, volunteers, visitors or others are also strongly encouraged to report any actual or suspected incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying. All reports should be reported to one of the school officials identified in CFCI policy. Reports may be made anonymously, and all reports shall be investigated in accordance with that policy.
- Training and Programs - The Board directs the Directors to establish training and other programs that are designed to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Information about this policy and the related complaint procedure must be included in the training plan.

- As funds are available, the Board will provide additional training for students, employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students regarding the Board's efforts to address discrimination, harassment and bullying and will create programs to address these issues. The training or programs should (1) provide examples of behavior that constitutes discrimination, harassment or bullying; (2) teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of discrimination, harassment or bullying; and (3) train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, on field trips, and on cell phones and the Internet.
- Notice - The Directors are responsible for providing effective notice to students, parents and employees of the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying. This policy must be posted on the school website, and copies of the policy must be readily available in the director's office. Notice of this policy must appear in all student and employee handbooks and in any school system publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for students and employees.
- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Complaint Procedure - The process provided in this policy is designed for those individuals who believe that they may have been discriminated against, bullied or harassed in violation of Policy 4320, Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying. Individuals who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying also should report such violations to one of the school officials. Reports may be made anonymously.
 - Alleged Perpetrator: The alleged perpetrator is the individual alleged to have discriminated against, harassed or bullied the complainant.
 - Complaint A complaint is an oral or written notification made by a person who believes he or she is the victim of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying.
 - Complainant: The complainant is the individual complaining of being discriminated against, harassed or bullied.
 - Days: Days are the working days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, vacation days or holidays, as set forth in the school calendar. In counting days, the first day will be the first full working day following receipt of the complaint. When a complaint is submitted on or after May 1, time limits will consist of all weekdays (Monday–Friday) so that the matter may be resolved before the close of the school term or as soon thereafter as possible.
 - Investigative Report: The investigative report is a written account of the findings of the investigation conducted in response to a complaint.
 - Investigator: The investigator is the school official responsible for investigating and responding to the complaint.

- Report: A report is an oral or written notification that an individual, other than the reporter, is a suspected perpetrator or victim of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Reporting by Employees or Other Third Parties

- **Mandatory Reporting by School Employees:** Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that an individual may have been discriminated against, harassed or bullied in violation of Policy 4320 must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual. An employee who does not promptly report possible discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- **Reporting by Other Third Parties:** All members of the school community including students, parents, volunteers and visitors are also strongly encouraged to report any act that may constitute an incident of discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- **Anonymous Reporting:** Reports of discrimination, harassment or bullying may be made anonymously but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- **Investigation of Reports:** Reports of discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be investigated sufficiently to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary, and school officials shall take such action as appropriate under the circumstances. At the option of the alleged victim, the report may be treated as a complaint by the alleged victim under this policy.

Complaints Brought by Alleged Victims of Discrimination, Harassment or Bullying

- **Filing a Complaint:** Any individual, who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed or bullied is strongly encouraged to file a complaint orally or in writing to any of the following
 - the Directors
 - an immediate supervisor if the individual making the complaint is an employee;
 - the Director of Operation if the alleged perpetrator or alleged victim is an employee of the school
 - any member of the Administrative Team
- **Time Period for Filing a Complaint:** A complaint should be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

- Informal Resolution: The Board acknowledges that many complaints may be addressed informally through such methods as conferences or mediation, and the board encourages the use of such procedures to the extent possible. If an informal process is used, the Directors or other designated personnel must (1) notify the complainant that he or she has the option to request formal procedures at any time and (2) make a copy of this policy and other relevant policies available to the complainant. In those circumstances in which informal procedures fail or are inappropriate or in which the complainant requests formal procedures, the complaints will be investigated promptly, impartially and thoroughly according to the procedures outlined in the remainder of this policy.

Process for Addressing Complaints of Alleged Incidents of Discrimination, Harassment, or Bullying

1. Initiating the Investigation

- a. Whoever receives a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying shall immediately notify the appropriate investigator who shall respond to the complaint and investigate. The investigator of a complaint is determined as follows:
 - i. If the alleged incident occurred under the jurisdiction of the Directors, the investigator is the Directors or designee, unless the alleged perpetrator is the Directors, or a member of the board. If the alleged perpetrator is any other employee, the Directors or designee shall conduct the investigation.
 - ii. If the alleged perpetrator is a Director, the the Co-Director shall bring the matter to the Executive Committee of the Board who will serve as investigator.
 - iii. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the Board, the Executive Committee is the investigator. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the Executive Committee, that person shall be excused from the investigation.
- b. The investigator shall explain the process of the investigation to the complainant and inquire as to whether the complainant would like to suggest a course of corrective action.
- c. Written documentation of all reports and complaints, as well as the school's response, must be maintained in accordance with standard administrative procedures.
- d. Failure to investigate and/or address claims of discrimination, harassment or bullying shall result in disciplinary action.

