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## 2023-2024 Wildcat Academy School Year Calendar

Wildcat has a total of 211 school days. Adjustments will be made to coincide with the NYC-DOE calendar that is available in May of each year.

<b>July 2023</b>				16 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	11	12	13	14
17	16	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

10<sup>th</sup> – Begin School/Extended Period

<b>August 2023</b>				14 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	18
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

18<sup>th</sup> End of Extended Period

21<sup>st</sup> Recess

<b>September 2023</b>				16 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
<b>25</b>	26	27	28	29

4<sup>th</sup> Labor Day

7<sup>th</sup> –First full day of school

25<sup>th</sup>—NO SCHOOL—Yom Kippur

<b>October 2023</b>				21 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	3	4	5	6
<b>9</b>	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

9<sup>th</sup> –NO SCHOOL Italian Heritage/Indigenous Peoples' Day

<b>November 2023</b>				13 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	<b>10</b>

13	14	15	16	17
20	<b>21</b>	22	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
28	29			

7<sup>th</sup> –NO STUDENTS-- Election Day

21<sup>st</sup> – Parent Teacher Night

23<sup>rd</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> –Thanksgiving Recess

<b>December 2023</b>				16 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

25<sup>th</sup> -Jan 1<sup>st</sup> – NO SCHOOL Winter Recess

<b>January 2024</b>				20 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
<b>15</b>	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
<b>29</b>	30	31		

15<sup>th</sup> – SCHOOLS CLOSED Dr. Martin Luther King

23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Regents Administration

29<sup>th</sup> – PD Day—No Students

30<sup>th</sup> -- Spring Semester Begins

<b>February 2024</b>				15 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
26	27	28	29	

19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> – Mid-Winter Recess SCHOOLS CLOSED

<b>March 2024</b>				20 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	<b>27</b>	28	<b>29</b>

27<sup>th</sup> – Parent Teacher Night

29<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup> –Easter Weekend—SCHOOLS CLOSED

<b>April 2024</b>				14 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	<b>10</b>	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>

<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>			
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10<sup>th</sup> Eid al-Fitr—SCHOOLS CLOSED  
 22<sup>nd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> –Spring Recess—SCHOOLS CLOSED

<b>May 2024</b>				20 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

27<sup>th</sup> –Memorial Day Observed

<b>June 2023</b>				17 School Days
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	<b>4</b>	5	<b>6</b>	7
10	11	12	13	14
<b>17</b>	18	<b>19</b>	20	21
24	25	<b>26</b>	27	28

4<sup>th</sup> Regents Administration for Algebra I (Next Gen Standards)  
 6<sup>th</sup> Chancellor’s Conference Day NO STUDENTS  
 14<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Regents Exams (excluding June 17<sup>th</sup> & June 19<sup>th</sup>)  
 17<sup>th</sup> – Eid al-Adha—NO SCHOOL  
 19<sup>th</sup> Juneteenth, NO SCHOOL  
 26<sup>th</sup> – Last Day for Students

## **School Overview**

### **Introduction**

The John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy was established in 1992 to accommodate students identified by the New York Department of Education as having a high risk of failure due to poor attendance, poor academic achievement, behavioral problems, or criminality. Since its conversion to charter school status in 2000, Wildcat Academy's student population has been comprised almost entirely of high school students who have dropped out of, been suspended from, or been expelled from other schools or who have historically attended classes so infrequently that they were labeled "in-school truant." The mission of the school is to serve the needs of "adolescents who are at risk of failure due to poor attendance, disruptive behavior, criminal activity and poor academic achievement."

Wildcat enrolls approximately 425 students, ages 15-21 and has a full-time teaching and counseling staff of 25. Currently, academic programs for grades 9-10 are provided at the school's Bronx site, and academic programs for grades 11-12 are provided at its Manhattan site.

Wildcat Academy students spend 380 minutes per day on core related subjects. All students attend school approximately 215 days per year. Smaller classes and a smaller student body ensure individual attention and a greater chance for students to feel they are part of a community. Academic and group counseling classes are provided for all students so they may have success in school and in life. Internships are also offered to all students so they may have meaningful work experiences, gain first-hand knowledge of the work world and its different sectors and gain skills that they can transfer to future work positions.

### **Campuses**

The John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School (Wildcat Academy) consists of two facilities. One facility is located at 17 Battery Place in lower Manhattan and the other is located at 1239 Lafayette Avenue in the Huntspoint section of the Bronx.

#### *Manhattan Facility*

This facility currently includes eight (8) classrooms, one (1) science lab, one (1) computer lab and a large common area for breakfast, lunch and assemblies. In addition to offices for staff, the school houses a library and a weight room. The site is accessible for students with disabilities.

#### *Bronx Facility*

This 20,000 square foot facility currently includes ten (10) classrooms, one (1) computer lab and a large common area for breakfast, lunch and assemblies. In addition to offices for staff, the school houses a library, a fitness center, and a state-of-the-art culinary kitchen and dining room.

Both the Manhattan and Bronx sites are accessible for students with disabilities.

### **Hours of Operation**

Wildcat Academy is open for students from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday.

## **School Closing and Emergencies**

Wildcat Academy follows the lead of New York City's Department of Education with regard to decisions concerning the opening and closing of school due to weather and other emergencies. School closings or emergencies will be announced on NY1 and WINS 1010.

## **School Visitors**

There may be frequent guests at Wildcat Academy. Staff and students should treat them with courtesy and try to accommodate them. All visitors must sign in at the front desk with proper identification. Please note that visitors may not meet with students without a counselor present.



## **School Leadership**

While Wildcat Academy policy is set by its Board of Trustees (see below), the Wildcat Academy Chief administrator and leadership team are responsible for translating these Board policies into administrative action.

The Board delegates day-to-day decision making to the Chief Administrator and holds the Chief Administrator responsible for the administration of policy, the execution of Board decisions, the operation of Wildcat Academy and for keeping the Board informed about the operation of the school and other functions. In turn, the Chief Administrator delegates responsibility to members of the Leadership Team as necessary to ensure the efficient operation of Wildcat Academy.

The school's highly skilled and experienced leadership team is composed of the following members:

Ron Tabano-Chief Executive Officer

Ed Peterman-Assistant Principal

Marc Helfand – UFT Chapter Leader

Kimberly LaRosa – Assistant Principal

Madeline Rosario - Director of Internship

## **Board of Trustees**

A Board of Trustees governs Wildcat Academy. The responsibilities and obligations of this Board include but are not limited to:

- Ratifying the school's mission statement, and any modification thereto;
- Selecting and evaluating the performance of the Principal;
- Ensuring that the school complies with all local, state, and federal laws;
- Providing necessary and proper oversight of all financial aspects of Wildcat Academy including approving the school's annual budget, providing fundraising guidance and ensuring that the school remains fiscally sound;
- Establishing and adhering to the school's code of ethics, and enforcing the same upon employees and officers of the school;
- Approving management, operational and service contracts and holding accountable such contractors for performance;
- Authorizing broad curricular guidelines or specific curricular programs, or delegating such authority;
- Approving assessment measures and performance measures or delegating such authority;
- Providing ongoing support and oversight of the academic program and performance of the school or delegating such authority;
- Approving admission policies and procedures for the school consistent with the terms of the charter agreement;

- Setting personnel policies, including establishing qualification criteria for employees, forming dismissal procedures, approving codes of conduct, and authorizing and approving salary schedules as well as terms and conditions of employment or delegating such authority;
- Hearing appeals according to specified processes;
- Hearing complaints from any individual or group alleging any violation of the provisions of the Charter Schools Act, the Wildcat Academy charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management and/or operation of the charter school;
- Ensuring that necessary accountability measures are in place, including the performance of audits and annual reports, and that all necessary records and reports are transmitted to the proper charter school oversight entities; and
- Involving parents and staff in school governance and administration.

The Board's membership consists of business and not-for-profit executives, private attorneys, a CPA, a retired school principal, parents and school staff. This combination of experienced members of the education, finance, business, social services and legal fields gives the Board the capacity to provide meaningful leadership and oversight to the Wildcat Academy.

The Board of Trustees is composed of the following members:

Harvey Newman-Chairman of the Board

Dana Jackson

Richard Levine-Treasurer

Ronald Tabano

Lawrence Ng

Evgenia Soldatos

Rocco Dispirito-Advisor

Michael Russo

## **Getting Started at Wildcat**

### **Required Records**

Admitted students are also required to complete and submit the following as part of the enrollment process:

- *Birth Certificate*
- *Proof of residence:* This can be a utility bill, (but not a cable bill).

