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Tenee Hall - Director of Operations
Michelle Rumph - Director of Finance
Riyad Baksh - Instructional Specialist

HEKETI BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Jamie Knox, Chairperson
Glory Carrion-Gomes, Secretary
Edwin Cespedes, Officer
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Dear Heketi Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! Our eighth year promises growth across our school community in many areas. We are all learners at Heketi and use each moment throughout the school day to grow. Whether it is reading a book independently or solving a math problem with a group of peers, we use our time to teach and learn. As educators, we become stronger by thinking about our work, sharing ideas with each other, and then making changes to our practice. As learners, we listen and see what makes the most impact on your children’s development and collect more information to make new decisions. We do this in service of your child’s academic, emotional, and social education. Our work as educators and learners only gets better when we partner with you. Each member of the Heketi community -- children, families, teachers, staff members, school leaders -- can become an even stronger individuals by working collaboratively with others.

You, as parents, guardians, and family, have the deepest impact on your children. In order for each child to grow in the best way possible, we have to work together. Our partnership lets your children know that the adults in their lives collaborate and communicate. Teaching each child to read, write, and mathematize is just as important as teaching them compassion, responsibility, gratitude, communication, collaboration, curiosity, courage, persistence, and respect. We want each child to think critically about her/his choices and how it will impact her/his life. We can do this as partners in your child’s life.

We are ONE community made up of many families and people from all over the Bronx and the world. We respect and build community with children and families from various ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds; with various gender identities; from various family compositions; from various religions and belief systems; with various spoken languages; with various sexual identities; and with various abilities to work and learn. Our school community is one built on safety, respect, and trust. As we hear more stories in the news about children and adults being targeted because they speak a different language, identify as Black or Latinx, and/or are immigrants, we have to work together to provide our children with a school that encourages them to be their true selves, use their voices, communicate their thoughts and feelings, and advocate for themselves and others.

Heketi continues to provide an exceptional educational solution. We pride ourselves in fostering the growth and development of the whole child, ensuring that we support their academic and social-emotional advancement. You can always rest assured that our school will continue being a safe and respectful educational space for your children.

In partnership,

David R. Rosas
School Director
General Introduction

This handbook outlines all policies for both students and families. It will outline school expectations, code of conduct, and safety and security policies. These policies are put in place to ensure that we collaborate for the greatest success for your student(s). Families are expected to be familiar with the content of this handbook.

All of the policies outlined in this Handbook have been developed for safety, the protection of the rights of others, and academic benefit. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this Handbook. After reviewing this Handbook, a parent/guardian is asked to sign the PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK 2019-2020 and turn it into your child’s classroom teacher.

Parent/guardians have an important role in the Heketi Community Charter School and in the event the parent/guardians have questions or complaints that cannot be resolved with your child’s teacher, an appointment should be made with the Director to resolve the situation.

This handbook should be considered a work in progress for our growing organization. If there are any updates, you will be notified with a copy of the updated policy.

What is a Charter School?

Charter schools are public schools. Students do not pay tuition to attend and admission is based on a random lottery. In exchange for an increased level of independence, charter schools are held to higher levels of accountability than traditional public schools. In addition, charter schools have more flexibility in the areas of curriculum, school schedule, and staff hiring than regular public schools. They can be founded by individuals, companies, parents, teachers or other interested adults.

Charters are granted for a period of 5 years and charter schools serve on a performance contract with the state. When the five years are up a review process is conducted to determine if the charter should be renewed. The review assesses whether the charter school lived up to its goals outlined in its original application. Heketi Community Charter School was granted its charter, by the State University of New York, in January 2011. In January, 2017, the School received a 3-year renewal through July 2020.

The governing body of Heketi is its Board of Trustees, which may have between 5 to 13 members. The Board of Trustees meets monthly. Anyone interested may attend, in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

Since Heketi is a public school, admission is open to any student living in New York State. Admission is done through an application process.

If there are more spaces than the number of applications received by the application deadline for the creation of our new Kindergarten classes each year, then every applicant is accepted. If there are more applicants than spaces, a public lottery is held. The lottery is held in the spring for the following academic year. Students are accepted in the order in which their names are pulled from the lottery. If a student who is accepted has a sibling, then that sibling is automatically assigned a space in the school. Siblings of students attending the school are automatically accepted. Once all the spaces are filled, the remaining students are placed on a waiting list in the order in which they were pulled from the lottery. As student spaces appear, the next person on the waiting list is notified of the vacancy.
Section 1: Academic Program

Philosophy and Mission

Heketi’s mission is to provide an exceptional educational solution through an integrated educational design with high expectations, extensive academic and social-emotional support, and a high level of family and community engagement.

Heketi’s name embraces two main elements of our mission focus. “Heketi” is the Taíno word for ONE. Taínos are the indigenous people of the Caribbean, representing the heritage of a large portion of the Spanish-speaking population in the South Bronx. Heketi was born out of a desire to honor this heritage and embrace the power of multilingual literacy and reading skills for success and leadership. The meaning of Heketi, ONE, is also a recognition of what it takes to create an educational environment that ensures each child’s success. Heketi has a singular focus that integrates families, school staff, and community members all invested and united in building a community focused on achievement.

Our vision is to enable a diverse group of children from the Bronx to develop the academic and social skills, knowledge, and language necessary to graduate from the most competitive high schools in NYC. Ultimately, our children will become leaders in their chosen careers.

Heketi will use our GUIDING PRINCIPLES to create a community of ONE. These principles are --

Compassion, Responsibility, Courage, Respect, Communication, Collaboration, Persistence, Curiosity and Gratitude.

Program Highlights

We believe that students learn best when teachers practice authentic and active pedagogy that requires students to construct their own knowledge, apply their learning, and receive immediate feedback. We follow the philosophy of “less is more”, “depth over breadth,” and engage students with challenging yet meaningful and relevant curricula, all within the context of a highly personalized, supportive culture with high expectations for all students as they master NYS and the Common Core learning standards. We know that all students have the capacity to achieve at high levels if the conditions for learning are available: high expectations, frequent and specific feedback, clarity of learning outcomes, competitive academic culture, social-emotional support, and a risk-free environment where errors are seen as opportunities for learning.

Our key design elements are:

- High Expectations for All
  - At the heart of every successful school is a palatable culture of high expectations, grounded in the shared belief among all adults that all students can, want to and will learn. Our students experience a nurturing, yet demanding environment at Heketi. They know that the broader community is rooting for – and expects - them to be
successful in school for them to become impactful leaders - in their personal lives, in their chosen professional fields and in their communities, contributing to the ongoing transformation of what “being from the South Bronx” represents to the larger world.

○ In order to achieve academic excellence across the school and ensure all students master grade-level content and skills, Heketi leaders and teachers utilize Common Core Learning Standards aligned curriculum maps to guide instructional planning, thoughtfully coordinating a number of high-quality resources. Literacy development is front and center, as it is foundational for learning across all other content areas. Instructional leaders and specialists coach teachers, individually, in teams and as a whole faculty, to effectively unpack standards and plan high-quality, engaging instruction.

● Data Drives Excellence: Transparency, Accountability and Growth

○ The Heketi culture has been developed into one reflecting accountability, urgency and a relentless commitment to learning and improving. Our community is one where adults are comfortable with transparency and using concrete information to make plans for students. We believe that true accountability is demonstrated by being unwaveringly focused on understanding the gap between the knowledge, skills and strategies that students have grasped, and the clearly defined grade level expectations of what they need to be able to show they know and can do.