2. Conducting the Investigation

- a. The investigator is responsible for determining whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation of Policy 4320. In so doing, the investigator shall impartially, promptly and thoroughly investigate the complaint. The investigator shall interview (1) the complainant (2) the alleged perpetrator(s); and (3) any other individuals, including other possible victims, who may have relevant information.

- b. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information in order to investigate and address the complaint appropriately. Any requests by the complainant for confidentiality shall be evaluated within the context of the legal responsibilities of the school. Any complaints withdrawn to protect confidentiality must be recorded in accordance with standard administrative procedures.
- c. The investigator shall review the factual information gathered through the investigation to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment or bullying, giving consideration to all factual information, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age and maturity of the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s), and any other relevant circumstances.

3. Investigative Report

- a. The investigator shall submit a written investigative report to the Directors.
- b. The investigator shall notify the complainant of the results of the investigation within 15 days of receiving the complaint, unless additional time is necessary to conduct an impartial, thorough investigation. The investigator shall specify whether the complaint was substantiated and, if so, shall also specify:
 - i. reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, corrective action intended to end the discrimination, harassment or bullying and prevent it from recurring;
 - ii. as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination, harassment or bullying on the complainant; and
 - iii. as needed, reasonable steps to protect the complainant from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint.
- c. Information regarding specific disciplinary action imposed on the alleged perpetrator(s) will not be given to the complainant unless the information relates directly to the complainant (e.g., an order requiring the perpetrator not to have contact with the complainant).
- d. If the investigator determines that the complaint was substantiated, the perpetrator(s) shall be subject to discipline or other corrective step. If the corrective steps involve actions outside the scope of the investigator's authority, the Director will be notified so that responsibility for taking the corrective steps may be delegated to the appropriate individual.

- e. Each alleged perpetrator will be provided with a written summary of the results of the investigation in regard to whether the complaint was substantiated, whether the alleged perpetrator violated relevant law or board policies by their actions, and what, if any, disciplinary actions or consequences will be imposed upon the perpetrator in accordance with board policy. The perpetrator may appeal any disciplinary action or consequence in accordance with board policy and law. However, an appeal by the perpetrator of disciplinary action does not preclude school officials from taking appropriate action to address the discrimination, harassment or bullying.
4. Appeal of Investigative Report
- a. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the investigative report, he or she may appeal the decision to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in accordance with the procedure described in subsection E.4.b below. The appeal must be submitted in writing within five days of receiving the investigative report. The Executive Committee may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary or take any other steps it determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. The Executive Committee shall provide a written response within 30 days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is needed.
 - b. If the Executive Committee was the investigator, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Directors within five days of receiving the Executive Committee's response. The Board will review the documents, direct that further investigation be conducted if necessary and take any other steps that the board determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. Upon request of the complainant, the Board will hold a hearing in closed session. The Board will provide a written response within 30 days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

Timeliness of the Process

The number of days indicated at each step of the process should be considered a maximum. Every effort should be made to expedite the process.

If any school official charged with investigating the complaint or reviewing the investigation fails at any step in the process to communicate a decision within the specified time limit, the complainant will be entitled to appeal the complaint to the next step unless the official has notified the complainant of the delay and the reason for the delay, such as the complexity of the investigation, review or report. The school official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the complainant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays that interfere with the exercise of any legal rights are not permitted. Failure by the complainant at any step in the process to appeal a complaint to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at that step, unless the complainant has notified the investigator of a delay and the reason for the delay and the investigator has consented in writing to the delay.

General Requirements:

- No reprisals or retaliation of any kind will be taken by the board or by an employee of the school against the complainant or other individual on account of their filing a complaint or report or participating in an investigation of a complaint or report filed and decided pursuant to this policy, unless the person knew or had reason to believe that the complaint or report was false or knowingly provided false information.
- All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private.
- The board and school officials will consider requests to hear complaints from a group, but the board and officials have the discretion to hear and respond to complainants individually.
- The complainant may be represented by an advocate, such as an attorney, at any meeting with school system officials.
- Should, in the judgment of the director designee, the investigation or processing of a complaint require that an employee be absent from regular work assignments, such absences shall be excused without loss of pay or benefits. This shall not prevent the director or designee from suspending the alleged perpetrator without pay during the course of the investigation.

Records of Investigation Process

Records will be maintained as required by standard administrative procedures.

Location of Misconduct:

All rules governing student misconduct shall apply to any incident that is

- On school grounds during, before and after regular school hours
- On school grounds at any other time when the school is being used for a function or by any school group
- Off school grounds at a school activity, function or event
- During the transporting of students to include the period of time before boarding the car/bus, in the car/bus and getting off the car/bus, or in the proximity of the car/bus stop when under the supervision of the driver
- Off school grounds but which may affect the school climate or have a direct and immediate effect on the general welfare of the school.