- *Registration Form:* This form is used to record all basic information about the student and the family, including home, work, and emergency telephone numbers. It is extremely important that a parent or guardian sign this form.
- *Free and Reduced Price Meals Application:* This form must be completed for all students and will be held in strict confidence.
- *Medical Forms:* This set of forms must be submitted for all students within the first 30 days of attendance. It is the responsibility of each parent to keep their child's medical information, including food allergies, up to date.
- *Record Release:* This form gives the school permission to obtain all records pertaining to a given student from his or her previous school. It must be completed and should include the telephone number and address of the previous school, as well as the signature of a parent or legal guardian.

It is critical that the school be notified immediately of any changes in a student's name, address, phone number, responsible parent, or any other information provided at the time of registration. Such changes should be communicated in writing and sent to the Principal.

## Placement of Incoming Students

Once admitted to the JVL Wildcat Academy, students must provide transcripts from their previous academic institutions. JVL Wildcat Academy then reviews these transcripts and determines placement at either the Bronx site, (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades), or Manhattan site, (11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grades), depending on a student's accumulated credits. JVL Wildcat officials often contact students' transferring schools with questions regarding their transcripts.

Grade	Credits	Site
9 <sup>th</sup>	0-8	Bronx
10 <sup>th</sup>	9 -20	Bronx
11 <sup>th</sup>	21-29	Manhattan
12 <sup>th</sup>	30+	Manhattan

Students also take a series of assessments during orientation that help JVL Wildcat staff determine grade and classroom placement. These include the following:

- IXL (45-minute computer-assisted diagnostic tests in reading, language arts, and mathematics)  
Home Language Survey (used for placement in ELL programs).

## Transfer Credits

Whenever possible, incoming students' report cards and/or progress reports are reviewed for course placement and credit. If a student has made satisfactory progress at his/her transferring school in a course, then he/she may be able to get full credit for the equivalent course at JVL Wildcat, given that he/she completes all stated requirements by the end of the term. Students who did not performed satisfactorily at

their previous school may be eligible to earn partial credit in an equivalent JVL Wildcat course if they complete all stated requirements by the end of the term. The degree of partial credit granted hinges on consultations between the site principal and respective instructors.

## **Privacy**

JVL Wildcat complies with all confidentiality laws protecting the privacy of its students and their families. Information regarding a student's progress will be shared only with parents or guardians, appropriate members of the school's faculty and staff, appropriate staff at Wildcat Service Corporation, and any professional consultants retained for the purpose of measuring and/or improving instructional quality. When information regarding student performance is made public, it will be presented in such a way as to avoid the identification of specific, individual students.

## **Curriculum and Instructional Design High-School Program**

### **High School Program**

#### **Overview**

Students enter Wildcat having earned varying numbers of credits in disparate subject areas. To accommodate all levels of learners, Wildcat Academy functions as an ungraded school divided into small, heterogeneous learning teams. This model allows the school to emphasize individualized instruction, intensive case management, interdisciplinary teaching strategies, and cooperative learning – all methods that have proven to help students acquire a deep understanding of key concepts while developing critical work skills including self-direction, perseverance, and commitment to quality. Additionally, Wildcat teachers employ innovative classroom techniques such as student portfolios, thematic course units and the integration of instructional technology into the everyday learning environment.

Another critical design element of the School is its internship program, arranged by Wildcat with various host employers at work sites throughout the city, and where students learn about the world of work while also earning money and course credit. Students attend classes at Wildcat and their internships in alternating weeks since the School has found that over-age under-credited students become more engaged in school when they are active in the world of work that the School has structured. Each student at Wildcat is required to enroll in the full academic program and participate in an internship.

While Wildcat does follow an “ungraded” classroom model, for the purposes of alignment with State and City standards, students are classified as follows:

Grade 9	0-8 credits
Grade 10	9-20 credits
Grade 11	21-29 credits
Grade 12	30+ credits

#### **Schedules**

Wildcat Academy students are expected to be involved with their education on a full-time basis. All students attend school approximately 215 days per year. Wildcat Academy’s scheduling plan includes the following key points:

- School buildings open from 8:00 AM to 6:00PM;
- Classes in session from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM; and
- On-line computer access from all areas to facilitate group project research.

A six-week summer term is also mandatory for all students. Hours are 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Students may earn up to three credits for the summer term.

Wildcat’s structure is designed to meet the needs of individual students, with not only multiple variations of student schedules depending on their credit needs, but also after-school and pull-out opportunities to provide remedial services. Student course schedules are individually tailored so students take those classes they need for graduation or to prepare them for success on the Regents exams. Students who struggle with subjects are assigned additional classes, such as Reading Lab or Transition Math, or can receive after-school tutoring (until 6pm) by Wildcat graduates or by teachers for specific subjects or to prepare for Regents exams.

Examples of two different Wildcat daily student schedules are shown below:

Period	Period Start Time	Period End Time	Subject
1	9:00	9:50	Creative Writing
2	9:55	10:45	Algebra
3	10:50	11:40	Global 4
4	11:45	12:35	Language Arts
5	12:40	1:30	Lunch
6	1:35	2:25	Chemistry
7	2:30	3:20	Web Site Design
8	3:30	4:45	English Regents Prep

Period	Period Start Time	Period End Time	Subject
1	9:00	9:50	Living Environment
2	9:55	10:45	US History and Gov’t
3	10:50	11:40	Global 3
4	11:45	12:35	Language Arts
5	12:40	1:30	Lunch
6	1:35	2:25	Literature
7	2:30	3:20	Chemistry
8	3:30	4:50	Art Therapy

## Credit Accumulation

### *Academic Program*

All JVL Wildcat students must meet the New York State “seat time” requirement of 54 hours per term in order to earn a credit towards graduation. However, in keeping with the school’s alternative learning environment, these 54 hours are broken down into 42 hours of classroom instruction and 12 hours of supervised classroom-based assignments. These assignments consist of investigations, research papers, projects and reinforcement homework. Students are responsible for completing these assignments as part of the experiential learning strategy that characterizes the JVL Wildcat Academy. The 12-24 hours needed to complete these assignments amount to the prescribed additional hours of instructional time. For marking purposes, the latter out-of-class homework accounts for 25% of students' classroom grades.

JVL Wildcat can provide examples of Weekly Assignments, Samples of Student Work and Rubrics upon request to clarify the classroom-based assignment aspect of our educational program.

### *Internship Program*

JVL Wildcat awards elective credit for the Internship Program as follows:

*One credit is awarded for:*

- Minimum 54 hours of internship service; and
- Satisfactory internship evaluation.

*Two credits are awarded for:*

- Complete journal and satisfactory portfolio activities;
- Minimum 108 hours of internship service; and
- Satisfactory internship evaluation.

## **Curriculum**

### ***Core Subjects***

Each core subject offered by the Wildcat Academy has an approved curriculum that is aligned to the New York State learning standards and performance indicators. All of Wildcat Academy's core curricula are based on NYS curriculum guidelines as well as core curricula and core curricula guidelines produced by NYC DOE. Wildcat core curricula are reviewed annually, and adjustments are made as required.

According to New York State Learning Standards, core subjects are defined as the following:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics, Science and Technology
- Social Sciences
- Languages Other Than English
- Arts
- Health, Physical Education and Family Consumer Sciences
- Career Development and Occupational Studies

### ***Electives***

Students who intend to get further training for employment in college or those who will enter the work force or military directly after high school should tailor their elective choices around their employment plans. All students should consider taking extra math, computer and office skills, writing, literature, and other humanities courses.

## **Additional Services**

### ***Special Education***

The special education coordinators (two at each of the sites) provide services in small-groups and individualized settings. All students are assessed at entry to the school and can be identified for additional services by assessment results or by teacher referral. Please see the Special Education section of this guide for more detailed information.

### ***English Language Learners (ELL)***

JVL Wildcat offers a full range of services to aid in the instruction of English Language Learners. Please see the ELL section of this guide for more information.

### ***Title I***

Under ESSA, JVL Wildcat receives funds to support a School-Wide Program that provides supplemental instructional and support services to all students.

## **Internship Program**

An important factor contributing to the success of Wildcat Academy has been the interplay of academic studies and the internship/job experience. The internship/job experience reinforces our approach to academics by allowing students to be active and work cooperatively while at the same time learning employability skills. Success at a job can help clarify the purpose and routines of the classroom.

