

Discipline

Behavior

eStem schools hold high expectations for student performance and behavior. Students are expected to show respect for fellow students, staff members, volunteers and members of the community with whom they have contact during the school day and at school events. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own behavior and for working towards their academic goals. **Repeated violations of our policies, procedures, & expectations could result in removal from school. All rules will be strictly enforced.**

Offenses

Student behavioral offenses are categorized based on the severity of the action.

- **Category I Offenses: Failure to comply with faculty or administrative directives; failure to follow building policies and procedures; failure to comply with academic, dress code, food/drink/gum, cell phone expectations; excessive tardiness; failure to follow dismissal procedures**

Minimum consequence for Category I could include a Parent Conference and/or detention

Maximum Consequence for Category I could include Saturday Alternative School (SAS) or suspension for repeated violations.

- **Category II Offenses: Disruption of the classroom; defacement of school property or the property belonging to another person; insubordination; emotional abuse of others, including teasing and bullying; vulgar or profane language; inappropriate physical contact; sexual, racial, or religious harassment; plagiarism or cheating; truancy or skipping class; leaving a classroom or the school building without permission from classroom teacher or a school official; petty theft; repeated violations of cell phone or other electronic devices during school hours; possession of tobacco products.**

Minimum Consequence for Category II is Saturday Alternative School (SAS) or suspension.

Maximum Consequences for Category II could result in probationary status with suspension, removal, or expulsion.

In addition to the consequences issued, professional counseling from eStem staff or a third party may also be required and/or recommended.

- **Category III Offenses: Theft; destruction of private property; destruction of school property; possession, use or distribution of drugs, including**

alcohol; vandalism of school property; possession of a weapon; performance of any act leading to the endangerment of others; tampering with any safety device on school property; pulling, attempting to pull, or calling in a false fire alarm; physical or sexual assault; communication of threats; repeated violations of Category I or II offenses.

eStem maintains a zero-tolerance policy for fighting . Physical altercations are considered a Category III offense and will not be tolerated. If students choose to participate in a physical altercation with another student or student(s), the students will be immediately sent home, and the maximum consequence will be recommended for all students involved.

Minimum Consequence for Category III is suspension.

Maximum Consequences for Category III could result in probationary status with suspension, removal, or expulsion.

In addition to the consequences issued, professional counseling from eStem staff or a third party may also be required and/or recommended.

Administration reserves the right to use discretion when making decisions regarding all behavior infractions.

Bullying

eStem Public Charter School District strives to provide a positive learning environment, free of bullying and harassment, for all of its students.

eStem utilizes the BRIM anti-bullying app as a reporting resource for students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to anonymously report incidents of bullying. Each school's website includes a red, highly visible BRIM button on the front page, and anyone may submit a report by clicking on the button and answering questions about the incident.

Bullying is defined as "the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, or threat or incitement of violence by a student against any other student or public school employee,

- by written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that may address an attribute of the other student, public school employee, or person with whom the other student or public school employee is associated; and causes or creates actual or reasonably foreseeable
 - a. physical harm to a public school employee or student or to their

- property,
 - b. substantial interference with a student's education or with a public school employee's role in education;
 - c. a hostile educational environment for one or more students or public school employees due to the severity, persistence, or pervasiveness of the act, or;
 - d. substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment.
- In other words, bullying is when someone repeatedly and systematically on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending themselves.

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying in the form of an electronic act. An electronic act includes written communication or images transmitted by using an electronic device such as a telephone, tablet, or computer.

Cyberbullying is prohibited even if the incident did not originate on school property or with school communication systems/tools. eStem Public Charter Schools prohibit bullying, meaning that it is not allowed in the following areas:

- in school,
- on school equipment or property,
- in school vehicles, at school bus stops,
- at school sponsored activities, or at school sanctioned events,
- or by an electronic act that results in the substantial disruption of the educational environment; does not matter whether the electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment

If a staff member of the school has witnessed or has reliable information regarding an act of bullying as defined by the outlined definition of bullying, the staff is required to report the incident via BRIM or notify the Administration. Once the incident is reported, the director, assistant directors, deans, and/or counselors will be alerted.

