



# Odyssey Charter School Scholar and Family Handbook

## 2025–2026

*An Academically Accelerated School of Choice*

### **Mission Statement**

To provide a challenging and positive educational environment that creates an enthusiasm for learning through an innovative, hands-on curriculum while maintaining a focus on the needs of each scholar.

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What is a Charter School? (A School of Choice)

A charter school is a public school that operates under a charter granted by the Department of Education. Within the charter, the school sets forth a number of measurable goals and objectives. In return for that accountability, charter schools may operate with flexibility in terms of personnel decisions and educational methods and material, implementing innovative educational philosophies and curricula. Charter schools promote parental involvement in the most straightforward way: by giving parents and guardians direct say in the substantive issues affecting their scholar's education.

Most charter schools in Georgia are district charter schools, approved by a local school board. However, Odyssey Charter School is approved through the Georgia State Board of Education and the State Charter School Commission. Where this frees the school from any governance by the Coweta or County School Board, it does currently limit the school in terms of funding, as Odyssey does not receive local funding over and above what is required by state law.

Odyssey Charter School operates under a charter, or contract, negotiated between Community Education Association, Inc. dba Odyssey Charter School and the Georgia State Board of Education. This contract outlines how our school will be organized and managed. Odyssey Charter School receives a renewal of its charter every 5 years. A copy of the charter is available for viewing at the Odyssey Charter School web site.

### **Who is Odyssey Charter School?**

We are the Tigers! Our school colors are gold and black, and our mascot is the brave and clever Tiger. Our tiger's name is Ozzy, which was voted on by the students during our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary (the 24-25 school year). You can purchase spirit wear at Coweta Sports

**Odyssey Charter School only enrolls scholars currently residing in Coweta, Meriwether, Carroll, Douglas, Fulton, Fayette, Heard, and Troup Counties.**

### **Website**

Odyssey Charter School's website is [www.odysseycharterschool.net](http://www.odysseycharterschool.net) and is a great way to stay informed of school happenings. Parents can find a link to the school's charter, the school newsletter, ways to donate time to the school, teachers' websites, staff email addresses and much more. It is updated often with upcoming events and important announcements. Additionally, it is an easy way to stay abreast of our school board meetings: the board meeting updates are posted, and there are links to each member of our governing board if a parent wants to express concerns and/or questions about the school's policies.

### **Constructivism**

Odyssey Charter School's curriculum is based upon an approach called constructivism, where scholars assume an active, hands-on role in their own learning with teachers guiding them in the development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. The Constructivism approach is Student Centered. This teaching methodology has recently been adopted by numerous school districts throughout the nation.

## Teachers

Kindergarten	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	Middle School
Ms. Sirmon	Ms. Kennedy	Ms. Milliorn	Mrs. Barsky	Mrs. Addison	Ms. Huddleston – 5/6 Science
Mrs. Harper	Mrs. Steele	Ms. Uhlman	Mrs. Griffies	Ms. Elder	Ms. Jones – 5/6 ELA
Mrs. Snellgrove	Ms. Traylor	Mr. Pifer	Ms. Chadwick	Mrs. Smith	Ms. Stewart – 5/6 Math
					Mr. Adams – 5/6 Social Studies
					Mr. Martin – 7/8 ELA
					Ms. Blansit – 7/8 Social Studies
					Mrs. Moore – 7/8 Science
					Ms. Packer – 7/8 Math

## Title IX Coordinator

Diane Bickerstaff - [dbickerstaff@odysseycharterschool.net](mailto:dbickerstaff@odysseycharterschool.net)  
770-261-6111

## Schedule of Events for 2025-2026 School Year

August 1 <sup>st</sup> – August 5 <sup>th</sup>	Teacher Work Days
August 5 <sup>th</sup>	Orientation By Classroom Appointment
August 6 <sup>th</sup>	First Day of School
September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Labor Day (school holiday)
October 13 <sup>th</sup>	Columbus Day (school holiday)
November 24 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup>	Thanksgiving Break
December 12 <sup>th</sup> -January 5 <sup>th</sup>	Winter Break (school holiday)
January 5 <sup>th</sup>	Teacher Work Day
January 6 <sup>th</sup>	First School Day of the Calendar Year
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	Martin Luther King Day (school holiday)
February 16 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup>	Mid-winter Break (school holiday)
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Teacher Work Day
April 6 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>	Spring Break (school holiday)
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Last Day of School
May 21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Teacher Post-Planning

## DAILY PROCEDURES

### School Hours

Although the majority of our breaks coincide with Coweta County Calendars, please note that several days are different. Important dates are listed in the Schedule of Events or can be accessed on Odyssey Charter School's website. A school calendar is available on the Odyssey Charter School website.

Our school hours do differ from the traditional public school system. Here are the school hours for the current school year:

#### Grades K-3

8:25 am-3:10 pm Monday-Friday

#### Grades 4-8

8:25 am-3:10 pm Monday-Friday

**Buses will leave school at 3:20pm with all grade levels. All scholars still in a classroom at 3:30 will be reported to law enforcement.**

### Transportation

There is limited bus service provided by Odyssey Charter School to and from designated points throughout the county. Parents are responsible for arranging their scholar's transportation to and from school each day.

### Before/After School Programs

(Before or After School Program are not available during 2025/2026 school year)

### Carline

New Carline pickup times have been introduced this year. Please be watching for specific details as the year begins.

**Note: all school scholars left at school after 3:30pm will be reported to law enforcement unless prior written arrangements have been approved by the program director.**

### Daily Arrival and Dismissal

Scholars should plan to arrive at school in time to get to class and be ready to begin the instructional day promptly at 8:25 am. Any scholar arriving before 8:00 am will not be allowed into the building. Any

scholars who are unsupervised prior to 8:00am will be turned over to law enforcement. Scholars are not allowed in their classrooms before 8:00 am without their teacher's consent.

Between 8:00-8:25 am, school rules state that only faculty, staff, scholars, and parents with pre-arranged conferences and/or volunteer assignments enter the building. This is a security procedure and will be strictly enforced. For the first week of the school year however, parents with scholars in the K/1 cluster will be allowed to walk their scholars into the building.

The instructional day ends at 3:10 pm for grades K-3 and 3:10 pm for scholars in grades 4-8. Scholars will remain in the classroom until a parent or guardian arrives. During afternoon dismissal, the same rules apply with regard to building access. Scholars still in classrooms 20 minutes after final dismissal will be reported to law enforcement.

*Note: all elementary school scholars left at school at 3:30pm and all middle school scholars left at school at 3:30pm will be reported to law enforcement unless prior written arrangements have been approved by the program director.*

Parents picking up scholars should not pick up their scholar from inside the building or at the fence line if the scholars are outside. **All scholars must be signed out properly when leaving school outside of normal dismissal. All parents must enter the building through the front door only. No exceptions.**

## **Transportation Changes**

If there are any same day temporary transportation changes, the parent must make all changes to carline pick up in the Carline Application (School Dismissal Manager).

In the case of divorced parents with joint legal custody, please be advised that it is not be school's responsibility to enforce your custody agreement with regard to scholar pick-up days, holiday arrangements, etc.

### **\*\*\*Dismissal Note\*\*\***

Written permission from a parent/guardian must be provided if a scholar is to leave school with someone *not* listed on their emergency contact card.

## **Early Dismissal**

Scholars leaving early are to be signed out by a parent or guardian. If someone other than the parent or guardian is checking the scholar out, see "Dismissal Note" above.

Scholars should *not* be checked out of school on a regular basis. Early departures should be reserved for occasions such as doctor's appointments and other non-routine instances. Parents should not schedule extracurricular activities (dance practice, drama rehearsals, guitar lessons, etc.) for their scholar during the school day, nor should they check their scholars out for lunch and return them to school at the conclusion of the lunch period. These activities will be counted as an unexcused absence. Scholars checked out of school to avoid required curriculum as outlined by the Georgia Department of Education will be counted as unexcused.



We will not release scholars grade K-3 after 2:40pm and grades 4-8 after 2:40pm. This disrupts both the teachers and office staff during their end of day assignments.

## **Tardiness**

The instructional day begins at 8:25 am each morning. Scholars are expected to be in school on time and ready to learn. Scholars arriving to class late miss important preparation time and disrupt the classroom environment .

Scholars not in the classroom at 8:25am are considered tardy. After the 8:25am bell rings, **scholars must be escorted by their parents into the building and signed in at the office.** Failure of a parent/guardian to sign in their scholar will result in an automatic unexcused tardy.

Scholars acquiring more than five (5) tardies during a semester period will have a letter sent home to their parents. Scholars having more than 5 tardies per year will not be considered for perfect attendance or good attendance awards. 5 tardies is the equivalent of 1 unexcused absence. Georgia policy also empowers schools to turn the names of excessively tardy scholars over to the court for possible fines. Scholars having at least 5 unexcused tardies in one academic semester will be placed on probation for the remainder of the school year and may receive in-school suspension. **Should the scholar acquire 10 unexcused tardies throughout the school year, they are subject to referral to the court system O.C.G.A. 20-2-701 and a required report will be sent to the Department of Family Services indicating “educational neglect.”**

## **Attendance**

School attendance is not optional. Not only does regular school attendance increase scholar achievement, Georgia state law requires that all scholars under the age of 16 be enrolled in a public, private, or home school program. Unless a scholar is ill or a family emergency occurs, it is expected that your scholar be at school every day. Scholars should not be absent from school for planned events such as family vacations. These should be scheduled during periods when school is not in session. For reporting purposes, a scholar is deemed to be in attendance for the day if they are present for a minimum:

- Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade - 4.5hrs
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade – 5<sup>th</sup> grade - 5 hours
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade – 8<sup>th</sup> grade - 5.5 hours

Absences will be classified as excused or unexcused. Excused absences are those due to emergencies such as illness, death in the family, or other extreme circumstances. Excused absences are religious holidays, service as a page in the General Assembly, school-sponsored activities, and voter registration. Unexcused absences are all failures to attend school without proper documentation. A written explanation for all absences is required. The written notice should include:

1. Scholar’s first and last name (clearly printed)
2. Date(s) of absence
3. Reason for absence

#### 4. Signature of parent/guardian

If your scholar will be absent more than one day you may contact your scholar's teacher(s) via email and ask for assignments. These assignments will be sent to the front office for pick-up unless another specific arrangement is made between the teacher and the parent. It is not the front office's responsibility to collect this work. **Middle school scholars will have 3 days to make up their work. Elementary scholars will have 6 days to make up their work. No work will be accepted for unexcused days of absence.**

A maximum of three parent notes will be accepted during a school year for illness. A maximum of 5 excused absences will be accepted during a school year including doctor's excuses. Absence in excess of these numbers will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Odyssey Charter School is a public school and, as such, falls under the provisions of the State Charter School Commission and the Georgia Department of Education. Each year, the state sets an attendance goal. As a small school, each scholar denotes a higher percentage of the total than at a large school. **Therefore, any scholar with 5 or more absences can adversely affect the school's chances of making this attendance goal.** Since we operate with a charter that is dependent upon renewal by the state, it is very important that we make this goal in order to increase our chances of being re-chartered.

***A "chronically absent" student is a student who has been absent (excused and unexcused) for 10% or more of the total school days the student has been enrolled in the school or system during a school year. If your child falls within this category they will be reviewed by our attendance review team.***

***Any scholar missing 5 or more school days may be turned over to juvenile authorities for a review of absences and possible violations of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1.***

Odyssey Charter School follows the attendance policies adopted by the Coweta County School System:

- Georgia Legislation and Board policy indicate that truancy charges may be filed in court after five (5) unexcused absences. These charges can result in fines of \$25 to \$100 per unexcused absence and/or imprisonment of up to 30 days.
- Upon returning to school, scholars *must* bring documentation stating the date and reason for absence with the signature of a parent/guardian, doctor, dentist, or judge. The scholar and/or parent have the responsibility to present the written excuse within three (3) school days of the scholar's return to school. The excuses will be filed and saved for the school year. The principal will resolve any question in determining whether an absence is excused or unexcused.
- The school administration will require an excuse from a doctor, dentist, health center, or court after five (5) consecutive absences, or twelve (12) excused absences related to health, except for mitigating circumstances such as a death in the family. Truancy charges may be filed after 12 excused absences unless there is documentation from a doctor.
- Excused and unexcused absences will result in the loss of full credit for class participation unless scholars arrange to make up the work within (3) school days of returning to school. The scholar must complete makeup work and tests within 3 school days of returning to class.
- Scholars will not be called out of class until the parent arrives to sign them out.
- Odyssey Charter School may file a juvenile complaint for excessive tardies and requests for early dismissals. Scholars with more than 5 tardies/early dismissals **WILL NOT** be eligible for the Perfect Attendance Awards at the end of the school year.