Aside from the socialization aspect of internships, Wildcat Academy's students are taught skills with future jobs in mind. Vocational education classes such as horticulture, construction, culinary arts, and graphic arts reinforce practical experience. All students experience several different internship assignments while attending Wildcat Academy.

At the present time, internship sites range from law firms to culinary institutions. Students with exceptional academic records are eligible for positions at private companies such as Legends Hospitality. On occasion, students with demonstrated work skills have been hired for permanent positions by their internship site.

Please see the *Student Internship Planner* guidebook, which is distributed to all students for comprehensive information about this aspect of the JVL Wildcat instructional program.

## **Performance Measurement**

All incoming students are administered the IXL Test which provides individual baseline data for annual measurement of individual student progress. Students may be tested in May to check progress.



Wildcat Academy utilizes all State Exams with the understanding that these exams are, in their very design, in alignment with State Standards. In areas where no State exams exist, other standardized assessments are used. Local teacher-made assessments aligned with State Standards, performance indicators and the Wildcat Academy curricula are also used. These assessments include teacher-developed assignments and tests, portfolios, and direct examination of student work. PSAT's and SAT's are also a part of the School's assessment program.

The School utilizes the information from all assessments to refine the curriculum and classroom practice to ensure that the School can respond effectively to the needs of individual learners. Assessment results facilitate an understanding of the status of each student in relation to his/her level of achievement regarding the specific goals of the School. Where these assessments reveal that students are not performing at expected levels, modifications to curriculum and individual student programs will be made. Accordingly, the results of student assessments will influence the type of professional development offered to the instructional staff.

## **Grades and Report Cards**

Report cards are distributed twice each term. Progress reports are distributed after the first six weeks of every term. One report card is issued for the summer term.

## **Honor Roll**

The student must meet the following criteria to qualify for the honor roll:

1. Have an 80 average or better.
2. Take at least four core subjects.
3. Must pass all classes.
4. Must have 85% or better attendance.

## **Field Trips**

As part of their regular classroom instruction, teachers may schedule field trips during the school year. Permission slips may be required for students under 18.

## **Student Support**

Members of the school community consciously and continually work to construct a personalized and supportive environment and a climate of caring and respect that facilitates the exchange of information and encourages students and staff members to discuss and solve problems, academic and non-academic.

When a student is having academic problems, that student is assigned to a mentor tutor who provides one-on-one instruction and help with assignments.

When it is determined that a student is dealing with a non-academic personal issue that may interfere with his/her success at Wildcat Academy, the school psychologist offers on-site counseling for those students and their families. In addition, the Mental Health Team provide workshops at the Wildcat Academy on a wide range of subjects and provides support groups for bereavement, domestic violence, parenting and stress management.

## Graduation Requirements

The John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School (Wildcat Academy) adheres strictly to the New York State requirements for graduation, including all revised State Board of Regents' requirements and examinations.

For high school graduation, students must:

1. Attain 90% or better attendance.
2. Accumulate 44 credits\*, including:

English	8 Credits
Social Studies	8 Credits 4 Global History 2 US History 1 Economics 1 Government
Science	6 Credits
Mathematics	6 Credits
Art	1 Credit
Music	1 Credit
Foreign Language	2 Credits
Health Education	1 Semester / 1 Credit
Electives	7 Credits
Gym	4 Semesters / 4 Credits

\* In order to graduate from the Wildcat Academy Charter Schools, students must complete at least 44 required units of study. Colleges may have more requirements for admission; students should check individual college catalogs regarding courses they may have to take for acceptance.

3. Achieve passing grades\*\* on five New York State Regents Examinations:
  - a. English
  - b. Mathematics
  - c. Global History
  - d. U.S. History and Government

e. Science

\*\* Students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in September 2022 must take and pass Regents exams in English, Math, US History & Government, Global Studies and Science with a score of 65 or greater to obtain a diploma.

To earn an Advanced Regents diploma, students must score 65 or more on their Regents exams and take additional credits in a language other than English, pass a Regents Comprehensive Assessment in that language, pass an additional Regents exam in science (at least one course should be in life science and one in physical sciences) and take an additional set of math courses. Adjustments are made for students taking a sequence in Career or Technology Education or the arts.

***ELL Students***

All English Language Learners must pass the Regents English Exam to receive a regular high school diploma. However, these students who enter the U.S. in 9<sup>th</sup> grade or later may take other required Regents examinations in their native languages, if the translated exam is available and if the test is taken within three years of their entering the U.S. Regents examinations are available in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Haitian-Creole, and Korean.

***Special Education Students***

The law states that the majority of students who receive special education services should be prepared to earn regular high school diplomas...

## **Student Life**

### **Library**

The Wildcat Academy library provides a multitude of research tools as well as leisure reading sources. The library is intended as a quiet place for students to do research, to read, and to study. Students are required to have a pass from their teacher to visit the library during class time.

### **Internet Policy**

All students may access the internet unless expressly denied by parents in writing to the school. Students may not access inappropriate content, use instant messaging, or use the internet for non-school related business.

### **Textbooks and Supplies**

Students must provide their own materials for learning, including a 3-ring binder, two pens, and most importantly, a ready-to-work attitude. Some books and equipment will be issued on loan and some will be kept in the classroom. Please note that students are responsible for the proper care of all supplies provided by the school and are held financially responsible for disfigurement, breakage, or damage to school or personal property.

### **Lockers**

Lockers are the property of the school and loaned to students for their convenience. Students should protect their own combination and should not share their combination with anyone. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. Valuables, personal items and electronic equipment should be left at home. Students are advised not to share lockers with another student.

Students should stow all coats and electronics in the morning before classes begin. Students must understand that administration has the legal right to inspect individual lockers and will make periodic health and safety inspections.

### **Lost and Found**

All items, materials, and possessions found should be turned into the main office where a lost and found will be located. Anyone losing any item should leave a written description of the item with the administrative assistant.

## **Student Government and Organizations**

Clubs are based on student interest. Information on how to form a club or participate in Student Government can be had in consultation with a faculty sponsor.

## **Getting Attention**

Notices or posters approved by the main office may be placed on designated announcement boards.

## **Dress Code**

Student dress and personal appearance should not disrupt or distract from the learning environment of the school. Students should dress for success in the school building as a manner of professional comportment.

The following items are prohibited on school or internship grounds.

- See-through or revealing clothing, which exposes abdomen, cleavage, chest, buttocks or underwear.
- Halter tops, backless shirts, half-shirts, bare midriffs, spaghetti straps, sagging pants, and transparent clothing.
- Hats and coats (Both must be stored in lockers.)
- Excessive jewelry
- Excessively high-heeled shoes
- Bare feet or flip-flops
- Undershirts worn as an outer garment
- Clothing with profanity, nudity, suggestive language or obscenity.
- Drug/alcohol/tobacco logo clothing
- Bandannas, headscarves, do-rags, or hairnets.
- Gang paraphernalia, colors, beads, etc. that is worn, carried, or visible.

Students wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to leave the building to change their clothing. Repeated offenses will result in disciplinary action. Students should put hats and coats in lockers upon building entry.

## **Money and Other Valuable Property**

Any item that distracts students from learning and does not contribute to a safe school environment should be left at home. Examples include electronic games, dice, and music with demeaning, obscene or profane lyrics, excessively expensive/flashy clothing, or firecrackers.

Pagers, walkmans, radios, telephones, and other electronic equipment, water pistols, toys or similar items are also disruptive to the educational process and are not allowed. Students should leave them at home or in their lockers. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

### **Emergency Phone Calls**

All emergency phone calls for students should go through the main office where the counselor will be notified and the students will be notified during the change of classes.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Wildcat Academy is a drug-free and safe learning environment. Any person using, possessing or distributing alcohol or drugs on or around school property will be recommended for dismissal and the police may be called.

### **Weapons**

Any person using, displaying, carrying, or possessing any dangerous instrument or deadly weapon on or around school property shall be recommended for dismissal and the police will be notified.

### **Solicitation**

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member on school property for any cause except those authorized by the Principal is strictly prohibited.

## **Attendance**

### **Overview**

Serious students know that there is a close relationship between academic success and school attendance. Good attendance habits learned and developed in school will be carried over into the world of work. Since every student has expressed an interest in furthering his or her education, it is expected that students attend all scheduled classes (e.g. subject classes, electives, group counseling, tutoring, health & physical education) each day. Daily attendance at internship sites is mandatory.

### **Tardiness**

The school day begins at 9:00. Students not in their classrooms at 9:05 will be marked as arriving late. Students entering the building or not in classrooms at 9:05 will be required to make up the time missed at a mandatory detention from 5:00 – 5:30 in the lunch room on the date of the late arrival. Students arriving with a parent note will still be required to serve detention.

