



Lowcountry Connections Academy HANDBOOK SCHOOL SUPPLEMENT

2022-2023

This Supplement provides school-specific information in addition to the general policies documented in the School Handbook: General Portion. Because this Supplement does not constitute the full set of policies related to your Connections Academy school, please be sure to read the School Handbook: General Portion along with this Supplement. Both of these documents may be updated during the year as needed. If there are any discrepancies between this Handbook Supplement and the General Handbook, the policies in this Supplement override policies in the General Handbook and are the binding policies that should be followed.

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1 Non Discrimination Statement

Lowcountry Connections Academy Nondiscrimination Policy

Lowcountry Connections Academy is committed to a policy of educational equality. The school does not exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of ethnic group identification/ethnicity, marital status, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), religion, physical or mental disability, age, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups, or any other category protected by federal or state law in the admission to, participation in, or receipt of the services under any of Connections' educational programs and activities.

This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Educational Amendment of 1972* (Title IX), Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504), the *Age Discrimination Act of 1975*, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)*, and *Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act*.

The following individuals are designated to coordinate compliance with these laws:

For School Employment-Related Matters As Outlined in the Services Agreement

Contact Information	
Coordinator	Sarah Savage – School Related Inquiries sarah.savage@pearson.com 855-330-4636

For School Related Matters Other than Employment:

Contact Information	
Title IX Coordinator	GeRita Connor geconnor@lcca.connectionsacademy.org
504 Coordinator	Tanish Lewis talewis@lcca.connectionsacademy.org
All Other Student or School Related Matters	GeRita Connor geconnor@lcca.connectionsacademy.org

***All staff can be reached via the main Lowcountry office phone number at 843-695-9305.**

For further information on public and student rights and the responsibilities of public schools, please visit the South Carolina Department of Education's [website](#).

Any student and/or caretaker may file a complaint in compliance with the school's grievance procedures.

For questions regarding the applicability of Title VII or Title IX, please contact:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Bldg.
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Toll Free Call Center: 800-421-3481
Fax: 202-453-6012

OCR@ed.gov

[OCR Complaint Assessment System](#)

[OCR Regional Office Locations](#)

[OCR Discrimination Complaint Form](#)

Suicide Prevention

If a student or family member is struggling with suicidal thoughts please reach out to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-272-8255. Mental health resources are also available [here](#).

2 School Mission and Overview

2.1 Mission Statement

The mission of Lowcountry Connections Academy (LCCA) is to help students maximize their potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program, supported by teachers and Learning Coaches.

3 School Organization and Roles

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

*****If applicable the 2022-2023 SY Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Compact will be added once approved*****

3.3 School Information

School Information	School Contact
School Phone Number	843-695-9035
School Fax Number	843-962-5427

School Address	1520 Old Trolley Road Suite 200 Summerville, SC 29485
School Hours	8:00 am- 4:00 pm
Technical and General Support	1-800-382-6010
School Leader	GeRita Connor
WebMail	All staff and support services are located in the Education Management System's (Pearson Online Classroom) Webmail address book.
School Board of Directors	Refer to Board Info web page for most current contact information

School Calendar

3.4.1 The LCCA 2022-2023 School Year Calendar

LCCA School Calendar

Note: The School Status Legend below the calendar reflects the possible school statuses for each event. All events which show a status of School In Session indicates they are school days for students. All events which show any other status indicates they are NOT school days for students. Please refer to the legend to determine whether teachers and/or administrator staff are available for each event according to its status.

Event	School Status	Date
<i>First Day of School</i>	School and Office Open	August 11, 2022
Labor Day	School and Office Closed	September 5, 2022
Fall Break	School and Office Closed	October 17, 2022
Election Day	School Closed/Office Open	November 8, 2022
Thanksgiving Break	School and Office Closed	November 23-25, 2022
Winter Break	School Closed/Office Open	December 19-21, 2022
	School and Office Closed	December 22, 2022-January 2, 2023
Teacher Work Day	Staff Work Day	January 3, 2023
<i>First Semester End Date</i>	NA	January 11, 2023
Teacher Work Day	Staff Work Day	January 12-13, 2023
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	School and Office Closed	January 16, 2023
<i>Second Semester Start Date</i>	NA	January 17, 2023
Presidents' Day	School Closed/Office Open	February 20, 2023
Spring Break	School Closed/Office Open	April 3-6, 2023
	School and Office Closed	April 7, 2023
<i>Last Day of School</i>	School and Office Open	May 26, 2023

School Closed - Additional Administrator/12 Month Employee Days:

October 17, 2022; November 23, 2022; December 22, 2022; December 23, 2022; April 7, 2023

School Status Legend:

School Closed/Office Open = Students and Teachers are not in school but Admin are on duty

School and Office Closed = No one is in school

School and Office Open = Everyone is in school

Staff Work Day = Students are not in school but Admin and Teachers are on duty

3.4.2 Required Instructional Hours

Based on a 180-day school year, and a 5-day school week:

- Kindergarten: 4 hours a day (including 30 minutes for lunch) or 20 hours a week.
- Grades 1 – 8: 5 hours a day (does not include lunch) or 25 hours a week.
- Grades 9 – 12: 6 hours a day (does not include lunch) or 30 hours a week.

Note that these are the **minimum** hours required by the state and that students are responsible for mastering all material, which may require additional time.

Emergency Closure Information

In the case of an emergency closure, students will be sent a WebMail. If you find a LiveLesson® session is not running, or a teacher is missing a call, please check the student's WebMail before calling the school office.

3.5 Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Transfers

Enrollment Policy

Purpose

Lowcountry Connections Academy ("LCCA") is committed to maximizing open enrollment for students in grades K-12 within its annually set enrollment limits, while giving careful consideration to student/teacher ratio to ensure students are provided with quality instruction and support. Enrollment shall be open to any child who resides within the state and is eligible to attend public school, subject to space limitations and in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. §59-40-50(B)(7).

Nondiscrimination Assurances

LCCA does not discriminate against any person on the basis of ethnic group identification, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, physical or mental disability, athletic performance, language proficiency in English or another language, prior academic achievement, or age in the admission to, participation in, or receipt of any educational services or activities.¹ LCCA will ensure student demographics comply with the terms set forth in the Charter and the racial composition requirements outlined in S.C. Code §59-40-50(B)(7).

Notification of Enrollment and Admission Procedures

LCCA will ensure active communication of enrollment and admission opportunities and procedures to parents as well as, the school community to ensure to ensure that students and parents have an equal chance to learn

¹ This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972 (Title IX), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state regulations as applicable.

about and apply to the school. The School shall also notify the Sponsor of its enrollment procedures and dates of its annual enrollment period no less than sixty (60) days prior to the first day of each annual enrollment period, in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. §59-40-55(B)(10). The enrollment cycle will be displayed on LCCA's website prior to and upon commencement of the opening of an enrollment cycle.

Open Application Procedure

Each year the school will conduct an open application period, beginning in February. During this period, applicants who are interested in enrolling must begin by:

1. Completing the online registration form which will be made available on the school's website.
2. Required documents as indicated on the Caretaker's banner except for course placement

No students will be admitted for the school year during open application period. After accounting for returning students and their eligible siblings (this begins in the 2022-2023 school year), if the number of enrollment applications during the annual open application period exceeds the available slots, LCCA will ensure applicants have an equal chance of admission through means of a publicly held random lottery selection process.

Waitlists

LCCA will continue to accept applications after the open application period. If the school is oversubscribed, these students will be placed on a waitlist determined by the automatic recorded time/date stamp recorded at the time their enrollment tasks, excluding placement, were completed. These students will be allowed to enroll based on the availability of space in their grade cluster and their place on the waiting list.

If the school is not oversubscribed by the end of the open application period, no lottery will be held and LCCA will continue to accept applications and admit eligible students in the order in which enrollment tasks are completed and based on availability in their respective grade clusters.

Lottery Procedure

Upon accounting for returning students and their eligible siblings, if the number of applications exceeds the school's enrollment capacity, a random lottery will be held in accordance with this policy. The schedule of the lottery will be set by the School Board in conjunction with the End Date. **The lottery will include all students who have completed all enrollment tasks except course placement, by the End Date.** The lottery will be conducted in clusters:

- Grades K-3,

- Grades 4-6
- Grades 7-8
- Grades 9-12

The order in which those clusters are drawn and the total number of students selected for each cluster may vary each year in consideration of the school's overall enrollment limit, the expected number of returning students and any of their eligible siblings who complete an enrollment application during the open application period, and/or other operational factors.

Randomization of Lottery

In order to ensure a random lottery without the possibility of human bias and error, LCCA will utilize a computer-generated randomization. The program will randomly select a student name from the pool of enrollment applicants for a specific grade cluster until the number of available slots are filled, or the pool of enrollment applications is exhausted.

Enrollment Preferences

LCCA will give enrollment preference in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(B)(8) as follows:

- Students enrolled in the School the previous school year, and who have completed all enrollment tasks, including course placement by the End Date. An enrollment preference for returning students excludes those students from entering into a lottery.
- Siblings of students continuing their enrollment from prior year.
 - If multiple sibling applicants are eligible for the lottery, they will be treated as one common entrant for lottery drawing purposes, and if one sibling is selected, all siblings shall be enrolled.
- Children of employees (up to 20% of enrollment)

The lottery will be held in a public forum on a specific, publicly announced date and time with at least one school administrative staff member and one outside observer in attendance.

Student Selection Process

Students Selected in Lottery: The primary caretakers of selected students will receive an email within seven (7) business days after the lottery and must accept the offer of enrollment by replying to the email by a set deadline. Students that have not accepted their offer of enrollment by the set deadline will forfeit their slot to the next eligible students on the list.

Students Not Selected in Lottery: When all available slots have been filled, eligible students not selected in the lottery will be placed on a lottery waiting list based on the lottery number they receive from the random number generator. Non-selected students must complete all remaining enrollment tasks within seven (7) days of the lottery to maintain their lottery determined placement on the waitlist. Once a vacancy becomes available (in the appropriate grade cluster) then waitlisted students will be assigned to the appropriate vacant spot. Waitlisted siblings of students selected will be given the first priority to enroll.

Appeals

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §59-40-50(C)(1), any decision to deny admission to a student (other than a denial of admission due to results of a lottery) may be appealed to the Sponsor. The appeal must be in writing and state the grounds on which the appeal is based. The decision made by the Sponsor will be binding on the student and the School.

There is no appeal to the Sponsor when an applicant is denied admission because of lottery results, in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(B)(7).

Maximum Age to Enroll

The maximum enrollment age of a student is determined by state law. The maximum enrollment age may also vary by student, dependent upon the program in which a student is enrolled. In South Carolina, the maximum age limits are:

- General education students who turn 21 on or before September 1st
- Students who receive special education and related services who turn 21 on or before September 1st

Maximum age limits also apply to students who choose to re-enroll. For more information regarding the maximum enrollment age, please contact the school counselor or administrator.