When an incident of bullying is reported to the school either through BRIM or by notifying an Administrator, the school will follow the school's bullying investigative process which includes the following steps:

- An administrator will be assigned to investigate the report of bullying and will begin an investigation no later than 24 hours after a report is received. Parents of the students involved will be communicated to within this same

timeframe, regarding the alleged incident of bullying.

- The investigation shall be completed no later than 5 school days following the date of the initial report. The parents of the students involved will receive communication regarding the completion of the investigation and what follow up steps will be taken.
- Once an investigation is complete, the administrator assigned to the case will finish the report, including the findings from the investigation as well as any disciplinary action that was handed out. The report will also include any additional follow up actions that will be completed for the individual(s) involved.

Students found to be in violation of the bullying policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. The consequence for a student engaging in an act or bullying will vary depending on the age and grade of the student.

- In addition to any disciplinary actions that may be handed out, the school will take appropriate steps to remedy the effects of bullying that may have been incurred from those students and/or public school employees that were involved in the incident(s).

The student or staff member that files the complaint of bullying will not be subject to retaliation or reprisal in any form.

Discipline

All eStem students are expected to comply with school rules. However, a student may be subject to disciplinary action for any disorderly conduct not specifically listed in this Handbook. The Director of School will determine such disciplinary actions, where the offending student is enrolled. In addition, **the offending student may be permanently removed from the school for violations of the school's student conduct policies or repeated violations of the Learning Compact.** It is the policy of the eStem schools not to administer corporal punishment.

The following is a list of disciplinary actions (as applicable for the school campus and schedule) for students who fail to comply with school rules:

- **Minimum - Parent Conference:** A meeting involving the classroom teacher and parent/guardian to address specific concerns about a student's behavior. A student behavior contract will be signed to acknowledge that continued disruptive behavior would be grounds for further disciplinary action.
- **Lunch Detention:** A supervised detention conducted during the student's

lunch and/or recess.

- **Early Morning Detention:** Early Morning Detention is supervised detention conducted on weekdays (JHS 7:25-7:45 a.m.).
- **Saturday Alternative School (SAS):**
Junior High School: Saturday School will be held in one of the lobby classrooms from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. every Saturday unless notice is given. Failure to appear without prior notice can result in an automatic 1-Day suspension.

Tardiness will not be permitted. If a student is tardy to SAS, he/she will not be permitted to serve for that day and will have to make up the detention at an alternate time.

When writing referrals for students, teachers will provide documentation of the pattern of misbehavior. Please remember that this discipline option is typically used for specific, recurring behavior.

- Skipping detention
- Recurring discipline issues (a pattern of a particular offense moderate in nature) First time severe offenses that do not warrant out of school suspensions, including truancies

Although this discipline option is typically used for specific, recurring behavior, it may also be used for first-time and/or isolated Category II Offenses.

Under state law, a student may be suspended from school for a period not to exceed 10 days. A student's parent/guardian will be notified immediately when the student has been suspended. At the conclusion of the suspension, the parent/guardian must accompany the student who is returning to school for a Re- entry conference. The parent/guardian must meet with a school administrator to ensure that the student's inappropriate behavior does not continue. A student will not be permitted to attend classes until the completion of the Re-entry Conference.

Emergency Send Home: Requires the student's immediate removal from school grounds while the administrative team deliberates to determine the appropriate consequence. The administration will notify the parent/guardian of the decision as soon as possible.

Maximum - Expulsion: A student who consistently disrupts an eStem school may be expelled for a period exceeding 10 days. In addition, state law requires that a student must be expelled for a minimum of one year for bringing a firearm onto the school campus. Law enforcement officials must be involved in this process.