○ Teachers administer a varied range of formative assessments, to assess learning at the lesson, unit and interim levels, and summative assessments to evaluate learning. Teachers routinely analyze these data sets, first and foremost to construct targeted plans to re-teach, reinforce and differentiate instructional strategies to ensure all students master each required standard, and second, to provide ample opportunities for students to extend and stretch their thinking.

○ Our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) functions as a continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across a number of critical levels within the school. It represents the integration of evidence-based instruction, interventions, and assessments to address the full range of student needs. One critical aspect of MTSS is our Response to Intervention (RtI) structure, in which students are categorized, and regrouped as needed, within tiers, based on evidence of academic proficiency on an identified set of standard measures.

○ Teachers are also well aware of their own strengths and areas of growth, and with instructional leaders serving as individual coaches, track what they need to achieve, how and when. Teachers engage with instructional leaders in cycles of review, reflection, feedback and learning, to support the achievement of clearly articulated goals within distinct periods of time.

○ Objective data related to their children’s learning progress is readily available to families at the school. Parents and caregivers will be aware of their children’s academic status,
and what they need to achieve in each content area, through formal, routine parent/teacher conferences, frequent informal discussions with teachers and varied school communications. They are provided with guidance and resources to help them create supportive and supplementary learning experiences for their children at home and within and beyond their communities.

● **Dual Language Model**

  ○ Heketi offers a rich, two-way dual language immersion program, fully implemented in one classroom at each grade level. Teachers implement a 50/50 model, developing and promoting both languages equally. In this model, the target language – Spanish - is used for 50% of instructional time and English for the other 50%. The approach requires a closely aligned curricular program where instruction across most content areas is alternated or bridged. Lessons are not re-taught, but rather are built upon and efficiently integrated. Explicit Spanish language instruction is also implemented at each grade level. Language objectives are incorporated into curriculum planning and rich literature is utilized across the curriculum to ensure that students learn content as well develop appreciation of the culture and language of Spanish. The model also integrates the use of technology in both languages.

● **Investment in Social Emotional Support**

  ○ Heketi prioritizes the social emotional development and health of children and families. A team of interventionists and social workers drive the key areas of work, with coordinated support from members of the operations team and in close partnership with teachers and leaders. These critical staff members support the tenets and practices of Responsive Classroom, address student behavior challenges, provide individual or small group counseling, connect families to a host of community-based services and supports and engaging families in a range of learning and development opportunities throughout the year. They spearhead the creation and implementation of systems and programs to overcome challenging school-wide trends.

● **Parent and Community Involvement**

  ○ Heketi values family involvement in the life of the school. Families will be invited to participate in the Family Engagement Committee and take advantage of any number of volunteer opportunities.

**Assessment**

The ultimate purpose of assessment is to support and enhance student learning. Every student is a complex individual with a broad spectrum of abilities, skills, and knowledge. Assessment provides the entire learning community, students, parents, and teachers, with feedback, which not only exemplifies understanding, but also affords opportunities for reflection that improves instruction. Assessment must be ongoing, unbiased, and designed to meet the needs of our diverse learning community.
We know the results of standardized tests do not measure student success, only informal and formal classroom assessments can provide a clear picture of individual learners. The goal is to use data to inform instruction. Teachers then use the information to create opportunities for student growth.

**Principles of Assessment**
- Assessment begins with an end product and learning in mind.
- Assessment is based on the conceptual understanding of what has been taught.
- Assessment is non-threatening.
- Assessment provides feedback to students in a timely manner.
- Assessment differentiates for individual needs and learning styles.
- Assessment allows students to express their own ideas, thoughts, and opinions on a topic.
- Assessments provide collaborative opportunities between students, parents, and teachers.

**Purpose of Assessments**
- To guide students through the five essential elements of learning, including concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and action.
- To set goals for student growth.
- To assist with vertical and horizontal learning.
- To provide opportunities for teacher and student reflection.
- To guide instruction, teaching, and learning.

**New York State Assessments**
As a public charter School, Heketi Community Charter School is required to administer all New York State assessments, beginning in grade 3. Students at Heketi will also be given several internal and norm-referenced assessments. Test data will be used to adjust teaching in an effort to help all students reach skill mastery.

**CURRICULUM**

**Literacy**
Heketi Community Charter School uses a balanced literacy approach in which reading, writing, and word study are taught to, with, and by children within a workshop model. The goal of a balanced literacy classroom is to help children become strong, independent readers and writers. Our students learn to read, write, listen, and speak through the instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Heketi will ensure that reading and writing occur in every project, not just in the literacy block. Each classroom will receive a daily literacy block of 90-120 minutes, so that students develop core competencies of reading and writing. Heketi will use a clear and relevant language for problem-solving, and adjustable and self-destructing scaffolds; Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading and Writing®; Wilson Fundations® a program of systematic phonics and study of word structure with a strong handwriting component; and Heketi's backwards-design framework.

Teachers will create a structure in which children read and write daily with varying degrees of support. The four contexts for reading are: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. The four contexts for writing are: shared writing, guided writing, interactive writing, and independent writing. Our
Mathematics
A balanced approach to mathematics instruction will support our students’ accurate, efficient, and flexible reasoning and problem-solving skills. Children need strong number sense, fractions, place value, and particular aspects of algebraic thinking, data analysis, measurement and geometry. Teachers use whole-class investigations, math games, mental math mini-lessons, fact fluency, routines, and math review to support our young mathematicians. Heketi believes that a hands-on, inquiry-based philosophy is critical to the development of language for all students, namely students who are English-language learners. Our mathematics block will follow the workshop model as a way to introduce, develop, and refine understanding of key concepts and skills. The workshop model consists of an introduction, modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and sharing. Teachers will also lead guided math groups for students who are struggling to acquire lower level skills. Students will engage deeply in mathematics by working in hands-on and minds-on ways. They will discuss and write about the problems they solve, often identifying a variety of ways to tackle a single problem.

Science
Heketi values the importance of scientific literacy and recognizes the underperformance of students in science across the nation. Our instructional approach remains the same—inquiry-based and hands-on. We use a nationally normed curriculum, FOSS, that follows the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Through the use of in-depth studies, students will work collaboratively, build on what they know, apply concepts to new questions, and participate in planning, decision-making, and discussion of scientific investigations. For our elementary students, there will be a focus on debunking myths about science and gaining skills in the following areas:

1) observing (using the senses to get information),
2) communicating (talking, drawing, acting, writing),
3) comparing (pairing, one-to-one correspondence),
4) organizing (grouping, seriating, sequencing),
5) relating (cause and effect, classification, correlating),
6) inferring (superordinate/subordinate, classification, if/then reasoning, developing scientific laws), and
7) applying (developing strategic plans, inventing).

Teachers will design projects around compelling topics that relate to issues in the Bronx. Topics are shaped and enriched through questions posed by students, teachers, or experts in the field of study. Professional
development will focus on supporting teachers in the design of science projects that encourage and nurture a curiosity about the world and mastery of content and skills.

Social Studies
New York City and neighboring North East cities offer rich opportunities for integrating history, geography, and civics into the academic curriculum. Our social studies curriculum map will drive the content, while teachers will develop the unit projects from a variety of sources. We will incorporate local communities into learning projects, such as having students develop a sense of how neighborhoods in NYC are formed by visiting and interviewing their own families and recent immigrants. As the curriculum develops, we will draw on a wide variety of other resources and institutions that will help structure learning projects, for example:

- The Museum of the City of New York
- American Indian Museum
- El Museo Del Barrio
- Ellis Island
- Bronx County Historical Society
- New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
- New York Historical Society
- Lower East Side Tenement Museum
- Business and civic associations such as those leading the revitalization of area neighborhoods (that will provide older students with opportunities for exercising math/analytic skills in the context of urban development questions).