Enrollment of Students Suspended or Expelled from another School

Students who have been suspended from another school and who are eligible to return to that school system, but who wish to enroll in LCCA, will be required to submit a disciplinary history to LCCA during the enrollment process. The disciplinary history will be reviewed by the School Leader who will make a final decision regarding enrollment. Students who are permitted to enroll in LCCA while under suspension from another school will not be allowed to attend field trips or school events until the end of their term of suspension and after a review of academic progress by the School Leader. Failure to disclose a prior suspension or expulsion

during the enrollment process that is later verified through prior school records will result in an immediate withdrawal.

Students who have been expelled from another school may not enroll in LCCA until their term of expulsion is over. A disciplinary history must be submitted during the enrollment process, along with a letter from the school in which the student was expelled, stating the terms of the expulsion have been met.

Enrollment of Students with Documented History of Truancy

Students who have a documented history of truancy at LCCA or a previous school will be required to attend a brick and mortar school for a minimum of one (1) semester and provide evidence of satisfactory attendance during that semester prior to being permitted to enroll at LCCA. The final determination to accept a student with a history of truancy shall rest with the School Leader.

3.5.2 Kindergarten and First Grade Admissions Policies

Kindergarten: Any student enrolling in kindergarten must be five (5) years old on or before September 1 or have substantially initiated a public-school kindergarten program in another state that has a different attendance age requirement from South Carolina, to be eligible for enrollment in LCCA.

First Grade: Any student enrolling in first grade must be six (6) years old on or before September 1, or have substantially initiated a first grade program in another state that has a different attendance age requirement from South Carolina, or have attended a public school kindergarten program for one full school year, to be eligible for enrollment in LCCA.

3.5.3 Enrollment after the Start of the School Year

Students may enroll after the start of the school year, provided that there is space available in the school at the time of application. Families should contact the enrollment team for details on the school's enrollment capacity at the given time of application or inquiry. Families enrolling mid-year are subject to all the same enrollment requirements as families that enroll prior to the start of the school year. Enrollment may be closed before the end of the school year at the discretion of the school.

Additional Information for High School

High school students entering mid-semester should submit report cards, progress reports and/or teacher notes from their previous school as part of the enrollment process. Connections Academy teachers review the student's work and progress up to that point in the semester and enter an equivalent grade into the Connections Academy grade book that represents the student's efforts at the previous school. That grade will be averaged in with the Connections Academy grades earned in that same semester.

3.5.4 Dual Enrollment in another K-12 School

Due to LCCA being a full-time program, students may not be concurrently enrolled in another public school on a full or part-time basis. This includes receiving special education and all related services through the student's home district.

In certain special circumstances, it may be possible for a student to participate in a course or activity at another local school within the parameters described below. Seeking such permission should be initiated after the start of the Connections Academy school year. The parent's decision whether or not to enroll in Connections Academy should not be contingent on approval to participate in a course or activity at another institution. To make these arrangements, parents must obtain the *Request for Local School Activities Form* from the Virtual Library. The form essentially outlines the activity, lists contact information, and indicates that the cooperating School Leader and district agrees to: 1) not claim or collect any state, local or federal funding for the student, and 2) assume all liability for that student while on the school grounds. Once the form is completed and signed, the parent should present it to the Connections Academy School Leader, who will ensure that the student is in good standing and call the local School Leader and make a final approval decision (on the form).

Violations of this policy may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

3.5.6 Withdrawing from School

Students will be withdrawn from the school if they have ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences. If a student is logging attendance, but the student's lesson completion does not meet the state requirements for attendance the student may be placed on a Truancy Intervention Plan designed to support the student and the Learning Coach. At the end of that intervention the Learning Coach and school staff will evaluate whether or not the student should continue with LCCA or seek an alternative educational setting.

3.6.3 Mandatory Testing

All students enrolled in LCCA must take one proctored test per semester, which may be conducted in person or via telephone with a teacher. Travel, if necessary, to the approved, proctored test location is the responsibility of the parent/caretaker. Students who do not appear for the required proctored tests will be at risk of being withdrawn from LCCA.

LCCA students in certain grade levels will participate in South Carolina state testing during the appropriate testing windows. The students' grade level or high school cohort year dictates which test(s) they will participate in. More information about the administration of the tests will be communicated once the school year is under way, specific dates and information will be communicated in a timely manner to affected families.

3.7 Personalized Learning

Supplemental Instructional Support Program Participation

Students may be identified as needing a Supplemental Instructional Support Program (SISP) in order to master the grade level skills and standards needed for promotion. This additional instructional support will be led by teachers and the Student Support Team (SST) but will require a Caretaker to ensure the student is participating according to the SST's outlined plan. Caretakers, students and teachers will all play an integral role in the success of the student if an SISP is assigned.

Caretakers will be directed to a data view where they will provide an electronic signature that shows support of their child receiving additional instructional support at the school level. The data view also outlines the roles of the Caretaker, student, and teacher, as well as the consequences for not fully participating in the assigned SISP.

4 Attendance

4.2 Marking and Verifying Attendance

Learning Coaches document student attendance on a regular basis in the Education Management System (Pearson Online Classroom-formerly known as Connexus), and the school verifies that the attendance records are accurate.

Pearson Online Classroom Attendance Codes

The following attendance codes are available in Pearson Online Classroom:

Code	Definition of Code	Who enters the code?
0-9	Hours of Schooling	Learning coach (and the school as necessary)
V	Vacation	Learning Coach
E	Excused Absence	The School
U	Unexcused Absence	The School

Please note: If the Learning Coach fails to provide a WebMail explaining the absence or send a faxed doctors' note to verify the excused absence, the absence will be recorded as "unexcused".

Hours of Schooling

In order to meet the state’s requirements (located in the *School Schedule* section of this handbook), families must complete the following minimum hours of schooling each week, based on a five (5)-day school week. If a holiday occurs that week, the number of expected hours would be adjusted accordingly.

Grade(s)	Minimum hours per week
K	20
1-8	25
9-12	30

Learning Coach Responsibilities

- **Record Hours of Schooling** - For each instructional day, Learning Coaches enter a 0 – 9 in Pearson Online Classroom to indicate the number of hours of schooling that occurred. They must meet the weekly totals listed above to ensure compliance with state regulations. Coaches may also ask for assistance from the school to enter attendance records if they are unable to access a computer on a given day, per the *Marking and Verifying Attendance* section of the General School Handbook.
- **Alert School of Excused Student Absences** – Coaches cannot enter “E” attendance codes in Pearson Online Classroom. If a student is absent, the Coach must send information to the homeroom teacher about the absence, and the school determines if the absence can be classified as excused, per the guidelines listed in the General School Handbook.
- **Complete Defined School Year** – Regardless of the number of hours of schooling a student may complete prior to the last day of the school year (as defined in the school year calendar in this Supplement), students are required to meet the weekly required instructional hours up to and including the last day of the school year.
- **Vacations or Days Off:** Connections Academy students are allocated “vacation” days based on the number of weekdays in the school calendar that are marked as non-school days/holidays/vacation. For example, a student may choose to work on President’s Day, but then take the following Monday off. The Learning Coach would record hours of attendance on President’s Day, as though it were a regular school day, and then mark the Monday off as “V” for vacation. Whenever a student wishes to take a regular school day as a vacation day (that is, will not be completing any educational activities), the Learning Coach should notify the student’s teacher and if possible, seek prior approval.

Note that regularly scheduled school holidays, vacations, etc. must still be marked with a “V” if the student did not complete any educational activities on that day; they are not automatically recorded as vacation days in Pearson Online Classroom.

Students who start after the beginning of the school year will not be permitted to take vacation time for any school holiday or vacation days that occurred *prior* to their start date. For example, if a student starts school September 5 but school officially started August 18, the student is not entitled to use Labor Day as a vacation day but is still entitled to all vacation days that are scheduled *after* his/her official start date. If a student has used his/her allotment of vacation days, any day on which no educational activities are completed (i.e., no hours are recorded) will be treated as zero hours. If that student is able to meet the weekly state hours requirement on the days in which they do work, then the zero-hour day will not adversely affect the student's attendance percentage. If the hours are not made up during that same week, however, the student will be considered absent and their Escalation Status could be adversely impacted.

School Responsibilities

- **Review Attendance Records** – Teachers monitor and review attendance records on a weekly basis. They remind Learning Coaches to enter hours of schooling for all days of the week.
- **Monitor Attendance Issues** – The student's homeroom teacher monitors student attendance. Homeroom teachers contact families with low attendance rates, and work to help them stay in compliance. Homeroom teachers will also identify and record excused absences.
- **Maintaining the Integrity of the Attendance Data** – The attendance system prohibits further editing of attendance data at certain points. Any requests for adjustments to the previously verified records must be submitted in writing to the homeroom teacher for review, approval, and adjustment.
- **Official Attendance Record** – the Pearson Online Classroom attendance system is the record of Learning Coach documented attendance. It is however only one of many sources used to determine if a student is meeting the minimum instructional hour's requirement. In certain cases, where it has been determined that a student has not completed enough work or that certain other program requirements have not been fulfilled, the homeroom teacher may invalidate the Learning Coach record resulting in sanctions up to and including withdrawal.

4.3 Escalation Status

Enrolled students are always in one of three escalation statuses:

1. On-Track
2. Approaching Alarm
3. Alarm

This status is based on several criteria, as outlined in the School Handbook: General Portion, and is a combination of measures that indicate if a student is demonstrating adequate participation and attendance in the program. This not only includes the actual attendance hours recorded by the Learning Coach, but also lesson and assessment completion rates, and amount of communication with the teacher. Therefore, even though a Learning Coach may record a high number of instructional hours

in the attendance records, if a student's work completion rates are not on track or if they fail to communicate on a regular basis with the teacher, they will be placed into an escalated (Approaching Alarm or Alarm) status, depending on the severity of the issue. It is important to recognize that just marking proper attendance will not keep a student's escalation status On-Track.

Students enrolled in virtual charter schools in South Carolina are required to have a minimum of 25% of their instruction held "in real time." This real-time instruction can occur via a combination of both technology, such as web conferencing or telephone, and face-to-face interaction in the form of activities such as field trips and special projects. Families who enroll in LCCA should be prepared for more synchronous interaction with their teachers than they might have in other states and should be prepared to travel occasionally to various locations for "real-time, face-to-face" interaction with the school staff.

LCCA students and their Caretaker or Learning Coach will also be expected to maintain consistent contact with teachers and staff throughout the school year. Contact can be held either in real time via a variety of technological options or may be held face-to-face if viable for both Caretaker and teacher.

4.4 Truancy

The LCCA program offers a great deal of flexibility about how many hours students spend each day on schoolwork and on what days of the week they choose to complete specific lessons. However, within this flexible environment, students must still complete the required weekly and annual hours of attendance. Caretakers are legally responsible for ensuring that their students are fully participating in school and are ultimately responsible for ensuring their student is not truant, even if they have designated another individual as their student's Learning Coach. In order to avoid unexcused absences that may lead to truancy, the Caretaker must ensure that the following activities are taking place:

- The student regularly completes assigned lessons and assessments.
- The student participates in educational activities for an appropriate number of hours, as outlined in *Section 3.4.2 Required Instructional Hours* section of this Supplement, and the Caretaker or Learning Coach records these attendance hours in the Education Management System on a daily basis.
- The student is available for regularly scheduled telephone calls with teachers.
- The student is able to demonstrate that they are doing their own schoolwork.
- The student attends mandatory state testing.
- The Caretaker or Learning Coach has communicated with the homeroom teacher in advance if they need to deviate from the regular school calendar (for example, switching a vacation and school day).