Any student arriving after 9:30 am without a valid, written excuse and a phone call from a parent/guardian may not be admitted to school.

### **School Arrival and Departure**

In recognizing the school's need to adequately monitor and maintain daily attendance records, Wildcat Academy CS has developed a comprehensive protocol and safeguard measures for attendance in the 2022-2023 school year.

The system has the following characteristics:

- Each student is assigned an I.D. number and card.
- Each student is required to swipe his/her card when arriving and departing school.
- Attendance monitors will receive a daily printout of students in attendance and students who are absent or tardy with an indication of when they arrived at school. These reports are available by 10AM. Attendance monitors will call the home of each student listed as absent. Monitors send letters to the parents of chronically absent students (after three and six absences).
- Daily attendance reports will be available to staff after 10AM.
- The staff is required to maintain an attendance roster for each period.

Wildcat's database has added reporting capability for attendance controls on a daily, monthly, and annual basis for each building individually and for the two sites combined. Furthermore, the database is being adjusted to flag students when a threshold is reached (e.g. three absences), so that the counselor and attendance coordinator are notified and intervention strategies can be enacted.

### **Internship Attendance**

Tracking internship attendance is the responsibility of the Internship Coordinator and the Site Supervisors who produce a daily record of student attendance and punctuality. Student attendance information from each site is collected daily by the site internship supervisor and is communicated via phone and e-mail to a central location. Plans are in place that will enable a student to swipe his/her ID card when arriving and

departing the internship site. In this manner each internship site will be included in the database and internship attendance will be recorded in the same manner as when the students are in attendance at one of the two school sites.

### **Absence Policy**

- If a student is going to be absent, a parent/guardian should contact the student's counselor before the date of the absence and provide proper documentation upon the student's return to school.
- Examples of legal absences are: medical appointments, mandated court appearances, approved religious holidays, or emergencies.
- Students are responsible for making up all missed work.
- Parents/guardians will be called daily regarding student absences.
- School-related absences and field trips will not be counted as absences for determining perfect attendance.
- Students may not participate in extra-curricular activities including dances, games, practices, etc. if they have not been in attendance for the normal school day or if they have been suspended.
- Students with perfect attendance will be eligible for stipend raises and lunch time privileges.

### **Early Dismissal Policy**

- Students who must be dismissed from school early should provide proper documentation on the day of dismissal. Students without documentation will not be permitted to leave the building.
- Students who fall ill at school should report to the main office with a staff person or an able student.



## **Food Services**

Breakfast and lunch are available to Wildcat Academy students on a daily basis. The school participates in the Federal Free- and Reduced-Priced breakfast and lunch programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and adheres to all applicable requirements including but not limited to:

- Meal pricing;
- Determination of eligibility;
- Nutritional value; and,
- Reporting requirements.

All parents/guardians must submit a Free and Reduced Priced Meals Application before the start of the term so that payment status may be established. While these forms are being processed, all students who desire meals provided through the school will receive them.

## **Transportation Services**

Wildcat Academy works via the New York City Department of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation to provide school bus service for eligible special education students and MetroCards for eligible 9-12 students.

All Wildcat students are issued MetroCards that entitle them to free transportation to and from school. This MetroCard also allows for one additional trip per day and free transfers to all buses.

Any student who for any reason does not qualify for free MetroCard transportation will be given tokens for their travel. Wildcat Academy will secure funds from outside sources to cover the costs of these additional tokens.

**Transportation for Special Education Students will be provided in accordance with all applicable State and Federal laws.**

## **Parent Involvement and Communications**

Wildcat Academy believes that parents play an integral role in the education of their children, and that parental involvement in Wildcat Academy is critical to the school's success.

## **Participation in School Governance**

To meet the educational and social needs of our students, to obtain feedback and direction from parents on how to best serve children, and to assist parents as they help their children be successful in school, Wildcat plans for and expects an active role for parents in the governance of the School. Specifically:

- At least one seat on the Wildcat Academy’s Board of Trustees shall be filled by a parent of a student in the School;
- Wildcat Academy will establish and maintain a Parents’ Association, which shall consist of all parents of students enrolled in the School who wish to participate. The Parents’ Association will be involved in a variety of School activities, including fundraising events, field trips, and promotion of Wildcat Academy throughout the community. The Parents’ Association also will be involved in the governance of the School, selecting a delegate to work with and advise the Principal and Board of Trustees on policies and practices of the School, plans for providing information to parents, and strategies for arranging staff interaction with parents.
- At each regular meeting of the Wildcat Academy ’s Board of Trustees, a selected delegate from the Parents Association shall be allotted a set amount of time to present any issue to the Board, if the Parents Association so desires.
- From time to time, as the Board of Trustees or Principal requests, the Parents’ Association will be asked to participate in or comprise advisory committees to study or implement a specific policy or action of the School. For example, committees may be formed to study and advise the Board on building expansion plans, budget issues, or student recruitment activities to help the Board determine how the School could best proceed.

Participation in the Parents’ Association is voluntary and open to all parents, and a parent need not formally belong to or participate in the Parents’ Association to participate at public meetings of the School, serve on ad hoc committees, or meet with or make recommendations to the School’s Board of Trustees or administration.

## **Other Parental Involvement Measures**

In addition to including parents in the governance of the school, Wildcat also provides a variety of other avenues for participation and involvement, including:

- Providing comprehensive information on policies and activities in a timely fashion through a newsletter distributed to the entire school community;
- Holding parent information meetings, workshops, open houses and orientations that keep families informed about the activities of the school as a whole;
- Communicating with parents openly and frequently about their child’s individual progress via direct interaction between parents and teachers;
- Enabling parents to monitor their child’s academic progress through progress reports and teacher updates;

- Making available parent volunteer activities such as assisting the school's staff with field trips, attending cultural and/or sporting events, and taking part in special in-school events;
- Allowing parents to establish committees under their own initiative to enrich the life of the school; and
- Soliciting candid feedback from parents in terms of their child's academic progress in the form of a questionnaire. (Parents who do not choose to submit a written evaluation are offered the opportunity to express their views in a personal interview.)

## **Health and Physical Education**

### **Overview**

The John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School (Wildcat Academy) complies with all health services requirements applicable to other public schools including, but not limited to, all immunization requirements and diagnostic testing requirements. The School shall provide on-site health care services similar to the extent that such health services are available to children attending other public schools in New York City.

### **Hearing and Vision Testing**

Hearing and vision testing will be done on all new students by a qualified individual. A review of student immunizations requirements and the proper supporting documents shall be completed for all new students. School staff will work with the county health department, the NYC-DOE, and other appropriate authorities to provide these services.

### **Immunization Requirements**

New York State law requires that each student entering kindergarten or a new school district in grades 1-12 have a certificate of immunization at the time of registration or not later than the first day of school. State immunization requirements include: Diphtheria [Toxoid Containing Vaccine (DTP, DTaP) 3 doses]; Polio [(IPV) (OPV)3 OPV or 4 IPV]; Measles/ Mumps/ Rubella [(MMR) Born before 1985:1 dose of MMR; born on or after 1985:2 doses of measles containing vaccine and 1 dose each of mumps and rubella (preferably as MMR)]; Hepatitis B [Born on or after 01/01/93:3 doses, 7<sup>th</sup> graders entering school after 9/1/00 – 3 doses of RecombivazHB, Engerix B or 2 doses of adult hepatitis B vaccine for children 11 to 15 years old]; Varicella [Born on or after 1/1/98:1 dose].

Before a child can be permitted to enter or attend school, parents or guardians must present documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or that their child has received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals.

Parents may waive immunization by complying with §2164 of the Public Health Law with respect to exemptions to immunizations of the Charter School's student population.

Exceptions shall be granted, in consultation with legal counsel, if a licensed physician or nurse practitioner certifies such immunization may be detrimental to the student's health, or the student's parent or guardian hold genuine and sincere religious beliefs contrary to such immunization.

### **Medication**

JVL Wildcat must be informed of any prescription medication that a student is required to take at while on school grounds. To dispense prescription medication to students, the school must receive a written order from the student's doctor and a permission slip from the student's parent or guardian. All medication should be brought to the main office in its original prescription container, labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, the date of expiration, and the proper dosage.

Students are not permitted to bring non-prescription medications to School. If, during the course of the school day, it is necessary for a student to receive common, non-prescription medication (e.g., Tylenol), the School Nurse or a trained staff member will dispense it.

Parents must inform the School of any allergies to or restrictions on non-prescription medication that their children might have. If you do not want your child to be administered any non-prescription medication, please so indicate on the Medication Permission Form. Also, please notify the school in writing if your child has a chronic illness that may affect his or her performance.

### **Physical Form**

A recent physical form must be on file in the main office. It is expected that all students come prepared to participate in all activities to the level of their ability.

### **Defibrillator**

The Wildcat Academy, in accordance with §917 of the Education Law, maintains on-site automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment to ensure ready and appropriate access for use during emergencies and shall ensure that a staff member is trained in the operation and use of such equipment for use in the School and at any School-sponsored events at other locations.

### **Counseling Services**

The counseling department exists for the benefit of every student at Wildcat Academy. Counseling services are designed to serve the needs of individual students in preparation of academic schedules, long-range school programs, vocational and college planning, course adjustments, and personal matters. Each counselor is available to help anyone who has issues with school, teachers, friends, family or him/herself. Among the types of issues counselors deal with are sexuality, housing, substance abuse, parenting, depression, conflict resolution, suicidal feelings, world of work, sexual abuse, peer pressure or any factor that interferes with a students' ability to learn. A school psychologist is also available to address students' needs.

Case Management Referrals for Services Personal Development	Counselor A
Internships Career Planning and Development	Counselor B
College Student Organization Student Government Academic Development	Counselor C

## **Fire Drills/Emergency Procedures**

To ensure the safety of all students, students should evacuate the building in a quiet and orderly fashion upon the sounding of the fire alarm. Students should also follow the instructions of those in charge.

## **Student Discipline Policy and Code of Conduct**

### **Non Discriminatory Statement**

John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy provides a learning environment where students are treated equally and do not receive different treatment based on race, color, national origin, disability status, gender, sexual orientation, religion or on any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law. Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. Anyone who feels that they have been treated differently on any such basis should speak with a counselor, mentor, or trusted staff who will inform the Principal and/or Dean. Anyone who raises any concerns of discrimination on any basis will be free from retaliation for raising such a concern.

### **Search and Seizure**

Any time a student enters the building, they will be searched electronically by front desk security with a wand. Bags and backpacks will be searched before entering the school. For the safety of the students and everyone at John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy school property that is assigned to students, including lockers and desks, remain the property of the school. Students therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas. Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from students' desks, bag, backpack, cubbies, lockers, and person by school authorities.

At John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy, we know that our students have not fit the traditional school model and come to us facing a variety of obstacles that have interfered with their academic performance. Here we look at each student's unique needs which may include managing behaviors with discipline which is viewed as an active part of the learning process. Misbehaviors happen when skills are either not taught or mastered, we use these opportunities to teach skills that are missing or have not been acquired.

Discipline is most effective when the intervention deals with the problem fairly and at the time and place where the infraction occurs. This means that when consequences are administered, the student's background and situation are considered before determining an appropriate consequence. Conflicts usually result due to ineffective communication, immature coping skills, and a low tolerance for frustration with peers and staff. We use this opportunity to teach these deficit skills since it does not benefit the student to be disciplined for a behavior that has not been mastered, this will only lead to the negative behavior being repeated.

If the conduct of a student is related to a disability, determined by the Committee of Special Education (CSE) through a Manifestation Determination Review ((MDR) this will follow the procedures outlined in Article VIII of this Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy and in accordance with the IDEA. This ensures the student is not disciplined based on disability.

### **I. Wildcat Academy Code of Conduct**

#### **A. Students will:**

1. Arrive to school and class on time
2. Turn in all electronic devices upon entering the building.
3. Arrive to class prepared and remain the entire day.
4. Remain in class during the appropriate class times.

5. Use appropriate language.
  6. Respect all students and staff members.
  7. Show no tolerance for violence or possession of weapons or dangerous instruments.
  8. Show no tolerance for harassment, intimidation, or aggressive behavior.
  9. Do not use of illegal drugs or alcohol.
  10. Do not smoke tobacco or cannabis products on or near school grounds.
  11. Dress appropriately; no gang related clothing or accessories or revealing clothing.
- B. The Discipline Policy and Code of Conduct is meant to ensure the health and safety of students staff, to foster an atmosphere where learning can take place without distractions and to protect the school building and the property within. In addition, these rules serve to protect students from intimidation, harassment, violence (verbal and physical), and any person or behavior that may prevent them from receiving a quality education.
- C. The standards set forth in the Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy apply to behavior in school during schools hours, before and after school, while on school property, while traveling on vehicles funded by the School, at all school-sponsored events and on other-than-school property when such behavior can be demonstrated to negatively affect the educational process or endanger the health, safety, orals, or welfare of the school community. When misbehavior involves communication, gestures or expressive behavior, the infraction applies to oral, written or electronic communications, including but not limited to texting, emailing, social networking and other online communication platforms.

## II. Code of Conduct Violations

- A. John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy adheres to the Discipline Policy set by the NYSED which provides coherent responses disciplinary responses and guidance surrounding misconduct and consequences.

### Infractions

- **LEVEL 1 Infractions - Uncooperative/Noncompliant Behavior**
- Unexcused absence from school
- Cutting classes
- Being late for school or class
- Bringing items to school in violation of school policy
- Engaging in verbally rude or disrespectful behavior
- Failing to be in one's assigned place on school premises
- Behaving in a manner which disrupts the educational process
- Posting or distributing material on school premises in violation of school rules
- Failing to provide school officials with required identification



- Using school computers, fax machines, telephones, or other electronic equipment or devices without permission

### **LEVEL 2 Infractions - Disorderly Behavior**

- Smoking and/or use of electronic cigarettes and/or possession of matches or lighters
- Gambling
- Using profane, obscene, vulgar, lewd, or abusive language or gestures
- Lying or giving false information to, and/or misleading school personnel
- Misusing property belonging to others
- Inappropriate use of electronic technology (e.g., unauthorized audio/video recording)
- Leaving class or school premises without permission of supervising school personnel

### **LEVEL 3 Infractions – Disruptive Behavior**

- Defying or disobeying the lawful authority or directive of school personnel or school security in a way that substantially disrupts the educational process
- Entering or attempting to enter, or leave, the school building without authorization or through an unauthorized entrance
- Using slurs based upon actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, weight, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability
- Shoving, pushing, or engaging in a minor altercation or similar physical confrontational behavior towards students or school personnel (e.g. pushing past another person), throwing an object (e.g., marker) or spitting at another person
- Bringing unauthorized persons to school or allowing unauthorized visitors to enter school in violation of school rules
- Engaging in gang-related behavior (e.g., wearing or displaying gang apparel and/or accessories, writing graffiti, making gestures or signs).
- Tampering with, changing or altering a record or document of a school by any method, including, but not limited to, computer access or electronic means
- Engaging in vandalism, graffiti or other intentional damage to school property or property belonging to staff, students or others
- Knowingly possessing property belonging to another without authorization
- Pulling the fire alarm falsely

### **LEVEL 4 Infractions – Aggressive or Injurious/Harmful Behavior**

- Violating the school's Internet use Policy (e.g., use of the school's system for non-educational purposes, security/privacy violations)
- Engaging in scholastic dishonesty which includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarizing, or colluding (engaging in fraudulent collaboration with another person in preparing written work for credit).
- Posting or distributing libelous material or literature (including posting such material on the Internet)
- Engaging in sexual conduct on school premises or at school-related functions