## **Scholar Drop Off and Pickup Procedure**

Due to the high number of cars both parked and accessing the parking lot in front of the school, cars are to follow the designated route around the parking lot to either park or join the carpool line. In the afternoon carpool line, staff members will call your scholar from the classroom, and escort your scholar to your car for you. You will not be allowed to enter the school to get your scholar. Due to the growth of the school and the limited space in our parking lot, we must prohibit parents from parking and coming to the door to pick up your scholar. If you walk up to the car line, you will not be allowed to get your scholar. Instead, please proceed through the car line. For safety reasons, parents are also reminded to drive slowly through the parking lot.

**Please do not drop off scholars at the front of the school unless instructed to do so by a staff member.**

## **Visitors/Signing In**

All visitors (including parents) must sign in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge while in the school. This is a security issue and exceptions cannot be made. Our updated check in system requires visitors to check in every time they visit campus .

## **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

Parental participation is a key component to the success of our scholars at Odyssey Charter School. Charter schools promote parental involvement in the most straightforward way: by giving parents and guardians direct say in the substantive issues affecting their scholar's education. Parents are welcome to help out in the classroom, provided they follow Board policy as well as school policy, regarding parental observation and volunteering.

## **Parental Observation and Classroom Assistance**

Parents shall obtain approval from the teacher at least one day in advance if they wish to observe or assist in their scholar's class during instructional time as agreed upon by the teacher. Parents may be allowed to assist in a classroom only with teacher and administrator approval and not to exceed one 45 minute period per year. If a parent does not provide notice, the teacher does have the right to refuse them entry into the classroom. Further, the teacher (or appropriate staff) will have the discretion to remove a parent from the classroom if the parent causes a disruption to scholars or staff, ignores the teacher's instructions, countermands the teacher or if the teacher feels that the parent is hindering the learning process. Parents not abiding by these requests face the possibility of removal from the premises by law enforcement and/or expulsion of their scholar from Odyssey Charter School. Any decision to expel a scholar must be determined at a scheduled Board hearing; however, the Principal may elect to suspend the scholar pending the hearing.

**Please note: all visitors must sign-in with the front office prior to entering the building.**

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

At the beginning of each day, scholars at Odyssey Charter School shall be afforded the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Scholars participating in the recitation of the Pledge will be expected to stand, face the flag, place their hand over their heart and recite the Pledge in unison. Scholars not participating in the recitation of the Pledge may: a.) stand and refrain from reciting the Pledge, or b.) remain seated. Georgia Code Section 20-2-286 states; "Each student in the public schools of this state shall be afforded the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America during each school day. It shall be the duty of each local board of education to establish a policy setting the time and manner for recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Such policy shall be established in writing and shall be distributed to each teacher within the school.

## **Moment of Reflection**

In compliance with Georgia Law, at the opening of school on every school day in each classroom, the Principal or his/her designee shall announce a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than sixty seconds with the participation of all the pupils.

This moment of quiet reflection is not intended to be a religious service or exercise, but shall be considered as an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day.

Teachers and administrators shall not suggest or imply that scholars should or should not use the moment of reflection for prayer, nor shall they deny to any scholar the right to use it for a moment of quiet prayer.

Scholars and/or staff may not under any circumstances use the moment of quiet reflection to audibly pray, singly or in unison.

Teachers & Administration should simply state: "We will now observe our moment of silence."

## **Lunch**

Scholars are expected to bring their lunch every day. Should a scholar arrive at school without a lunch, the scholar's parents will be notified.

Scholars will provide the option to purchase lunches from vendors several from time to time. The cost for each school provided lunch ranges between \$5.00 and \$7.00. Odyssey will not accept lunch deliveries unless it is delivered by the parent.

Parents are not allowed to have lunch with their scholar unless previous arrangements are approved by the administrator. *Scholars will typically eat lunch in their assigned classroom.*

Parents are required to supply a lunch for their scholar. Scholars without lunch will be in violation of the school enrollment agreement.

## **Snacks**

Scholars are allowed to bring a healthy snack to school with them daily. These will be eaten in the classroom during a designated time as assigned by the teacher. A water bottle is recommended for use throughout the day.

## After School Activities

All school-sponsored activities, held after school hours, are under the jurisdiction of the school, and the same rules and regulations govern them as during school hours. Participation in after school activities are at the discretion of administration.

## DRESS CODE - New for 2025-2026 School Year

The Odyssey dress code has been established to support and encourage a standard of respect for all scholars and results in a higher standard of behavior. The dress code guidelines indicate appropriate school dress for normal school days. Odyssey Charter School administration reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and/or make changes during the academic school year.

**School uniforms shall be worn by every scholar in attendance, every day.**

If scholars are in violation of the dress code, they will be given the opportunity to correct the violation during morning announcements. If the scholar needs different clothing, they will be asked to call home for appropriate uniform clothing. The scholar will wait in the In-School detention room until proper uniform apparel is delivered. The scholar may receive disciplinary consequences as determined by the administrative staff for being out of uniform. Parents or scholars who have questions about financial restrictions, a garment's appropriateness or who would like to request an exemption for religious reasons should contact the Principal.

### Section 1: Uniform Attire

**Shirts:** White Oxford uniform shirts with school logo, uniform polo shirts are Black, Gold and White must be purchased from J&R Clothing. Scholars may wear both short and long sleeved approved logo shirts. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. **Only Logo uniform shirts are permitted to be worn on campus.** Shirts from other vendors than J&R Clothing are considered "Out of Uniform".

**Jackets:** Only Jackets with the school logo are allowed on campus. These can be purchased at J&R Clothing or French Toast School Wear. **No hooded sweat shirts or hooded apparel are to be worn. No winter jackets or hooded sweatshirts on campus. Outer jackets must be purchased as part of the school uniform and must have the school logo. No exception.**

**School Logo Sweat Shirts:** have been added to the uniform. School Sweat Shirts must be worn with a collared shirt underneath. Sweat Shirts can be ordered through Coweta Sports in Newnan. *(No Hooded Sweatshirts will be allowed).*

**J&R Clothing 600 W. Lanier Ave., Fayetteville , GA 30214 Phone: 770-461-3440**  
**HTTP://www.jandrclothing.com**

**Slacks/Shorts:** Uniform pants, skirts, shorts, jumpers or skorts must be Khaki or Plaid and can be obtained from the vendor of your choice. **Please Note: All Grades pants must be Khaki only.** No black pants are allowed in any grade. All pants in grades 4-8 must have a black/brown belt. Plain white or black tights may be worn under skirts, skorts or dresses. Baggy pants or cargo pants, **will not** be permitted. Shorts, skirts or dresses must be finger tipped length or longer. All pants to be worn at the waist, **no Sagging.** (Khaki pants can be purchased from any vender or source).

**Socks/Shoes:** Low cut black or white tennis shoes are worn with the uniform along with clean socks. Appropriate socks must be worn with the uniform, and may *not* be a distraction.

**Hair:** Girls may wear headbands or bows to match their uniform. Hair designs are *not* permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, shapes, sports logos or Mohawks. No hair wraps, hats, or head coverings except of religious standards.

**In General:** Boys and girls may *not* wear body piercing other than earrings or studs in their earlobes.  
No chains on wallets or chain belts are allowed at any time.  
No wheeled back packs or tow behind cases are allowed in the halls or classes.

This dress code represents the minimum standard for attire. Additional clothing items such as blazers with logo, sweaters with logo, and fleece jackets with logo and oxford shirts with logo can be added to the scholar's attire, but must be purchased from J&R clothing.

- **Community Attire** - All scholars must have a minimum of 1 black polo shirt with the Odyssey Charter School logo and 1 pair of khaki uniform pants, skorts, or skirt in Khaki. These items must be of good quality for scholars to appropriately represent Odyssey Charter School in the community.

## **Section 2. NON-UNIFORM ATTIRE FOR SCHOOL SANCTIONED FUNCTIONS**

Odyssey Charter School uniforms may not be required for all Odyssey Charter School functions i.e. athletic events, parties, and/or social gatherings. Scholars should wear clothing that is clean and suitable for school activities. Keeping in mind weather conditions, location and type of event adhering to the following:

- If a scholar chooses to wear shorts, dress or a skirt, the shorts, dress or skirt must be of appropriate length. The appropriate measurement will be determined when the scholar is standing erect, hands by his/her side, fingertips not extending below the hem of the clothing, maintaining modesty at all times. Biker shorts, spandex apparel, excessively form fitting shirts, shorts, dress, pants, or skirts are not allowed.
- All shirts, blouses, and dresses must have sleeves. Shirts and blouses must not be excessively long and should not be a safety concern or a disruption. If a shirt is too long, it must be tucked. Clothing should not expose areas of stomach, side, or back. Oversized clothing is not allowed.

- Pants must be appropriately sized for width and hemmed to a safe length. Underwear should not be visible. Pant size should not hinder ability to move about easily and safely. Pants must be fastened securely at the waist. **Pants may not have holes or the appearance of holes.**
- No items of clothing are allowed that may be affiliated with gang activity, as defined by administration and law enforcement.
- No "hardware chains" may be worn as belts, wallet chains, or jewellery. No chains of this type are allowed on school campus or at any school function. No hats, bandanas, or headbands may be worn or displayed during the instructional day. Girls can wear head bands or bows that match their uniform.
- No items may be worn with inappropriate pictures, symbols, or lettering. This includes but is not limited to depictions of alcohol, drugs, or weapons. Statements that might be deemed offensive to others are prohibited. No writing is allowed on the seat of pants or skirts.
- Pajamas and/or house shoes or slippers may not be worn to school unless previously approved by administration or a teacher for a sanctioned school event.
- Shoes with wheels may not be worn to school. Other shoes that may present a safety hazard should not be worn. No shoes with flashing lights.
- All dance attire must be modest. Excessively low cut dresses or dresses with no back are unacceptable. If a scholar is in doubt about the item of clothing, he/she should discuss it with the Administration before wearing the item. Formal dance and formal social activities will have their own dress code as appropriate for the occasion

### **Section 3. IMMEDIATE DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS**

- Hoodies worn in the building are an immediate dress code violation
- Jackets with hoods worn in the building are a dress code violation
- Any outer jacket or outer clothing without the school logo is a dress code violation
- Halter-tops, tank tops, fishnet tops and midriff blouses.
- Excessively large or baggy clothing.
- Tops and dresses with spaghetti straps.
- Muscle shirts.
- Shirts that advertise alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- Short shorts, dresses and skirts (Your index finger should touch the hem of the shorts).
- Shorts covered by a full-length shirt.
- Bicycle pants or shorts.
- Yoga pants or shorts
- **Clothing with open holes.**

- Clothing that is suggestive, advocates disobedience to society or causes a possible disruption to the school.
- Clothing or attire with statements or symbols which might be deemed offensive to others, violent or of a threatening nature.
- Shoes with cleats and/or wheels (heels) or flashing lights. Gliders, flip-flops, house slippers, house shoes or boots.
- Hardware chains.
- Caps, hats, visors, any other headgear, and sunglasses.
- Pants not worn at the waist, **No Sagging**

**School Uniforms are required for all grade levels, every day**

**Violations are determined at the discretion of the administration. If scholars are in violation of the dress code, they will be given the opportunity to correct the violation during morning announcements. If they fail to correct the violation, they may be asked to call home for appropriate clothing and/or may receive disciplinary consequences as determined by the administrative staff. Scholars awaiting changes of clothing will wait in the In-School Suspension room.**

## **Face Covering**

No longer allowed unless it is required per our nurses' recommendations at which point a medical mask will be given.

## **Addressing of Staff Members**

Scholars should address teachers and administrators as Mr., Ms., or Mrs., followed by their last name. Scholars should address other Odyssey Charter School staff and administrators as Mr., Ms., or Mrs., followed by either their first or their last name. **Failure to do so will be considered a code of conduct violation.**

## **Hall Passing**

All scholars are required to sign out when leaving the classroom. This includes trips to the office, restroom, library, or any other reason requiring the scholar to leave the classroom. Scholars leaving the classroom without permission are subject to receiving a Level 1 discipline infraction. Scholars will display a Hall Pass when made available by the classroom teacher.

## **Scholar Records**

School records include all materials directly related to a scholar, which the school maintains. Odyssey Charter School will maintain scholar records in a confidential manner and will comply with all state and federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, concerning the publication and dissemination of scholar records. Access to a scholar's educational record shall be given to natural or adoptive parents, legal guardians, or individuals acting as a parent or guardian in the absence of the parent or



persons with a Consent Form for Non-Parent to Receive and Review Educational Records and Information signed by the legal guardians of the scholar.