If the students’ teachers become aware that the student is not fully participating in school as outlined above, the student may be given an unexcused absence. The School Leader or homeroom teacher may override the number of attendance hours previously entered by a Learning Coach, changing the attendance hours to a 0, if the student’s teacher(s) has evidence that the student has not participated as required. These absences will be marked “unexcused” in Pearson Online Classroom. The final decision about whether an absence is considered excused or unexcused will be made by the School Leader.

Missing a “day” of school is defined as “missing a day’s worth of hours in a week.” This would be the equivalent of completing fewer than 80% of the required hours for the week, as outlined in the chart below. When a student misses the equivalent of one day of hours in a week and does not provide the school with acceptable documentation for an excused absence, the school will mark that student with an unexcused absence.

Grade(s)	Required Hours Per Week	Truancy Threshold
K	20	<16
1-8	25	<20
9-12	30	<24

If a student has three (3) consecutive unexcused absences or five (5) total unexcused absences during the year, the student is considered at risk for truancy, and the school will begin a truancy intervention process in accordance with state law. Because it includes factors other than attendance, escalation status may not always be triggered when a student is truant.

5 Grading and Student Evaluation

LCCA follows the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale for all grades.

Course Point Range	Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D

<59	F
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Portfolio Resubmission Guidelines

To focus on student growth and continued student improvement, teachers at each grade level have established parameters for resubmission of portfolios. Those parameters will be communicated to students and parents by individual teachers. Teachers may set a deadline of receiving resubmissions and those deadlines will be communicated to students frequently throughout the semester and should appear in WebMail messages and phone conversation logs. These deadlines, if applicable, may also be posted on teacher Message Boards.

National Honor Society/National Junior Honor Society

Students who are in good academic standing, have attended LCCA for at least one semester, and meet other eligibility requirements, may be eligible to join the National Honor Society or National Junior Honor Society. Please contact your school for more details.

K-8 Promotion and Retention

Near the end of each school year, teachers make a recommendation to the School Leader regarding promotion or retention for each of their students in grades K through 8. Teachers, school administrators, and the School Leader review and discuss the recommendation and work together to make a final decision regarding promotion or retention for each student. If a student is recommended for retention, the school's decision is final.

For 3rd grade students to be promoted to 4th grade, proficiency in reading on SCREADY must be demonstrated, per South Carolina's Read to Succeed Act.

6 High School Programs and Policies

Promotion

The following credits are required to be promoted from one grade to the next:

Classification	Grade	Minimum Number of Credits
Sophomore	10	5
Junior	11	10
Senior	12	16

At the time of a student's enrollment, grade levels will be established based on preliminary information about previously earned credits. Student grade levels will be updated twice each year – once in the fall and once again at the end of the school year. The automatic adjustments are based on the student's earned and verified credits recorded in the Education Management System.

In certain situations, the counselor, in consultation with the student, Learning Coach, and/or school administrator, may adjust the student's grade level to most appropriately match the student's current academic needs.

Graduation and Diploma Requirements

To be eligible to graduate and receive a diploma from LCCA, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be enrolled at LCCA during the semester immediately prior to graduation, and not be full-time enrolled in any other high school.
- Earn a minimum of five (5) of the credits (or 10 courses) required for graduation at LCCA*, with at least 1.5 of these credits (or 3 courses) earned in the semester immediately prior to graduation.
- Earn a total of twenty-four (24) credits (in specific areas and subjects as outlined in this Supplement)
- Take all state-mandated tests. Meet any other additional graduation requirements required by the school or state.

**Credits earned at another Connections Academy school or schools may be included in this total, as these schools all use the same curriculum, technology, and instructional protocols as LCCA.*

A student may attend school until the student reaches 21 years of age (with the exception that if the student is in a graduating class and becomes 21 years of age before graduation, the student is permitted to complete the school-year if otherwise qualified to do so).

Expected Graduation Timeframes

Based on a student's progress toward graduation requirements, LCCA assigns an "Expected Graduation Timeframe" (EGT). If the school counselor or administrator determines it is feasible for the student to graduate on-time after four years of high school, necessary courses will be added to the student's schedule and the student is required to make every attempt to graduate on-time. A student's "Expected Graduation Timeframe" is discussed annually during Individual Graduation Plan meetings. Parent and student attendance at Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) meetings is essential.

Expected Graduation Timeframe Details:

NOTICE: Graduates who complete requirements at the end of the fall (or summer) semesters will not be included in class count for class rank calculations for SC scholarship purposes. Please read below for additional details from the state of South Carolina.

Early (Winter) Graduation: Graduating after the new school year begins and before Day 90

Students who intend to graduate following the completion of fall semester must notify their school counselor before the last day of their 11th grade school year to request approval. Early (Winter) graduates are welcome to join in any and all graduation activities offered by Lowcountry Connections Academy but must inform the school of their desire to participate in graduation activities at the same time they request early graduation.

- These students have demonstrated that all graduation requirements are completed at the end of the fall term.
- These students are no longer part of the class size and are no longer active students at the high school. These students are not provided a class rank.
- A fifth-year graduate would not be eligible to receive a SC State Scholarship for colleges/universities until after his or her first year attending a higher educational facility.

Spring Graduation: Graduating after day 90 but on or before day 180

The majority of the graduating class is expected to graduate following their spring semester. Spring graduates are included in the Senior class rank and are eligible for SC State Scholarships.

Summer Graduation: Graduating after day 180 but on or before the beginning day of the next school year

- These are the seniors who missed the spring graduation date deadline (last day of the school year) by not completing all graduation requirements.
- These students complete remaining requirements during a summer school session.
- The graduation date for summer graduates is either August 1st or the last day of the term for which summer school is offered.
- Summer graduates are not provided a class rank.
- “Commission on Higher Education” (CHE) Scholarship Eligibility for Summer Graduates:
 - Student in their 4th (or more) Year of High School: This Summer Graduate is not eligible to receive a SC scholarship for colleges/universities until after their first year attending a higher

educational facility. In the first year, if students attend a two-year college, they could receive the lottery tuition assistance grant or the need-based grant at any institution.

Student in 3rd (or less) Year of High School: This Summer Graduate may be able to earn SC State Scholarship eligibility based on the SC UGP GPA. (Families should contact the CHE office and/or prospective college to make determination.) CHE policy will not allow class rank to be used as an eligibility factor.

Completing Coursework Prior to end of Semester

Students who have completed all graduation requirements at any time prior to the end of the semester of their expected graduation may request early graduation by contacting their homeroom teacher.

Unofficial transcripts will be available to students via Pearosn Online Classroom as long as the student is enrolled in Connections Academy, and official transcripts will be available at any time by contacting the school or requesting on [Parchment](#).

Early (Winter) graduates will receive their diplomas either at the Graduation Ceremony or by certified mail in July. Summer graduates will receive diplomas by certified mail in August.

Participation in the Graduation Ceremony

In order to participate in the graduation ceremony, a student must meet all graduation requirements by the end of the spring semester. This includes earning all credits required for graduation prior to the ceremony. If a student must enroll in summer school to earn required credits, they will be permitted to participate in the ceremony upon proof of registration.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian Selection Criterion

Valedictorian

Class rank is determined by the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (SC UGP). The valedictorian is determined to be the student with the highest Grade Point Average (GPA) based on the SC UGP at the end of the first semester of the 12th grade year. Students who graduate as winter or summer graduates are excluded from class rank and cannot be Valedictorian or Salutatorian. The Valedictorian must be a student in good standing and must have attended LCCA for a minimum of 2 semesters and earned a minimum of 5 credits at LCCA at the time of graduation.

Salutatorian

Class rank is determined by the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (SC UGP). The salutatorian is determined to be the student with the second-highest Grade Point Average (GPA) based on the SC UGP

at the end of the first semester of the 12th grade year. Students who graduate as winter or summer graduates are excluded from class rank and cannot be Valedictorian or Salutatorian. The Salutatorian must be a student in good standing and must have attended LCCA for a minimum of 2 semesters and earned a minimum of 5 credits at LCCA at the time of graduation.

Area and Subject Requirements

Students must earn the following credits in the following areas and subjects in order to graduate:

Area	Subject	# of Credits
Language Arts	English	4
Mathematics	Algebra	1
Mathematics	Geometry	1
Mathematics	Any in the Area of Mathematics	2
Science	Biology	1
Science	Any in the Area of Science	2
Social Studies	U.S. History and Constitution	1
Social Studies	Government*	.5
Social Studies	Economics	.5
Social Studies	Other Social Studies Course	1
Health and PE	Physical Education or Junior ROTC	1
Technology	**Computer Science (including keyboarding)	1
Foreign Language or CATE	Foreign Language OR a Career and Technology Education Course	1
Various	Electives	7
Total		24

*****Each student must demonstrate computer literacy before graduating.***

******Students who are enrolled in their first year of high school with LCCA are expected to take a Freshman Focus course for .50 credit. Students enrolled in their final year of high school with LCCA are expected to take a Senior Success course for .50 credit.***

Connections Academy uses a standard whereby one credit equals approximately 180 hours of instruction (sometimes referred to as Carnegie Units). Students are required to be enrolled in a minimum of four courses per semester in order to be considered full-time students.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility

In order to be eligible for National College Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarships, students must meet certain academic and other requirements, including but not limited to taking NCAA-approved high school courses. Many of Connections Academy's core and elective courses are NCAA-approved; however, students interested in NCAA scholarships should contact their school counselor to determine an appropriate course schedule that will help them meet NCAA requirements. Students should also visit the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) for more information.

Grades and Grade Point Averages (GPA)

High school students will be awarded credit only for courses in which they have earned a grade of 60% or better. Previous courses taken at other schools in which the student earned a grade below a 60% will not be awarded with transfer credit but will appear on student records and will be included in a student's grade point average (GPA). Courses required for graduation will need to be re-taken by the student if a grade of 60% or higher was not earned and re-taking such courses may delay the student's graduation.

Course Point Range	Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
<59	F

Semester and year-end GPA calculations will follow the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale which is a 10-point scale (below). Grade point averages will only include graded courses; pass/fail courses will not be averaged into a student's GPA. Passing grades for Honors courses are weighted with one-half (0.5) extra grade point. Passing grades for college dual-enrolled or Advanced Placement (AP) courses are weighted with one (1) extra grade point.

South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale Conversions

Numerical Average	Letter Grade	College Prep	Honors	AP/IB/Dual Credit
100	A	5.000	5.500	6.000
99	A	4.900	5.400	5.900
98	A	4.800	5.300	5.800
97	A	4.700	5.200	5.700
96	A	4.600	5.100	5.600
95	A	4.500	5.00	5.500
94	A	4.400	4.900	5.400
93	A	4.300	4.800	5.300

92	A	4.200	4.700	5.200
91	A	4.100	4.600	5.100
90	A	4.000	4.500	5.000
89	B	3.900	4.400	4.900
88	B	3.800	4.300	4.800
87	B	3.700	4.200	4.700
86	B	3.600	4.100	4.600
85	B	3.500	4.000	4.500
84	B	3.400	3.900	4.400
83	B	3.300	3.800	4.300
82	B	3.200	3.700	4.200
81	B	3.100	3.600	4.100
80	B	3.000	3.500	4.000
79	C	2.900	3.400	3.900
78	C	2.800	3.300	3.800
77	C	2.700	3.200	3.700
76	C	2.600	3.100	3.600
75	C	2.500	3.000	3.500
74	C	2.400	2.900	3.400
73	C	2.300	2.800	3.300
72	C	2.200	2.700	3.200
71	C	2.100	2.600	3.100
70	C	2.000	2.500	3.000
69	D	1.900	2.400	2.900
68	D	1.800	2.300	2.800
67	D	1.700	2.200	2.700
66	D	1.600	2.100	2.600
65	D	1.500	2.000	2.500
64	D	1.400	1.900	2.400
63	D	1.300	1.800	2.300
62	D	1.200	1.700	2.200
61	D	1.100	1.600	2.100
60	D	1.000	1.500	2.000
59	F	0.900	1.400	1.900

58	F	0.800	1.300	1.800
57	F	0.700	1.200	1.700
56	F	0.600	1.100	1.600
55	F	0.500	1.000	1.500
54	F	0.400	0.900	1.400
53	F	0.300	0.800	1.300
52	F	0.200	0.700	1.200
51	F	0.100	0.600	1.100
0-50	F	0.000	0.000	0.000
50	WF	0.000	0.000	0.000
50	FA	0.000	0.000	0.000
-	WP	0.000	0.000	0.000
-	P	0.000	0.000	0.000
-	NP	0.000	0.000	0.000
-	AU	0.000	0.000	0.000

WF = Withdraw Fail and FA = Failure due to Absences. WF and FA will factor into the student's GPA as a 50.

WP = Withdraw Pass, P = Pass, NP = Not Passed (Credit-Recovery courses that are not passed in 2017-18 and beyond), and AU = Audit. WP, P, NP, and AU do not factor into the student's GPA.

Class Rank

LCCA will calculate the class rank for each high school student two times per year, shortly after the conclusion of each semester. Students who have not yet successfully completed any high school courses for credit directly from Connections Academy will be excluded from the class rank calculation.

Graduates who complete requirements at the end of the fall, winter, or summer term will not be included in the class count for class rank calculations for South Carolina scholarship purposes.

Spring graduates only will be included in the class count for class rank calculations at the end of the school year. The senior class rank depends on the total number of students eligible for graduating high school as follows:

- Are actively enrolled in classes during the spring term.
- Will have completed all high school requirements on or before the final date of the school year.
- Will receive their high school diplomas at the end of the spring term (May/June).

For the purposes of calculating the class rank, the student's cumulative GPA will be used, which may include weighted grades for Honors or Advanced Placement courses. Courses transferred in from other accredited institutions will also be included in the class rank if there is a grade assigned for that course.

The cumulative GPA is calculated to the thousandth of a point. Students whose class rank rounds off to the same thousandth of a point will be considered tied and will receive the same class rank. The ranking will compare students within the same grade level at the same school. The class rank is included on the student's official high school transcript.

Release of High School Educational Records

Connections Academy will provide educational records, including official high school transcripts, class rank, test scores, and letters of recommendation to third parties such as post-secondary institutions, scholarship committees, and/or potential employers, only with prior written approval from the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s), or from the student if they are aged 18 or older or an emancipated minor.

All transcript requests for college applications and LCCA graduates can be fulfilled electronically through Parchment.com. LCCA has authorized Parchment, Inc. to provide free transcripts and report cards in electronic or paper format. If this is your first time requesting a transcript, you will first have to register by creating a new account on Parchment.com. Once you have created your account, you can request to have your transcript sent to any destination and track your transcript order.

In order to ensure that application deadlines are successfully met, we require advance notice of at least ten **(10) working days for requests to provide educational records** to students, parents, and/or third parties. We require fifteen **(15) days' notice for letters of recommendation**. Note: Class rank is only calculated twice a year.

Requests for records should be made using the Authorization for Release of Educational Records and Letters and Letters of Recommendation Form available in the Virtual Library.

Prerequisites

Students must meet all course prerequisite requirements prior to registration in them.

Prerequisites are listed by each course's overview in the course catalog. Semesters A and B of a course cannot be taken concurrently (during the same semester) unless approved by a school official.

Duplicate Course Work: Retaking a Course

According to the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale policy, a student may retake a course at the same level of difficulty if the student has earned a “D”, “P”, “NP”, “WP”, “FA”, “WF”, or an “F” in that course with school counselor approval. It is the responsibility of the family to contact the student’s school counselor to make this request. Retaking the course means that the student completes the entire course again (not a subset of the course). The student’s transcript and GPA will incorporate both occurrences of the course, but only one course attempt and the highest grade earned for the course will be calculated in the GPA.

A student who retakes a high school credit course from middle school must complete it before the beginning of the second year of high school or before the next sequential course (whichever comes first). A student in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) must retake a course by the end of the next school year or before the next sequential course (whichever comes first).

For all grade levels, all courses will remain on the transcript. However, only the highest grade will be used in figuring the student’s GPA.

Schedule Changes

New students can request to drop a course without penalty within the first ten (10) days of enrollment in that course. After ten (10) days have passed a dropped course will result in a WF (Withdraw Fail) on the student’s transcript and will affect the student’s GPA calculation by factoring into their GPA as a 50%, F. New students can add a course during the first 30 days of enrollment. To add or drop a course, a student’s Caretaker or Learning Coach should contact the homeroom teacher.

Returning students may request changes to the following year’s schedule; however, changes must be completed by the last day of school.

Course change requests should be shared with homeroom teachers and are subject to counselor review and approval.

After the student’s last day of school, course schedule changes will only be considered for the following reasons:

- A senior is missing a class required for graduation.
- A four (4) year college bound student is missing a class required for admission.
- A student completed a course in summer school.
- A student is academically misplaced.
- A student is approved for dual-credit enrollment.
- A change is necessary due to a student’s Individual Education Plan or 504 Plan.

Course changes must be approved by a School Counselor or Administrator.

Transcripts

Students will be able to access ongoing information about their courses through their online grade books within the Education Management System. To request an official copy of a transcript, families must complete the Authorization for Release of Educational Records and *Letters and Letters of Recommendation* form (located in the Virtual Library) and submit it to the school counselor for approval and processing. Official transcripts are generated at the school. They have official school signatures, raised seals, and are sent in a sealed envelope.

All transcript requests for college applications and LCCA graduates can be fulfilled electronically through [Parchment.com](https://www.parchment.com). LCCA has authorized Parchment, Inc. to provide free transcripts and report cards in electronic or paper format. If this is your first time requesting a transcript, you will first have to register by creating a new account on [Parchment.com](https://www.parchment.com). Once you have created your account, you can request to have your transcript sent to any destination and track your transcript order.

Parents will be able to view an unofficial copy of the transcript through the Education Management System at any time.

Credit from other Schools

As part of the enrollment process, families submit their students' most recent report cards and/or transcripts. Counselors analyze previously earned credits and determine which credits will transfer to the Connections Academy school. The school counselor may require complete unofficial transcripts or complete end-of-year report cards before approving a student's grade level and course selection. Official transcripts are required within the first thirty (30) days of school for final credit transfer approval and for final course approval. Upon graduation or withdrawal, the official Connections Academy transcript may display both the credits earned at Connections Academy as well as any transfer credits.

It will be at the discretion of the school to approve enrolled students for credit-recovery or original credit courses with another provider.

Credit for Coursework Completed in a Non-Standard School Program

Students may request to receive credit for courses completed in previous educational settings other than fully accredited schools, including home school, non-accredited public, private, alternative or international schools. LCCA is not obligated or required to award credits from non-standard and non-accredited schools, including home school programs.

Students will be placed into the next linear course to determine if the previous content was mastered. If the student passes this next course, credit in related content area will be assigned for courses taken previously in the non-standard program. If the student does not pass the course, the school will determine if credit will be awarded and if a placement change needs to occur.

Credits for courses completed in a non-standard school program are granted as described above, but no grades are assigned. Students receiving credit will be given a grade of “Pass,” which is not included in the calculation of the student’s GPA. These credits are not entered into the student’s records until the student has completed a full semester in Connections Academy.

High School Courses Taken in Middle School

Students may earn high school credit for high school level courses taken during the middle school years. The South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale and method for calculating GPAs also applies to high school credits earned during the middle school years. A middle school course for which high school credit is granted must cover the same content as the equivalent high school course, and must be approved by the school counselor, Assistant Principal or School Leader in advance. Check with the school counselor, grade level Assistant Principal or School Leader for more specific information.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Approval for Advanced Placement course enrollment is based on the student’s academic history, which should show successful performance in related honors-level courses. If a student has already taken an Honors and/or AP Courses in the prior year and done well (90% or above), they could be eligible to take a maximum of AP courses according to grade level:

9th Grade: 1

10th Grade: 1-2

11th Grade: 1-3

12th Grade: 1-3

Enrollment into AP courses is at the school’s discretion. Students and Caretaker(s) should be involved in Individual Graduation Plan meetings with the school counselor to discuss readiness for advanced courses.

Dual Enrollment/Credit for College Courses

Students must be in good standing at LCCA to be permitted to enroll in a college course or courses while still enrolled at LCCA. Therefore, families must consult with their student’s school counselor if the student wishes to register to take a college course. The school counselor will discuss with the family any potential course changes resulting from the college enrollment, determine with the family if taking a college course is appropriate for the student, and advise the family on next steps to become dually enrolled.

Once approved by LCCA to take a college course, the student must pass the course with a grade of D (60%) or higher in order to receive high school credit for the college course. High school credit will be granted by using the ratio of 1 Carnegie/high school credit = 3 semester college credits. College credits and letter grades from dual enrollment courses will appear on the LCCA high school transcript.

Students must provide the following to the Counseling department before a course schedule will be changed:

1. Name of college
2. College course title
3. College course description
4. The semester in which they are taking the course
5. Number of credits offered for course
6. College course dates (beginning and ending)
7. College paperwork to be filled out by High School (if applicable)

Credit for Other Experiences

Many students are involved in activities outside their school experiences, such as: music, dance, and art lessons, foreign language instruction, and participation on athletic teams. While Connections Academy recognizes the value of these activities, they cannot be used to earn high school credit.