Teachers will use the Readers’ and Writers’ Workshop to incorporate content-specific resources into their genre units. The integration of science and social studies content with the ELA units of study not only ensures that students are making connections between content, skills, and process, but also that teachers are deliberately planning lessons that support students in making those connections.

Students with Special Needs
Heketi Community Charter School is committed to inclusion settings. Our setting can accommodate students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) that mandate a General Education classroom, and Integrated Co-Teaching and SETSS (Specialized Education Teacher Support Services). Further speech and language services, as mandated by an IEP will be provided by the school. The school will make reasonable adjustments in procedures as mandatory by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The process begins with a review of all School records and previous evaluations. We will maintain close communication with the Committee on Special Education to ensure that our staff or contract providers implement all elements of the IEP.

Social Curriculum
At the heart of a safe and respectful school culture is the establishment of guiding principles. At Heketi, we believe the character traits we expect of our students are also the ones we adults expect of ourselves. These guiding principles are:
Compassion: Be kind and patient. Be aware of your friends’ emotions.
Responsibility: Take care of yourself and others in our school community.
Courage: Reach out for help when you need it. It takes courage to admit you don’t know something.
Tell an adult when someone is hurting a member of our school community.
Respect: Treat all members of our community with dignity and respect, regardless of differences.
Communication: Use “I” Statements to communicate your feelings.
Collaboration: Work as a team. Help a friend who needs you.
Persistence: Never give up!
Curiosity: Ask questions and keep on learning.
Gratitude: Always show appreciation and give thanks.

Our social curriculum provides students with the skills to be independent learners, work well with others, and be self-confident individuals.

Services for English as a New Language

All parents or guardians of a newly enrolled student are required to complete a Home Language Survey. This Survey lets Heketi know what language is spoken in the student’s home. If the Home Language Survey indicates that a student speaks a language other than English, he or she will be administered an English proficiency test called the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). Performance on this test determines if a student is entitled to English language development support services. The school will also administer the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to English Language Learners students on an annual basis to evaluate their English proficiency. The scores on the NYSESLAT indicate the proficiency level the student has achieved each year, and whether the student’s level of English proficiency is advanced enough to exit the English as a New Language (ENL) programs or services. In addition to our classroom teachers we have a full-time English as a New Language Coordinator and Teacher who are responsible for meeting the language needs of our students.

Promotion and retention at Heketi Community Charter

Heketi demonstrates its excellence through its relentless drive for individualized learning. We will work with students until each of them can attain mastery. This is most evident in our stringent and staged promotion policy based on academics and attendance. The promotion policies become increasingly rigorous as students progress, ensuring that when students graduate from fifth grade that they are prepared to succeed in competitive middle and high schools, college and beyond. While we aim for all students to have the academic skills to earn promotion every year, we also recognize that for some students it does take longer, and that should not be seen negatively. The child’s classroom teachers, Instructional Specialists, and School Director will use the Light’s Retention Scale to review students recommended for retention. Additionally, students who are retained are not guaranteed a seat in the existing grade, as a vacancy may not be available. Retained students will be placed on a waitlist if the current grade is filled to capacity.

K - 5 Promotional Standards
Heketi only promotes those students who:

- meet annual attendance requirements—at least 85%
- meet social-emotional expectations for the proceeding grade
- attain a Level 3 or 4 proficiency in 80% of ELA and math standards

Families are informed of promotion-in-doubt status in the first week of February of each year. Mandatory parent/teacher meetings are scheduled to determine necessary interventions at school and at home. Final determination of retention takes place by the end of May of each year.

Students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and modified promotional criteria will be promoted to the next grade based on successful completion of the annual goals listed in the IEP.

Exceptions

In certain exceptional cases where retention of a student in the current grade would provide no educational benefit, in the determination of the school leadership, a student may be promoted.

Parent Appeals

Parent/Guardian will have 30 days to file an appeal with the School Director. If the parent does not file an appeal to the School Director within 30 days, then the student shall be placed in the grade recommended by the teacher. Upon receipt of notice to appeal, the School Director will form a hearing committee composed of the School Director, Family Advocate, teacher and an unbiased teacher to hear the parent’s appeal. Upon receipt of the committee’s decision, if still not satisfied, the parent/guardian will have 10 days to file an appeal with the Board of Trustees. The hearing is conducted within 30 days from the date of notification to the board. The Board Chair, Jamie Knox, may be contacted at Jamie.Knox@dlapiper.com.
Section 2: Schedule and Attendance Policy

There are 182 days in our school year. We ask that families review and adhere to the school calendar so that students are present for all days and maximize learning time.

Schedule

The student school day will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 8:00 a.m. - 1:55 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Heketi’s weekly schedule was designed with a focus on maximizing student and staff learning. We decided to have a shorter day for students on Wednesdays in order to offer teachers quality, weekly professional development to strengthen their instructional and pedagogical practices.

Arrival

The building will open at 7:30 am daily. Children should not be left outside of the school entrance unsupervised as that presents a safety issue. A parent or family member must accompany their child(ren) to the lobby; all children will be supervised in the cafeteria and gym. Our students will walk to their classrooms in lines at 7:55 a.m.

The school day will begin promptly at 8:00 am. Heketi provides a 10-minute grace period. Any students that arrives after 8:10 am will be recorded as late (i.e., from 8:11 am and on). Students will need to sign in at the security desk, receive a late pass, and will then be sent to their class. The time is based on the clock by the security desk.

Breakfast will be provided everyday from 7:30 am to 8:15 am in the cafeteria.

Dismissal

Dismissal is at 3:15 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and at 1:55 p.m. on Wednesdays. Families are asked to be prompt when picking up children. Children may only be picked up by a parent, guardian or one of the persons named on the emergency form on file or via written permission by the parent/guardian. If someone else shows up to collect a child, the parent or guardian will be called and asked to authorize the dismissal. In no case will a child be dismissed to a person under the age of 12 years. Fourth and fifth grade students are allowed to walk home by themselves AFTER a waiver has been signed. Please note that this waiver does not allow students to pick up younger siblings. In addition, we do not release students to car sharing services such as Uber, Lyft, etc. to maintain the safety of our child(ren).

- Daily Dismissal Procedure
  - Families with a child(ren) in Kindergarten, 1st, or 2nd grades will use the Concord Ave. doors at dismissal. Kindergarten students are dismissed from Kindergarten classrooms on the second floor. 1st and 2nd grade families will be dismissed from the cafeteria. Families with a child(ren) in Kindergarten, 1st, or 2nd grades will exit through Concord Ave. doors.
  - Families with a child(ren) in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades will use the main entrance on E. 144th St.
at dismissal. These grades are dismissed from the gym. Families with a child(ren) in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades will exit through the E. 144th St. entrance.

- **Early Pick-Up**
  - Students are not permitted to leave school early without written permission from a parent/guardian. If a child needs to leave early for some reason, the student/parent/guardian must bring a written note to the office on or before the day of the early dismissal. Please avoid scheduling appointments during school hours since these can disrupt the child’s learning. The parent/guardian must personally come in to sign the student out on the day of early dismissal.
  - If a child becomes sick at school, the nurse will call the family and ask them to come and pick up the child early.
  - All students that leave early must be signed out with security.