- Making sexually suggestive comments, innuendos, propositions or similar remarks, or engaging in nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (e.g. touching, patting, pinching, lewd or indecent public behavior, or sending or posting sexually suggestive messages or images)
- Posting, distributing, displaying, or sharing literature or material containing a threat of violence, injury or harm, or depicting violent actions against or obscene, vulgar or lewd pictures of students or staff, including posting such material on the Internet
- Engaging in physically aggressive behavior other than minor altercations as described under B24, which creates a substantial risk of or results in minor injury
- Engaging in an act of coercion or **threatening violence**, injury or harm to another or others
- Engaging in or causing disruptive behavior on the school bus which creates a substantial risk of or results in injury
- Engaging in harassing, **intimidating** and/or bullying behavior, including using electronic communications to engage in such behavior (cyber bullying); such behavior includes, but is not limited to, physical violence, stalking, verbal, written or physical conduct that threatens another with harm; seeking to coerce or compel a student or staff member to do something; hazing, taunting, exclusion from peer groups designed to humiliate or isolate; using derogatory language or making derogatory jokes or name calling to humiliate or harass.
- Engaging in harassing, intimidating and/or bullying behavior, including using electronic communications to engage in such behavior (cyber bullying) based on an individual's actual or perceived race, weight, religion, religious practices, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability; such behavior includes, but is not limited to, physical violence, stalking, verbal, written or physical conduct that threatens another with harm; seeking to coerce or compel a student or staff member to do something; hazing, taunting, exclusion from peer groups designed to humiliate or isolate; using derogatory language or making derogatory jokes or name calling to humiliate or harass.
- Possessing controlled substances or prescription medications without appropriate authorization, illegal drugs synthetic hallucinogens, drug paraphernalia, and/or alcohol
- Falsely activating a fire alarm or other disaster alarm
- Making a bomb threat
- Taking or attempting to take property belonging to another or belonging to the school without authorization, without using force or intimidating behavior
- Creating a substantial risk of serious injury by either recklessly engaging in behavior, and/or using an object that appears capable of causing physical injury (e.g., lighter, belt buckle, umbrella, or laser pointer)
- Causing a serious injury by either recklessly engaging in behavior, and/or using an object that appears capable of causing physical injury (e.g., lighter, belt buckle, umbrella, or laser pointer)
- Inciting/causing a riot
- Possessing or selling any weapon as defined in Category II
- Using controlled substances or prescription medication without appropriate authorization, or using illegal drugs, synthetic hallucinogens, and/or alcohol

#### **LEVEL 5 Infraction – Seriously Dangerous or Violent Behavior**

- Starting a fire
- Threatening to use or using force to take or attempt to take property belonging to another
- Using force against, or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury against school personnel or school security
- Using extreme force against or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury upon students or others
- Planning, instigating, or participating with another or others, in an incident of group violence

- Engaging in **threatening**, dangerous or violent behavior that is gang-related
- Engaging in physical sexual aggression/compelling or forcing another to engage in sexual activity
- Selling or distributing illegal drugs or controlled substances and/or alcohol
- Possessing or selling any weapon, other than a firearm, as defined in Category I
- Using any weapon as defined in Category II to threaten or to attempt to inflict injury upon school personnel, students, or others
- Using any weapon, other than a firearm, as defined in Category I, to threaten or to attempt to inflict injury upon school personnel, students, or others
- Using any weapon, other than a firearm, as defined in Category I or II, to inflict injury upon school personnel, students, or others
- Possessing or using a firearm

C. Prohibited Weapons

Prohibited Weapons – Category I

- Firearm, including pistol and handgun, silencers, electronic dart, and stun gun
- Shotgun, rifle, machinegun, or any other weapon which simulates or is adaptable for use as machine gun
- Air gun, spring gun, or other instrument or weapon in which the propelling force is a spring or air, and any weapon in which any loaded or blank cartridge may be used (such as a BB gun or paintball gun)
- Switchblade knife, gravity knife, pilum ballistic knife and can sword (a cane that conceals a knife or sword)
- Dagger, stiletto, dirk, razor, box cutter, case cutter, utility knife and all other knives
- Billy club, blackjack, bludgeon, chuck stick, and metal knuckles
- Sandbag and sandclub
- Sling shot (small, heavy weights attached to or propelled by a thong) and slung shot
- Martial arts objects including kung fu stars, nunchucks and shirkens
- Explosives, including bombs, fire crackers and bombshells

Prohibited Weapons – Category II

- Acid or dangerous chemicals (such as pepper spray, mace)
- \*Imitation gun or other imitation weapon
- Loaded or blank cartridges and other ammunition
- Stun weapons
- Any deadly, dangerous, or sharp pointed instrument which can be used or is intended for use as a weapon (such as scissors, nail file, broken glass, chains, wire)

\* Before requesting a suspension for possession of an article listed in Category II for which purpose other than infliction of physical harm exists, e.g., a nail file, JVL Wildcat Academy will consider whether there are mitigating factors present. In addition, JVL Wildcat Academy will consider whether an imitation gun is realistic looking by considering factors such as its color, size, shape appearance and weight.

Guns Free School Act

Federal and State laws require the expulsion from School for a period of not less than one year for a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except the School Leader may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such

modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). Any such expulsion must comply with the individuals with disabilities Education Act and its implementing regulations, for a student with or presumed to have disabilities. “Firearm” as used in this law is defined by 18USC921(a), and includes firearms and explosives. The School Leader shall refer to the criminal justice of juvenile delinquency system any student who brings a firearm or weapon to the school. “Weapon” as used in this context shall mean any device, instrument, material or substance that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than two and a half inches in length.

#### D. Dignity for All Students Act Policy

John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy is committed to providing a safe, educational environment where students are free from discrimination and harassment and are treated equitably. Under the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), School strictly prohibits harassment/bullying or discrimination of or by any student enrolled at the School. This prohibition includes harassment/bullying or discrimination based upon an individual’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. Harassment, intimidation/bullying or discrimination, whether verbal, physical, or environmental, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Schools. This includes anything within the school building or offsite such as a nearby park used for school activities, school-sponsored events such as field trips, afterschool events, or other activities. The purpose of this policy against harassment/bullying and discrimination is to educate students about what may constitute harassment/bullying and discrimination, to notify students that the School will not condone harassment/bullying or discrimination, and to explain the procedure for reporting harassing/bullying or discriminatory conduct.

“Harassment” and “Bullying” means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, verbal, non-verbal, and/or written, intimidation, or abuse, including cyberbullying, that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being, fear for physical safety and/or injury. These incidences may be in as well as outside the school environment where these incidences create an emotional and/or physical risk for the student within the school setting.

All staff at John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy as well as students and families are required and encouraged to report any incidences of bullying and/or harassment. Staff and students are also educated throughout the year about what constitutes bullying/harassment. Students have access to counselors, mentors, and advisory classes for additional support. When such incidences occur, the following process is in place:

1. The student, staff, or parent/guardian who is reporting the incident can report in two ways. They can either file a bullying/harassment incident form through the schools’ websites (anonymously or not) or they can meet with the school’s DASA coordinator to complete a bullying/harassment incident form in person. This is a comprehensive report that records all aspects of the incident. This can be done anonymously, in-person, through video conferencing, or phone.
2. The DASA coordinator informs the principal of the filing and then starts a full investigation within 24 hours of receiving the complaint.
3. If the investigation determines that this complaint is founded, John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy will take actions to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination. Strategies will include restorative practices, education, counseling, or other interventions that promote pro-social behaviors. Suspensions can occur depending on the severity of the incident but is

considered only as a last resort. All interventions are consistent with the John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Code of Conduct and PBIS program.

4. The DASA Coordinator will follow up with all parties concerned to ensure that everyone feels safe, there is no retaliation, and students are supported on both sides.

John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation must comply with all confidentiality guidelines and are acting in good faith.

The school will maintain records of complaints of harassment/bullying and discrimination as well as records of subsequent investigation of such matters. These records will be kept confidential to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances.

### **III. Discipline Procedures and Interventions**

The following is a non-exhaustive list of other responses and supports that.

There are times when disciplinary action is needed despite pro-social supports, education, and interventions, or a student engaged in serious offenses as outlined above. When a student is found to have violated Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy, they will be subject to the following process and suspensions consistent with the students' right to due process. The school principal will initiate and issue a notice of suspension and hearings. Determining next steps and interventions is made by consulting those that work and know the student and will be in alignment with the Code of Conduct. Interventions can include:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Written notification to parent
- Suspension from athletic participation
- Suspension for social or extracurricular activities
- Short term suspension (10 days or less)
- Long term suspension (11 days or more)
- Expulsion from School

A. may be used in conjunction with the disciplinary responses for each level of infraction:

- Referral to Support Services Team
- Intervention by mental health staff
- Individual/group counseling
- Conflict resolution
- Peer mediation
- Development of individual behavior contract
- Restorative practices
- Advisory classes
- Support groups
- Short-term behavioral progress reports
- Transfer to another program (with parental consent)

- Guidance Conference
- Referral to a Community Based Organization (CBO)
- Mentoring Program
- Academic sanctions for a scholastic dishonesty infraction only
- Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling services

#### **IV. Due Process**

The degree of due process a student is entitled to receive before an intervention is imposed depends upon the penalty being imposed. In all cases, regardless of the level of the infraction and regardless of the imposed, the school personnel authorized impose the intervention must inform the student of the alleged misconduct and must investigate, to the extent necessary, the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary in connection with the imposition of the intervention. Students and teachers will give statements either verbally and or in writing. Students who are to be given interventions other than an oral warning, written warning or written notification to their parents are entitled to additional rights before the intervention is imposed. These additional rights are explained below:

##### **(i) Removal from Classroom**

A student's behavior can affect a teacher's ability to teach and make it difficult for other students in the classroom to learn. In most instances the classroom teacher can control a student's behavior and maintain or restore control over the classroom by using good classroom management techniques. Such practices may include, but are not limited to: (1) short-term "timeout" in an administrator's office; (2) sending a student into the hallway briefly with an adult; (3) sending a student to the principal's office for the remainder of the class time only; or (4) sending a student to a guidance counselor or other staff member for counseling. Time-honored classroom management techniques such as these do not constitute disciplinary removals for purposes of this Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.