Independent Study

Independent Study is a school-approved, student-centered, alternative method of learning that allows a student to earn regular education course credit while working on a standards-based, curriculum-aligned, independent project. Students work independently under the supervision of a certified teacher following a plan created jointly by the student, the parent, and the teacher. Students who wish to earn credit for an Independent Study project must complete an application and have the approval of both the teacher and school counselor in advance. Students may earn up to two full credits for Independent Study.

Students Driving to Sanctioned Events

The school highly recommends to Caretakers that students not be permitted to drive unaccompanied to Connections Academy sanctioned events ("event(s)"). Preferred options include having Caretakers or designated adults drive and supervise students, or having students use public transportation options.

However, we recognize that in certain circumstances students may need or wish to drive to an event without supervision from an adult. In order to be able to drive unaccompanied to a Connections Academy sanctioned event, students must meet the following guidelines:

- Must be sixteen (16) years of age.
- Must possess a valid driver's license.
- Must have access to a currently registered, inspected, and insured vehicle.
- Must be a student in good standing, with good attendance, and with no disciplinary actions noted in the student's file.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the student who attends an event without a parent, legal guardian, or designated adult to do the following:

- Document parental permission to drive to events for the current school year by submitting a completed and signed *Connections Academy Sanctioned Event Student Driving and Attendance Authorization* to the School (form available in the Caretaker's DataView)
- Obey all time schedules.
- Obey all school rules including maintaining acceptable attendance and disciplinary standards. If a student arrives late, privileges may be revoked.
- Adhere to school rules and procedures for events.

Under no circumstances shall the school be responsible for students who make their own personal travel arrangements and/or are not accompanied by an adult. The conduct of unaccompanied student drivers at events will remain the responsibility of their parents/legal guardians. If a student driving to or from an event is involved in an accident, Connections Academy will not be liable for any injuries or damage; all liability rests with the student, his/her parent/legal guardian and/or any insurance maintained by the parent/legal guardian and/or the student.

Under no circumstances shall students drive other students to an event. If a student nevertheless permits another student or students to ride with him/her, Connections Academy shall not be liable for any injuries or damage to any parties. The student, the student's parent/legal guardian, and/or any insurance maintained by the parent/legal guardian and/or the student, will be responsible for any and all injuries and/or any damage that may occur.

Even if a parent/legal guardian does grant permission for a student to drive unaccompanied, it is important to note that driving a car to an event is a privilege for a student and not a right, and such privilege may still be denied or revoked by the school at any time. Safe driving practices must be adhered to at all times. Students who endanger other drivers, individuals, pedestrians, or property, and/or do not follow school rules and/or procedures for events, may have their permission to drive unaccompanied to school events revoked by the school. Furthermore, students may be reported to school authorities and, if warranted, may also be reported to the police for further action.

7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligible Students

Enrollment Requirements

At the time of enrollment, all Caretakers that indicate their students have a disability are asked to submit a copy of the student's most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP). It is important that the IEP is submitted complete containing all sections with current annual review and reevaluation/eligibility review dates. Educational assessments, evaluation reports, functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention plans that support the IEP should also be submitted.

When a child with a disability transfers to LCCA with an IEP from a previous LEA the school in consultation with the parents, will provide a FAPE to the child, including services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous LEA.

All documents are reviewed by the Director of Special Education, and if necessary, a member of the special education staff contacts the family to discuss specific student needs or to clarify the information. The student's annual review and reevaluation/eligibility review date is noted. Once enrollment is complete and the student has started classes the team begins to schedule IEP meetings, as necessary.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, the special education team ensures that teachers have access to the student IEPs. The teachers are made aware of each student's special learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations.

Conducting IEP Meetings

LCCA is responsible for all special education services including planning, scheduling, and conducting all annual review and other IEP-related meetings. The staff at LCCA contacts families and establishes mutually beneficial meeting times. Although typically held virtually, the IEP meetings occur in compliance with all state and federal laws.

Special Education and Related Services

According to their IEPs, some students qualify to receive special education and related services. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. The IEP team ensures the service is provided in compliance with the IEP. The team locates and secures the provider and handles all contracting and financial issues. LCCA is responsible for arranging for and providing those services.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for special education assistance. If this is suspected, the school will suggest strategies for learning and consider options for gathering learning information in combination with initiating a special education referral.

Child Find and the Intervention Process

Throughout the school year teachers and Learning Coaches may recognize that a student is having difficulty learning. If this is suspected, the teacher, with assistance from the Learning Coach, will implement a series of program interventions. If the recommended strategies do not address the students learning needs, the teacher (along with the parent) will refer the student to

LCCA's special education referral team. Once the special education referral team receives the referral, they will begin the process of creating a referral packet in preparation for evaluation planning.

7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students

Enrollment Requirements

Caretakers of students with Section 504 plans seeking to enroll in the School are asked to submit a copy of the Section 504 plan during the enrollment and academic placement process.

When a student enters the School with a Section 504 plan developed by a prior school, the School will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with Section 504.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, the 504 Coordinator ensures that teachers have access to a student's 504 Plan. The teachers are made aware of each student's special learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations.

Students who have Section 504 plans will participate in the regular education environment, with the support of the 504 plan's outlined accommodations. The regular education teachers (with the support of the Section 504 coordinator) will implement the provisions of Section 504 plans. A case manager will be assigned to notify teachers about the accommodations and to assist with and monitor implementation of the Section 504 plan. Teachers will also have access to information regarding accommodations on their home page.

Reevaluation

The school conducts a reevaluation of student 504 plans annually. For students who enter the school with an existing Section 504 plan, a 30-day transfer meeting will be held to review accommodations and ensure adequate support for the student.

Section 504 Accommodations

According to their Section 504 plans, some students qualify for accommodations and services. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. The 504 Coordinator ensures the service is provided in compliance with the student's Section 504 plan.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for accommodations supplemental aides and services as required under Section 504. If attempted strategies fail, the team (along with the Caretaker) will consider a referral to the school's special education team and/or Section 504 Committee. Once the team receives the referral, they will begin the process of determining if the student needs evaluations and a Section 504 plan.

Federal law requires LCCA to provide its students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. LCCA is committed to providing its students with equal access to its education program. We provide students with accessibility through resources tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support.

If your student needs assistance in order to fully participate in Lowcountry Connections Academy's education program, please contact the school's special education coordinator. You can also obtain 24-hour technical support by calling the Accessibility Hotline at 888-639-5960.

7.4 Gifted Students

All second-grade students -are required to participate in state testing in the fall. The results of the assessments will be used to determine eligibility into our Gifted and Talented Program. An automatic recommendation for the GT Program will occur if a student scores in the 93 percentile or above on a nationally- or state-normed standardized test. Once a child qualifies for Gifted and Talented, they do not have to re-qualify in subsequent years.

After parent permission has been obtained, all nominated students will be assessed using multiple measures, both qualitative and quantitative to determine their aptitude, performance, and productive thinking abilities.

Identification of Underserved Populations

Gifted and talented students are found within all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Identification is a multi-step process, established by the South Carolina Department of Education.

Identification Timelines

Months	Grades/Parameters	Dimension(s)
Sept/Oct	Grades 2-8 as needed	Dimension A
Oct/Nov	All 2 nd Graders Iowa Assessment (IA) Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)	Dimension A Dimension B
May	Grade 3-8 Standardized Assessment (TBD)	Dimension B

Placement in the GT program is voluntary and will require written permission from the parents or legal guardians. Students not placed in the program may be re-nominated the following year and will follow the same screening procedures.

9 Conduct, Due Process, Grievance, and Communication

9.1 LCCA Student Dress Code

Students and parents/caretakers are responsible for the dress and grooming of students.

Approved dress and grooming:

- During all in-person student events and LiveLessons, students must wear clothing including both a shirt and pants, skirt, short, or the equivalent. All students attending field trips/events must also wear shoes.
- Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front and on the sides.
- Clothing must cover undergarments.
- Fabric covering all private parts must not be see through.
- Hats and other headwear must allow the face to be visible and not interfere with the line of sight to any student or staff. Hoodies must allow the student's face and ears to be visible to staff.

Not-Approved Dress and Grooming:

- Clothing may not depict, advertise, or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances.
- Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
- Clothing may not use or depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, political beliefs, or any other protected groups.
- If the student's attire or grooming threatens the health or safety (e.g. attire that is affiliated with a gang) of any other person, then discipline for dress or grooming violations will be consistent with discipline policies for similar violations.

All persons who are visible during student LiveLessons should adhere to the student dress code. This applies to parents, caretakers, siblings, or others within view of the web camera.

9.2 Bullying and Prohibited Behaviors

Connections Academy is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or toward any student, staff, Learning Coach, Caretaker, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse; and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether or not the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected group, such as sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability.

The following definitions are intended to provide guidance in assessing whether a particular behavior is a prohibited behavior. They are not exhaustive in their scope and are not intended to replace the intuition of the individual. When in doubt as to whether or not a particular suspected behavior is a prohibited behavior, you are urged to rule on the side of caution and report your concerns to the appropriate authority, as provided for in this policy.

Harassment - any intentional behavior or course of conduct (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) directed at a specific person or group of persons that causes substantial physical and/or emotional distress or harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive educational environment for the other person(s) and serves no legitimate purpose.

Bullying – a course of abusive treatment (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) that typically involves the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when habitual and involving an imbalance of power. It may involve verbal, written or cyber harassment, physical assault or coercion and may be directed persistently towards particular victims.

Cyber-bullying – the use of information and communication technologies, such as, but not limited to, cell phone, email, instant messaging, social media websites, Twitter, etc., to support deliberate and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that (i) is intended to harm others or (ii) that an objectively reasonable person would expect to cause harm to others. Cyber-bullying includes the posting or other transmission of text,

video, or images that are embarrassing, demeaning, or threatening in nature, regardless of whether the subject of such text, video, or images directed, consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue posting or other transmission.

Hazing – the use of ritual and other activities involving harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, intimidation, abuse or humiliation for the purpose of initiating a person or persons into a group, regardless of whether such person(s) consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue behavior(s) and action(s).

Intimidation – a course of behavior that instills fear or a sense of inadequacy.

Violence within a dating relationship - any behavior by a student exhibited towards that student's dating partner that is an attempt to gain and/or maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, verbal, psychological, and/or mental abuse.

Sexting - knowingly using a computer, or any other device capable of electronic data transmission or distribution, to transmit or distribute to another minor any photograph or video which depicts nudity and is harmful to minors. Knowingly possessing a photograph or video that was transmitted or distributed by another minor as described above.

Prohibited behaviors include all of the above.

The school Administration and School Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which (i) cause, threaten to cause, or, an objective and reasoned third-party would find was intended to cause, bodily harm or personal degradation, or (ii) creates, or an objective and reasoned third-party would determine was intended to create, an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for any student, staff member, member of the administration, parent or guardian, or other third-party.

This policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson® sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards; and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on school property. This policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or staff member is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where a staff member is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources.

Any student or student's Caretaker who believes that student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation to

the school counselor, School Leader or assistant principal, or

School Director. The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who

will be responsible for notifying the appropriate school administrator or Board official. Complaints about prohibited behavior against the School Leader should be filed with the Connections Academy School Director or the Vice President of Schools, or the Board President. Complaints about prohibited behavior against the Connections Academy School Director or the Vice President of Schools should be filed with either the Connections Academy Executive Vice President or the Board President.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be prohibited behavior. Reports may be made to those identified above. If a student or other individual believes there has been prohibited behavior, they should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action. Any teacher, school administrator, or school staff member who does not timely make a written report of an incident of prohibited behavior shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process (found in this Supplement).

All complaints about prohibited behavior shall be kept confidential and be promptly investigated. The School Leader or appropriate administrator shall prepare a written report of the investigation upon completion. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether any prohibited behavior(s) were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action, shall be in the report. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report. When the target of the prohibited behavior is a student, the school shall provide that student with a written copy of the rights, protections, and support services available to them. If there is any evidence that the student has experienced physical harm as a result of the prohibited behavior, the school shall promptly communicate that information to the appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, emergency personnel and /or law enforcement.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process. This may include up to expulsion for students; up to discharge for staff members; exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any official position and/or a request for a Board member(s) to resign. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for staff members will follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in this Supplement.

When appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s) Caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, when appropriate, that action has been taken. In providing such

notification care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying, and/or dating violence.

If after investigation the act(s) of prohibited behavior by a specific student is/are verified, the School Leader or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the Caretaker of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior will not be tolerated, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of school policy, and suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as prohibited behavior. Making intentionally false reports about prohibited behavior will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This policy shall not be interpreted as infringing upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by state or federal law).

Complaints

Students and/or their Caretakers may file written reports regarding any suspected prohibited behavior by completing the *Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form*, found in the My School section of the Virtual Library, and sending this to the school. Such reports should be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the School Leader for review, investigation, and action.

Students and/or their Caretakers may make *informal* complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing by completing the *Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form*, found in the My School section of the Virtual Library. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the School Leader for review, investigation, and appropriate

action.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The school will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Bystanders

Bullying involves not only those who are bullies and their victims, but also the bystanders who are witnesses. LCCA recognizes that bystanders may be negatively affected by bullying, but that they also have the potential to play a positive role in responding to it.

Bystanders may be negatively affected in the following or other ways:

- be afraid of being associated with the victim of bullying for fear of becoming a target of the bully themselves.
- feel discomfort or fear at witnessing bullying.
- feel guilt, helplessness, or loss of control for not standing up to the bully.
- be drawn into the bullying behavior by group pressure.
- or feel unsafe in the situation.

Conversely, bystanders may be able to help victims of bullying by doing the following:

- Ask for help from a trusted adult such as a teacher, School Leader, or other school official.
- Help the person being bullied: create a distraction to focus attention on something else; try helping the person who is being bullied leave the scene by telling them that you need them to play a game or that an adult needs to see them, etc.
- Don't give bullying an audience: bullies are often encouraged by the attention they receive, so don't support them by watching.
- Set an example: do not bully others; don't encourage bullies; create posters against bullying; join an anti-bullying club; tell a bully that his/her actions are not funny.
- Be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Spend time with the person being bullied: talk to them; listen to them; tell them you think that bullying is bad; tell them to talk to a trusted adult for help.

LCCA's expectation is that student bystanders will report bullying to a school official or other appropriate adult in a timely manner. If it comes to the attention of the school leadership or staff that a student bystander did not report bullying, the school will initiate a conversation with the student regarding the school's expectations for bystanders to report bullying. Second and subsequent occurrences of non-reporting of bullying may subject the student to more serious disciplinary action.

Additionally, if it is determined by the school leadership that a student who was initially a bystander became actively involved in the bullying, s/he may be subject to disciplinary action for bullying as described in section *9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students* in this Supplement.

9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students

All students enrolled in Connections Academy are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the school, and parents are expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. This expectation is also required at all state testing sites, field trips, field/fun days, and any other school sanctioned event. Student codes of conduct are set forth in this Supplement. School students are also guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

Discipline Measures

There are three levels of disciplinary measures utilized by the school: 1) Warning, 2) Suspension, and 3) Expulsion. Each level has associated conduct breach definitions and corresponding disciplinary actions that may occur.

1. Warning

Students that receive warnings from the school will have a conference (via phone or in person) with their parent/guardian(s) and the school administrator(s), and the incident will be formally documented in writing. The student will not have a disruption in schooling and will not be removed from the class (Pearson Online Classroom).

Warnings are issued when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct.

2. Suspension

When a student is suspended, they are temporarily removed from class (Pearson Online Classroom) or a school sponsored program or activity. The length of a suspension is determined by the school administrator (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

During a period of suspension as defined by the School Leader, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of Pearson Online Classroom is restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online

clubs/activities, and/or all of Pearson Online Classroom may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to Pearson Online Classroom and obtaining the student's assignments and responding to Webmail. The student should continue with his/her schoolwork during a suspension. The student should submit his/her work once the suspension has expired.

Violations that may lead to suspension or withdrawal from the school include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct:

- *Cheating on tests or daily work:* A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another's work, and representing it as his/her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- *Plagiarism:* A student's use of another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as his/her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying-and-pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.
- *Unexcused absence:* An unexcused absence is the absence of a student due to truancy, illegal employment or parental neglect.
- *Illegal absence:* Illegal absences are unexcused absences by a student who is under the age of 17 who are absent from school due to avoidable absences, parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations, and truancy.
- *Abusive conduct:* A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.
- *Bullying:* A student that repeatedly engages in negative actions against another student in an attempt to exercise control over them.
- *Harassment:* A student who demonstrates verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the school's programs that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment, 2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance, or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.
- *Vandalism:* A Student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances, the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency/agencies.
- *Theft and robbery:* A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is

considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances, the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.

- *Sexual harassment*: A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.
- *Violation of acceptable use policy*: Students who violate the acceptable use policy in one form or another are open to disciplinary action including suspension. This would include signing on as parents.
- *Repeated violation* of any disciplinary issues.
- *Outdated immunization records*: Students must have valid immunization records (consisting of a valid South Carolina Certificate of Immunization, or a valid South Carolina Certificate of Special Exemption, or a valid South Carolina Certificate of Medical Exemption, or a valid South Carolina Certificate of Religious Exemptions) on file per school guidelines. The school will notify the family if the student's immunization records are lacking or invalid and will provide 30 days for valid records to be submitted. Section 44-29-180 of the SC Code of Laws and Section 61-8 of the SC Code of Regulations require that a student who does not have valid immunization records within thirty (30) days of such notice be suspended until the school receives the valid records.

3. Expulsion

When a student is expelled, they are separated from the school for an extended period of time, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

For those students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the disciplinary procedures required by the IDEA will be followed. In the event a student has disabilities under both Section 504 and the IDEA, both policies shall be followed in determining appropriate disciplinary actions.

Due Process

The following actions will be conducted by the school, per each of the disciplinary measures as outlined below:

Suspension (no more than 10 days)

An informal hearing will be convened with the student, Caretaker, School Leader, and other staff members as appropriate. The School Leader will inform the student and Caretaker of the allegations and an explanation of

the evidence that supports the allegations. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his/her version of the occurrence. If the School Leader determines that the incident(s) justifies suspension, written notice will be provided to the student and his/her Caretaker. The student will be provided all due process as required by law.

Suspension of more than 10 days (Expulsion)

If a School Leader believes that a student has committed an offense that might require expulsion, the School Leader may suspend the student for up to 10 days pending a committee of the board hearing. During this time, the School Leader will request a committee of the board hearing to discuss the possible expulsion of the student. The parent(s) will be notified of due process rights including the right to appear at the board hearing and to present the student's side of the case. The parent(s) will be notified of the date, time, and place of the hearing at least five (5) days prior to the hearing.

Formal Expulsion Hearing

If the School Leader determines that a student's conduct may warrant expulsion, the School Leader will provide written notice to the Caretaker of the student of his/her determination and the student's right to a hearing. Such notice shall include (1) date, time and location of hearing; (2) description of the incident(s) that is the subject of the hearing; (3) notice that the student and/or Caretaker have a right to review the student's school records prior to the hearing; (4) description of the hearing process and explanation of the consequences of an expulsion.

At this hearing, the allegations and supporting evidence will be reviewed. The student shall have the right to present his/her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by counsel. The School Leader will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors regarding long-term suspension, expulsion or an alternative, and the Board, through the School Leader, will provide notification to the student and Caretaker of the Board's decision and discipline determination. The decision of the Board is final.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

If a student with a disability violates a code of conduct, they will be disciplined according to the discipline measures described above for up to ten (10) days. Upon subsequent violations that result in suspensions that exceed ten (10) days, the school will determine if the behavior manifested from the student's disability. If the school determines that the violation is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school will apply the discipline procedures to the student in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities. However, if it is determined that the violation manifested from the student's disability, the school will conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop a behavior plan to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

9.4 Academic Honesty

Plagiarism

Connections Academy requires the original work of all students and in so doing, prohibits plagiarism of the work of others. Students shall be expected to properly cite the origin of work that is not the student's own. If work content, other than commonly known facts, is not properly cited, attributed, or credited, the work may be determined to be plagiarism.

Students may not plagiarize in written, oral, or creative work. In general, plagiarism occurs when a student uses another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work and with the intention of passing it off as his/her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying and pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.

Consequences of Plagiarism for Students in Grades K-8

First Offense

The first time a student is determined to have plagiarized the work of other(s), the student will receive a warning. The student's teacher will contact the student and the Learning Coach to explain the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered plagiarism and will discuss how to avoid plagiarizing again. The student will be required to resubmit the question/assignment with original work and will be eligible to receive up to full credit for the assignment. If the student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a zero for that question/assignment.

Second Offense

The second time a student is caught plagiarizing; they will receive a second warning. The student's teacher will contact the student and the Learning Coach to explain the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered plagiarism, remind the student and Learning Coach that this is the second time the student has been caught plagiarizing, and will reinforce how to avoid plagiarism. The student will be required to redo the question/assignment and will be eligible to receive up to half credit. If a student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a zero for that question/assignment.

Third Offense

The third time a student is caught plagiarizing; a required conference with the parent/guardian, student and administrator will be scheduled. They will receive a zero and will not have the opportunity to redo the question/assignment. Such repeated offenses of plagiarism by a student may result in a recommendation by the School Leader that the student be determined to be a repeat violator of school policy and a disruption of school discipline. The third offense of plagiarism will result in a referral to the assistant principal. The assistant principal will meet with the student, the parent/Learning Coach and the teachers to discuss the incident(s). Any

further violations of plagiarism policy may result in a determination to suspend or expel the student.

Consequences of Plagiarism for Students in Grades 9-12

First Offense

The first time a student is determined to have committed academic dishonesty the student will receive a warning. The student's teacher will send a webmail message to the student and the Parent/Learning Coach to explain to the student the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered plagiarism and will invite the student to a LiveLesson with an administrator. At that LiveLesson, students will be taught ways to avoid academic dishonesty. After the student attends the coaching session, the student may resubmit the assignment for full credit. If a student does not attend the session or chooses not to resubmit the work after attending, the student will receive a zero for that question/assignment.