Dress Code

The CFCI Dress Code, a part of our student code of conduct, is an important aspect of our school's culture. Students should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the school day including learning and active play. This includes safe and comfortable clothes that are suitable for the weather and a variety of settings (outside, the playground, the classrooms - whether sitting in chairs or on the carpet, and other work spaces).

Students should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the school day including learning and active play.

- Apparel or jewelry should not advertise violence, tobacco or alcohol use, nor contain sexual content or profanity
- Clothing should cover torso, midriff and backside
- Flip flops are not allowed for active play
- Undergarments should not be shown at any time
- Hats, hoods or sunglasses are not allowed inside the school building

The following measures may be taken to dress code offenses:

- Private one-on-one conversation between teacher and student
- Teacher phone call to family
- Family conference (with teacher and a coordinator/director)

*If needed, alternate clothing will be provided or a student will call home to rectify the dress code offense.

Cell Phones/Smart Devices

All student cell phones and smart watches (or any other device with cellular capabilities) shall be turned off and stored in backpacks during school hours (7:45-3:30). These devices are not to be used on campus during school hours for any reason. Devices will be confiscated by staff if a student is found using one during school hours. If a student needs to reach a family member, they may be allowed to ask the office to make the contact. Extenuating circumstances may be used to make exceptions, at school staff discretion.

1:1 Chromebook Policy and Procedures

CFCI is a 1:1 school for our students. Please see the 1:1 Chromebook Agreement linked on the website (for 4-8th grade students).

Part V: Educational Information and Services

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a tiered framework for providing comprehensive and systematic support based on the unique needs of students. The proactive approach promotes student success through a focus on high-quality instruction. MTSS addresses students' needs in the areas of academics, behavior, and social emotional learning and utilizes a team approach to continuously analyze data to determine the appropriate layers of support.

- Core Instruction (Tier 1): all students receive high-quality, research based instruction in the core curriculum to meet their needs in the general education classroom. Teachers and school leaders review universal screening data to inform the most appropriate instructional practices.
- Supplemental Instruction (Tier 2): includes instruction, strategies, and programs designed to supplement, enhance and support the core curriculum for students' whose data support the need for additional opportunities for learning. Teachers monitor student progress frequently using multiple assessments and curriculum-based measures, as well as behavioral data.
- Intensive Instruction (Tier 3): includes strategic, research-based instruction specifically designed and customized to target a student's skill deficits. Intensive intervention is an added layer of support in combination with core and supplemental instruction.

School-based problem-solving teams, which may include school leaders, teachers, and support staff, meet to talk about possible reasons for students' needs. The team formulates and implements data-driven intervention plans for students and progress is monitored regularly to ensure growth and success.

Parents/guardians are also important members of the MTSS team and are encouraged to attend and participate in their child's progress meetings.

Curriculum

As a public charter school, CFCI uses the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for each grade to inform our units of study. These standards are a foundation for instruction and through inquiry, classes and individuals may go beyond these expectations. For information on specific grade level objectives visit the [NC DPI webpage](#) on the Standard Course of Study.

Assessment

Students at CFCI are assessed for their understanding through formal and informal means. Teachers use data to drive their instruction on a daily basis.

Informal methods of assessment may include:

- observations by teacher or other faculty members
- anecdotal records of reading
- samples of student work

Formal assessments may include:

- portfolios
- reading assessments
- tests and curriculum-based measures
- project rubrics and feedback
- report cards and narratives

As a North Carolina public school, CFCI participates in the annual, state testing and accountability program. At the end of each school year, students in grade 3-8 take the End-of-Grade tests for their grade level. Students in grades 3-8 take reading and math, 5 & 8 also take science, and Math 1 students take the End of Course exam.

Student-Led Conferences

Student-led conferences are held twice a year and give students the opportunity to share their work with their families. Typically, a class will discuss what items should be included in the conference. Many teachers develop guidelines based on the standard course of study to help students choose evidence that meets these expectations.

Read to Achieve

Read to Achieve is a part of the Excellent Public Schools Act which became law in 2012. The law offers multiple supports for children as they build reading ability with the goal of every child reading at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade. CFCI teachers administer diagnostic assessments through the mClass assessment suite in order to guide their reading instruction to meet your child's specific needs in phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Your child will be assessed in reading at the beginning, middle, and end of the year with various mClass assessments. As your child's teacher receives feedback about the instructional needs of your child, they will communicate those needs directly with you. Teachers and families work together to promote students' reading proficiency.

Specials

At CFCI we offer several different Specials classes that students attend daily. Sixth through eighth graders are offered additional options and those courses vary from year to year. These classes follow the North Carolina Essential Teaching Standards.