Junior High Discipline Ladder

- **Step 1:** Redirection & Parent Contact

- **Step 2: Redirection Level 1 Detention:**

ONE supervised 30 minute detention conducted by an eStem staff member either before (7:25–7:55), during (Lunch Period), or after (3:50-4:20) school

Failure to attend detention within 48 hours of being issued without prior notice can result in Saturday School.

- **Step 3: Redirection and Level 2 Detention:**

THREE supervised 30 minute detentions conducted by an eStem staff member before (7:25–7:55), during (Lunch Period), or after (3:50-4:20) school (if offered by the school)

Failure to attend ALL detentions within 48 hours of being issued without prior notice can result in Saturday School.

An excessive amount of detentions issued in a single week will be transferred to Saturday school. A parent will be informed, and the Saturday school will take the place of any remaining detentions. After this change is made, further behavior infractions will continue up the discipline ladder to additional Saturday schools or possibly suspension.

- **Step 4: Redirection & Saturday School:**

Supervised 3 hour session conducted by an eStem staff member and held in a first floor classroom from 8:00 – 11:00 every Saturday unless otherwise informed of an alternative date/time.

- **Step 5: Redirection & Suspension:**

Step 5 will result in probationary status. It will also result in a meeting with the student, a parent/guardian, teacher(s), and building leadership. Further behavior infractions may result in removal or expulsion from eStem.

All eStem students are expected to comply with school rules. A student may be subject to disciplinary action for any disorderly conduct not specifically listed in the Handbook. Administration reserves the right to use discretion when making decisions regarding all behavior infractions.

Due Process Procedures

Due process for students will include, at a minimum, the following steps: 1) notice of charge; 2) opportunity for denial; 3) evidence against him/her (if denies); 4) opportunity to tell his/her side; 5) decision, timely notice, and an opportunity for a fair hearing. The degree of due process required is directly proportional to the degree of loss to the student. Any penalty that effectively denies a student's education will require the greatest degree of due process.

Expulsion

eStem Public Charter Schools may expel a student for a period longer than ten (10) school days for violation of the District's written discipline policies. The Chief Executive Officer may make a recommendation of expulsion to eStem Board of Directors for student conduct deemed to be of such gravity that suspension would be inappropriate, or where the student's continued attendance at school would disrupt the orderly learning environment or would pose an unreasonable danger to the welfare of other students or staff.

The Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee shall give written notice to the parents or legal guardians (mailed to the address reflected on the District's records) that he/she will recommend to the eStem Board of Directors that the student be expelled for the specified length of time and state the reasons for the recommendation to expel. The notice shall give the date, hour, and place where the eStem Board of Directors will consider and dispose of the recommendation.

The hearing shall be conducted not later than ten (10) school days following the date of the notice, except that representatives of eStem Public Charter Schools and the student may agree in writing to a date not conforming to this limitation.

The Board President of eStem or other designated Board member shall preside at the hearing. The student may choose to be represented by legal counsel. The hearing shall be conducted in open session of the eStem Board of Directors unless the parent, or student if age 18 or older, requests that the hearing be conducted in executive session. Any action taken by the eStem Board of Directors shall be in open session.

During the hearing, the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee will present evidence, including the calling of witnesses, which gave rise to the recommendation of expulsion. The student, or his/her representative, may then present evidence including statements from persons with personal knowledge of the events or circumstances relevant to the charges against the student. Formal cross-examination will not be permitted. However, any member of the eStem Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer, or designee, the student, or his/her representative may question anyone making a statement and/or the student. The presiding officer shall decide questions concerning the appropriateness or relevance of any questions asked during the hearing.

The Chief Executive Officer shall recommend the expulsion of any student for a period of not less than one (1) year for possession of any firearm or other weapon prohibited on school campus by law. The Chief Executive Officer shall, however, have the

discretion to modify the expulsion recommendation for a student on a case-by-case basis. Parents or legal guardians of a student enrolling from another school after the expiration of an expulsion period for a weapons policy violation shall be given a copy of the current laws regarding the possibility of parental responsibility for allowing a child to possess a weapon on school property. The parents or legal guardians shall sign a statement acknowledging that they have read and understand said laws prior to the student being enrolled in school.

The Chief Executive Officer and the eStem Board of Directors shall complete the expulsion process of any student that was initiated because the student possessed a firearm or other prohibited weapon on school property regardless of the enrollment status of the student.

Legal Reference: A.C.A. § 6-18-507

Gangs & Gang Activity

eStem is committed to ensuring a safe school environment conducive to promoting a learning environment where students and staff can excel. An orderly environment cannot exist where unlawful acts occur which cause fear, intimidation or physical harm to students or school staff. Gangs and their activities create such an atmosphere and shall not be allowed on school grounds or at school functions.

The following actions are prohibited on school property or at school functions:

- Wearing or possessing any clothing, bandanas, jewelry, symbol or other sign associated with membership in or representative of any gang;
- Engaging in any verbal or nonverbal act such as throwing signs, gestures, or handshakes representative of membership in any gang;
- Recruiting, soliciting, or encouraging any person through duress or intimidation to become or remain a member of any gang;
- Extort payment from any individual in return for protection from harm from any gang;
- Gang graffiti
- Social media posts depicting students displaying gang related posturing or affiliated clothing on eStem property or wearing eStem attire.

Students found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Students arrested for gang related activities occurring away from school grounds shall be subject to the same disciplinary actions as if they had occurred on school grounds.

Harassment

Harassment is any form of uninvited and unwanted physical, verbal or written behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning environment for education. The eStem Public Charter Schools will not tolerate this type of behavior.

Harassment - Sexual

eStem recognizes that harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of law, school district policy and common courtesy. eStem is committed to providing a learning environment free from sexual harassment and will not tolerate such conduct on the part of employees, students, non-employees, vendors, board members or any others having business or contact with eStem students. Sexual harassment when perpetrated on any student by an employee or student will be treated as sexual harassment under this policy.

Sexual harassment of students consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demands for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of a student's academic status or advancement;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for academic decisions affecting the student(s); or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student's academic performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment.

Forms of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal harassment, including derogatory comments, jokes, requests, or other sexually oriented language;
- Uninvited letters, telephone calls, electronic communications or materials of a sexual nature;
- Physical harassment, including unnecessary or offensive touching, repeatedly brushing against another person's body, or impeding or blocking movement;
- Visual harassment, including offensive posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, drawings, or gestures; and
- Attempted or actual rape or sexual assault.

Harassment - Verbal

Verbal harassment includes threats, gestures, or verbal attacks on persons, including attacks directed at one's racial, ethnic, or religious background, sexual preference, physical or mental disability, appearance, as well as any form of

obscene language, swearing, slander, name-calling, or slur. eStem is a place where everyone must be comfortable and treated with due respect. Verbal harassment when perpetrated on any student by an employee or student will be treated as verbal harassment under this policy.

Harassment – Response

The eStem Public Charter Schools are committed to the equitable and swift resolution of harassment issues. Any student experiencing harassment should follow these measures:

1. Let the offender know you want the behavior to stop. Be clear and direct. Do not apologize.
2. If you are not comfortable confronting the offender alone, ask an adult to accompany you, or write a letter to the offender, keeping a copy.
3. Make a record of when, where and how you were mistreated; include any witnesses, direct quotes, and other evidence.
4. Make a Brim report
5. Notify a teacher. The Director of Schools will ensure that the student discipline policy is used for handling the case.
6. The offender may be required to attend counseling or classes in addition to any consequences given.

Verbal Abuse of Staff

State law specifically prohibits insults or verbal abuse directed to a school employee in the course of his or her duties. Those who violate this policy will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and may be banned from campus and all school related events.

Medical Information/Student Support Services

Counseling Services

The eStem schools employ full-time counselors who work closely with students. Students removed from class for behavioral issues, returning from suspensions, or who have been referred by the school administration may meet with the counselor on an informal basis. In addition, students may be referred by the school administration to the counselor for more regular one-on-one or group counseling.