- **Late Pick Up**
  - Late pick-up coverage is provided by the school until 4:00 pm. If a student will be picked up late from school, parents/guardians are asked to notify the school immediately. If students are not picked up in a reasonable amount of time, students will be escorted to the 40th Police Precinct.

**Attendance**

School attendance and timely arrival is critical to each child’s learning and is the responsibility of each parent/guardian. Absences and tardies affect learning time in a negative manner. We ask that you review the two general categories of absences -- excused and unexcused.

- **Excused absences** are related to illness, family emergencies, and religious observances.
- All other absences will be considered **unexcused**, including but not limited to, family vacations.
- **Excused absences** still count as an absence. Determination as to whether an absence is **excused** or **unexcused** lies with the School Director.

For all absences we ask that you call the school by 9:00 am to notify the Main Office. If a student is absent and we have not received notifications from a parent/guardian, the school will contact the family to determine the status of the student’s absence. If the family cannot be reached, additional investigation on the absence may be taken. When a student returns back to school, we ask that students return with a written note to verify the absence.
• Tardiness
  ○ A student will be considered late if they arrive after 8:10 am (i.e., 8:11 am and on). Ten tardies per month will result in one absence; twenty tardies per month will result in a second absence. Heketi will investigate any situation in which a student has 5 or more tardies to prevent reaching the level of chronic tardiness.

• Family Vacation
  ○ Family vacations when school is in session are strongly discouraged due to the detrimental impact on a child’s learning. Families who take extended vacations must submit a copy of their itinerary to the school as soon as possible. A meeting will be scheduled with the school to make sure that students have assignments and homework. Parents/Guardians should note the total absences up to date and the child’s academic record before scheduling trips. The absences from these trips will count to the child’s overall attendance record and may affect their promotion for the following school year, especially if the child has received promotion in doubt letters prior to the vacation.

• Extended Illness
  ○ In the event a student is ill for an extended period or may have special circumstances related to an illness, parents/guardians are asked to notify the Main Office immediately. The school will then work with the family to create a suitable plan so that students will not fall behind on

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### GREAT ATTENDANCE EQUALS

#### COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

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<tr>
<th>Number of Days Absent</th>
<th>Attendance Rate</th>
<th>Instructional Time Loss in Months</th>
<th>Instructional Time Loss in Hours</th>
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<td>½ Month</td>
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<td>75%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>73</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>4 Months</td>
<td>401.5 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
her/his academics.

- **Chronic Absences**
  - Chronic tardiness and/or absences obligate the school to notify other public agencies, including the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). Chronic absences are an issue of educational neglect and will be reported as such. In the State of New York, “Educational neglect includes allowing unexplained absences from school, a failure to enroll a school-age child in school, refusal of recommended remedial services without good reason and failure to respond to attendance questions.” Children with 18 or more absences are considered to be chronically absent. Heketi will investigate any situation in which a student has 5 or more unexcused absences to prevent reaching the level of chronic absenteeism.
  - If a student is excessively absent or tardy during the school year, the student, classroom teacher, and student’s parents/guardians may be required to meet with the School Director to decide if the student will have to complete additional coursework over the summer and/or remain in the same grade for the following year. Students with over 18 absences per school year are subject to retention in the same grade.

**Religious Holidays**

We respect any member of our community who wishes to fulfill a religious obligation while school is in session. If a family will observe a religious holiday not recognized by Heketi’s school calendar, we ask that the parent/guardian submit a written note to the office. In addition, the classroom teachers will provide school work to avoid disruption to the child’s learning.

**Weather/Emergency Closings**

In the event of severe weather conditions, i.e., a snowstorm, freezing rain, high winds, etc., families should listen to the radio or TV. If any announcement is made that New York City Public Schools are closed, Heketi will also be closed. Families will also be notified about the change via a robocall by 6:00 am.
Section 3: Dress Code Policy

Heketi has developed a uniform policy that creates a wholesome learning environment for the academic achievement of every student. This policy also looks to promote high standards of conduct and behavior among students. It is mandatory for all students to be in full uniform for school field trips. This rule is to ensure the safety of students. If a student is not in uniform, the family will be notified and asked to bring the necessary items.

The school uniform includes:

- Heketi Polo Shirt or T-shirt (short- or long-sleeved);

- Comfortable a solid-colored bottoms (pants, skirts, jeans, leggings, long shorts, etc). Skirts should be worn with shorts underneath. Pants may not be too tight or baggy or worn low on the hip; and,

- Shoes should be MOSTLY a solid color with NO lights, noises or wheels and they must cover the front and back of the foot (no flip flops or strappy sandals). Plain color sneakers or dress shoes are preferred. Flip-flops, sandals, high heels, wedges, or backless shoes are not permitted.

All students must be neat and clean with uniform at all times. Pants may not be too tight or baggy or worn low on the hip. Students are not to wear outer garments (i.e., jackets, coats, hoodies, etc.) or hats in school except when they are entering or leaving the building. If a student is cold or prefers to be warm, a sweater, such as a cardigan or sweatshirt without a hood, can be worn. Sweaters should be a solid color. Students should wear seasonally appropriate, comfortable clothing that allows them to move safely and easily.

Any jewelry and hairstyles that interfere with learning are not permitted and will be brought to the family’s attention. Heketi is not responsible for any jewelry that is lost during school hours. Students wearing necklaces will be asked to put them inside their shirts so they are not tempted to play with them during learning time. Press-on nails, makeup and lip-gloss are not to be worn nor brought to school. Students wearing temporary tattoos will be asked to wash them off upon arrival at school. Sunglasses may not be worn in school unless there is a medical reason. Students will be asked to remove excessive or inappropriate items of clothing, jewelry, or makeup. Families will be contacted by the Main Office or the Behavior Intervention Specialist.
Section 4: Food Policy

Heketi is a sugar-free, nut-free, and seafood-free environment. We also encourage healthy eating and food choices for our students and families. It is our goal to create eating habits that promote focused learning. To assist with this, we offer a healthy breakfast, lunch, and snack option daily to our students. Students are allowed to bring their own food, however we do prohibit unhealthy food choices. Students who bring any unhealthy food choices will be asked to keep them in their backpack and will not be allowed to open them.

Families who choose to send their own snacks must send healthy snacks such as the following:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Water

The following snacks are NOT ALLOWED, will not be opened, and will be kept in your child’s backpack:

- Anything with peanut butter
- Anything with seafood
- Candy
- Pastries, cookies (i.e., honey buns, donuts, or Little Debbie snacks)
- Chips
- Drinks (i.e., soda, punch, juices)
- Gum

In addition, we ask that families do not bring fast food (i.e., Popeyes, McDonald’s, etc.) as lunch choices for students.

Classroom Celebrations/Parties

Heketi does not celebrate children’s birthdays with class parties. However, we do celebrate birthdays once a month during our Community Meeting. On the day of a child’s birthday, the classroom teachers will celebrate by singing, reading a child’s favorite book, and/or including an activity that highlights that child. If a family is interested in having a special lunch to celebrate a birthday, we ask that they make arrangements with the classroom teachers at least 2 weeks in advance.
Section 5: Health Policy

New York State Education Law requires a medical examination for every child who enters nursery school and Kindergarten, entering grades 1, 3, 7, 10 and entering any grade when transferring from another school. The health examination must be documented on New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene form CH204 and signed by a healthcare provider. Forms are available at the school. All students attending Heketi Community Charter School must meet the immunization requirement set forth by New York State Law. These immunizations include Measles, Rubella (German Measles) Mumps, Polio, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis B, and Varicella (chicken pox). Documentation of all required immunizations is necessary.