Growth and Changes

The Board of Directors believes that the parent or guardian should make decisions concerning the student's participation in a sex education program. In accordance with NC General Statutes and regulations, a focused program of sex education will be offered to students in select grades 5-8. Parents or guardians may review the instructional materials, discuss the goals/objectives with the teachers/school counselor/administrators, and obtain other information to assist them in deciding whether to consent to their child's participation in the program. Prior to placement in the sex education program, the school must receive written permission from the parent or guardian. Any student without written consent on file at the school will not participate in the sex education program.

Looping

Students in grades K-5 loop with their teachers and classmates in order to promote the development of close classroom communities. A teacher staying with one group of students for two school years. This allows teachers to know their students better and to more easily individualize instruction. Classroom dynamics, teacher strengths and individual student needs will be considerations in making decisions about looping.

Middle Grades Structure

The middle grades program is composed of two homerooms at each grade level. 6th graders will have two subject teachers - one for math and science and one for language arts and social studies. 7th and 8th grade students have four core teachers, one for each subject area (math, science, ELA and social studies).

High School Registration

The 8th grade teachers and school counselor will give students and families information about high school registration. They will support students and families in high school transition. Families are responsible for enrolling their child in their districted high school or school of choice.

Placement Policy

The current and prospective teachers in conjunction with support staff and school leadership decide on class placement for all students. All information available will be considered in making classroom placements for each child. Families who wish to have input regarding their child's placement should discuss concerns with their child's teacher. Student placement/retention is taken very seriously at CFCI. The Multi-tiered System of Supports that we have in place as a guiding framework automatically helps us identify students who are struggling and in need of additional support. Interventions will be put into place and followed through consistently with a team, that includes their classroom teachers, and other reading, math or behavioral specialists that may be best to assist the student.

Extracurricular Activities

CFCI supports extracurricular opportunities, and is open to exploring new options. Family or community members interested in starting an extracurricular group should contact the Director of Education to discuss the details of the activity to ensure that it is safe and appropriate. A faculty member or other school employee must be present at any event, practice, or session conducted as part of any extracurricular activity.

Field Studies/Field Trips/Scholarship Fund

Children learn best through experience. Field study is an excellent way to provide these experiences. Each teacher will arrange for appropriate field studies that support and expand learning at each grade level.

Students should attend all field study events/field trips if at all possible, as field studies serve as valuable foundations for inquiry-based learning. If a student does not go on a field trip, they will complete work related to the field study in another classroom at school. Every precaution will be taken to ensure student safety. Families should understand that unknown risks may also exist.

All students must have a signed permission form to participate in a field trip by the deadline set by the teacher(s). Students who have not returned their permission slip to their teacher will not be permitted to participate in the field trip. Parents/guardians must sign permission forms and send in appropriate car seat or booster seat if their child is younger than eight (8) years old, or weighs less than 80 pounds.

Family volunteer drivers or buses will provide transportation for field studies. Any time family drivers are used the Volunteer Policy must be adhered to. Please see the volunteer page on our website [here](#).

CFCI is not liable for any damage done to your car during the course of a field trip. CFCI reserves the right to review a driver's driving record if it is deemed prudent and is in the interest of student safety.

Appropriate behavior is required on field studies by all students and chaperones. CFCI behavior expectations apply to all field experiences. Inappropriate behavior by students may be addressed by having parents pick up their child from the field study experience. Students who are sent home from a field trip for inappropriate behavior may also lose the privilege of attending the next field trip opportunity, and/or may be subject to further disciplinary action.

CFCI has scholarship funds to assist with field trip fees for those students who qualify for free/reduced lunch, or those who request assistance. Please contact the child's teacher or the front office for more information.

Part VI: Student and Family Information

Volunteering at CFCI

CFCI values the presence of volunteers who support its educational programs and activities. Therefore, the Board of Directors authorizes the use of volunteers when they perform duties on behalf of the CFCI as authorized by the Director/designee. There are two windows of opportunity to apply to be a volunteer at the school. **The first window begins on August 1st and ends on September 30th. The 2nd window begins on January 1st and ends on January 31st.**

1. Application of the Policy

The requirements of this policy shall apply to individuals who wish to volunteer at CFCI. This policy shall not apply to staff members, incidental school visitors, and other individuals who are visitors to CFCI and have no ongoing individualized interaction with a student or students. This includes, but is not limited to: individuals who help with classroom or graduation parties, or similar activities; individuals who have been invited to speak at a class or assembly, to judge academic competitions, to give a musical or other artistic performance, or participate in a specific school program for a day provided there is direct supervision of the event by regular CFCI employees.

Student visitors requesting to come to CFCI will be screened by the Director/designee or designated staff member prior to visiting. These students will not be required to complete a volunteer application.