***Step-parents do not have access to scholar records without the written consent of both biological parents unless the scholar has been legally adopted. In the absence of legal documentation to the contrary, non-custodial parents retain access rights. Parents/legal guardians have access to their scholar's school records .***

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (F.E.R.P.A.)**

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (the “Act”), you have a right to:

- 1) Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a scholar who is your scholar, or in the case of a scholar who is eighteen (18) or older, or those who are emancipated, your own education records. Parents or eligible scholars should submit to the Principal a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Principal will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- 2) Request the amendment of the scholar's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the scholar's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible scholars should write the Principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the scholar's privacy or other rights. If the Principal decides not to amend the record, he will notify the parents or eligible scholars of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
- 3) Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the scholar's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or scholar serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee.) A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the scholar seeks or intends to enroll.
- 4) Odyssey Charter School has designated the following information as directory information:
  - a) Scholar's name, address and telephone number; e-mail address
  - b) Scholar's date and place of birth;
  - c) Scholar's participation in official school clubs and sports;
  - d) Dates of attendance at the Odyssey Charter School, and
  - e) Awards received during the time enrolled in Odyssey Charter School.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible scholar, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the Principal in writing within 5 days after officially enrolling in school.

5) You are also notified that from time to time scholars may be photographed, videotaped, recorded or interviewed by the news media at school or at some school activity. If you, as a parent/guardian object to your scholar being photographed, videotaped or interviewed, you must notify your scholar's principal, in writing, of your objection within 5 days of enrolling the scholar.

6) File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning the alleged failures by Odyssey Charter School to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated thereunder. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

### **McKinney-Vento**

Charter schools that are LEAs or schools within LEAs must implement the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act just as any other LEA or school to ensure that students experiencing homelessness have access to and can succeed in their education. Services include those for students who become homeless while attending a charter school as well as for students experiencing homelessness who wish to enroll in a charter school.

### **OPEN RECORDS REQUEST**

Please make all open records requests to the school registrar's office, Records Retention Specialist at Odyssey Charter School, 14 Saint John Circle, Newnan Ga. 302656

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990), or disability (Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA")) of programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. To access coordinators for the above statutes and appropriate complaint procedures, please refer to Title IX Compliance below: Title IX, VI, 504 and ADA Compliance It shall be the policy of the Odyssey Charter School Board of Education that no person (scholar or employee) shall on the basis of sex, race, national origin, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity or in recruitment for employment, and related benefits. The Human Resources Manager will be the employee responsible for coordination of efforts to assure compliance with Title IX, VI, 504 and ADA mandates with regard to employed personnel. The principal of the school has been designated as the official responsible for coordination of efforts in his/her school to comply with requirements of Title IX, VI, 504 and ADA with regard to scholars.

## **NOTICE OF RIGHTS OF SCHOLARS AND PARENTS UNDER SECTION 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled scholars have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled scholars. These records will be reviewed and updated annually prior to the start of the school year. Medical records will be documented annually.

The implementing regulations for Section 504 provide the following rights:

1. Your scholar has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled scholars.
2. Your scholar has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled scholars or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled scholar.
3. Your scholar has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled scholars to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs.
4. Your scholar has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled scholars.
5. Your scholar has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your scholar.
6. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 504 regulations.
7. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations.
8. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your scholar, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities.
9. If your scholar is eligible under Section 504, your scholar has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement.
10. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your scholar.
11. You have the right to examine your scholar's educational records.
12. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your scholar's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney.
13. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school Parent Scholar Handbook.
14. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure.
15. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights

16. Should you wish to file a grievance regarding a 504 process or decision, please see Addressing Concerns, on page 31 of this manual.

### **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

The PPRA protects the rights of parents and eligible scholars to:

- Consent before scholars are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”): if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education: political affiliations or beliefs of the scholar or scholar’s parent; mental or psychological problems of the scholar or scholar’s family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the scholar or parents; or income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a scholar out of: any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a scholar, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from scholars for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use: protected information surveys of scholars; instruments used to collect personal information from scholars for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum. As with FERPA rights, PPRA rights transfer from the parents to a scholar who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under Georgia law. (For more information on the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), visit the U.S. Department of Education’s website at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcoppa/index.html>)

### **RIGHT TO KNOW**

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act, parents may request the following information:

1. Whether the student’s teacher-
  - a. Has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - b. Is teacher under emergency or provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
  - c. Is teacher in the field of discipline depicted on the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you have questions, please contact the principal at Odyssey Charter School (see the front of the handbook for contact information) .

### **No Unauthorized Recording**

Scholars and parents are not allowed to record teachers, classrooms, other students or operate any recording device without expressed written consent and the permission of the principal. **Unauthorized recording of any such event will be considered a level 4 discipline violation and will lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from Odyssey Charter School. This includes all and any type of recording device or a device with the ability to record audio and/or video.**

### **Divorced Parents**

A parent who is divorced should provide the school with a complete copy of the divorce decree with the legal custody arrangements for their scholar. If any additional court proceedings take place while the scholar is at Odyssey, the school must receive a copy of this documentation. Oral information from one parent, a letter from one parent's attorney or a request filed by the court but not acted upon does not constitute legal documentation.

If the two parents have joint legal custody, both parents have the same rights as far as access to the scholar, ability to see school records, attend conferences, etc. It is not the job of school personnel to enforce custody arrangements for parents who are divorced or no longer together but who have joint legal custody.

If a non-custodial parent wishes to receive a copy of report cards, they will need to provide the registrar with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and a duplicate copy of the scholar's report card will be sent to them.

### **Scholar Internet Use**

Each scholar is required to have a signed Terms and Conditions for use of the Internet form on file in the office before the beginning of the school year. A copy of that consent form can be found at the front office.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost and found clothing items are kept in the cabinet in the front of the building for scholars to look through. Valuable items will be kept in the office. All items not collected by the end of the last school day prior to winter break and again by the end of the last day of the school year will be donated to charity.

Any items brought to school from home are the responsibility of the scholar. Odyssey is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Lost or stolen items will not be replaced or reimbursed.

**\*\*To help us, please put your scholar's name on and inside all items. \*\***

## **Harassment-Free Environment**

Odyssey Charter School is dedicated to maintaining an environment that is free from harassment because of an individual's race, color, sex, religion or disability. The school will act promptly and investigate all complaints formal or informal, verbal or written, of said harassment. If it determines that unlawful harassment has occurred, Odyssey will act promptly to appropriately discipline any scholar, teacher, parent or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy. Allegations of such harassment should be made to the Principal. Filing of a complaint will not affect the individual's status, future grades, or educational decisions. The right to confidentiality of both parties will be respected until a complete investigation has been conducted and corrective action has been determined.

## **Harassment of School and Staff by Parents or Adults**

It is the policy of the Odyssey Charter School Board of Education to support O.C.G.A § 20-2-1181 which prohibits conduct which disrupts a school and O.C.G.A § 20-2-1182 which prohibits parents from unbraiding, insulting or abusing public school employees in the presence of pupils. Disruptive individuals may be immediately removed from the School grounds and restrictions may be placed on their presence on School grounds in the future. The School reserves the right to refer the situation to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. These provisions are equally applied to statements on social media or in public forums.

## **Telephone Usage**

The phones in the school are for business use only. Scholars may not use the classroom phones without teacher permission. In an emergency, scholars may request permission to use the classroom phone. A parent wishing to speak with a teacher may leave a message during the school day.

**Scholars are not to have a personal phone device at school for any reason. Teachers will report any and all cell phone devices to administration for appropriate disciplinary action.**

## **Emergency Information Cards**

Emergency Information Cards are needed for each scholar in our school. They list parents' home and work telephone numbers, doctors' names and numbers, and persons to contact in emergencies if parents cannot be reached. In medical emergencies, the school may only give first aid and must be able to contact someone who can make vital decisions about medical attention. Even sending a scholar to the hospital requires parental consent. When a scholar is sick or injured, it may be necessary to contact an adult other than his/her parent/guardian who can assume responsibility for your scholar. It is essential that this person be within a reasonable distance from the school and can pick the scholar up. If there are any changes in this information, parents are asked to contact the school as soon as possible.

## **Family Emergency**

The office will take a message to your scholar's teacher and arrange for any early pickup or other arrangements that need to be made in the case of a personal emergency. **Scholars will not be called from the classroom to receive telephone calls.**

## **Inclement Weather**

It is Odyssey Charter School's policy to close when the Coweta County School System closes due to weather emergencies. If school systems are forced to close due to hurricanes, snow, ice, etc., tune into a local or metro Atlanta news outlet. If the announcement is made that Coweta County Schools are closed, then it is safe to assume that Odyssey Charter School is also closed. The school will also place the information on the school website and send out notification through e-mail, phone and text. However, if certain individual schools are closed within Coweta County (ex. the power is out at White Oak E.S.), then you should not assume that Odyssey Charter School is closed. If, for any reason, a decision is made to close the school due to a localized emergency, we will contact media outlets and begin to contact parents directly. If you are ever in doubt as to our status, please call the school for additional information.

## **Scholar Abuse and Neglect**

Under Georgia law, school employees are mandated reporters and as such are required to report suspected cases of scholar abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services. This law, which was designed for the protection of the scholar, provides immunity from civil or criminal liability in connection to reports, unless malicious intent is proven. **Scholars left at the school after 3:30pm with no ride home will be turned over to law enforcement for their protection.**

## **Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior**

(a) Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

(b) Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

(c) Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

## **ODYSSEY CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD**

The role of the School Board at Odyssey Charter School is to:

- Uphold and revise the school charter.
- Adopt, amend and implement board by-laws, internal board policies and procedures consistent with the charter.
- Adopt and amend board policies.
- Ensure adequate resources for the school's programs and administrator.
- Oversee the fiscal management of school budgets.
- Secure and maintain the school site.
- Hire, support, supervise and evaluate the Superintendent.
- Approve recommendations for hiring contracts of school faculty and staff.
- Oversee school and parent participation structure.
- Review the effectiveness of school programs.
- Represent the school in the larger community.
- Maintain standing board committees.
- Approve the yearly budget for the school.
- Review Monthly the *Interim Financial Statement* - (OCGA 20-2058)

The Superintendent reports directly to the Odyssey School Board and is responsible for the Academic, Financial and Operational metrics which appear in the State Charter School Commission Frameworks.

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, developing procedures, and carrying out the policies of the Board.

According to the by-laws as amended in August 2015, the Board is made up of up to thirteen voting members and will include parents, and interested members of the community. Each Board member serves a three-year term with elections being held in September.

Board members have authority over school policies only when they are in session as a Board. Board members do not gain any special privileges, compensation, etc. nor do they have authoritative power at the school as individuals.

### **Parent Questions or Concerns**

Parents with a question or concern about policy or procedure that they wish to be brought to the Board, may contact the board directly by email on the Board Member's link on the school's website. Please contact a Board member in writing before the scheduled Board meetings, so the issue can be placed on the agenda. The parent may wish to be present at that meeting so as to provide additional information if needed. However, it is not necessary to attend.

Parents who have questions or concerns regarding their scholar's education should begin by addressing the matter with the member of the Odyssey Charter School staff closest to their scholar's class - the teacher. Should speaking with the teacher not resolve the matter, the parent may then choose to address the matter



with the Principal. If the matter regards school procedures, then the Principal's decision is the final word on the matter. If speaking with the Principal does not resolve the issue and it regards a matter of overall school policy, then it would be appropriate to speak with a member of the Board about bringing it to the Board for discussion.

Sample situation 1: A teacher informs her class that any scholar having three infractions in a month will not be able to take part in a pizza party. A scholar gets their third infraction for the month and has to go to another classroom to do work during the pizza party. The parent disagrees with this policy and wants to speak to someone about it.

*In this case, the parent should approach the teacher. This is a classroom rule, not a Board policy. Therefore, it would not be an appropriate avenue to take this matter to the Board for discussion.*

Sample situation 2: A teacher brings a scholar to the office for talking in an offensive manner to her. The Principal speaks with the teacher and with the scholar. The Principal then chooses to suspend the scholar for two days. The parent is informed of the suspension and wishes to speak with someone about it.

*In this case, the parent should speak with the classroom teacher if they are questioning the particulars of the incident or may approach the Principal with questions regarding the actual suspension. The decision to implement a short-term suspension is entirely at the discretion of the principal. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to approach the Board regarding this suspension. However, if the parent wanted to question the issue of whether to give the Principal discretion to suspend a scholar or whether this type of offense should warrant a suspension, this question would fall to the Board as it is related to the school's overall discipline policy.*

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Clinic**

The purpose of the school clinic is to provide first aid for minor injuries and illnesses, administer medication, and notify parents if specific symptoms appear serious. Parents are expected to arrange for their scholar to go home immediately if the clinic personnel determine the illness to be contagious or if a fever persists.