Students who require medication during school hours must bring the Medication Administration Form, completed by a healthcare provider to the Heketi Community Charter School nurse. We prefer that students take medication during school hours only when absolutely necessary.

A parent/guardian requesting that medication be administered to their child during the school day must submit the following in writing to the Main Office:

1. A letter of request and authorization that contains all information required by the state Education Department policy.
2. Written orders for all medication to be given at school, including renewals at the beginning of the school year.
3. A written description by the physician or dentist of the desired effects and child specific potential of adverse side effects.
4. A list of names and telephone numbers of persons to be notified in case of medication emergency in addition to the parent/guardian and licensed person prescribing the medication.
5. Arrangement for the safe delivery of the medication to and from school in the original labeled container as dispensed by the pharmacist.
6. Unit dose packaging shall be used whenever possible.

Temporary Daily Medication

Prescription or over the counter medication (OTC) to treat a temporary illness/condition requiring daily or multiple daily doses should be brought to the school nurse in the morning. The medication must be in its original container either dispensed by the pharmacist or in its original OTC packaging. The parent/guardian of the child must contact the school nurse practitioner by telephone or e-mail explaining the reason for the medication and the requested times and doses.

Alcohol and Drugs

The use of alcohol or drugs adversely affects a student’s ability to achieve, is physically and emotionally harmful, and has serious social and legal consequences. We will keep our school free of alcohol and illegal drugs and have a zero tolerance policy towards the use of these substances.
Section 6: Safety and Security

In the event of an emergency Heketi has created an extensive emergency plan that students and staff are expected to follow.

Fire and Emergency Drills

To adhere to the emergency plan that is in place for the building, throughout the year, students will ask to practice fire and emergency drills. We expect students to move quickly, silently, and in an orderly fashion under the direction of staff to assigned assembly points. Exit directions are posted in each classroom. Attendance will be taken once the classes have arrived at the assembly points. Students must stay with their teachers. Fire drills will be held on a regular basis under a variety of weather conditions.

Outdoor Recess and Weather

When possible, Heketi Community Charter School will take students to St. Mary’s Park for recess. Structured playtime is a good way to support student’s physical health as well as their social growth. Students will play outside when the temperature is between 35 (degrees) F with the wind chill factor and 85 (degrees) F with low humidity. Students will be dressed in the same coats/sweaters/hats that they arrive to school in. During inclement weather (ice, rain and extreme cold/heat), students will remain indoors at recess time.

Personal Property

Students, faculty, and staff are reminded that they are collectively responsible for their personal property, as well as that of the school. The school does not take responsibility for valuables left unsecured in the building and everyone should think carefully about what they bring to school. A Lost and Found box is available for items found in our school that are unlabeled. We strongly encourage you to write your child’s name on all student items.

Toys, Electronics and Video Game Devices

Students are not allowed to bring nor play with toys or electronics video games while in school, except in the case of written or verbal permission from the classroom teacher, if it would serve as an addition to the academic curriculum. The school does not take responsibility for valuables left unsecured in the building. If a toy is seen in use, the school will confiscate it and parents/ guardians will be notified of exactly what the item is and where and how it can be obtained. If an electronic video game device is seen in use, the school will confiscate it and place it in a secure location. The electronic video game device will only be returned when a parent/guardian comes to school to retrieve it.

Fidgets

Spinners and other fidgets have become very popular. They are used by holding one so that a person’s hands are busy and free to focus on a different task. Many children can benefit from such a tool throughout their learning day. To this end, the school will provide fidgets in each classroom so that teachers can hand them out.
when needed. The fidgets will only be used to help any student focus on their work. Please do not send any fidgets from home. If a fidget from home is seen in use, the school will confiscate it and the classroom teacher will contact parents/guardians to notify them of how it can be obtained.

**Cellular Phones**

Students are not allowed to use cellular phones while in school. If a cellular phone is seen in use or heard, the school will confiscate it and place it in a secure location. The phone will only be returned when a parent/guardian comes to school to retrieve it. Although we discourage the possession of cellular phones, we understand that students who are dismissed without an adult may need one. Any students who bring a cellular phone may drop it off in the Main Office at arrival for safekeeping; it will be returned at dismissal.

**Visitors in the School Building**

All visitors entering the school building must sign the Heketi visitor’s log at the security desk. This requirement includes all parents/guardians entering and leaving the building while school is in session. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the school at any time during the school day, but an appointment must be set up to meet with teachers. Upon entering the building, all visitors must proceed directly to the Main Office.

**Misconduct of Adults in School**

It is expected that all adults entering the school building behave in a professional and safe manner. As a school that puts children first, we expect that families and visitors take account of the language used in the presence of children. As such, we have established the following procedures for any misconduct among adults (including the use of profanity, yelling or threatening another person, physical violence, hitting your child, seeming intoxicated, smelling of marijuana, etc.):

- **First incident:** The adult will be given a verbal warning to find your composure. If the behavior persists, he/she will be escorted out of the building by the security guard.

- **Second incident:** The adult will be escorted out of the school building by the security guard and will be prohibited from entering without an appointment for the duration of one month.

- **Third incident:** The adult is prohibited permanently from the school building. The school will arrange for your child to be escorted for dismissal.

The School Director, Assistant Principal, and/or Director of Operations reserves the right to determine if the incident warrants an immediate escalation to the third tier.

**Non-Discrimination, Abuse and Harassment Policy**

We are a diverse community. Among our central values is the recognition of the inherent dignity of each person. This is reflected in our mission statement, which welcomes students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds. At our school, it is unacceptable, and a violation of our policy, to discriminate against, abuse or harass any person because of his/her race, color, religion, national origin or sexual orientation or disability. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of mutual respect, which must prevail for this school to
fulfill its educational mission. For this reason, every incident of discrimination, abuse or harassment undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community.
Section 7: Grievance Policy

Complaints should be submitted in writing to the School Director. Upon receipt of the complaint, the School Director will respond in writing or in person within ten business days. If this does not resolve the complaint, or if the complaint pertains to the School Director, then the individual or group may submit the complaint, in writing, to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Any individual or group may submit a complaint directly to the Board of Trustees of Heketi Community Charter School.

If the complaint is submitted to the Board of Trustees five business days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at that Board meeting. If the complaint is submitted fewer than five business days before a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board of Trustees shall render a determination in writing if appropriate or required.

The names of Trustees, including the Secretary of the Board, as well as the dates of regularly scheduled Board meetings, will be prominently posted at the school.

In accordance with Education Law § 2855(4), if after presentation of such a complaint to the Board of Trustees, the individual or group believes that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, that individual or group may present the complaint to the School’s charter entity, the New York State Education Department, which shall investigate and respond appropriately.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE, SUNY, the individual or group determines that the charter entity has not adequately addressed the complaint, they may present the complaint to the Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. The CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE, SUNY and the Board of Regents shall have the power and the duty to issue appropriate remedial orders to the Board of Trustees of the Charter School under their jurisdiction to effectuate the provisions applicable under Education Law.

Contact information for the CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE (CSI), SUNY is prominently posted at the school.
Section 8: Student Code of Conduct

Establishing and Maintaining High Behavioral Expectations
It is a core belief of Heketi Community Charter School that the FIRST and MOST IMPORTANT classroom management tool is the teacher’s lesson plan. When teachers design and implement engaging, rigorous lessons for students and hold them to high academic and behavioral expectations, negative behaviors decrease significantly.