2. Volunteer Requirements

All prospective volunteers (other than those listed above, to whom this Policy does not apply) shall complete a [Volunteer Application and sign the Volunteer Agreement](#).

3. Background checks

No background information is an automatic bar to volunteer work for CFCI unless otherwise provided by statute or regulation. Instead, the information obtained will be considered in view of all relevant circumstances and a determination made whether volunteering would be inconsistent with the safe and efficient operation of CFCI, recognizing the need to protect children.

Criminal background checks will be reported to the Front Office. Results will be kept strictly confidential and only shared with the Director/designee when it is decided to disqualify a volunteer.

Even if no statute or regulation provides that particular background information uncovered is an automatic bar to volunteer work in a particular circumstance, a volunteer may be disqualified where:

- The potential volunteer fails to provide necessary information, or provides false information, in connection with CFCI's screening requirement.

- CFCI considers the information relevant, and disqualifies the volunteer after consideration of circumstances which may include, but not be limited to.
- Time, nature, and number of matters disclosed
- Facts surrounding each such matter
- The relationship of the matter to the service to be provided by the applicant
- Length of time between matters disclosed and application
- Volunteering/employment history before and after the matter
- Efforts and success at rehabilitation as well as the likelihood or unlikelihood that such matter may occur again
- The likelihood or unlikelihood that the matter would prevent the applicant from performing the position in an acceptable, appropriate manner consistent with the safety and welfare of children.

4. Volunteer activities. All volunteer activities shall be conducted under supervision of CFCI staff who will determine the schedule, work location and duties of volunteers. Based on the results of the criminal background check, a volunteer may be approved for some activities but not others. If such is the case, the relevant staff members will be informed on a need to know basis.

5. Access to Student Information/Confidentiality. CFCI may provide volunteers student information necessary for accomplishment of their duties to the extent authorized by law. CFCI shall use all available methods to ensure that volunteers have access only to such student information and records in which they have a legitimate educational interest because the information is necessary to effective performance of their duties as a volunteer.

As a condition of such provision of information, CFCI shall ensure that prior parental permission has been secured for the release, or the volunteer is considered a “school official” because:

- The volunteer performs an institutional service or function for which the institution or agency would otherwise use employees.
- The volunteer is under the direct control of the agency or institution, and,
- The volunteer has signed the CFCI Volunteer Agreement.

6. Denial/Exclusion/Revocation of Status. At their discretion, employees who supervise volunteers may ask any volunteer who violates school rules to leave campus.

The Director/designee has the right to deny or revoke any person’s volunteer status at any time. The Director/designee shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints regarding volunteers.

7. Procedures. CFCI shall develop and implement procedures for registering the presence of volunteers in the building and utilizing the services of volunteers. Volunteer Applications and Agreements will be kept on file.

Visitors

All visitors are welcome at CFCI. Please enter the building through the main front door. All visitors must sign in, state their reason for visit and receive a visitor's badge at the front office that must be worn while in the building. An ID will be requested before a visitor is allowed into the school building. Family volunteers in classrooms are welcome. Please contact your child's teacher to volunteer, and remember that this is not an appropriate time for a conference. If a conference is needed, parents/guardians should call the teacher to set up an appropriate time free of distraction where both parents/guardians and teacher can focus on the child.

CFCI Board of Directors

The CFCI Board of Directors is the governing body for CFCI. The CFCI Board of Directors is a volunteer board consisting of a mix of parents/guardians, staff, and community members. The Board sets policies, oversees and approves the school budget, and supervises the Director/designee. Parents/guardians and community members are welcome to attend monthly meetings. A public comment section is held at the beginning of every meeting.

Partnership for CFCI

The Partnership is the parent/guardian organization at CFCI. It performs many of the functions of the "PTA" or "PTO" at other schools. The Partnership supports the mission of our school.

The Partnership has its own Board, separate from the CFCI Board of Directors. Members of the Partnership Board serve a two-year term. The Partnership meets throughout the school year. The primary responsibility of the Partnership is to raise funds for the school. The "Fund The Wonder" campaign is an opportunity for families to give directly to the school. In addition, the Partnership sponsors events such as coupon book sales, a silent auction, and others. The Partnership supports teachers and classrooms through supplementary supply money, and the purchase of needed materials.

Parent Collaborative Network (PCN)

The PCN is a group of parents and guardians who serve as representatives and stakeholders of the larger CFCI community. The primary function of the PCN is to provide a conduit of feedback and work together with school leadership to proactively problem-solve. If interested in serving on the PCN, please contact the Front Office for more information.

Family/Teacher Communication

What Parent/Guardian can EXPECT

- Parent/Guardian communications responded to within 48 hours, unless extenuating circumstances apply.
- Parent/Guardian to be notified about serious issues or ongoing problems.
- Two student-led conferences per year, other meetings and calls, as needed.
- Weekly digital communication from teacher (newsletter, email, etc.).

- Regular newsletter from school.
- Scheduled Parent/Guardian education nights.
- Schoolwide alerts, as necessary.
- Narrative, standards-based report cards.
- Annual Parent/Guardian input surveys.
- Opportunities to attend Parent/Guardian Collaborative Network (PCN) meetings.
- A team of support for your student(s) (teacher, support staff, and leadership).

What Parent/Guardian should NOT EXPECT

- Answering an email or returning a call in the evening/weekends
- Immediate responses to email communication during the school day
- Access to teacher's private phone number or email

When you should contact your child's teacher/additional staff member:

- Changes in family situation (divorce, new baby, move)
- Medical issues that arise or change
- Illness lasting longer than 3 days
- Safety issues, change in behavior at home
- Family emergencies, appointments (send a note)
- Changes in transportation arrangements (in conjunction with office communication)
- Ongoing and pervasive problems/concerns at school or home
- When you can't keep a scheduled appointment
- General academic or social/emotional concerns
- Absence from school - short-term/long-term (email/call front office - cc teacher)

When you have last minute information for the teacher:

- Call the office and leave a message for the teacher

Communication that interferes with teaching and learning:

- Speaking to the teacher or any CFCI staff member disrespectfully or angrily. This type of behavior will not be tolerated.
- Gossiping to other people or posting on social media to communicate frustrations rather than discussing issues directly with staff members.
- Remember that you are the model of how you want your child to communicate.

To maintain mutual respect, remember:

- Teachers will make mistakes; they're human, too.
- Teachers have their own families and lives; respect their privacy and time.
- Recognize that we won't always agree, but we promise to listen.
- Speak positively in front of your child.
- We're all on the same team – your child's support team!
- We appreciate your support, and look forward to a successful year of learning together.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA provides certain rights for parents regarding their children's education records. When a student reaches 18 years of age or attends an institution of postsecondary education at any age, the student becomes an "eligible student," and all rights under FERPA transfer from the parent to the student. Requests to review student records and requests to correct inaccurate records may be made to the Director/designee.

Personal Information

CFCI must have up-to-date personal information for all students including a correct address, phone number, and emergency contact numbers. Parents/guardians should remember to update this information if changes occur throughout the year. All personal information about students and families will remain confidential unless parents/guardians request it be disclosed.

Requesting/Forwarding Records

When a student transfers into CFCI, a request for records is sent to the student's previous school. When a student leaves CFCI, the student's new school will request records from CFCI. Records are not forwarded until students officially withdraw from our school. Parents/guardians should contact the school office with questions or concerns regarding transfer of records.

Court and Custody Orders

For student safety, relevant custody papers and/or court orders must be on file in the school office. Documentation should be presented to the Director/designee who will notify appropriate personnel. Records will be kept in the student's cumulative file.

Patriotic Exercises

Each school day will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance will be followed by a moment of silence not to exceed one minute in duration. Such period of silence shall be totally and completely unstructured and free of guidance of any kind from any source. No staff or student will be required to participate in either exercise. During the moment of silence and for those not participating in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, silence shall be maintained and no one may engage in any other activity. Legal Reference: NC Statute 115 C-47 (29a).

Student Surveys

On occasion, the school may collect information via a student survey. CFCI shall make the process for providing consent to participation in the protected information survey and the full text of the protected information survey available to parents/guardians at least 10 days prior to the administration of a protected information survey. The school shall provide opportunities for review of the following both electronically and in person. No student shall be permitted to participate in a protected information survey without the parent/guardian or the adult student's prior written or electronic consent.

Lunches/Snacks/Allergies

Parents are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch and snack from home. These should be sent with your child to school each morning. CFCI does not allow the delivery of outside food for students. Forms are sent out at the start of each school year to address issues of financial difficulty. If you need assistance, please complete and return the form. All information will be confidential.

CFCI recognizes the increasing frequency and intensity of allergic reactions to foods by certain students. The school must receive written documentation from your child's doctor. The doctor's note should state the allergy and what foods should be omitted. We are happy to work with you and your child to find alternative food items whenever possible.

Lost and Found

Lost items are housed with the front office. Check the lost and found often. Items not claimed will be donated to charitable organizations regularly.

Integrated Pest Management Program

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry supports clean and safe facilities for its students, staff and the public. To that end, CFCI will use an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPMP) to prevent and control pest problems in the school buildings and grounds and minimize pesticide use. The IPMP means a comprehensive approach to pest management that combines biological, physical, chemical and cultural tactics as well as effective, economic, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable methods to prevent and solve pest problems. The IPMP will emphasize pest prevention and provide a decision-making process for determining if, when and where pest suppression is needed and what control tactics and methods are appropriate. The IPMP will utilize strategies including, but not limited to, training of staff, monitoring and inspecting facilities, communication and notification to staff and parents/guardians, and the use of pesticides as a last resort. When a decision is made to use pesticides, the staff will utilize the least toxic pesticide formulation and most targeted application method possible. (Legal Reference: NC Statute 115 C-47)

Distribution of Materials by Students

Students have a right, under the Constitution of the United States, to express their thoughts and opinions at reasonable times and places. However, certain kinds of speech, whether spoken, written or symbolic, may be prohibited or regulated at school. It is the policy of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry that students be allowed to distribute written materials at school or at sponsored events with the Director/designee's permission except as prohibited or regulated in this policy.

- Students may not distribute any materials that are illegal, obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, indecent, libelous, or likely to incite violence or serious disruptions of the learning environment.
- Students may not distribute commercial advertisements or solicitations from non-school sponsored groups.

- Students may not distribute any materials during instructional time or in a manner that interferes with instructional time or causes a disruption of the learning environment.
- Students may not request or receive assistance from teachers or other school personnel in distributing materials pursuant to this policy.
- Students may not be used as conduits by parents or others to distribute materials.
- Students will be considered conduits for the distribution of materials when the primary motivation for the distribution rests with someone other than the student.

Part VII: Safety

Medication

A physician's authorization for medication is necessary if school personnel are to dispense medication at school or on field trips (including over-the-counter medication). This is applicable for short-term and long-term periods. All medication must be in an original, labeled container. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medication. All medication will be kept in a secure location. However, if the Physician's Authorization indicates that the student may possess and self-administer any medication, the student may have the medication in their possession. If this is the case, the parent/guardian must provide backup medication to the school that will be kept in a secure location (G.S. 115C 375.2) Parents/guardians may come to school to administer medication as well.

Students are not to have in their possession any kind of medication (including over-the-counter medications) while on the school grounds, unless so indicated on the Physician's Authorization.

In order to comply with G.S. 115C-375.2 Article 26A, the parent or guardian of any student who has physician's authorization to possess and self administer medication for asthma or anaphylactic reactions shall provide to the school:

1. Written authorization from the student's parent or guardian for the student to possess and self-administer asthma medication.
2. A written statement from the student's health care practitioner verifying that the student has asthma or an allergy that could result in an anaphylactic reaction, or both, and that the health care practitioner prescribed medication for use on school property during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events.
3. A written statement from the student's health care practitioner who prescribed the asthma medication that the student understands, has been instructed in self-administration of the asthma medication, and has demonstrated the skill level necessary to use the asthma medication and any device that is necessary to administer the asthma medication.
4. A written treatment plan and written emergency protocol formulated by the health care practitioner who prescribed the medicine for managing the student's asthma or anaphylaxis episodes and for medication use by the student.
5. A statement provided by the school and signed by the student's parent or guardian acknowledging that the school administrative unit and its employees and agents are not liable for an injury arising from a student's possession and self-administration of asthma medication.

Other requirements necessary to comply with State and federal laws.

- The student must demonstrate to the Director, or the Director's designee, the skill level necessary to use the asthma medication and any device that is necessary to administer the medication.
- The student's parent or guardian shall provide to the school backup asthma medication that will be kept at the student's school in a location to which the student has immediate access in the event of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency.
- Information provided to the school by the student's parent or guardian shall be kept on file at the student's school in a location easily accessible in the event of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency.
- If a student uses asthma medication prescribed for the student in a manner other than prescribed, a school may impose on the student disciplinary action according to the school's disciplinary policy. A school may not impose disciplinary action that restricts the student's immediate access to the asthma medication.
- The requirement that permission granted for a student to possess and self-administer asthma medication shall be effective only for the same school and for the school year and must be renewed annually.
- No local board of education, nor its members, employees, designees, agents, or volunteers shall be liable in civil damages to any party for any act authorized by this subsection, or for any omission relating to that act, unless that act or omission amounts to gross negligence wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing.

CFCI will have procedures in place to ensure compliance with G.S. 115C 375.2A, School Supply of Epinephrine Auto-injectors.

Illness

Sometimes it is necessary to send a child home from school due to sickness. This occurs when the teacher sees that a child is unable to participate in school activities. If your child needs to go home, we will make every effort to contact you. If, for some reason, we cannot reach you or you will be detained for some length of time, we will then contact the people you have listed on the emergency contact sheet. It is very important that you keep this sheet up-to-date.

If a child has a fever over 100.4 degrees; the presence of lice, scabies, impetigo, inflamed eyes, rash, or lesions; or is vomiting s/he will be sent home and should not return to school until symptoms have ceased for 24 hours. If a student is limited in his/her ability to participate in the activities of a regular school day, the parent/guardian provides written explanation for the student's limitations. A doctor's note may be requested as appropriate.

There is no need to call the school office if your child will be out sick. However, a note should be provided upon return to school.

Concussions – Return To Learn

***Please See Details for our Concussion Protocol on our Family Resources page:

<http://cfc.net/alumni/parent-resources/>

Immunizations

Parents/guardians of all children must present to the school acceptable medical evidence indicating that the required immunizations have been received, which are:

- a) 5 DTP doses (If the 4th dose is after the fourth birthday, a 5th is not required)
- b) A booster dose of Tdap vaccine is required for all children before entering
- c) 6th grade on or after Aug. 1, 2008, if 5 years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine.
- d) 4 Polio doses (If the 3rd dose is after the fourth birthday, a 4th dose is not required)
- e) 1-4 Hib doses
- f) 2 Measles, Mumps, Rubella doses (on or after first birthday and before entering school)
- g) 1 Varicella dose for students born on/after 4/01/01. Students born before 4/01/01 are not required to receive varicella vaccine.
- h) 3 doses Hepatitis B vaccine for students born on or after 7/01/94.

Religious and/or medical exemptions must be appropriately documented and on file in the school office and submitted for review as to legal exceptions. Students not in compliance with the immunization policy will not be allowed to attend school.

Seclusion and Restraint Policy

CFCI shall train all staff in Responsive Classroom strategies as well as appropriate staff in the use of the CPI nonviolent crisis intervention, which includes verbal de-escalation techniques, to be employed with all students. This curriculum advocates for the care, welfare, safety, and security of all students. Verbal de-escalation involves the use of several components. Nonverbal communication involves non-threatening body language such as a supportive stance, maintaining personal space, and neutral facial expressions. Verbal communication includes maintaining supportive tone, lower volume, and slower cadence when speaking. Staff trained in the use of seclusion and restraint will use a risk continuum to assess the potential threat to stakeholders or property. Any other concerns not specifically mentioned in this procedure will fall under [NC G.S. 115C-391.1](#)

Emergency Closing Due to Weather

When CFCI must dismiss students unexpectedly due to adverse weather conditions or other types of emergencies, the early dismissals will be announced through local television and radio stations as well as email and through the use of our mass communication system. When snow, ice or other adverse weather conditions cause school to be canceled or delayed, information will be broadcast over local radio and television stations.

Crisis Management

In order for CFCI to successfully implement our Crisis Management Plan in any given situation, your cooperation and understanding of each situation is vital. In each situation, the school has orderly procedures that are in place to help all students.

Do not attempt to go to the school. Access routes and streets need to remain clear for emergency vehicles. Traffic congestion will make response much more difficult for police, ambulances, and fire departments to get to the school to deal with the emergency quickly.

Do not call the front office as telephone lines will need to remain open to deal with the emergency. If the phone system is overloaded, it will hinder efforts to help students and to provide information.

Make sure that your phones are set up with the CFCI automated phone and/or text system. (Information distributed the beginning of each school year)

Lock Down/Shelter in Place Procedures

A lockdown is a procedure followed during the threat of danger just outside our school walls. In the event of a lock down, communication will be made to families regarding any pertinent details. CFCI always consults with law enforcement when responding to a potential threat.

Part VIII: Student Admissions

Statement of Non-discriminatory Policy

CFCI does not discriminate against any student on the basis of gender, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, sexual identification or orientation, or disability in its admissions or education programs. Tuition or admission fees shall not be charged to any student.

Application

CFCI accepts applications for prospective students for a set application period. Applications are available on the website. These meetings will be announced and advertised. Students who are currently attending CFCI do not need to apply again; however, if these students have siblings wishing to enroll at CFCI they do need to complete an application. (See info on sibling priority below.) Admission to the school is based on a lottery system. Maximum class size limits will determine the numbers of students in each class.

Enrollment

Once a student has been admitted to CFCI, formal enrollment is required to reserve the student's space in the school. The enrollment procedure will ensure that the school has all information it needs to meet State Board of Education records requirements for charter schools. North Carolina State law requires all students to have immunization records complete and on file within 30 days of starting school or the student may not be allowed to return to school.

Enrollment Priority/Lottery Exceptions

The following exceptions to the lottery and admissions process may be made each year, in accordance with G.S. 115C-238.29.

Currently enrolled students will be given first priority. Children of CFCI faculty/staff members will be given second priority. Siblings of currently enrolled students will be given third priority. Siblings constitute brother or sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, or stepsister who resides in the same household as the currently enrolled student. Siblings of students who have completed the highest grade level offered by CFCI and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels offered by CFCI will be given fourth priority. Students who were enrolled in CFCI within the two previous school years but left the school to participate in an academic study abroad program or a competitive admission residential program or because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent/guardian will be given fifth priority.