If a scholar has a fever above medical normal (98.6 F) or vomits during the night, the scholar should be kept home a full 24 hours before returning to school.

When a scholar becomes ill or injured during the school day the clinic will determine continued attendance for the day.

### **Contagious Conditions**

As a courtesy to the other scholars, parents are asked to contact the school when their scholar contracts a contagious condition. This includes strep throat, head lice, and pink eye. Parents in the affected classroom

can then be notified. Any scholar with a fever of 100.4(F) or greater will be quarantined and the parents will be called to pick up their scholar from school.

### **INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

- The Principal must be immediately notified if a student or employee is reasonably suspected of suffering from an infectious or communicable disease. Upon receiving notification, the Principal must immediately inform clinic personnel and public health officials to determine the appropriate actions.
- The employee or the student and his/her parent will immediately be notified and counseled on the need for appropriate medical evaluation.
- If appropriate, the Principal or his or her designee will consult with the student's or employee's physician or a public health official knowledgeable about the disease. When necessary to obtain a reasonable medical opinion as to the contagiousness of a disease, the student or employee may be removed from the school or employment for a period not to exceed 10 days.
- After consultation with public health officials and once the student or employee's medical condition has been determined, the Principal or his or her designee shall determine whether reasonable accommodations will allow the student to return to his/her original or an alternate education setting or will allow an employee to perform the essential functions of his/her job without undue financial hardship or administrative burdens.
- The student or employee will be excluded only if it is determined that, after consultation with public health officials, the communicable disease is of such a nature or at a state that the individual may pose a significant risk to others and should not remain in the educational setting.
- In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of communicable disease, the School will provide personal protective equipment and undertake all standard and necessary precautions based on CDC recommendations and guidelines, as appropriate.
- Neither the Board nor school employees shall disclose medical information about a student or employee with a communicable disease without the consent of the individual or his or her parent or guardian, whichever is applicable, or only as required by law or court order.

### **Medication**

- The school clinic does not provide medication for scholars except in the case of an emergency.
- A Medication Consent Form must be filled out for any scholar to receive either prescription or over the counter medication.
- All prescription and non-prescription medications will be retained in the clinic to be administered by, or in the presence of, school personnel.
- All prescription medications must be in the original container with the scholar's name, physician's name, name of the drug, and dosage instructions.
- All over-the-counter medications must be the original containers, labeled with the scholar's name and dosage.
- Medications are not to remain with the scholar, except in cases of scholars who require prescription asthma inhalers or Epi-pens and have permission to self-medicate.
- Home Schooling of scholars is only applicable when a medical reason has been established by a licensed doctor in the state of Georgia. A specific diagnosis and required time of home schooling will be required.

## School Safety

School safety is of the utmost concern at Odyssey Charter School. **During the school day, there is only one entrance to the school to be used – by visitors - the front door.** There is also an interior door with an electronic lock that remains closed during the school day and you must be signed in on the computer system and buzzed in through the security door. There is a phone intercom system at the school, and all teachers also use walkie-talkies to enhance communication. The school also features a 24 hour monitored alarm system. **No visitors will be allowed on campus unless cleared by the front office.**

## Emergency Procedures

In compliance with state law, Odyssey Charter School has developed specific plans for situations such as fire, tornadoes, and other emergency situations. Drills are conducted throughout the year to prepare the staff and scholars for these situations. Emergency lights are located throughout the building as are sprinklers and exit signs.

Odyssey Charter School has also developed specific plans for situations including natural disasters, bomb threats and unauthorized visitor/ hostage circumstances.

During emergency evacuations, all families must have a plan to pick-up their scholar from school. Emergency contacts must be registered with the school so all scholars can be safely evacuated during a school day emergency. Scholars left on campus during an emergency evacuation will be turned over to law enforcement as teachers and staff will also be evacuated from the school.

## Alcohol and Controlled Substances Testing and Drug Free School Zone

Odyssey adopts the following policy, effective on the date that the policy is adopted by the Board. Odyssey values the health and well-being of all scholars. The Governing Board believes that the use or possession of alcohol and other drugs is harmful to their physical, emotional and mental health and has an adverse impact on instruction.

- Application of Policy to Scholars

This policy shall apply to all scholars and compliance with this policy is mandatory as per requirements for the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989. It shall further be the policy of School to provide age appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs, which address the legal, social and health consequences of drug and alcohol use and provide information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure in the use of illicit drugs or alcohol for all scholars in the system. These programs shall provide information about the drug and alcohol counseling rehabilitation and reentry programs available to scholars by the school counselor and/or outside recommended resources.

- Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages, Stimulant Drugs, Vaporizers or Electronic Cigarettes:

A scholar shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any narcotic drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, and amphetamines, barbiturates, cocaine, marijuana, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, look-alike drugs, or intoxicants of any kind:

1. On the school grounds during and immediately before or immediately after school hours
2. On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by any school group
3. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event
4. In-route to and from school or school activity on buses acquired for school activities.

Use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician should not be considered a violation of this regulation. All prescription drugs shall be kept in the original container and housed in the nurse's office according to administrative procedures.

### **Procedures for Handling Substance Abuse**

Procedures for handling incidents in the schools involving the possession, sale, and/or use of drugs, alcoholic beverages or any other behavior affecting substances shall be as follows:

- The police and the parents of any involved scholars shall be contacted immediately and an initial investigation will be conducted. During the investigation, the Principal or other authorized school leader shall have the discretion to temporarily suspend the scholar during the investigation.
- If the scholar was found to have possessed, used or sold drugs, alcoholic beverages or drug paraphernalia, the Principal or other authorized school leader has the discretion to continue to suspend the scholar or expel the scholar through Odyssey's disciplinary process listed in the handbook. The parents of the scholar may appeal this decision following the boards adopted grievance policy.
- The school will make every effort to help scholars experiencing a problem with alcohol or drugs through counseling and drug abuse education.

### **Tobacco Products and Tobacco Use Prohibited (including e-Cigarettes and Vaporizing Tools)**

No scholar, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product at any time, including non-school hours 24 hours per day, seven days per week:

- In any building, facility or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by Odyssey Charter School or any employee of the school.
- On any school grounds and property-including athletic fields and parking lots-owned, leased, rented or chartered by Odyssey Charter School.
- No vehicle being used by an Odyssey staff member to transport Odyssey scholars from the school to Odyssey official events, unless the staff member's relatives are the only Odyssey scholars in the vehicle.

- At any school-sponsored or school-related event on-campus or off-campus.

No scholar is permitted to possess any tobacco product or liquid derivative. The policy may permit tobacco products to be included in instructional or research activities in public school buildings if the activity is conducted or supervised by the faculty member overseeing the instruction or research and the activity does not include smoking, chewing or otherwise ingesting the tobacco product .

Tobacco and tobacco-related products are defined to include cigarettes, candy cigarettes, chewing tobacco, blunts, blunt wraps, pre-wrapped blunt cones and tubes, cigars, cigarillos, bidis, pipes, cigarette packages or smokeless tobacco containers, electronic cigarettes, lighters, ash trays, key chains, t-shirts, coffee mugs and any other item containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products. Tobacco use includes smoking, chewing, dipping or any other use of tobacco products or liquid derivative.

## **SCHOLAR AFFAIRS**

### **General Expectations**

We believe that all scholars want to enjoy school and learn, want to be respected and treated with dignity, and want to be loyal to teachers and classmates. We also believe that all teachers care about their scholars, expect scholars to achieve, desire success, strive to be effective, and want scholars to enjoy learning.

Kindergarteners should be potty trained before starting school. For liability and health reasons, teachers and teacher assistants are not responsible for changing diapers, Pull-ups, or training pants. Scholars who need assistance after soiling themselves should go to the nurse. The scholar's parent will be contacted to arrange a change of clothes (if needed) and to change the scholar if necessary. Parents of younger scholars may consider putting an extra change of clothes in their backpack.

Parents of scholars with health issues that prevent complete toilet training should provide documentation of this situation to the administration and the school nurse upon enrollment. Special education scholars having this issue addressed in their IEP will be exempt from this rule.

### **Homework**

We believe that homework should have a purpose and be related to what the scholar is learning in the classroom. Homework will assist in the development of mastery in specific subject areas. Homework completion is required.

### **Mandatory Homework Schedule**

Odyssey Charter School is an Academically Accelerated School of choice and as such, homework is a requirement. The following chart is a general guideline for family planning. Specific activities and core subjects will vary with classes;

### Home Work

Kindergarten	10 minutes
First Grade	10 minutes
Second Grade	20 minutes
Third Grade	20 minutes
Fourth Grade	45 minutes
Fifth Grade	45 minutes
Sixth Grade	60 minutes
Seventh Grade	60 minutes
Eighth Grade	60 minutes

### Reading

10 Minutes
10 Minutes
20 Minutes
20 Minutes
30 minutes of writing
30 minutes of writing
30 minutes of writing
30 minutes of writing
30 minutes of writing

## **Academic Grade Rubric**

Odyssey Charter School is an *Academically Accelerated School of Choice* and as such will hold to a specific grading policy. The following chart will be used to establish the grade tiers and assessment grades for the end of quarter and semester grades. Teachers have some latitude in individualized assignments; however the quarter and semester grades will always follow the grade chart.

## **Grade Chart for Quarter and Semester**

A	90% and above
B	80% and above
C	70% and above (Minimum Standard)

Any Odyssey Charter School scholar receiving less than a 70% in any two academic subjects will automatically be retained in their current grade level, pending review by the grade level committee. Approval must be given prior to moving such a scholar to the next grade level.

All scholars must be in good academic standing to participate in any extra or co-curricular activities. A “C” average or better is required for all field trips and sports activities.

## **Late Homework or Assignments**

*No Credit for Late Assignments*

*No Credit for Failing to Participate in Classroom Assignments*

When a scholar has an excused absence, the following time will be allowed to make up missed classroom work and homework assignments:

Middle School Scholars (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade) – 3 days to turn in missed work

Elementary School Scholars – 6 days to turn in missing work

Unexcused absences will receive no credit for the classroom assignments missed that day.

## **Lost Books/Agendas**

Scholars who have lost agendas will be able to purchase a replacement agenda at the cost of \$8. Scholars who lose textbooks or library books (or who return them in a damaged condition) will be responsible for the replacement cost of a new book. *Parents should be reviewing agendas and signing in the appropriate place, nightly.*

## **Summer Book Program**

At the conclusion of the school year all scholars will be given an opportunity to use a selection of books to read over the summer. These books are selected for each grade level as the first assignment for the next school year. Parents should read and discuss these books with their scholar, and complete the assignment package supplied with the text. Teachers will enter this assignment sheet in their grade book as the first grade of the new grade level for the scholar. These books are yours to keep.

## **Communication with Family**

Families receive information through daily e-mails. Other communication comes to parents regularly through letters, surveys, etc. that are brought home via the scholars or sent electronically. Parents are encouraged to access *Infinite campus* on a regular basis to monitor their scholar's grades. Grades are updated on a regular schedule. Teachers utilize a number of communication tools such as Classroom DoJo, Google Classroom and other software to give parents daily updates and progress on scholar's assignments and progress. Please contact your teacher for specifics on how their classroom is organized for this communication.

## **Addressing Concerns**

Scholars/Parents who are concerned about a specific classroom situation should first speak to the teacher. If the issue is not resolved, the scholar/parent should then approach the Principal of the school. Parents should inquire with the front desk about scheduling appointments with the appropriate parties. Since Odyssey's first and foremost priority is the scholars, staff members will be engaged in instructional activities from bell to bell. Should you find that your concerns are not being addressed by the teacher or administrator on campus, there is a grievance procedure detailed on the schools website. A grievance will be reviewed by the Community Education Association Board of Education and a reply to your grievance will be returned to you in writing. *Please schedule teacher meetings in advance. Impromptu meetings cause teachers to miss important scheduled meetings and responsibilities.*

## **Behavior Guides**

Teachers notify parents of each scholar's behavior through the use of weekly correspondence. If indicated, these behavior guides are to be reviewed and signed by a parent, and returned the next day. Teachers will also contact the scholar's parents if there have been any significant behavior issues within the classroom. These behavior guides are the basis of a scholar's conduct grade.

## **Cell Phones, Cell phone Devices, Electronic Readers, etc.**

Scholars are **NOT** permitted to bring cell phones, smart watches or cell phone devices to school. Scholars having cell phones on campus during the school day (including before and after school) or caught operating cell phones, or a cell phone device will be suspended. Parents will need to come to school and pick up their scholars and their phone. These methods of communication violate the Odyssey Board of Education Communication Policy. If a scholar needs to make an emergency phone call, they are to ask their teacher and use the classroom phone. If a parent needs to get a message to their scholar they can call the office and we will deliver the message. If it is imperative that the scholars answer the phone, we will bring the scholar to the office for the call. **No “Personal Electronic Devices” of any type are to be used during school hours for any reason. Recording of teachers or classmates will result in a level IV discipline violation up to and including expulsion. Scholars are Not permitted to bring electronic reading devices such as Nooks, Kindles, Smart Watches or alike.**

“Personal Electronic Device” – any portable electronic device capable of transmitting, receiving, or accessing communicators, data, or media – includes but is not limited to smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, headphones, or other devices with capabilities like wireless communication, internet access, messaging, gaming, social media access, or data transmission. It does not apply to school equipment of the same types that are made available for student use (HB 340).

## **Gum**

Because of health concerns (choking) and possible damage to the school building, no scholar will be permitted to chew gum in the school building or on the school grounds.

## **Gameboys, Legos, Yu-gi-oh, Pokémon cards and Spinners**

Scholars should not bring Gameboys or other electronic hand- held devices, Legos, Yu-gi-oh cards, Pokémon cards or Fidget Spinners to school (even to use in before school or after school). These items are subject to confiscation by the teacher should they be brought to school.

## **Field Trips**

- All scholars who participate in co-curricular activities must be in good academic standing.
- All scholars who leave school on a bus must return to school on the same bus, for all field trips.
- Any scholar who has had a disciplinary issue in the current semester or previous disciplinary issues must have the principal’s permission to attend any co-curricular activity.

**Community attire is required on all field trips for all grade levels. Clean black shirt with Odyssey logo and Khaki pants will always be worn on field trips.**

Field trips are educational excursions that are preplanned learning experiences, related to the curriculum and followed by an evaluation activity. Written parental permission is necessary prior to each excursion for a scholar to participate. Parents will be notified in advance of upcoming field trips.



If a parent or family member wishes to accompany a class on a field trip as a chaperone, a successful background check must be completed and on file at least two weeks prior to the field trip. Failure to have this information on file will result in the family member not being allowed to attend the field trip. In this case, no money will be refunded.

In some cases, these field trips are to public places and parents and/or family members arrange to meet their scholar at the field trip, although they are neither signed up to be chaperones nor do they have the required approved background check on file. **We actively discourage parents and/or family members from doing this as it can create a problem since these people are not approved to chaperone the trip and will not be allowed to chaperone scholars (not even their own) nor will they be allowed to take part in any specially arranged group activities (like a special behind the scenes tour or educational lesson for example).** Failure to adhere to this provision will result in the scholar not participating in future co-curricular activities.

Scholars who have had an out of school suspension of two days or more during the current 9-week grading period will not be allowed to take part in field trips during that term.

At the discretion of the principal, participation in field trips may be dependent upon a parent accompanying the scholar on the field trip. In such a case, the parent will be expected to ride the bus with the scholar and pay the field trip fee. The scholar will not be able to attend the field trip if the parent is not available.

Field trips are a required component of the curriculum and as such attendance is required. Students not in attendance for the field trip will receive an unexcused absence for that day.

### **Grades K-3**

Scholars will not be excluded from field trips based upon behavior, except as noted above.

### **Grades 4-8**

Scholars will be in good academic standing and have no disciplinary issues. The approval of the principal is required for all scholars to attend any co-curricular activity.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

A birthday is a special day for a scholar, and a parent is welcome to bring or send in a simple treat for the class. Any food shared in the classroom must be purchased and have the ingredients clearly detailed on the label. No home made products are safe for our scholars due to allergies. Any and all food products entering the classroom must be reviewed by the school nurse prior to distributing to scholars. This should be scheduled at a time that causes the minimum amount of disruption to the instructional day.

## **CODE OF SCHOLAR BEHAVIOR**

It is the belief of Odyssey Charter School that every scholar has the right and ability to reach academic excellence. In order to achieve this objective, it is important that scholars, teachers and parents/guardians work together in order to provide an environment free from the distractions of inappropriate and disruptive

behavior. A uniform code of conduct has been installed to enhance the learning experience of all scholars and the teaching opportunity of the staff at the Odyssey Charter School.

Any willful acts of disruption in an Odyssey classroom or learning environment will not be tolerated and will be handled immediately. Teachers are responsible for documenting inappropriate behavior and disciplinary action in the classroom. Each teacher has the right to deal with disruptions in the classroom as they occur until the behavior becomes disruptive to learning. The scholar will then be referred to the Principal or Vice Principal for further disciplinary action.

Infractions of school policy are to be handled at the discretion of the Teacher/Paraprofessional or Odyssey staff involved. Any grievances with how Odyssey staff use this discretion will be handled by the Odyssey Principal. In the case of a grievance against the Principal, the Odyssey Charter School board will hold an executive session to discuss the grievance. There are 4 Classes of offenses to be used at the Odyssey Charter School.

- Level 1 offense will be managed by the classroom teacher. Odyssey staff is to use appropriate judgment when issuing a behavioral report and are responsible for informing the Principal when the scholars behavior is not classroom appropriate.
- Level 2 offenses gather other disciplinary actions ranging from a formal warning through in-school or out of school suspension.
- Level 3 and 4 offenses will necessitate contact with the parent and could lead up to in-school or out of school suspension and could possibly lead to expulsion of the scholar.

Odyssey Charter School will always show appreciation to the scholars who set themselves apart in facilitating a learning experience free from distractions. It takes leadership from our scholar body to help minimize distractions and we will recognize those scholars throughout the year.

*NOTE:* If a returning scholar continues with a pattern of disciplinary problems the parents will be notified and suspension and/or expulsion will occur.

**Level 1 (including but not limited to)**

- 1) Dress code violations
- 2) In hall without a permission from a teacher
- 3) Failure to deliver and/or return communication with parents
- 4) Unprepared for class (assignments, books, writing utensils, etc.)
- 5) Tardiness
- 6) Agenda not signed by parent
- 7) Talking at an inappropriate time
- 8) Off task
- 9) Incomplete Home Work

Disciplinary Action for all Level 1 offenses may vary from the elementary school to the middle school and may include such punishments as silent lunch, loss of recess time and other loss of privileges.

**Level 2 (including but not limited to)**

- 1) Obscene Language

- 2) Repeated interference with instruction
- 3) Repeatedly targeting a scholar
- 4) Horseplay/ rough housing
- 5) Inappropriate physical contact
- 6) Academic cheating
- 7) Defiant refusal to do class work
- 8) Disrespect toward an adult
- 9) Personal electronic use violation
- 10) Damaging another scholar's property

**Level 3 (including but not limited to)**

- 1) Blatant defiance toward an adult
- 2) Stealing/Hiding
- 3) Fighting\*\*
- 4) Causing bodily harm
- 5) Damaging/Defacing school property
- 6) Vandalism
- 7) Inappropriate sexual gestures or language
- 8) Verbal attack on an adult
- 9) Verbal threats

\*\*Fighting will automatically result in either in school or out of school suspension to all scholars actively involved.

**Level 4 (including but not limited to)**

**The following acts are considered high offenses and will warrant the issuing of *immediate* suspension and possible Expulsion subject to a disciplinary hearing:**

- 1) Weapons/Firearms
- 2) Tobacco/Alcohol/Substance Abuse
- 3) Truancy
- 4) Assault
- 5) Harassment/Threatening behavior/bullying/cyber bullying or social media abuse
- 6) Pornography
- 7) Inappropriate sexual acts
- 8) Written or verbal threats against the school, staff members or students body
- 9) Self harm or abuse
- 10) Recording staff or scholars (audio, video or combined) without written permission from the administration.

***11) Sexual Harassment or Sexual Abuse:***

Sexual Harassment is defined as the following by Title IX:

Unwelcomed verbal, visual, or physical sexual conduct. Offensive, severe, and/or frequent remarks about a person's sex. Harassment of a sexual nature which interferes with an individual's right to an education and participation in a program or activity.

*Note: Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused*

All level 2-4 infractions of school policy will be accumulated over the school year and will not “reset” until the following school year.

The school’s primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual scholar comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, scholars shall be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in this Code of Conduct.

**Scholars receiving a Level 3 or 4 infractions are disqualified from any after school or co-curricular activity for that day.**

### **Academic Fraud**

Scholars who plagiarize, copy without citation, or turn in work completed by others, have committed academic fraud. Academic fraud is punishable by suspension and additional discipline up to and including expulsion. The administration of the school will review each case on an individual basis and determine the degree of the issue. This includes, but is not limited to: ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, Perplexity, and Jasper AI.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT/THREATS/ASSAULT**

#### **You have the right to attend school in safety.**

Sexual Harassment is defined as the following by Title IX: Unwelcomed verbal, visual, or physical sexual conduct. Offensive, severe, and/or frequent remarks about a person's sex. Harassment of a sexual nature which interferes with an individual's right to an education and participation in a program or activity.

- You must respect others. You may not fight, push, shove, or hit another scholar or staff member.
- You may not play-fight or play-scuffle with another scholar or staff member.
- You may not threaten to harm another scholar or staff member.
- You may not throw objects at other people (rocks, snowballs, pencils, etc.) You may not spit.
- You may not threaten to harm or strike any staff member. This will result in immediate removal from class and/or school. The incident will be documented and reported to the Principal.
- You may not ask other scholars to threaten or hurt another scholar or staff member.
- You may not record sound or video of a class, teacher or other scholar without preapproval from administration.

### **Consequences:**

The scholar will discuss this with your teacher and the Principal. The scholar may have supervised study, in-school suspension, detention or other consequences as assigned by the Principal or Vice Principal. The scholar’s parents will be notified.

Each classroom teacher and his/her scholars, will follow a school wide behavior management plan that builds on scholar self-discipline while maintaining an appropriate classroom demeanor for instruction and learning. If scholars have difficulty following the plan, the following consequences may be implemented. These steps do not have to be implemented in order and are based upon the severity of the infraction as well as behavioral history:

- Silent lunch away from others
- Time out in the classroom
- Name marked on board
- Notification to parents – verbal and/or written
- Individual Behavior Contract (IBC)
- Counseling with Guidance Counselor or Principal
- Parent-teacher conference
- Inability to attend School and/or class functions
- Out of school suspension for persistent or serious lack of respect.
- Expulsion.

## **Discipline Regarding Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities**

In addition to the regular discipline plan, scholars involved in extracurricular and co-curricular activities (including band, chorus, glee, academic bowl and sports) are subject to the following additional rules:

- **Academic Guidelines:**

In addition to remaining within the behavior guidelines for participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, scholars must pass all classes to remain eligible to participate. Scholars not passing the required number of subjects will be suspended from the sport or activity for the next 9-week grading period or until their grades are above 70% in all classes.

- **Administrative Involvement**

Teachers are responsible for the ongoing behavior of their scholars. When a scholar's behavior is consistently disruptive or becomes unsafe, the teacher may refer the scholar to the school discipline office. At this point, the Principal and his/her designee will gather information from both Odyssey personnel and the scholar involved and make a determination as far as appropriate punishment. Punishment may range from silent lunch to out of school suspension and may include recommendation for expulsion. The discipline procedures for punishment of suspension and above are listed below.

### **Authority of the Principal**

The Principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school .

### **Authority of the Discipline Office**

In cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in this Code, the discipline office will take direction from the vice principal in how to undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the scholar and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures.

## **Involvement of Law Enforcement**

At times, Odyssey administrators may contact local law enforcement due to the nature of a discipline situation. Typically, this occurs when a state or federal law may have been broken. In those situations, the school will attempt to contact the parents of the scholars involved prior to law enforcement speaking with them. However, once law enforcement arrives on the scene, they take over the investigation from the school and Odyssey personnel will follow the directives of law enforcement regarding the situation.

The Governing Board shall require that Odyssey comply with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.35 concerning “seclusion” and “restraint”, as those terms are defined within the rule.

This policy is not intended to prevent the use of physical restraint in limited circumstances where a scholar exhibits behaviors that place the scholar or others in imminent danger and the scholar is not responsive to verbal directives or less intensive de-escalation techniques. The Board recognizes that in determining when and how to implement this policy and any procedures related to it, educators will have to exercise their professional judgment and discretion. Therefore, the policy is not to be construed as imposing ministerial duties on individual employees. Further, it is not intended to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel.

## **In School Suspension**

Scholars who display continued disruptive behavior within the classroom and/or the school shall be removed from the situation and subject to an in-school suspension with the school discipline office. Disruptive behavior has two definitions: (1) behavior that interferes with scholar’s learning or the educational process of others and requires attention and assistance beyond that which the traditional program can provide, or (2) behavior that results in frequent conflicts of a disruptive nature while the scholar is under the jurisdiction of the school, either in or out of the classroom. The final decision to implement in-school suspension shall rest with the principal and vice principal, although the teacher or another administrator may make the referral and be questioned prior to the decision.

The purpose of in-school suspension is threefold:

1. Isolate the disruptive scholars from the regular classrooms and the activities of the school during the school day.
2. Continue the scholar’s progress with classroom assignments.
3. Identify possible deficits or obstacles that may contribute to the scholar’s adjustment problems.

## **Short-term Suspension**

Short-term suspension shall mean the denial of a scholar of the right to attend school and take part in any school function for any period not to exceed four (4) days. The principal or vice principal shall have the discretionary power to initiate a short term suspension upon receipt of satisfactory information of a violation by the scholar of any of the disciplinary rules. The process will be as follows;

- The scholars and scholars parents will be notified in writing of the reason for his/her suspension.
- Written or verbal communication will be made to the parent or guardian of the scholars within 24 hours of the suspension becoming effective, providing notification and a brief description of the reason.
- The notice shall offer the parent or guardian an opportunity to discuss the details of the infraction.
- The parent or guardian requesting such a conference will be told the full details of the conduct that formed the basis for suspension.

### **Long-term Suspension or Expulsion**

Long-term suspension means denial to a scholar of the right to attend school and take part in any school function for any period not to exceed ten (10) school days. Expulsion shall mean the denial to the scholar of the privilege of continuing at Odyssey Charter School for the remainder of the school year or longer. During this process the scholar will have the rights of due process. This includes but is not limited to the opportunity for a hearing, the opportunity to present witnesses, the opportunity to present evidence and the opportunity to be represented by council and the opportunity to make an appeal (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-754).

A long term suspension or expulsion will normally follow a short-term suspension. There are exceptions, however, that could prompt the school Principal and/or discipline office to move for the immediate dismissal of a scholar. Examples of such violations include, but are not limited to, bringing a weapon to school, assault on a scholar or Odyssey Charter School personnel, or other chargeable offense. A decision to impose a long term suspension will be at the responsibility of the principal. An expulsion will be the responsibility of the school board. An exception to this rule may occur when a scholar garners a short term suspension and a hearing is scheduled to consider additional punishment. In this case, the Principal or his/her designee may choose to extend the suspension until such time as the hearing can occur. The Principal or his/her designee will present the case for expulsion to the school board. In order for an expulsion to take place, the following steps must be taken:

1. The Principal recommending the expulsion will furnish to the school board a written statement of charges against the scholar, accompanied by any supporting affidavits that may be available.
2. The Principal shall notify the scholar or parent or guardian of the scholar the recommendation for expulsion.
3. The school board shall notify the parent or guardian by certified mail indicating a time and place for a hearing, and containing a statement of the charges against the scholar.

### **Hearing**

Odyssey Charter Schools disciplinary hearing officers meet the training requirements included in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-759 and State Board of Education (SBOE) rule 160-4-8-.15

1. The school board will appointed an independent panel to review the case. At that time, the Principal and/or his designee will present the facts of the case against the scholar as well as

the reasons for this recommendation. The scholar, parent, or guardian present for the hearing will be able to ask questions and present arguments against the recommendation.

2. A vote on the recommendation shall be taken at the conclusion of the hearing. A simple majority of those appointed members present is needed for passage of the recommendation of expulsion. The members of the appointed panel have the right to establish provisions for re-entry to the school, as long as they are in accord with established board policy. If the majority of the panel declines to approve expulsion, they may make recommendations to the Principal for alternative punishments and/or conditions that must be met prior to the scholar's return to school.
3. The decision of the school board is final.
4. Should a parent wish to challenge the decision of the school board, they must indicate this desire in writing by the deadline given to them by the Principal. The Board will be notified and the Board chair will call a special called meeting (if necessary) to reconsider the decision. At that time, the Board will consider whether or not to reconsider the decision. If a change is made to the decision, the parents of the scholar will be notified.

### **Notification**

The parent or guardian shall be notified in writing of the decision of the school board.

In the event that no appearance is made by or for the scholar at the hearing set by school board, the parent or guardian shall be notified by certified mail of the decision.

### **Re-admission Procedures:**

Before any scholar is permitted to return from a long term suspension, Odyssey Charter School shall:

- a. At least one parent or guardian will attend a conference with the Principal or his/her designee to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend this conference shall preclude the scholar from being re-admitted to the school.
- b. Ensure that a notation of the conference is placed into the scholar's permanent record.

### **Scholars with Disabilities**

The following information could be considered whenever a disabled scholar under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) commits a violation of a school rule:

1. Short-term suspension or temporary suspensions not in excess of ten (10) days are permitted and do not require special considerations. The use of short-term suspensions may be an appropriate



disciplinary technique and will not constitute a change in placement unless the cumulative days of the short term constitute in reality a long-term suspension or expulsion.

2. Before long-term suspension or expulsion can occur, it must first be determined whether the scholar's misconduct was a manifestation of his or her disability. This determination should be made by a group of persons knowledgeable about the scholar. In the case of a special education scholar, this team will most likely be the IEP Placement committee.
3. If the misconduct is related to the disabling condition, the scholar may not be expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) school days.
4. If the misconduct is not related to the disabling condition, a Section 504 scholar may be expelled or suspended for more than ten (10) days if a non-disabled scholar in similar circumstances would have received the same punishment.
5. If the misconduct is not related to the disabling condition, an IDEA scholar may be expelled or suspended for longer than ten (10) days. However, complete cessation of special education services mandated by federal law during the time the scholar is suspended or expelled from school is not permitted.

## **Bullying**

For all purposes hereunder, "bullying" shall mean: (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent, present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force as such would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm .

The bullying of one scholar by another scholar on school property, on school buses, or at any school-sponsored event is hereby prohibited.

Bullying shall result in disciplinary actions in accordance with the discipline policy. The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has specific guidelines for the protocol of this behavior. The specifics can be found in Policy for Prohibiting Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation (May,2015) which is available in the Guidance Counselor office. Odyssey Charter School supports the following GaDOE model for dealing with a complaint of Bullying:

Model Bullying Policy for The Odyssey Charter School District believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the district have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or humiliate, and social isolation and/or manipulation.

The school district policy prohibiting bullying is included in the student code of conduct and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Any student who engages in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the teacher or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.

- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the school teacher, the student or the parent of the student should contact the local principal or his or her designee.
- The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.
- All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during a school-sponsored activity, by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system or acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic equipment
  - is directed specifically at students or school personnel,
  - is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and
  - creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Georgia Department of Education  
Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent September 9, 2010 · Revised May 12, 2015  
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Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt.

Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria or school bus
- Reassignment of classes
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Detention
- Assignment to an alternative school (through appropriate due process hearing) If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying.
- *Students in grades 6 through 12, scholars found to be "bullying of a student by another student" shall, as required by SBOE 160-4-8-.15 and OCGA 20-2-754.1(b)(1)., shall attend a disciplinary hearing. This requires that, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, and tribunal of school officials that a student in grades 6 through 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school. This assignment to an alternative school will occur after a finding of bullying by a disciplinary officer, panel, tribunal, or school official*
- *Expulsion is not required*

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor or other staff member by using the school district's complaint procedures.

Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited.

Odyssey treats cyber bullying the same as in person bullying. In accordance with OCGA §20-2-751.4, cyberbullying is the use of electronic communication that is (1) directed specifically at another student or school personnel; (2) maliciously intended for the purposes of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the other students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Cyberbullying includes being threatened, harassed, humiliated, or embarrassed by a peer using digital technologies such as the Internet or other electronic communication devices, regardless of whether the communication originated on school property or with school equipment. Some examples of cyber bullying include, but are not limited to:

- a) Pretending to be someone else online to trick others
- b) Spreading lies and rumors about others
- c) Tricking people into revealing personal information
- d) Sending or forwarding mean text messages
- e) Posting pictures of people without their consent

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.
- The school shall keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school principal or vice principal. The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:
  1. Investigate: Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance if available. School police, school counselors, use protocol from Georgia Department of Education Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent September 9, 2010 · Revised May 12, 2015 Page 14 of 17. Social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.
  2. Notify: At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the accused and the victim must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. Discipline: Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances. Students found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school consistent with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4. Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.
4. Follow Up: Follow up is important to the accused and the victim. Implement a planned method to provide after-care and follow up with the guidance counselor.

## **Weapon Policy**

It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess or have under such person's control any weapon or explosive compound within a school safety zone, or in any school building, on school property, at any school sponsored function or activity, on any school bus, vehicle or other transportation furnished by the school, or in a private vehicle parked on school property per O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1, "(b) (1)."

The term "weapon" means and includes any pistol, revolver or weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind; bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, or other knife having a blade of two and one half or more inches; any straight-edged razor; any spring stick, metal knuckles, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chuck, nunchaku, nunchaku shuriken, or fighting chain; any disc of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind; and any stun gun or laser; and bat, club or other bludgeon-type weapon. This policy also includes "Terroristic Threats" of weapon use via phone, internet or any electronic communication.

- **PUNISHMENT**

Violation may result in suspension, expulsion and/or criminal prosecution.

Items defined as "Weapons" owned by the school such as utility knives are an exception to this rule and will be allowed on school grounds provided they are stored in a secure location and used only by school personnel in the normal operation of the school.

## **Guidelines for Conducting Interrogations and Searches**

Before a scholar is searched, the school official must have a reason to believe that the scholar has in his or her possession an article or substance which is illegal, prohibited by school rules, or dangerous. This reason may be something the school official has seen, heard from the scholar involved, heard from another scholar, or observed about the scholar. School officials should not base their search on a hunch or belief unless the reason for that belief can be articulated and supported.

All scholar searches must be witnessed by another professional employee of the school system. This is primarily for the protection of the employees involved, but also may provide additional testimony and evidence if such is ever needed in a board proceeding or otherwise.

Scholars must be searched in as unobtrusive a place and manner as possible under the circumstances. Generally, searches should be in private and reasonable efforts should be made to avoid humiliating or embarrassing the scholar involved.

Before any action is taken by the school officials to physically search a scholar, the school official must explain to the scholar his suspicion. (For example, "I believe you have contraband in your possession.")

The scholar must be given an opportunity to voluntarily empty his or her pockets, pocketbook, or otherwise produce the item sought.

If a physical search of the scholar is to be conducted, it should be conducted by a school official of the same sex, and generally, the witness should be of the same sex as well.

Pocketbooks, satchels, and other such items can be searched most easily and with the least restriction. Pat-down searches of scholars are certainly acceptable if conducted by an official of the same sex.

Strip searches of a scholar should never be allowed. Asking scholars to remove certain articles of clothing, such as jackets, shoes, socks, vest, or other such apparel, is acceptable if done in connection with a pat-down search.

If the school official believes that the item is contained within the scholar's clothing and the scholar refuses to produce it, the school official should give the scholar several choices all of which are designed to produce the item. (For example, "You can either let me have the marijuana, prove to me that you do not have it on you, or I will call your parents or if appropriate, law enforcement officials). It should be made clear to the scholar that he/she will not leave the office until the issue is resolved and the school official should be willing to follow through on whatever action he/she proposes to the scholar.

### **Guidelines for Conducting Searches of School Property**

School lockers, desks and other school property shall be subject to inspection by school authorities at all times without further notice to scholars or parents. Scholars shall be advised (by the scholar handbook or by some other means) each year that the school has reserved this right. Scholar searches shall be conducted by school officials. School officials, at their discretion, may seek the aid of law enforcement officers. At the discretion of school officials, consultation may be sought with the school attorney.

1. Physical searches of scholars' lockers and desks and other school properties will be conducted by school officials based upon the belief that drugs, alcohol, stolen property, weapons, or other dangerous substances, instrumentalities or contraband are contained therein.
2. Searches supported by the use of trained police dogs may be employed for the search of physical facilities and equipment, which are properties of the school system. The use of law enforcement personnel and dogs will be a cooperative effort with the school administration retaining overall control.
3. No scholar shall be searched with the use of police dogs.
4. All searches conducted with the use of police dogs will be accomplished while scholars are absent from the site of the search.
5. In the event that illegal or unauthorized contraband is discovered in the locker, desk, or backpack of the scholar(s), the following procedures will be implemented:

- a. Scholar(s) will be removed to a private setting and advised of the findings.
  - b. Scholars will be afforded an opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding the possession of the identified substance, property, materials or contraband.
  - c. The school or system administrator will determine if the scholar(s) should be processed under the local board policies and procedures or referred to local law enforcement authorities.
  - d. School officials will take action to notify by phone parents or legal guardians of scholar(s) immediately upon the discovery. A letter giving formal notice of the findings and proposed action will be forwarded as soon as practical.
6. In all search procedures, every effort will be made to preserve the teaching and learning environment with minimum disruption to the total program.

### **Physical and Verbal Abuse and Harassment**

Physical and/or verbal abuse and/or harassment or threats of such abuse by any scholar toward another scholar or adult are unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately. Such behavior may result in steps to suspend or expel the scholar from Odyssey Charter School.

Any parent, guardian, or person other than a scholar enrolled in this school who has been advised that minor scholars are present, and berates, insults, verbally or physically abuses any teacher, school administrator, parent volunteer or staff member in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of this school will, by any of the above designated school personnel:

- 1<sup>st</sup> incidence: be asked to leave Odyssey Charter School premises.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> incidence: be asked to leave Odyssey Charter School premises and will be banned from school property.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> incidence: Will be reported to law enforcement.

**It is the policy of the Odyssey Charter School Board of Education to support O.C.G.A § 20-2-1181 which prohibits conduct which disrupts a school and O.C.G.A § 20-2-1182 which prohibits parents from unbraiding, insulting or abusing public school employees. Disruptive individuals may be immediately removed from the School grounds and restrictions may be placed on their presence on School grounds in the future. The School reserves the right to refer the situation to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. These provisions are equally applied to statements on social media or in public forums.**

The principal has the authority to call law enforcement whenever the safety or welfare of a scholar or employee has been threatened.

### **Illegal Acts**

Illegal acts will be reported to and handled by the appropriate authorities. Any scholar involved in such acts is subject to punishment up to and including possible expulsion from Odyssey Charter School.

### **Behavior Records**

Each scholar will have a behavior record in the office, which shall be updated on any occasion when a scholar is sent to the office for disciplinary reasons. Discipline records will be passed along to a scholar's subsequent school.

## **Behavior Contracts:**

Based upon the recommendation of the teacher and approval of the Principal and/or discipline office, scholars whose behavior continues to disrupt learning may be placed on an individual behavior contract. In such a case the teacher, parent/guardian, and Principal and/or discipline office will agree to the provisions of such a contract. Scholars violating the contract through continued behavioral problems will be subject to the discipline plan set forth in the contract which may or may not be identical to the overall discipline plan in place for Odyssey Charter School. In the case of parents who are not married, the custodial parent will retain the power and the final decision about whether to sign the contract.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

### **Parent involvement is essential to the overall success of Odyssey Charter School.**

Charter schools depend on the high parent or guardian involvement in the form of volunteering. The Volunteer Coordinating Committee is responsible for not only organizing volunteer opportunities but also monitoring and verifying the number of volunteer hours for each family.

### **Volunteer Service Request**

Families are requested to contribute volunteer service toward Odyssey Charter School per school year. You must record your hours and turn them in to the office to receive credit for them. If you are volunteering during school hours, please make sure you sign in and out as a volunteer with the office. We will make efforts to keep you informed of the status of your volunteer hours, but please remember that the overall responsibility is yours. 50% of the volunteer time should be accrued prior to the conclusion of the first semester if possible, which ends prior to Christmas/winter break beginning.

### **Volunteer Orientation**

Each year, volunteers will be requested to attend a mandatory volunteer orientation program before being allowed to volunteer within the school. A mandated reporting certificate must be obtained by all volunteers and chaperones. Please see the Human Resources Manager to complete this. A current background check and confidentiality agreement must be on file for volunteers. This must be updated every three years.

### **Parent Covenant**

The goal of the Parent Covenant is to create the strongest possible partnership between home and the school and to nourish and facilitate the individual abilities of each scholar. To succeed in our mission and foster intellectual and social growth, education must extend beyond the classroom walls by recognizing and incorporating the family and home as vital parts of success.

### **Odyssey's Pledge to Parents:**

- To provide a program of academic excellence that fulfills the goals expressed in our mission and core beliefs
- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- To communicate regularly regarding a scholar's progress and needs
- To continually reflect on, evaluate, and develop the learning environment
- To provide meaningful parent and scholar programs and extracurricular activities

- To communicate effectively regarding school and classroom events and policies
- To be courteous and respectful to parents and work collaboratively to help the scholar find success

### **Parents' Pledge to the School:**

- To read, understand, and support the mission of Odyssey
- To provide all necessary enrollment paperwork including report cards, test scores, and scholar records prior to scholar attending Odyssey
- To provide a home environment that nurtures a love of learning and supports learning (e.g., reading with scholar, checking homework, etc.)
- To ensure my scholar is on time, in uniform with appropriate materials and assignments for class.
- To provide a nutritious breakfast and lunch each day
- To be courteous and respectful to staff and work collaboratively to help my scholar find success
- To stay abreast of school communication, including signing agenda book or similar
- To follow school policies and procedures
- To participate in discussions and/or conferences regarding academic progress and behavior
- To attend extracurricular activities and events to support the scholar or the school
- To maintain an updated Volunteer Log of volunteer activities

Parents are requested to sign the Parent-School Covenant that acknowledges that they are in support of these requirements involved in their scholar's learning. By signing the last page of this book, you also agree to these terms and conditions as previously listed.

### **Violation of Parent Covenant:**

Parents will be notified in writing of violations of the Parent Covenant. Repeated violations will result in the loss of opportunity to participate in Before/After school programs and extracurricular activities. Violations include but are not limited to:

- On-going failure to ensure that scholar completes homework, projects, and class work in a timely manner as established by the teacher
- Excessive tardies (10 or more during the school year), early check-outs, or absences as defined by the school's attendance policy
- On-going failure to provide a nutritious breakfast and lunch daily
- Aggressive, disrespectful, or combative behavior towards Odyssey staff
- On-going failure to sign school communication (e.g., agenda book)
- Failure to pay school fees (e.g., forgotten lunch, non-sufficient funds, lost books, ASP, etc.)
- Failure to pay Before School/After School fee's
- Failure to sign in as a visitor or presence in un-authorized areas of the facility
- On-going failure to follow school policies and procedures
- On-going failure to monitor dress code compliance
- On-going failure to attend conferences related to academic progress and behavior
- Misrepresenting or omitting scholar information/records, credit hours, or other communication requested by the school
- Negative or condescending comments regarding Odyssey Charter School or staff, on social media or sent to public officials.
- Inappropriate dress during a school activity as defined by the principal. Dress code violations by parent or guardian.



If circumstances prevent the family from meeting the requested parent volunteer hours, administration can waive or alter the hours. Requests should be placed in writing to the administration and preapproved if possible.

## **Ways to Earn Hours**

You may receive volunteer hours in a number of ways. You can help out a teacher, work in the front office, or chaperone a field trip. The Volunteer Coordinating Committee will also have information and sign-ups for volunteer opportunities.

## **Reporting Volunteer Hours and Other Guidelines:**

We encourage families to work together to participate in the scholar's learning experience and in support of the school.

Parent involvement logs are due on established dates each month. Every effort will be made to remind parents of their obligation to report involvement via notes, emails, and bulletin reminders; however, the responsibility for timely communication is with the parent.

What is the "spirit" of the Parent Involvement Compact? It is twofold:

- Active and on-going involvement in your scholar's education
- Support of school operations and the well-being of the school community and its future success.

Parents/guardians/volunteers may sign in at the front office or on a sign in sheet for off campus activities. Credit is officially counted based on attendance logs. Sign in sheets are used to substantiate participation if needed and for reporting in our Charter Schools report. Always sign in at the front office whenever you are on campus even if you are just dropping off medication or materials for a class.

Credit may not be carried over from year to year unless prior authorization is granted in writing by administration. Credit commitments may be modified on a pro-rated basis for scholars who enroll late. Pro-rata figures will be based on whole months the scholar is enrolled. The office staff will confirm enrollment dates if required.

## **Classroom Involvement**

Your presence is welcome in the class provided it follows the guidelines of Parental Observations and classroom assistance. Here are just a few examples of ways you can volunteer in the classrooms:

- Read to the class
- Assist the teacher with a special project
- Chaperone field trips
- Volunteer to teach a lesson in your area of expertise, music, or a foreign language

There are countless ways to volunteer both in the school and at home. If your situation leaves you with sporadic or unusual hours to help, please contact the office. All classroom activities must be organized by the classroom teacher and approved by administration before a parent can participate in classroom activities. Parents are not allowed to sign in and visit the classroom without discussing the visit with the teacher 24 hours in advance. Parent classroom visits cannot exceed 45 minutes and cannot be repeated more than one time during any semester without written permission from the teacher.

Currently: **All parent classroom activity must be approved by the administration.**

## **Serve on the Board**

According to the by-laws, the Board is made up of up to thirteen voting members, consisting of parents, instructional staff, and interested members of the community. Each Board member serves a three-year term with elections being held during the annual meeting in September.

The Board meets monthly at the school and has the overall responsibility for setting and writing policy for the school and insuring its continued financial solvency in compliance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-58. For more information, see Odyssey Charter School Governing Board on the school website .

## **Cell Phones**

Parents who are volunteering in the school are asked to either shut off their cell phones (or two way radios) or place them on vibrate/silent mode. This is to help reduce the number of distractions for the scholars.

## **ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

### **Pre-enrollment Assessment**

In order to better serve our scholars, prior to the first day of attendance, each enrolling scholar will be required to complete appropriate assessment tests, as determined by the school. These tests will primarily be based upon the scholar's age and grade level. Assessments will be done at no cost to the scholar.

Assessment results will not be used as criteria for admission to the school.

Any Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) from previous schools will be reviewed. A new IEP will be drafted by the school administration identifying any special needs for accommodation required by the new scholar.

\*Assessments will not be conducted unless a complete enrollment file is on record with the registrar including behavior records and Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) from previous schools.

### **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

Report cards will be issued at the end of each semester; with narrative progress reports issued each quarter (see the school calendar on the website for calendar dates). Our report cards are different from traditional report cards; Odyssey uses a continuum based report card. Although traditional grades may or may not appear for all subjects, the report is designed to offer a greater amount of detail to parents regarding the progress of their scholar .

## **Curriculum**

Odyssey Charter School gives scholars learning opportunities through a hands-on, inquiry-based approach. Odyssey's program offers innovative scholar-centered learning which actively engages scholars in explorations in subjects like math, science, computer technology, social studies, and incorporates reading and writing skills. Curriculums are reviewed annually for current methodologies and conformity to the Georgia Department of Education standards. Current state standards will be used to evaluate the content of each academic curriculum.

## Character Education

The Georgia Department of Education has mandated that each school implement a comprehensive character education program for levels K-12. This program should focus on the scholars' development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue.

## Conferences

Odyssey Charter School supports both formal and informal conferences between teachers and parents/guardians as the need arises. Conferences allow a forum for both parties to address concerns, share information, and create an environment designed to enhance scholar success. It is strongly suggested that parents have *at least two formal conferences a year* with their scholar's teacher. Scholar led conferences will be scheduled twice a year. At the end of each Nine Week Period each teacher will offer conference opportunities. Parents and/or teachers may also schedule informal conferences anytime throughout the year in order to address specific situations pertaining to their scholar. Currently - **All parent teacher conferences will be scheduled and approved by the administrator.**

## Staff/Siblings

The scholars of faculty shall not be placed in the same classroom as another adult family member for more than half of the instructional day. This provision shall not apply to any special classes such as PE, art, music, etc. Siblings may be placed in the same classroom after consultation with the parents.

## Standardized Testing

As a public school, Odyssey administers standardized testing when appropriate. Grades 3-8 take the Georgia Milestones in the spring. **All enrolled students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> are required to take the Milestone Test. Those who do not score at Developing Learner or higher will be required to retake the test that they failed. Scholars who do not take the Milestone test in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> will automatically be retained. Those scholars who do not score at Developing Learner or higher on any section of the milestone test will be reviewed by the placement committee for retention or placement in the next grade.** All results are recorded in the scholar's permanent record. Odyssey Charter School adheres to the Georgia Department of Education's guidelines for retention and promotion (O.C.G.A §20-2-281 and SBE 160-4-2-11). English second language scholars will take all required state level, standardized testing as directed by the foreign language department and GaDOE.

## Arts

Odyssey scholars receive fine art instruction in both music and visual arts.

## Library/Media Services

Library materials are provided for the informational needs of scholars, faculty, and parents. Scholars and parents may check out books and back issues of magazines. Reference books may not be checked out.

- Scholars must respect all materials in the library.
- There is no food, drink, or candy allowed near computers or books.

- Scholars must speak in low voices in the library.
- All material must be returned on time to avoid fines.

▪ **Circulation**

- Scholars may check out a maximum of 1-2 books for one week.
- Back issues of magazines may be checked out for one day.
- Parents may check out two books for one week.
- Items may be renewed once if not on reserve.

▪ **Loss or Damage of Library Materials**

Scholars will be expected to pay the replacement cost of lost or badly damaged library items. Report cards and school records will be withheld until all financial obligations to the library have been met.

▪ **Book Fair**

The school sponsors several book fairs throughout the school year. The proceeds from the fair are used to buy award-winning books for the library.

## **Enrichment Programs**

Odyssey offers a number of enrichment programs for scholars. Enrichment activities anticipated for the upcoming school year include music, bands, academic bowl, math contests, Reading Bowl, and athletics (co-ed soccer, boys' and Girls' basketball, girls' volleyball, and track and field). Some of these activities are fee-based. Please contact the activity's sponsor or the office for additional details. ***All extra-curricular activities must be approved by the administration.***

## **Technology**

Odyssey Charter School offers scholars a computer lab plus the use of portable chrome books within the classroom. Scholars in the K/1 cluster also have access to computers within their classrooms. Scholars in grades K-5 receive weekly instruction in technology and middle school scholars take technology courses through the Connections program. Additional documentation will be sent home for more detailed information regarding computer usage, fees, etc., by our technology teacher.

## **Gifted/Talented (STEP)**

Odyssey Charter School offers specific, targeted academic enrichment opportunities for these scholars through a variety of state-approved models. Each year, Odyssey has specific identification periods set aside for testing referred scholars. As scholars previously identified as gifted/talented through state regulated testing transfer to Odyssey, they will have the opportunity to be placed into our program .

## **Special Education**

The Special Education program at Odyssey works on an inclusion model when possible. However, there are times when individual or collaborative instruction by a Special Education teacher may be appropriate. For scholars with existing Individual Education Plans (IEP's), plans will be reviewed and revised as necessary and implemented as completely as possible. Parents of new scholars having IEP's will meet with the special education teacher soon after they begin school to evaluate and amend the scholar's IEP.

When a scholar is identified through past performance, teacher observation, or other avenues as needing additional assistance, he/she may be referred for specialized intervention strategies either within the regular classroom setting or within a small group setting. This will be accomplished through Early Intervention Program (EIP) or Response to Interventions (RTI) depending on grade level requirements.

### **Teacher Requests for the Upcoming School Year**

All class placements for the upcoming school year are completed by a team of staff members and are completed during the week of post planning. Any requests for scholar placement must be received **by no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year**. While Odyssey will accept a request for scholar placement, this does not guarantee placement. Placements are completed by various factors and all Odyssey staff members want to make sure scholars are in the best environment for potential success.

### **Child Find Procedures**

The purpose of Child Find is to identify, locate, and evaluate all children in the Odyssey Charter district, birth through 21, who are suspected of, or have a disability or development delay that may result in the need for special education and related services. Odyssey serves children ages 5 through 14 with identified special education needs, but may refer those ages 3-21 for assistance if needed.

**Disability Categories are:** Autism Spectrum Disorder, Deafblind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, Intellectual Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impaired, Significant Development Delay, Specific Learning Disability, Speech/ Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment.

Odyssey Charter School completes Child Find responsibilities in a variety of ways. Odyssey School's Marketing Director collaborates with public agencies to ensure parent and community involvement. She meets with preschools and daycares on a regular basis for enrollment purposes at Odyssey. Our Parent Involvement Coordinator meets with parents on a regular basis to inform them of agencies in the Coweta area that meets their need. Our Special Education Department sends out information to parents asking for sibling referrals for ages 3-5.

If you are aware of a preschooler, from ages 3 to 5 years old, who has or may have a disability and is in need of special education services, please contact the Assistant Principals who can help you with referrals to different agencies. Our Special Education Department sends out information packets asking parents for sibling referrals for ages 3-5.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **Admission Requirements**

Odyssey Charter School is a State Charter School. Odyssey is tuition free, public school enrolling scholars residing in **Coweta, Meriwether, Carroll, Douglas, Fulton, Fayette, Heard, and Troup County only**.

Returning scholars are guaranteed a place in the class for subsequent years as long as they adhere to the provisions of the Odyssey Charter School Parent/Scholar Handbook.

Any new scholar intending to be admitted as an Odyssey scholar must submit a complete enrollment/admissions packet on the day they are to complete intake testing or on the first day of their scheduled start should these days be the same. The only exception which can be made is with the 30-day waiver permitted by law in which the parent has 30 days to submit a copy of the scholar's up to date immunizations and hearing/dental/vision. This waiver will only be given if a scholar is coming to a Georgia public school for the first time or have been homeschooled. If on the 30th day the immunizations, hearing, vision, and dental are not received, then the enrolled scholar is subject to immediate dismissal from Odyssey. All 504's, IEP's and any behavioral records from previously attended schools must be disclosed during preliminary enrollment or application will not be authorized by the principal.

## **Transfer and Withdrawals**

Odyssey Charter School adopts the following policy which shall be effective on that date that the policy is adopted by the Board. Scholars may formally enroll in Odyssey pending receipt of their immunization record, for a period not to exceed 30 calendar days from initial entry. The 30-day waiver may be extended from the date of the first admittance, whichever is earlier, for up to 90 calendar days, provided the scholar is a transfer scholar from an out-of-state school system to a Georgia school system, or a scholar entering kindergarten or the first grade from out-of-state. The scholar must provide documentation to the school from the local health department or a physician specifying that an immunization sequence has been started and that the immunization time schedule can be completed as specified in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 20-2-771, "Any responsible official permitting any scholar to remain in a school or facility in violation of this Code section, and any parent or guardian who intentionally does not comply with this Code section, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$100.00 or by imprisonment for not more than 12 months."

***Note: No scholar expelled from a school in another school system may be admitted to Odyssey. No scholar suspended from a school in another school system may be admitted to Odyssey until after an investigation occurs determining whether or not the scholar was successfully transitioned back into the original home school.***

An elementary or middle school scholar transferring from a school accredited by a regional or state accrediting agency may be placed in the grade and courses recommended by the school from which he/she is transferring. Alternative placement may be made upon review by the placement committee (composed of classroom teacher, Sped or gifted teacher, scholars parents, and administrator) if scholar age, maturity level, previous academic record, standardized test scores, and/or placement testing indicate that scholar needs can be better addressed at another grade level. In the event a consensus cannot be reached, the administrator will make a final decision.

## **Lottery Procedures**

New scholars are admitted each year through the lottery process. The lottery is held each year in the Spring for the upcoming school year.

Prior to the lottery, a survey is sent to all current scholars regarding their intent to return to Odyssey for the following school year. Scholars who respond they are not going to return have had their spots in next year's class vacated and declared available for the lottery.

Scholars who apply for admission to Odyssey for the upcoming school year are placed in consideration for the lottery. A complete application for admission is required.

Each year stands on its own, so names from the wait list for the prior school year do not carry over into any future school years unless a new application for admission is completed.

Prior to beginning a class lottery, the names of all scholars in that lottery will be called. If your scholar's application has been turned in, but their name was not called, you will need to inform the speaker immediately so the problem can be resolved prior to the beginning of the drawing. If the parent is not present or does not make this error known prior to the start of the lottery for that grade level, then the drawing will continue as normal. Should that scholar be identified later by the parent as missing from that lottery, the scholar's name will be placed at the back of the wait list for that lottery.

Each scholar is assigned a number. Their number corresponds to a number in the container. Numbers will be drawn one by one until the available openings for that class are filled. Remaining numbers will make up a numbered wait list.

Siblings of scholars already attending Odyssey Charter School will have first priority for admission, along with the scholar of staff members. If there are too many siblings for available spots, a sibling lottery will take place first, followed by a wait list for general applicants.

In the case of multiple scholars (i.e. twins, triplets, etc.) from the same household who will be entering the same grade, each sibling will receive a number. When the first of the siblings' numbers is drawn, the other sibling(s) shall be assigned the next number(s) for admission. If one sibling is accepted and the other is placed on a wait list, it will be up to the parents to decide which scholar has priority for admission and communicate that wish to the office.

Families do not need to be present at the lottery to be considered for admission.

There is movement off of the wait list as plans change. When an opening does occur, we will notify the first family on the waiting list and proceed in order until the spot is filled.

The lottery will proceed grade by grade.

Once a family has been assigned a spot in the lottery, any additional required paperwork must be turned into the Registrar within 10 business days of the conclusion of the lottery drawing. Lottery participants will be informed following the lottery of which paperwork is required. Failure to have all paperwork into the Registrar will result in the family moving back down on the waiting list in order for the next family to be called.

### **Lottery Wait List Families**

In order to be entered into Odyssey Charter School, any family who is called from the waiting list will be told by the staff member calling them of any additional documentation that must be turned into the registrar. This additional paperwork must be turned in within 5 business days. Failure to submit all required paperwork will result in the family moving back down on the waiting list in order for the next family to be called.

### **Admissions Paperwork**

All admissions paperwork can be downloaded from Odyssey's website. A complete admission's packet will include the following:

- **Application for Admission**
- **Enrollment Information**

- **Release of Scholar Records Authorization**
- **Immunization Certificate – GA Dept. of Human Resources Form 3231** or notarized affidavit signed by all parents/legal guardians that swears or affirms that immunization(s) required conflict with religious beliefs (however, immunizations may be required in cases when such disease(s) is/are in epidemic or breakout stages.)
- **Hearing-Vision-Dental Certificate – GA Form 3300**
- **State-Issued, Certified Copy of Birth Certificate**
- **Copy of Driver’s license of enrolling parent** (for record of parent/guardian ID)
- **Copy of Scholar’s Social Security Card or Social Security Card Waiver**(social security numbers are required for state reporting)
- **Affidavit of Residence** (Must be accompanied by the 2 proofs of residence listed below/needs to be notarized – our school has two notaries)
- **Two Proofs of Residence** (one must be a voter registration card, mortgage, or current lease. The second may be a utility bill)
- **Considerations and Exceptions for Enrollment/Parental Pledge Agreement**
- **Enrollment Assessment Questionnaire**
- **Proof of custody/guardianship/foster/adoption** (if applicable)

### **Affidavit of Residency**

All families are required by Georgia law to complete an updated Affidavit of Residency on a yearly basis. New affidavits will be sent home with the first report card of the school year. Failure to return an updated Affidavit by the last day of school prior to Winter Break in December will result in the scholar not being permitted to return to school in January.

Scholars who are identified as Homeless will be registered and enrolled if there is room available. If there is no classroom space available for the Homeless scholar, their name will be placed on the waiting list .

### **Additional Forms**

Additional forms will be sent home periodically that we must have on file, however they are not required as part of the admissions packet. Please make sure to check your scholar’s agenda, email accounts, and/or the Odyssey website daily.

### **Right to Amend**

Odyssey Charter School reserves the right to amend any part of this handbook for just cause and parents will be promptly notified, in writing, when changes are made via posting on the school website.

## **History of Odyssey Charter School**

The genesis for Odyssey Charter School began in 1998 with a group of families who decided that the traditional public school system was not meeting the needs of their scholar. Utilizing recently implemented charter school legislation, the group wrote a charter reflecting their educational philosophy and setting forth the framework for Odyssey Charter School. After several years of negotiations with the local school district, the Georgia Board of Education approved Odyssey Charter School’s charter in 2001. As a provision of the charter school legislation, the parent group formed a non-profit corporation, Community Education Association, Inc. d/b/a Odyssey Charter School.



After several more years of planning, the school was able to secure an approximately 10,000 square foot space in the White Oak Shopping Center on Highway 34. The dream of Odyssey Charter School culminated on August 12, 2004, when the school began the school year with 119 scholars.

In July of 2008 Odyssey Charter School purchased a building on St. John's Circle in the Shenandoah Industrial Complex. It had previously been occupied by a small private school that had only built out a small portion of the approximately 26,000 square feet. Over the spring and summer of 2009, the rear portion of the building was renovated and the entire scholar body is now housed at this location.

In May of 2019, Odyssey received accreditation from Advanced Ed. Odyssey Charter School recently received a new Charter with the State of Georgia for an additional six years. In May of 2025, Odyssey received renewal of national accreditation through Cognia Inc. for an additional six years.



### 2025-2026 Odyssey Scholar and Family Handbook Acknowledgment Form

We, the \_\_\_\_\_ family, hereby acknowledge and accept the conditions set forth in this Odyssey Scholar & Family Handbook. We have received and read a copy of Odyssey Scholar & Family Handbook, and understand the rules, regulations, and procedures of the school. By signing this acknowledgement form I, along with my scholar(s), agree to abide by all rules, regulations, procedures and policies as outlined. Information and policies in this handbook may be updated at any time, as the Odyssey administration may deem necessary.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholar #1 (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholars Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholar #2 (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholar Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholar #3 (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholar Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*If additional scholars, please continue on the back of the form*

**THIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM IS TO BE SIGNED AND RETURNED TO YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER BY August 31th 2025.**