Heketi Community Charter School strongly believes that all teachers hold the ultimate authority in their classroom. Students are expected to follow the rules set by teachers in classrooms and demonstrate the guiding principles.

Heketi Community Charter School Disciplinary System
Heketi Community Charter School adheres to a responsive, leveled school-wide disciplinary system. As students demonstrate behavior reflective of our guiding principles (green), they will be recognized by their teachers in order to positively reinforce high behavioral expectations. Teachers are expected to maintain authority in their classrooms and address a range of behaviors (yellow) with classroom-based consequences. However, in cases that are severe enough for the teacher to refer a student to the Behavior Intervention Specialist (orange or red behaviors), the Behavior Intervention Specialist in consultation with administration will make the final determination of the consequences for the child based on both the Heketi Community Charter School Disciplinary System and his or her best judgment, and communicate this to the teacher, the student, and the student’s family.
## Student Behaviors

- Listens attentively without calling out during instructional time
- Focuses on work during independent work time
- Treats others with kindness and respect during partner work or small group work
- Keeps hands and feet to self
- Follows all of the guiding principles:
  - Compassion
  - Responsibility
  - Courage
  - Respect
  - Communication
  - Collaboration
  - Persistence
  - Curiosity
  - Gratitude
- Takes care of classroom and school
- Always does their best!
- Uses appropriate voice level within classroom/hallways

## Teacher Response

- Shout out!
- Smiles and positive gestures
- Guiding Principles awards given during closing circle
- Positive note home
- Positive phone call to family
- Positive recognitions of the student’s efforts and choices
### Classroom Managed Behaviors

- Calling out
- Taunting, or bullying
- Talks during instruction
- Talking back
- Not following directions
- Gets out of seat without permission
- Not completing work
- Does not follow directions after 2 reminders
- Inappropriate language (using unkind words)
- Makes inappropriate gestures (e.g., sucks teeth, rolls eyes)
- Has toys, candy, gum, etc.
- Chews gum, eats candy
- Makes inappropriate physical contact that does not cause injury and is not sexual in nature
- Not focused in class
- Passes notes
- Distracting others (touching, poking, talking)
- Minor emotional outburst (e.g., No!)
- Tattles on others frequently
- Eats without permission
- Misuse of materials (unsafe manner)
- Verbal conflict with classmate

### Range of Teacher Responses

*These minor infractions must be addressed consistently by the teacher with the student and family.*

### Classroom Managed Behavior Strategies

1. Verbal/Nonverbal Warning
   - a. student fixes it
   - b. Peer mediation (when it involves a peer)
2. Reminder
   - student fixes it
3. Take an **in-class break** (use a timer: max 5 minute) or **Buddy Break** (max 7 minutes; administratively assigned; student takes an independent reading book with **yellow pass**)  
   
   *Community healing circle can be held at any time*

**If classroom managed behaviors continue teacher will schedule a time to meet with Behavioral Specialist to strategize and problem solve with student.**

### Buddy Break Protocol

**Buddy Break Assignments**

**Buddy Break Protocol**
### Behavior Specialist/Administrator Managed Behaviors

- Intentionally causes or attempts to cause injury to another individual (e.g., hitting, biting, punching, pulling hair, throwing objects towards others)
- Intentionally hurts or attempts to hurt him/herself
- Over-sexualized behavior
- Refusal to take a break or problem solve with continuous classroom disruption
- Walking out of classroom without permission
- Destruction of school property (throws or pushes furniture out of anger or rage, writes on desk, breaks chair)
- Runs from any supervised area (school building, or playground)
- Makes violent threats against others
- Possesses a weapon, uses an object as a weapon, with intent to harm
- Goes into unsupervised red tape area
- Tampers with fire alarm
- Intentional unsafe behavior (e.g., climbing on furniture, kicking or punching walls)
- Continually taunts/bullies others
- Disrespectfully talks back or curses at teacher
- Throws objects

### Range of Behavioral Specialist and Administration Responses

#### Behavior form MUST be completed before sending students to the Behavioral Specialist.

**FIRST VISIT TO OFFICE:**
- The student completes a Stop and Think sheet.
- Student creates a plan to remain in class and improve upon behavior moving forward

If taunting, bullying, or biased comments occur, then the student creates a plan with teacher to address the situation with the community. Students will also meet with the Behavior Specialist and the student they offended to begin restorative work on repairing the relationship.

- The student writes a note stating to the teacher that he or she is ready to learn and they are aware of the consequences if there is a second visit to the office.
- Students will also meet with the Behavior Specialist and the student they offended to begin restorative work on repairing the relationship.

**SECOND VISIT TO OFFICE IN ONE DAY:**
- The office calls home to report the incident.
- If there is a need, the specialist will email the teaching team to schedule a mandatory family meeting. The meeting is scheduled by the classroom teachers.
- The student may or may not be assigned an ISS, depending on the incident.
- Academic work is made up a another time

**THIRD VISIT TO OFFICE IN ONE DAY (ONLY IF CHILD RETURNS AFTER SECOND INCIDENT):**
- A principal calls home to report the incident.
- The student is assigned an ISS or OSS.
Continually disrupts learning (e.g., shouts loudly, rolls on floor, goes in closet, stands on furniture, runs around room)

- Steals from a teacher or classmate
- Refuses to take a “Buddy Break” in partnered classroom
- Uses materials in an inappropriate or unsafe manner (e.g., throws pencil, breaks crayons, rips schoolwork)
- Stomps, bangs or tantrums
- Inappropriate gestures or conduct (e.g. sexual)
- Intentionally cheats
- Use of cell phone
- Biased comments (racial slur, ethnic slur, nationality, religion, gender, and disability.

A re-entry meeting is scheduled by a principal and must include the classroom teaching team
  - Academic work is made up another time

**FOR IMMEDIATE SUPPORT:**

- Call 100 the Behavior Intervention Specialist, or a member of the leadership team, will respond to the classroom.
- If necessary, send a responsible student to nearby classroom for adult assistance with and if necessary, remove other students from danger.
- The office calls home to report the incident.
- The student is assigned an ISS or OSS.
- A mandatory re-entry meeting is **scheduled by the office** and must include the family and the classroom teaching team.

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**Students with Special Needs**

If a special education student violates the school’s Student Code of Conduct and is being considered for a suspension or removal, the school will ensure due process protections. In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are additionally applicable to students with disabilities [A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or charter school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.527(b)—that a disability exists must be disciplined in accordance with these provisions.] Heketi will comply with sections 300.519-300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

The following will apply for students with disabilities in violation of the school’s Student Code of Conduct:

- If a student with diagnosed disability(ies) is to be suspended for more than ten (10) cumulative school days and the suspension constitutes a change of placement (manifestation determination), or if the School determines that a suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive school days is being considered, on the date a decision to make such a suspension is made, the School will immediately notify CSE by telephone and in writing;

- The provision of a free and appropriate education to students who are suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons for more than ten school days in a school year, this includes a certified teacher going to the student’s home or the student coming to the school after the scheduled school day to receive the required instruction and services according to the IEP;

- The school will be responsible for addressing behaviors that result in suspensions or removals for more than ten school days in a school year (functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plans);

- Providing the parent of the student a copy of the procedural safeguards notice (special education rights);

- An expedited process to resolve disagreements between parents and the school regarding certain
disciplinary actions;

✓ Protections for students who are not classified when a parent asserts that the school had knowledge, prior to the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary action, that the student was a student with a disability; ✓ Expedited evaluations of students suspected of having a disability during the time the student is suspended.