##### **(ii) Suspension from School**

A student's behavior can affect a teacher's ability to teach and make it difficult for other students in the classroom to learn. In most instances the classroom teacher can control a student's behavior and maintain or restore control over the classroom by using good classroom management techniques. Such practices may include, but are not limited to: (1) short-term "timeout" in an administrator's office; (2) sending a student into the hallway briefly with an adult; (3) sending a student to the principal's or counselor's office for the remainder of the class time only; or (4) sending a student to a guidance counselor or other staff member for counseling. Time-honored classroom management techniques such as these do not constitute disciplinary removals for purposes of this Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.

On occasion, a student's behavior may become disruptive to the point where these techniques are not sufficient to maintain classroom control. For purposes of this Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy, a "disruptive student" is a student who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or who substantially interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom. A substantial disruption of the educational process or substantial interference with a teacher's authority occurs when a student demonstrates a persistent unwillingness to comply with the teacher's instructions and/or repeatedly violates the teacher's classroom behavior rules.

If the student poses a danger or ongoing threat of disruption, and after discussion with stakeholders a suspension is given with the following process followed:

- The Principal and Dean speaks to the student about the behavior and explains how the behavior is interfering learning.
- The length of suspension is given
- The parent or guardian is notified by phone and/or e-mail the same day and a suspension letter is sent home within 24 hours via certified mail. The letter includes infraction, length of suspension a scheduled time to meet, and due process.
- The parent is informed during the call and in writing that they have the right to appeal the decision.
- Meeting with parent or guardian and student to discuss the suspension is scheduled, this is by phone or in person to accommodate the parent or guardian.
- Upon return to school the student meets with the Dean and/or a counselor to set a positive tone when returning to class and to reinforce pro-social strategies.

During the meeting the parent and student will have an opportunity to ask questions and clarification as it relates to the Code of Conduct. The meeting is held in the parents and student native language.

Note on removal of special education students: Removal of a student with a disability, having a 504 other than for testing or is considered “deemed to know” under certain circumstances, may constitute a change in the student’s placement. If the suspension is approaching 10 days of cumulative suspensions the procedures will follow procedures set in accordance with IDEA policies. Accordingly, no principal may remove a student with a disability from School until he or she has verified with the chairperson of the Committee on Special Education that the removal will not violate the student’s rights under state or federal law or regulation. The Dean keeps track of all number of days of suspension.

*Short-term (under 10 days) Suspension from School (In-School and Out of School Suspension)*

When the suspending authority proposes to suspend a student charged with misconduct for 10 days or less the suspending authority must immediately notify the student orally. If the student denies the misconduct, the suspending authority must provide an explanation of the basis for the proposed suspension. The suspending authority must also notify the student’s parents/guardians in writing that the student may be suspended from school. The written notice must be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, in addition to an email or some other means that is reasonably calculated to assure receipt of the notice within 24 hours of the decision to propose suspension at the last known address for the parents. Where possible, notice should also be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a telephone number(s) for the purpose of contacting the parents. Students will be given any class work to work on so they do not fall behind.

*Long-term (more than 10 days) suspension from school*

When the principal determines that a suspension for more than five days may be warranted, he or she shall give reasonable notice to the student and the student’s parents of their right to a fair hearing. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to question witnesses against him or her and the right to present witnesses and other evidence on his or her behalf. The principal shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, at his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths in conjunction with the proceeding before him or her. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no stenographic transcript shall be required. A tape recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of fact and recommendations as to the appropriate measure of discipline to the principal. The report of the hearing officer shall be advisory only, and the principal may accept all or any part thereof.

An appeal of the decision of the principal may be made to the Board of Trustees, which will make its decision based solely upon the record before with appeals submitted to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the school Board. The Board may adopt in whole or in part the decision of the principal. Final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the New York State Education Department.

John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy will follow procedures and policies set by the Department of Education A-443 regarding alternate instruction. A student who is suspended by the principal-for more than 10 days who is awaiting his/her suspension hearing, will be provided with alternative instruction at a site other than the School. Students who have IEP services will receive their related services as stated on their IEP as well as alternate instruction.

***(iii) Permanent Suspension or Expulsion***

Permanent Suspension or Expulsion is reserved for extraordinary circumstances such as when a student's conduct poses a life-threatening danger to the safety and well-being of other students, school personnel or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function.

When the principal determines that a permanent suspension or may be warranted, he or she shall give reasonable notice to the student and the student's parents of their right to a fair hearing. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to question witnesses against him or her and the right to present witnesses and other evidence on his or her behalf. The principal shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, at his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths and to issue subpoenas in conjunction with the proceeding before him or her. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no stenographic transcript shall be required. A tape recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of fact and recommendations as to the appropriate measure of discipline to the principal. The report of the hearing officer shall be advisory only, and the principal may accept all or any part thereof.

As set forth in Article V, Section A, an appeal of the decision of the principal may be made to the Board of Trustees, which will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the Board within ten (10) business days of the date of the principal's decision, unless the parents can show that extraordinary circumstances precluded them from doing so. The Board may adopt in whole or in part the decision of the principal. Final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the New York State Education Department.

*Weapons on School Property*

In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, any student found guilty of bringing a firearm (as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)) onto school property will be subject to suspension from school for at least one calendar year. Before being suspended, the student will have an opportunity for a hearing as set forth in this section. Students with a disability or having a 504 with a classification will follow guidelines and procedures set by all federal law and procedures.

The principal and the Board of Trustees have the authority to modify this one-year suspension on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to modify the penalty, the principal or Board may consider the following:

- The student's age
- The student's grade in school



- The student's prior disciplinary record
- The principal's belief that other forms of discipline may be more effective
- Input from parents, teachers and/or others
- Other extenuating circumstances

A student with a disability may be suspended only in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law.

### ***V. Appeal Process for Disciplinary Actions and/or Grievances with John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy School***

This Discipline Policy and Code of Conduct is to be distributed to parents and guardians once every year and upon enrollment in John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter High School. It outlines the disciplinary appeals process and grievance procedure in the event a parent or guardian would like to appeal a disciplinary decision or feels that their needs or the needs of their student have not been addressed in an appropriate matter.

#### A. Appeals

Any disciplinary action that results in a student's removal from School (out of school suspension, short term and long term or expulsion) may be appealed to the School's Board of Trustees by submitting the appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees at the following address:

Harvey Newman, Board Chair  
John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy  
17 Battery Place  
New York, NY 10004  
[hadakami@yahoo.com](mailto:hadakami@yahoo.com)

A student and/or parent who is not satisfied with the outcome of the review by the Board of Trustees, may appeal to the authorizer, the New York State Department of Education, by submitting the appeal in writing to the New York State Education Department at the following address:

New York State Education Department  
Charter School Office  
89 Washington Avenue  
Room 5N Mezzanine  
Albany, NY 12234  
(518) 474-1762

All appeals must be made in writing and must clearly state on what grounds the appeal is being made.

#### B. Grievances

Any school parent or teacher, other interested person, or agency may file a grievance or complaint. All complaints must be:

- Written (in the event the person is unable to write, the school will supply them with a scribe or to document it is a verbal complaint);

- Signed by the person or agency representative filing the complaint;
- Specify the requirement of law or regulation being violated and the related issue, problem, and/or the concern;
- Complete with information/evidence supporting the complaint; and
- Written with a statement describing the nature of the corrective action desired.

Complaints regarding the school's administration and implementation of any of its educational or after school programs should be sent to the Executive Director at the address below.

Ronald Tabano  
CEO/Principal  
John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter High School  
17 Battery Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
[rtabano@jvlwildcat.org](mailto:rtabano@jvlwildcat.org)

The Executive Director has a 30 day period in which to resolve the complaint and respond in writing. In the event the Executive Director fails to resolve the complaint within 30 days, or fails to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint should be sent to the John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter High School Board of Trustees at the address below.

Harvey Newman  
Board Chair  
John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter High School  
17 Battery Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
[hadakami@yahoo.com](mailto:hadakami@yahoo.com)

The Board of Trustees has a 30 business day period in which to resolve the complaint and respond in writing to the complainant. If the New Dawn Board of Trustees fails to resolve the complaint within 30 business days or fails to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint should be sent to the authorizer the New York State Department of Education at the address below.

New York State Education Department  
Office of Innovative School Model  
Charter School Office  
Room 465 EBA  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234

Appeal to the school's authorizer (the education organization in charge of your school.)

If after your appeal you are not satisfied with the Board of Trustees' decision, and if your complaint involves a violation of either the school's policies or its charter, you may submit a formal complaint to the Charter Authorization Team at the NYCDOE via email, [CharterOversight@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CharterOversight@schools.nyc.gov).

Appeal to the New York State Board of Regents  
If you are still not satisfied with the outcome after going through the first three levels of the complaint process, you may write to:  
The NY State Board of Regents  
NY State Education Department

Charter School Office, Room 465 EBA  
[89 Washington Avenue,](#)  
[Albany, NY 12234](#)  
518-474-1762

Or send an email to [charterschools@nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@nysed.gov) (subject line should include the name of the school and the word “Complaint”).

## ***VI. Discipline of Students with Disabilities***

- A. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities must be in accordance with IDEA regulations and are in addition to the policies and procedures outlined above. Among the special rules that apply are the following:
- If a student with a disability attending a charter school is suspended or removed for more than 10 school days in a year, the School must notify the CSE (Committee on Special Education). The CSE may conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop or review a behavior intervention plan.
  - If a student with a disability is suspended for 10 days or more, cumulative or due to a single incident the school will notify the Committee on Special Education as 10 days are approaching or is at the 10 day mark.
  - If a student with a disability is suspended or removed in excess of 10 school days in a school year, this constitutes a disciplinary change in placement. The CSE must be notified so a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) can be conducted. (See below for details.) The CSE will conduct an FBA and create an IEP.
- B. *Manifestation Determination*

Manifestation determination is a determination of whether there is a relationship between a student’s disability and a behavior that is subject to disciplinary action. This determination must be made by the CSE and other qualified individuals in a meeting that includes a representative from CSE, the parent, members of the student’s IEP team. The parent has the right to bring an attorney or advocate to this meeting. The requirement to conduct a manifestation determination comes into play only when school officials seek to impose a suspension or removal that constitutes a disciplinary change of placement (i.e., a suspension or removal of a student with a disability from his or her educational placement for more than ten consecutive days; or a suspension or removal for a period of ten consecutive days or less if the student is subjected to a series of suspensions or removals that constitute a pattern because they add up to more than ten school days in the school year and because of such factors as the length of each suspension or removal, the total amount of time the student is removed and the proximity of the suspensions or removals to one another).

Conversely, the CSE is not required to conduct a manifestation determination for suspensions or removals of ten days or less in the school year, or for subsequent short-term suspensions or removals (less than ten cumulative days) than do not constitute a pattern of removal. CSE is notified if a student approaches ten days of suspension.

Specifically, the CSE must convene a meeting to make a manifestation determination whenever:

- School officials impose a suspension or removal that constitutes a disciplinary change of placement
- The principal decides to place a student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for behavior involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances

If the CSE determines that the student's behavior was a manifestation of his or her disability, the students may return to School. The psychologist from CSE will conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and either develop or review a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) for the student.

If the CSE determines that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her disability, the removal from school will continue until the end of the determined period. During such suspension, the student shall receive appropriate special education services that will allow him or her to continue to participate in the educational curriculum and progress towards the student's IEP goals.

A parent may appeal the manifestation determination by requesting an expedited impartial hearing.

### **IX. Reporting Crimes and/or Disruptive Behavior**

It is important that all students and staff of John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School understand that certain criminal and/or disruptive behavior must be reported to appropriate police authorities by law. The following incidents *will* be reported.

- Capital Crimes
- Assaults or Threats of Assault
- Possession of Weapons
- Robbery or Theft
- Sexual Abuse
- Property Damage
- Drug or Alcohol Use

Additionally, the principal has the discretion to report any other incident occurring within the regular operation of the school.

Any student who is formally charged with a felony by a proper prosecuting attorney for an incident which is shown to have an adverse impact on the educational program, discipline, or welfare in the school in which the student enrolled shall, following an administrative hearing conducted pursuant to rules of the SED and after due notice to the parents, parent, or guardian, and when suspension is recommended, be suspended from all classes until the determination of his or her guilt or innocence, or the dismissal of charges, is made by a court of competent jurisdiction.

### **X. Required Reporting**

#### ***Violent or Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR)***

JVL Wildcat Academy Charter School is required to file a report for each individual Violent or Disruptive Incident that occurs at the school and then submit an annual summary report to the SED. A violent or disruptive incident includes any of the following: kidnapping, homicide, sexual offences, assaults with serious injury, arson, robbery, reckless endangerment, criminal harassment, bomb threats, and drug or

alcohol use, possession, or sale. Any staff witnessing such acts must immediately file a report with the principal's office.

**A.**

Any information concerning sexual misconduct involving students by school staff, board members, officers, employees, or others connected with school programs or services, including volunteers and contractors, must be reported immediately to the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District. This obligation extends to sexual misconduct on and off school premises. The principal must also immediately contact the student's parent. The principal should not gather any information or conduct an investigation of the allegations. Complete reporting obligation information can be found at: <http://www.nycsci.org/public/Reporting%20Obligation.pdf>

## **Special Education**

### **Overview**

Wildcat Academy follows these overarching principles in the administration of its special education program:

- Wildcat Academy aims to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with their non-disabled peers to the extent appropriate and allowed by each student's individualized education plan (IEP).
- Wildcat Academy does not discriminate in admission and enrollment practices on the basis of a student having or suspected of having a disability.
- Wildcat Academy adheres to all applicable state and federal guidelines in the implementation of its special education program.

### **Philosophy**

Wildcat strives to integrate special education students into the general education setting. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment only occurs if the nature or severity of a student's disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved. Any decision to remove a student from the general education environment is made in accordance with the IEP prepared by the Committee on Special Education of the students' district of residence.

Students with disabilities are expected to participate in, and receive credit for, nonacademic, extracurricular and ancillary programs and activities with all other students to the extent allowed by the IEP. Additionally, students with disabilities are granted access to and expected to take part in school-sponsored programs, activities and services.

### **Services at Wildcat**

The Wildcat Academy, in keeping with state and federal mandates concerning special education, ensures that all special education programs and services included in a student's IEP are provided directly to the student during school hours. Currently Wildcat Academy employs four full-time, certified special education teachers. These staff members provide consultation and support to classroom teachers; provide instruction in general education classrooms to special education students, both individually and in small groups; provide resource room services; and serve as special education consultants to the overall school community.

Classroom teachers at Wildcat Academy are expected to be highly knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities. In addition to understanding their responsibilities toward students with IEPs, they are required to request any support they may need to implement a student's program and to take all possible steps to implement classroom modifications/ accommodations in accordance with students' IEPs.

## **Responsibilities of Special Education Staff**

In addition to the duties outlined above, special education staff at Wildcat works in tandem with general classroom instructors and school leaders to ensure compliance with both IDEA policy and Charter Law. These responsibilities include:

- Long- and short-term planning to address individual needs of students;
- Evaluation of students' progress;
- Reporting on all special education issues to the Principal;
- Preparing written reports accurately and in a timely manner;
- Communicating with teachers and parents to facilitate the IEP process;
- Representing the Charter School at CSE meetings
- Remaining knowledgeable on current special education laws, rules, and regulations; and
- Maintaining the privacy of student records and information.

Special education teachers at Wildcat are also responsible for interacting with assigned students' districts of residence, including

- Seeing that referrals are made for students suspected of having a disability;
- Fulfilling reporting requirements of the resident district;
- Ensuring that all appropriate school staff participate in meetings of the resident district CSE; and
- Establishing a reporting structure in accordance with applicable law whereby the district of the student's residence is provided progress on the degree to which the services on the IEP are being provided. (The Special Education teacher will communicate directly with Chairperson of the District's CSE).

## **Training and Professional Development**

Professional training and development for staff involved with the education of students with disabilities includes:

- Introduction to the CSE referral process;
- Developing student IEPs;
- IEP implementation;
- