



Student/Family Policies

Discipline Policy

In accordance with the “Student Fair Access to School Act of 2018” parents reserve the right to due process for all expulsion recommendations. K-8 students cannot receive an out-of-school suspension or expulsion unless the student has willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily injury or emotional distress to another person.

This policy is designed to address conduct that might reasonably lead the school to forecast substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities, undermine the school’s basic educational mission or interfere with the rights of others. The following are details regarding when the policy applies, disciplinary action that may be taken for violating the policy, a list of infractions and other school policies that parents must review with their children.

Alternative Programs: A student may be assigned to or offered the opportunity to participate in alternative programs available if, in the opinion of school officials, such assignment would benefit the student. A student with a disability should be referred to the IEP team to determine appropriate services and placement.

Attendance Policy

Students who are not in school consistently and on time miss valuable instruction and the opportunity to progress to their fullest potential. Students are expected to be present every day. Students must arrive at school prior to the official start of the school day, remain in school until the official close of the school day and arrive to all classes on time in accordance with the school’s bell schedule. If a student is absent, a parent or guardian must submit valid written documentation to excuse the absence within 5 days of the student’s return to school. Failure to submit the written excuse note within 5 days will cause the absence to be unexcused.

Friendship PCS Policy and Legal Consequences Regarding Absences

The accumulation of absences will harm a child’s academic standing and will result in your violation of the District of Columbia’s compulsory school attendance requirements. Failure to meet established attendance guidelines will result in the following consequences except in extenuating circumstances left to the discretion of the principal or school administrator.

Excused/Unexcused Tardiness and Early Pick-Up Late arrival and early pick-up are violations of the attendance policy. Students who are tardy must sign in with the main office and must provide a valid reason for their tardiness. Students arriving late may also be assigned to tardy hall to prevent classroom disruption. Students will be integrated into the classroom as soon as possible. We request that parents schedule medical, dental and other appointments for students outside of school hours. All absences accrued are subject to the Friendship PCS attendance requirements. Late Pick-Ups If a child is not picked up by the official end of the day, we are required to notify Child and Family Services. A child will be picked up by an MPD officer and taken to the CFSA agency.



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Absences can only be excused for the reasons listed below and only with required documentation for excuse notes listed in the following section:

- Student Illness
- Quarantine
- Death in the family
- Judiciary proceedings
- Religious holiday
- Temporary closing of the school facility
- Failure of DC government to provide transportation
- Medical or dental appointments
- Allowances for the student to visit a parent before or after military deployment
- Out of school suspensions
- Other extenuating circumstances left to the discretion of the principal or school administrator

Triggering Event	Truancy Intervention
1 unexcused absence	Reasonable and diligent efforts at personal contact with the parent to obtain an explanation of reason for absence
5 unexcused absences within marking period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to parent regarding absences • Referral of student to school-based student support team to determine underlying causes of absences
5 Cumulative Absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to parent regarding absences • Mandatory parent conference with school based student support team to develop a plan for immediate Intervention
10 Cumulative Absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to parent regarding excessive absences • Mandatory parent conference with school based student support team to develop a plan for immediate intervention • School may recommend to Community Office that the student be dropped from enrollment (PK3-PK4 students only)
10 unexcused absences during a school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide plan to School Administrator for immediate truancy intervention plan (including delivery of community-based or other services on an emergency basis)
10 unexcused absences during a school year by a child age 5-13	Referral of student to Child and Family Services (CFSA)
15 Cumulative Absences	Mandatory Home Visit
15 unexcused absences within a school year by a child age 14-17	Referral of student to Court Social Services Division for Persons In need of Supervision (PI N) investigation
20 consecutive unexcused absences	School may recommend drop from enrollment



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Grievance Procedures

The procedures outlined below establish how complaints regarding discrimination or harassment will be investigated and resolved. These grievance procedures are intended to provide for a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. Procedures related to employees are addressed in the Friendship PCS staff handbook. Who May file: Any person, including a student, parent or visitor, who believes they have been discriminated against or been the subject of harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, in admission or access to, or treatment in, Friendship PCS' programs and activities may make an informal or formal complaint.

Informal Complaint: Friendship PCS recognizes that most if not all disputes are capable of being resolved amicably when there is communication between the person who believes they have been discriminated against or the subject of harassment and the school's administration. Friendship PCS encourages but does not require that any person who has a grievance speaks directly with the school Principal in an effort to resolve the concern(s).

Formal Complaint:

Step 1 Initiation A written notice must be completed and signed by the grievant and submitted to the Principal at the particular campus within ninety (90) calendar days of the complaint. A complaint form may also be obtained from the school's front office. The written notice must identify the subject of the complaint, the time frame/date(s) of the occurrence and the resolution or relief sought. The written notice should be signed and dated.

Step 2 Investigation The Principal or his/her designee will promptly conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of the matters outlined in the complaint. Each investigation will consist of obtaining written evidence, interviewing witnesses and allowing parties to present evidence. All matters relating to the investigation and/or the alleged discrimination or harassment are considered confidential and will not be disclosed to persons not involved in the investigation except as required by law.

Step 3 Response Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the written notice, the Principal or his/her designee will respond to the grievant in writing, summarizing the information obtained from the investigation, determine whether the grievance was substantiated and if so, propose an appropriate resolution. If the grievance was substantiated, immediate action will be taken to rectify the problem.

Step 4 Appeal If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision of the Principal he/she may appeal the decision through a signed written statement to the Deputy Chief of Compliance, Tamika Maulsby at the Community Office, 1400 First Street, NW Suite 300 Washington, DC 20001, phone number (202) 281-1700 within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the Principal's response. In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the Deputy Chief of Compliance or designee shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the



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Deputy Chief of Compliance's or designee's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) calendar days of this meeting.

If family and leadership cannot resolve the grievance, please contact Patricia Brantley, Chief of Executive and Board Member via email pbrantley@friendshipschools.org.

A grievant who is not satisfied with the process or response or does not wish to utilize this process may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights at any time before or during the grievance procedures. The regional office for the District of Columbia is located at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202 and can be reached at (202) 453-6020 phone; (202) 453-6021 fax.

Non-Discrimination Policy

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ("The Age Act"), as well as all other non-discrimination laws, Friendship Public Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day Friendship PCS receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school principal or other appropriate school official (A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board.) will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The rights to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask Friendship PCS to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If Friendship PCS decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. FERPA authorizes disclosure without prior consent to officials and teachers within the school or agency who



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have a legitimate educational interest and other K-12 schools or school systems to which the student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled as well as post-secondary institutions to which the student seeks to enroll. In the above instances, the student's educational records can be disclosed without prior consent based on the reason that the person or agency to which the records are being disclosed has a legitimate educational interest. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. FERPA also authorizes disclosure of directory information unless the parent or student over the age of 18 notifies the school in writing that they do not wish for directory information to be disclosed without prior consent. Directory information includes:

- A. Student Name; Mailing Address and Telephone Listing
- B. Photograph
- C. Date and Place of Birth
- D. Participation in Officially Recognized Activities and Sports
- E. Weight and Height of Members of Athletic Teams
- F. Honors and Awards Received
- G. Major Field of Study
- H. Dates of Attendance and Enrollment Status
- I. Most recent prior school of attendance

5. The right to file a Complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged violations of FERPA by contacting the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202.

Parents or eligible students may instruct Friendship PCS to withhold any or all of the information identified above by completing the "Release of Student Directory Information Form," available upon request in writing within one month after the first day of the school year.

Open Meetings Policy

Effective October 1, 2020 as required by an amendment to the Open Meetings Act, all Friendship PCS Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public. Meeting dates as well as agendas and instructions for how to access the meeting are published on Friendship PCS's website at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. All meetings will be conducted via Zoom until further notice. All meeting minutes will be posted on the website within 30 business days of the meeting and updated once the Friendship Board of Trustees at the next duly noticed meeting approves the minutes.

Admission Preference Policy

Friendship PCS participates in the My School DC common lottery a single, random lottery that determines placement for new students at all participating schools. Student-school matches are based on the number of available spaces at each school; sibling, proximity, and other lottery preferences; how each student ranked their school choices; and each student's random lottery number. Friendship PCS recognizes four (4) lottery preferences during the open enrollment period:

- (1) Transfer (A current Friendship student applying to any other Friendship campus),



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(2) *Sibling Attending (An applicant with a sibling who is attending the same Friendship campus for SY19-20 and will be re-enrolling for SY20-21),

(3) *Sibling Offered (An applicant whose sibling receives an offer to the same Friendship campus in the SY20-21 lottery),

*Sibling Definition: A child who has at least one parent or legal guardian in common with a current Friendship student (same physical location) and resides in the same household as the student

(4) Children of Staff (An applicant whose parent or primary guardian is a staff member at Friendship).

*enrollment based on staff preference is limited to 10% of the total student population and enrollment based on founder preference is limited to no more than 10% of the school's total enrollment or to 20 students, whichever is less;

Students' whose applications are submitted after the deadline specified on the My School DC website (www.myschooldc.org) are given post waitlist lottery numbers and will automatically be placed at the end of any waitlists, in the order in which they signed up.

Mid-Year Transfer: Mid-year transfers can occur at any time of year, but are only for current Friendship PCS students interested in transferring to another Friendship PCS campus. Families must complete an application via My School DC (www.myschooldc.org). Families will be placed in the order of their application entry on My School DC and accepted based on grade level availability.