Second Offense

The second time a student commits academic dishonesty, the student will be sent a WebMail from the assistant principal detailing the offense and future consequences. The student may resubmit the assignment for half credit.

Third Offense

The third time a student commits academic dishonesty, they will receive a zero and will not have the opportunity to redo the question/assignment. This third incidence of plagiarism will be considered chronic plagiarism and will result in a referral to the assistant principal. The assistant principal will meet with the student, the parent/Learning Coach and the teachers to discuss the incident(s).

Fourth Offense

The fourth time a student commits academic dishonesty, an in-person meeting will be scheduled with the School Leader. A zero will be given on the assignment.

Any further violations of plagiarism policy may result in a determination to suspend or expel the student.

9.5 Grievance Policy for Caretakers

The school is committed to ensuring parent satisfaction and takes its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to the student very seriously. These school responsibilities are set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) and the School Handbooks and include such things as: contacting the family regularly, delivering educational materials and equipment, and providing accessible support.

The school will also ensure the family and student adhere to their responsibilities stated in the PLCA and the School Handbooks, and when necessary, will discipline, disenroll a student, invoice, refer to collections, or take legal action against the family for a breach of the agreement or a school policy. Reasons for such disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, failure to attend mandatory state testing, failure to return materials, or

disputing the materials and equipment policy such as invoices for computer damage.

Caretaker Remedies

If a Caretaker has concerns with the school's action or performance on any of the above-defined school responsibilities or disciplinary actions, they have the following remedies available:

Addressing Issues

For routine issues or for a first attempt at redress, contact General Information Services via phone at 1-800-382-6010 or via e-mail at support@connectionseducation.com.

For more serious issues and/or to address lack of resolution of the issue at lower level, a detailed grievance procedure has been set forth below. All grievance proceedings will be conducted in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts. If a hearing is required for grievance proceedings, the parties will be provided with all due process procedures as required by law.

Where a parent feels that there has been discrimination on the basis of sex or on the basis of Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, allegations of sexual abuse or any other misconduct on the part of the school or its staff members, then the parent must activate the grievance procedures set out below and can directly report the complaint to the Academic Success Partner, formerly known as Director of Schools who is the person designated for the overall implementation of the requirements of Title IX and Section 504.

Grievance Process

1. A Caretaker with the grievance must, in writing, report the dissatisfaction, clearly state that they are documenting an official "grievance," and submit it to the student's teacher (or other appropriate Connections Academy staff member, as necessary). All parties involved must be appropriately defined, and the problem must be clearly outlined.
2. The recipient of the grievance must review the issue with his/her supervisor and respond to the Caretaker within three (3) school days.
3. If the original recipient did not resolve the grievance, the Caretaker should request a meeting with the recipient's supervisor regarding the grievance. The supervisor should investigate the matter, and schedule a meeting with the Caretaker, the student, if necessary, and any other staff member, if necessary, within three (3) school days.
4. If either party does not resolve this grievance, the Caretaker should then request a meeting with the Director of Schools regarding the grievance. The Director of Schools will investigate the matter and schedule a meeting within three (3) school days.

If the school has not been able to address the Caretaker's concern through the grievance process set out

above, or if there has not been a prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint prohibited by Title IX and Section 504, the parent can contact the President of the school's Board of Directors for further recourse. The Caretaker can also resort to contacting in writing the state Department of Education or the Charter Institute at Erskine.

Student and Staff Communications

All educational and/or school related communications with teachers, School Leaders, or any school staff member are required to be conducted via the approved tools and platforms provided by Connections Academy. All communications must be appropriate and remain educationally relevant.

External Video and Web Conferencing

LCCA may use external video and web conferencing services and tools (e.g., Zoom) in addition to the Education Management System. When using external communication services and/or tools students must comply with the expectations provided by their teacher, school policies and the Honor Code.

10 Educational Materials Provided by the School

10.2.2 Technology Provided by Connections Academy

Consult the [Hardware and Connectivity](#) of your school website to find out what technology may be provided by your school.

10.2.4 Use of Personal Equipment and Software

LCCA families will be expected to provide their own computers and Internet access. Families should review the Technology section of the School Handbook: General Portion or the school website to ensure their equipment meets the [minimum system specifications](#).

10.2.5 Use of the Internet

Internet Safety Policy

It is the policy of LCCA (the "School") to:

- prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
- prevent unauthorized access to and other unlawful online activity related to inappropriate material via

the Internet;

- prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personally identifiable information
- comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA") (Pub. L. No.106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h)).
- To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be made available for all computers accessible by students and placed on the computers located at the School site locations. As required by CIPA, this blocking technology is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or any other material deemed to be harmful to minors.
- To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be made available for all computers accessible by students and placed on the computers located at the School site locations. As required by CIPA, this blocking technology is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or any other material deemed to be harmful to minors.

Technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

To the extent practical, the School takes steps to promote the safety and security of users of Pearson Online Classroom when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and any other form of direct electronic communications.

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

To the extent practical, the School, through its handbook, the Pearson Online Classroom Terms of Use and its staff, is committed to educating, supervising and monitoring the appropriate usage of Pearson Online Classroom and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, CIPA, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

The School will provide age-appropriate training for students who use Connection Academy's Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote Connection Academy's commitment to the standards and acceptable use of Internet services, as set forth in the School's handbook and the Pearson Online Classroom Terms of Use; and Student safety with regard to safety on the Internet; appropriate behavior while online, on social networking websites, and in chat rooms; and cyber bullying awareness and response.

11 Charter Institute at Erskine Policy- Student Appeal After Denial of Admission

The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure by which the Charter Institute at Erskine will consider appeals of students arising from the denial of admission to a charter school sponsored by the Charter Institute at Erskine.

1 Statutory Authority to Hear Appeals

1.1 Pursuant to the South Carolina Charter Schools Act, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-10 et seq. (2006) (the “Charter Schools Act”), specifically Section 59-40-50(C)(1), “If a charter school denies admission to a student, the student may appeal the denial to the sponsor. The decision is binding on the student and the charter school.” Because the Charter Institute at Erskine is qualified to serve as a sponsor under the Charter Schools Act, the Charter Institute at Erskine must hear appeals in the appropriate cases.

1.2 The Charter Institute at Erskine is not required, however, to hear all student appeals when admission is denied. Importantly, Section 59-40-50(B)(7) of the Charter Schools Act states in part that “If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, students must be accepted by lot, and there is no appeal to the sponsor.” In the event that a student appeals to the Charter Institute at Erskine and it is determined the student was denied for the reason listed in Section 59-40-50(B)(7), the Charter Institute at Erskine shall not hear the appeal.

1.3 Section 59-40-50(C)(2) of the Charter Schools Act states that “If a charter school suspends or expels a student, other charter schools or the local school district in which the charter school is located has the authority but not the obligation to refuse admission to the student.”

2 Student Appeals Committee

2.1 The Charter Institute at Erskine hereby establishes a Student Appeals Committee (the “Committee”) whose membership will consist of three (3) members of the South Carolina Public Charter School District Board of Trustees. Two members of the Committee will each serve a 1-year term; the third member will be appointed by the Chair on an ad hoc basis. The Superintendent will serve as an ex officio member of the Committee. It will be the duty of the Committee to review all requests for appeals within its purview and to reject those appeals which are deemed outside its scope of responsibility. The decision to accept or deny any request for appeal rests solely with the Committee and shall be based on the written record (see below for specifications) and in accordance with applicable statutory provisions.

3 Submitting an Appeal

3.1 A written appeal shall be filed by the student’s parent(s) or legal guardian(s) within ten (10) business days of the denial of admission to the charter school. It shall be addressed to the Superintendent of the Charter

Institute at Erskine. The Charter Institute at Erskine then will have ten (10) business days to respond in writing by either accepting or rejecting the appeal. In the case of the former, a hearing shall be scheduled in a timely manner. All such appeals hearings shall be conducted at the offices of the Charter Institute at Erskine in Columbia, South Carolina, except in any case where another mutually agreeable location is identified. It shall be the responsibility of the Committee to notify the charter school of any such appeal, whether accepted for a hearing or not.

3.2 The following information shall be included in an appeals packet submitted to the Charter Institute at Erskine:

- (a) A copy of the student's original application to the charter school;
- (b) A copy of the denial from the charter school including specific reasons for the denial; and
- (c) The basis for an appeal.

The basis for any appeal should be no longer than one (1) typewritten page. Five (5) packets shall be submitted to the Superintendent.

4 Appeals Hearing

4.1 When an appeals hearing is scheduled and the appellant wishes to have legal counsel present, it is the appellant's responsibility to notify the Charter Institute at Erskine at least five (5) business days in advance. It is the right of the charter school to also have legal counsel and the same notice applies. Without proper notice by either party, the appeal will be re-scheduled. An appeal can be heard either in open session (public invited) or in closed session (only the parties concerned present), at the choice of the appellant.

4.2 The Chair of the Student Appeals Committee shall preside at all hearings. They may ask advice of the Charter Institute at Erskine counsel at any time. General hearing procedure shall be:

- (a) Introduction of Committee Members/Superintendent/ legal counsel;
- (b) Introduction of appellant/legal counsel/witnesses;
- (c) Introduction of charter school representatives/counsel/witnesses;
- (d) Presentation of appellant's case;
- (e) Presentation of charter school's case; and
- (f) Questions from the Committee.

4.3 Following questions, the Committee will deliberate in closed session. Following such closed session, the Committee will then take a vote on the matter in open session and announce its decision to the Appellant.

A written decision confirming the decision will be sent to the Appellant within five (5) business days of the hearing.

APPENDIX I: Title IX- The Final Rule

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal funding. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) enforces Title IX and has created regulations relating to how schools are required to respond to reports of sexual harassment. The regulations are known as the *Final Rule*. The Title IX sexual harassment protections apply to Connections Academy schools that do or may receive Federal financial assistance.

Under the *Final Rule*, Connections Academy is required to promptly respond to and investigate every formal complaint of sexual harassment by a student. The *Final Rule* establishes an emphasis on restoring a student's access to the Connections Academy's education program and/or sanctioned events and activities using supportive measures. Additionally, the *Final Rule* places the burden of proof on the school and requires a strict adherence to due process measures.

Definitions

Actual Knowledge

Notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or any designated school official/employee with the authority to institute corrective measures.

Under state law, school employees are mandatory reporters. In the K-12 environment any employee may receive notice of sexual harassment.

This standard is not met when the only person with actual knowledge is the respondent. Additionally, the ability or obligation to report sexual harassment or to inform a student how to make a report of sexual harassment, or having training on how to report sexual harassment does not qualify an individual to have the authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the school.

Complainant

An individual who has alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Formal Complaint

A document filed by the complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting an investigation of the alleged sexual harassment. A complainant must be an active student participating or attempting to participate in the education program provided by Connections Academy.

Respondent

An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment

Conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An employee of Connections Academy conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (quid pro quo).
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to a Connections Academy education program or sanctioned activity.
- Sexual assault as defined by 20 USC 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking as defined by 34 USC 12291(a)(10), (8), (30).

Supportive Measures

Non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, free of charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint, as well as, instances where no formal complaint has been filed.

Supportive measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy education programs and sanctioned events and activities. Such measures are designed to protect the safety of all parties, the education environment, and ultimately deter sexual harassment.

Supportive measures may include:

- Counseling
- Deadline extensions or other course related adjustments, including changes to class schedule
- Modification of class schedules
- Restricted contact between parties

Supportive measures provided to the complainant and/or respondent will remain confidential to the extent that confidentiality would not impair the ability of the school to provide such measures.

Effective implementation of supportive measures is the responsibility of the Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator

The employee designated by Connections Academy to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX responsibilities will be referred to as the Title IX Coordinator. In addition to students and current employees, the Title IX Coordinator's contact information must be provided to prospective employees, parents or legal guardians, and all unions (if applicable).

The name or title, office address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator shall be prominently posted on the school's website.

Any person, including a student's parent or guardian, may report sex discrimination and sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email at any time, including non-business hours.

Formal Complaint

A formal complaint of sexual harassment should be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by electronic mail, or by phone using the contact information provided below:

Current Designated Title IX Coordinator or Manager of Counseling

OBLTitleIXCoordinator@pearson.com

School Address:

School Phone Number:

Initial Response

The school must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to a complainant and respondent. The grievance process outlined below is followed prior to imposing disciplinary sanctions or other actions outside supportive measures against a respondent.

The Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures and consider the complainant's wishes with respect to the use of such supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures regardless of filing a formal complaint, and explain the process for filing a complaint.

Anyone may report instances of sexual harassment or potential violations to the Title IX Coordinator; reports may be anonymous. However, formal complaints of sexual harassment can only be filed by the complainant or the Title IX Coordinator.

In instances where the respondent faces allegations of sexual harassment and is determined to be an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of a student or other individual, they may be removed upon completion of an individualized safety and risk assessment. If a student is removed under emergency conditions, instant notice will be provided, and the student will be afforded the opportunity to respond to the emergency removal.

An employee respondent may be placed on administrative leave during the grievance process.

Required Grievance Procedures

Formal Complaints

Connections Academy is required to follow the grievance process defined by *the Final Rule* before disciplinary measures, not to include supportive measures, against the respondent are made. The procedures include:

All parties will be treated equitably through the remediation process. Remedies under *the Final Rule* are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy's education program and sanctioned events and activities.

An objective and thorough investigation and evaluation of the relevant evidence will be reviewed. This includes both evidence that can establish guilt (inculpatory) and evidence that can exonerate guilt (exculpatory).

Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision makers, and any designee tasked to assist in the informal resolution process must be free of bias or conflicts of interest. Additionally, training must be completed on:

- the definition of sexual harassment;
- the scope of Connections Academy's education program or sanctioned events/activities;
- the process for investigation and grievance process including, hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes;
- how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at hand, conflicts of interest, and bias;
- any person identified as a decision maker must complete training on any technology used during any part of the grievance process, on issues of relevance of questions and evidence (including instances when questions and evidence arise that are not relevant regarding the complainant's sexual predisposition or previous sexual behaviors);
- any person identified as an investigator must complete training on issues of relevance to properly compose a report that summarizes the relevant evidence;
- all training materials must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote objective investigations and final disciplinary decisions (adjudications) of formal complaints of sexual harassment.

A presumption the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until the conclusion of the grievance process.

A reasonably prompt time frame for conclusion to the grievance process, filing and resolving appeals and informal resolutions processes, if offered. A temporary delay or the limited extension of time frames for good cause may be granted. In such instances, written notice outlining the reason for the delay shall be sent to all parties. Examples of good cause are the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or to provide an accommodation of disabilities.

There will be a range of disciplinary sanctions and remedies that may be issued in the event responsibility of the respondent is determined.

The standard of evidence used may be the preponderance of evidence standard **or** the clear and convincing standard. The chosen standard must be used throughout the complaint process.

Include the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

List the range of supportive measures available to complainants and respondents.

Disallow the use of questions or evidence that seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless waived by the party holding such privilege.

Notice

If a formal complaint is made, written notice will be provided to all known parties. Included within the notice are the grievance process and the informal resolution process. Any details known at the time of report of sexual harassment may include the identities of the parties involved (if known), the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident (if known). The notice will include a statement acknowledging the respondent is presumed not responsible until the conclusion of the grievance process. The parties may have an advisor who may inspect and review evidence. Such an advisor may be an attorney, though the presence of an attorney is not required. All parties will be afforded enough time to prepare. Finally, the notice will include that knowingly making false statements is against the student and employee code of conduct.

If, during an investigation, Connections Academy decides to investigate allegations not included in the original notice, the school will provide subsequent notice to include the additional allegations to all known parties.

Dismissal

Under some circumstances, Connections Academy must dismiss a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

If the conduct did not occur while participating in the school's education program or sanctioned events or activities or did not occur in the United States, the complaint will be dismissed. However, the school may pursue action under the Code of Conduct Policy.

The school may dismiss the formal complaint if:

- a complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing wishing to withdraw the formal complaint and included allegations,
- the respondent is no longer enrolled, registered, or employed by Connections Academy, and
- specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering enough evidence to reach a determination regarding the formal complaint and/or allegations.

If conditions exist that require the school to dismiss the complaint, prompt written notice indicating a dismissal including any reason(s) must be sent to all parties.

Consolidation of Formal Complaints

Consolidation of formal complaints to allegations of sexual harassment may occur under the following conditions due to the same facts or circumstances:

- against more than one respondent
- by more than one complainant against one or more respondents
- by one party against the other party

Investigation

Under the *Final Rule*, the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence to make a determination as to responsibility of alleged sexual harassment falls to Connections Academy.

Voluntary written consent must be obtained to use a party's physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other professional treatment records.

An equal opportunity to present witnesses and evidence will be provided to all parties. The ability of either party to discuss the allegations investigated or gathered and present evidence may not be restricted.

All parties will be provided the same opportunities to have others present at any grievance proceeding. If either or both parties are joined by an advisor, including an attorney, at a proceeding, Connections Academy may limit or restrict their participation.

Written notice of the date, time, location, participants and purpose of all hearings, investigations, or any related meetings will be provided to all parties. Such notice shall permit enough preparation time for all parties.

Equal opportunity to inspect and review all evidence regardless of intent to rely upon said evidence in reaching the final determination will be provided to all parties. Prior to the investigative report, an itemized evidence list subject to review will be sent to all parties, including advisors/attorneys if applicable, in electronic format or hard copy. The parties will have ten (10) days to submit a written response. The response will be considered by the investigator prior to completing the investigative report. All evidence subject to inspection and review will be available at any hearing for reference and purposes of cross-examination.

Finally, an investigative report will be prepared to summarize the relevant evidence and sent in an electronic format or hard copy to all parties and their advisors/attorneys, if applicable. The report shall be sent to the relevant parties at least ten (10) days prior to a hearing to permit review and the opportunity to provide a written response.

Hearings

The Final Rule does not require hearings in the K-12 environment.

The designated decision maker shall provide each party the opportunity to submit relevant written questions to any party or witness, permit time for parties to respond, and subsequently allow for limited follow-up questions.

It is an important distinction that questions and evidence relating to the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual history are not considered relevant to the final determination.

The exceptions to this rule are if the pertinent information proves that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged sexual harassment, or if the evidence offered relates to specific incidents and prove consent between the complainant and respondent.

Determination

The decision maker may not be an investigator or the Title IX Coordinator.

The decision maker will issue a written determination with respect to responsibility. Under *the Final Rule*, the determination must include:

- A description of the allegation that meets the definition of sexual harassment
- A full description of the procedural steps from receipt of the complaint through final determination (notices, interviews, site visits, evidence gathering methods, and hearings)
- Findings of fact supporting the final determination
- Conclusions as to the application of the school's code of conduct and the known facts
- A statement and rationale for:
 - Each allegation and determination of responsibility
 - Disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, if any
 - If remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy's education program and/or sanctioned activities will be provided by the school to the complainant; any such remedies will be implemented by the Title IX Coordinator
- The school's allowable reasons and procedures for appeal (see Appeals section below)

The school shall issue written determination to all parties at the same time. The determination will be considered final when the time for filing a timely appeal has passed. If the allegations are appealed, the decision is considered final upon receipt of the final written determination.

Appeals

Both the complainant and respondent have the option to appeal under the following circumstances:

- A procedural irregularity
- New evidence that could affect the outcome – not available prior to dismissal or determination
- Conflicts of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), and/or decision maker(s)

The school may provide additional equitable circumstances as situations warrant. If a party wishes to appeal the determination, written notice will be provided to the other party that an appeal has been filed and provide procedures that apply to both parties. A new decision maker(s) will be appointed on appeal and such person will not have participated in the complaint prior to appeal, including investigators or the Title IX Coordinator.

Both parties will be permitted and equal opportunity to submit written statements supporting or opposing the outcome. A written decision will be provided to both parties at the same time and will indicate the result of the appeal and the rationale for the final determination.

Informal Resolution

Informal resolutions may be offered once a formal complaint is filed.

Parties are not required to participate in an informal resolution however, the school may offer this option instead of a full investigation and determination. The school will disclose information about the informal resolution process, including the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process prior to an agreed resolution. Once a party withdraws from the informal resolution process, the grievance process of the formal complaint will resume.

If both parties wish to proceed with an informal resolution, a voluntary written consent must be obtained waiving the right to an investigation and adjudication of a formal complaint. A common example of informal resolution is mediation.

The informal resolution process may not be used in instances where the school's employee is the respondent of alleged sexual harassment against a student.

Recordkeeping

The school shall maintain a complete record for seven (7) years relating to:

- All investigations, determinations regarding responsibility, disciplinary sanctions (respondent), and remedies (complainant); including audio/audiovisual recordings and/or transcripts
- Appeals and their result,
- Any informal resolutions and their result,
- Training materials used (posted publicly on the school's website), and
- Any actions, including supportive measures, in response to a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

The records shall provide a basis for the conclusion and show the response was not deliberately indifferent. Additionally, records should document the measures to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy's education program or sanctioned events and activities. Further, records shall indicate the rationale for not providing the complainant with supportive measures, if applicable.

Retaliation

Retaliation is prohibited. Prohibited behavior includes intimidating, threatening, coercing, or discriminating against anyone for the purpose of interfering with the rights protected by *the Final Rule*.

Specifically, retaliation because an individual made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in a Title IX investigation, proceeding, or hearing.

Retaliation against a student for code of conduct violations that arise from the same facts and circumstances as a report or complaint of sexual discrimination/harassment is also prohibited.

Speech protected by the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation.

The identity of parties and witnesses shall remain confidential except as permitted by FERPA.

Any party that makes a false statement in bad faith may be charged with a code of conduct violation.