Heketi will work closely with the Committee on Special Education to establish clear guidelines for communication and decision-making on disciplinary matters. The school will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.
APPENDIX A
Freedom of Information Law

Heketi will comply with a New York State Freedom of Information laws including the require FOIL “regulations” and notice. The school will acknowledge all written FOIL requests that reasonably describe documents within 5 business days. If the school cannot within five business days provide the records or deny the request (e.g., when the school has no responsive records), it will within five business days write to the FOIL requester and provide a reasonable date (under POL § 89(3)) by which either the some or all of records will be available or the request will be denied.

If Heketi determines to grant access to the requested information, and if circumstances prevent disclosure to the person making the request within twenty (20) days of the acknowledgement of receipt of the request, Heketi shall state in writing both the reason for the delay and a date certain, within a reasonable period of time, depending on the circumstances, when the request will be granted in whole or in part. Failure to conform to the provisions detailed above shall constitute a denial of the request for information. If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, he or she may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the secretary of the board of trustees. Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, Heketi will, within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, fully explain, in writing, the reasons for further denial or provide access to the record(s) sought. Heketi will also forward a copy of the appeal, as well as its ultimate determination, to the New York State Committee on Open Government.

Section 1. In the event an appeal for records is denied, the person requesting the information may bring a proceeding for review of such denial in pursuant to Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

Section 2. Heketi may deny access to requested records for one or more of the following grounds:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- Such records are trade secrets or are submitted to the School by a commercial enterprise or derived from information obtained from a commercial enterprise and which if disclosed would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of such enterprise;
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law § 87 (2)(3);
- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- Such records are computer access codes;
- Such records are inter-agency or intra-agency materials that are not statistical or factual tabulations
of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, or a final policy or external audits.

- Examination questions or answer

Section 3. Heketi shall maintain:

- A record of the final vote of each trustee in every proceeding in which the trustees vote;
- A record setting forth the name, public office address, title and salary of every officer or employee of the education corporation; and
- A reasonably detailed current list, by subject matter, of all records in the Board of Trustees’ custody or possession.

Heketi may charge a copying fee for each page requested to be copied. The fee can be no more than the fee allowed by state law.
FOIL MODEL REGULATIONS
PUBLIC ACCESS TO RECORDS OF Heketi Community Charter School
403 Concord Avenue, Bronx, NY 10454

1. Purpose and scope
2. Designation of records access officer
3. Location
4. Hours for public inspection
5. Requests for public access to records
6. Subject matter list
7. Denial of access to records
8. Fees
9. Public notice
10. Severability

Section 1 Purpose and scope

(a) The people’s right to know the process of government decision-making and the documents and statistics leading to determinations is basic to our society. Access to such information should not be thwarted by shrouding it with the cloak of secrecy of confidentiality.

(b) These regulations provide information concerning the procedures by which records may be obtained.

(c) Personnel shall furnish to the public the information and records required by the Freedom of Information Law, as well as records otherwise available by law.

(d) Any conflicts among laws governing public access to records shall be construed in favor of the widest possible availability of public records.

Section 2 Designation of records access officer

(a) Heketi Community Charter School is responsible for insuring compliance with the regulations herein, and designates the following person(s) as records access officer(s):

    Tenee Hall, Director of Operations

        403 Concord Ave Bronx, NY 10454 (school address)

(b) The records access officer is responsible for insuring appropriate agency response to public requests for access to records. The designation of a records access officer shall not be construed to prohibit officials who have in the past been authorized to make records or information available to the public from continuing to do so.

    The records access officer shall insure that agency personnel:
(1) Maintain an up-to-date subject matter list.

(2) Assist persons seeking records to identify the records sought, if necessary, and when appropriate, indicate the manner in which the records are filed, retrieved or generated to assist persons in reasonably describing records.

(3) Contact persons seeking records when a request is voluminous or when locating the records involves substantial effort, so that personnel may ascertain the nature of records of primary interest and attempt to reasonably reduce the volume of records requested.

(4) Upon locating the records, take one of the following actions: (i) Make records available for inspection; or, ii) Deny access to the records in whole or in part and explain in writing the reasons therefor.

(5) Upon request for copies of records: (i) Make a copy available upon payment or offer to pay established fees, if any, in accordance with Section 8; or, (ii) Permit the requester to copy those records.

(6) Upon request, certify that a record is a true copy; and

(7) Upon failure to locate records, certify that; (i) Heketi Community Charter School is not the custodian for such records, or (ii) the records of which Heketi Community Charter School is a custodian cannot be found after diligent search.

Section 3 Location

Records shall be available for public inspection and copying at:

Main Office
Heketi Community Charter School
403 Concord Ave Bronx, NY 10454

Section 4 Hours for public inspection

Requests for public access to records shall be accepted and records produced during all hours regularly open for business. These hours are: 8:00 am-3:30 pm.

Section 5 Requests for public access to records

(a) A written request may be required, but oral requests may be accepted when records are readily available.

(b) If records are maintained on the internet, the requester shall be informed that the records are accessible via the internet and in printed form either on paper or other information storage medium.

(c) A response shall be given within five business days of receipt of a request by:

(1) informing a person requesting records that the request or portion of the request does not reasonably describe the records sought, including direction, to the extent possible, that would
enable that person to request records reasonably described;

(2) granting or denying access to records in whole or in part;

(3) acknowledging the receipt of a request in writing, including an approximate date when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part, which shall be reasonable under the circumstances of the request and shall not be more than twenty business days after the date of the acknowledgment, or if it is known that circumstances prevent disclosure within twenty business days from the date of such acknowledgment, providing a statement in writing indicating the reason for inability to grant the request within that time and a date certain, within a reasonable period under the circumstances of the request, when the request will be granted in whole or in part; or

(4) if the receipt of request was acknowledged in writing and included an approximate date when the request would be granted in whole or in part within twenty business days of such acknowledgment, but circumstances prevent disclosure within that time, providing a statement in writing within twenty business days of such acknowledgment specifying the reason for the inability to do so and a date certain, within a reasonable period under the circumstances of the request, when the request will be granted in whole or in part.

(d) In determining a reasonable time for granting or denying a request under the circumstances of a request, personnel shall consider the volume of a request, the ease or difficulty in locating, retrieving or generating records, the complexity of the request, the need to review records to determine the extent to which they must be disclosed, the number of requests received by the agency, and similar factors that bear on the ability to grant access to records promptly and within a reasonable time.

(e) A failure to comply with the time limitations described herein shall constitute a denial of a request that may be appealed. Such failure shall include situations in which an officer or employee:

(1) fails to grant access to the records sought, deny access in writing or acknowledge the receipt of a request within five business days of the receipt of a request;

(2) acknowledges the receipt of a request within five business days but fails to furnish an approximate date when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part;

(3) furnishes an acknowledgment of the receipt of a request within five business days with an approximate date for granting or denying access in whole or in part that is unreasonable under the circumstances of the request;

(4) fails to respond to a request within a reasonable time after the approximate date given or within twenty business days after the date of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request;

(5) determines to grant a request in whole or in part within twenty business days of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request, but fails to do so, unless the agency provides the reason for its inability to do so in writing and a date certain within which the request will be granted in whole or in part;

(6) does not grant a request in whole or in part within twenty business days of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request and fails to provide the reason in writing explaining the inability to do so and a date certain by which the request will be granted in whole or in part;
or

(7) responds to a request, stating that more than twenty business days is needed to grant or deny the request in whole or in part and provides a date certain within which that will be accomplished, but such date is unreasonable under the circumstances of the request.

Section 6 Subject matter list

(a) The records access officer shall maintain a reasonably detailed current list by subject matter of all records in its possession, whether or not records are available pursuant to subdivision two of Section eighty-seven of the Public Officers Law.

(b) The subject matter list shall be sufficiently detailed to permit identification of the category of the record sought.

(c) The subject matter list shall be updated annually. The most recent update shall appear on the first page of the subject matter list.

Section 7 Denial of access to records

(a) Denial of access to records shall be in writing stating the reason therefor and advising the requester of the right to appeal to the individual or body established to determine appeals, [who or which] shall be identified by name, title, business address and business phone number.

(b) If requested records are not provided promptly, as required in Section 5 of these regulations, such failure shall also be deemed a denial of access.

(c) Appeals can be taken per the school’s complaint policy to the Board.

(d) Any person denied access to records may appeal within thirty days of a denial.

(e) The time for deciding an appeal by the individual or body designated to determine appeals shall commence upon receipt of a written appeal identifying:

   (1) the date and location of requests for records; (2) a description, to the extent possible, of the records that were denied; and (3) the name and return address of the person denied access.

(f) A failure to determine an appeal within ten business days of its receipt by granting access to the records sought or fully explaining the reasons for further denial in writing shall constitute a denial of the appeal.

(g) The person or body designated to determine appeals shall transmit to the Committee on Open Government copies of all appeals upon receipt of appeals. Such copies shall be addressed to:

   Committee on Open Government Department of State 41 State Street Albany, NY 12231

(h) The person or body designated to determine appeals shall inform the appellant and the Committee on Open Government of its determination in writing within ten business days of receipt of an appeal. The determination shall be transmitted to the Committee on Open Government in the same manner as set forth subdivision (f) of this section.
Section 8 Fees

(a) There shall be no fee charged for:

(1) inspection of records;
(2) search for records; or
(3) any certification pursuant to this part.

(b) Copies may be provided without charging a fee.

(c) Fees for copies may be charged, provided that:

(1) the fee for copying records shall not exceed 25 cents per page for photocopies not exceeding 9 by 14 inches;
(2) the fee for copies of records not covered by paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subdivision, shall not exceed the actual reproduction cost which is the average unit cost for copying a record, excluding fixed costs of the agency such as operator salaries.

Section 9 Public notice

A notice containing the title or name and business address of the records access officers and appeals person or body and the location where records can be seen or copies shall be posted in a conspicuous location wherever records are kept and/or published in a local newspaper of general circulation.

Section 10 Severability

If any provision of these regulations or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect or impair the validity of the other provisions of these regulations or the application thereof to other persons and circumstances.
FOIL MODEL PUBLIC NOTICE YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO SEE PUBLIC RECORDS

The amended Freedom of Information Law, which took effect on January 1, 1978, gives you the right of access to many public records.

Heketi Community Charter School has adopted regulations governing when, where, and how you can see public records. The regulations can be seen at all places where records are kept. According to these regulations, records can be seen and copied at:

Main Office
Heketi Community Charter School
403 Concord Ave Bronx, NY 10454

The following officials will help you to exercise your right to access:

1. Heketi authorized officials who have in the past been authorized to make records available
2. Records Access Officer(s)

   Tenee Hall, Director of Operations
   403 Concord Ave Bronx, NY 10454

If you are denied access to a record, you may appeal through the Board of Trustees as part of the school’s complaint policy.

Matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed; Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer; Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed; Discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;

1. When such law applies to charter school employees, collective negotiations that are within the scope of Article 14 of the Civil Service Law;
2. The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
3. The preparation, grading or administration of examinations; and
4. The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

In no case shall public funds be appropriated during an executive session.

Exemptions

The following matters are exempted from the Open Meetings Law and therefore need not be discussed at open meetings:

1. Judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings (for example, suspension hearings and employee grievance hearings); and
2. Any matter made confidential by state or federal law (for example discussions regarding a particular student’s records or children with handicapping conditions in violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

Enforcement

Any individual wishing to assert a violation of the New York State Open Meetings Law has standing to bring a proceeding in accordance with Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules and/or action for declaratory or injunctive relief.
APPENDIX B
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Under FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, a parent or eligible student has a right to inspect and review the student’s education records and to seek to have them amended in certain circumstances. A parent or eligible student must also provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from education records.
APPENDIX C
Code of Ethics

The Board of Trustees recognizes that sound, ethical standards of conduct serve to increase the effectiveness of school board trustees and their staff as educational leaders in the community. Actions based on an ethical code of conduct promote public confidence and the attainment of school goals. The Board also recognizes its obligation under the General Municipal Law to adopt a code of ethics consistent with the provisions of the General Municipal Law, setting forth the standards of conduct required of all school trustees, officers, and employees.

Therefore, every officer and employee of the Heketi Community Charter School, whether paid or unpaid, including Board Trustees, shall adhere to the following code of conduct:

1. Gifts: The Board welcomes and encourages the writing of letters or notes expressing gratitude or appreciation to staff members. Gifts from children that are principally sentimental in nature and of insignificant financial value may be accepted in the spirit in which they are given.

2. Confidential information: An officer or employee shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of his or her official duties or use such information to further his or her own personal interest. In addition, he/she shall not disclose information regarding any matters discussed in an executive session of the Board, whether such information is deemed confidential or not.

3. Representation before the Board: An officer or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school board.

4. Representation before the Board for a contingent fee: An officer or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school board, whereby the compensation is to be dependent or contingent upon any action by the school with respect to such matter, provided that this paragraph shall not prohibit the fixing at any time of fees based upon the reasonable value of the services rendered.

5. Disclosure of interest in matters before the Board: A member of the Board of Trustees and any officer or employee of the school, whether paid or unpaid, who participates in the discussion or gives official opinion to the Board on any matter before the Board shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of any direct or indirect financial or other private interest he or she has in such matter. The term “interest” means a pecuniary or material benefit accruing to an officer or employee.

6. Investments in conflict with official duties: An officer or employee shall not invest or hold any investment directly in any financial, business, commercial or other private transaction that creates a conflict with his or her official duties.

7. Private employment: An officer or employee shall not engage in, solicit, negotiate for or promise to accept private employment when that employment or services creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge
of his or her official duties.

8. Future employment: An officer or employee shall not, after the termination of service or employment with the Board, appear before the Board or any panel or committee of the Board, in relation to any case, proceeding, or application in which he or she personally participated during the period of his or her service or employment or that was under his or her active consideration. This shall not bar or prevent the timely filing by a present or former officer or employee of any claim, account, demand or suit against the district on his or her own behalf or on behalf of any member of his or her family arising out of any personal injury or property damage or for any lawful benefit authorized or permitted by law.

Distribution of the Code of Ethics

The School Director shall cause a copy of this Code of Ethics to be distributed annually to every officer and employee of the school. Each officer and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment.

Penalties

In addition to any penalty contained in any other provision of law, any person who shall knowingly and intentionally violate any of the provisions of the Board’s code of ethics may be fined, suspended, or removed from office or employment, as the case may be, in the manner provided by law.
FAMILY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK 2019-2020

If you have more than one child attending the school, please complete one Parent Acknowledgement page for each child.

I acknowledge that I have received the Heketi Community Charter School Student and Family Handbook.

I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Handbook, and to understand the school’s policies and procedures.

Today’s Date (mm/dd/yyyy):

Name of Child (Please print):

Grade:

Name of Parent/Guardian (Please print):

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Telephone Number of Parent/Guardian: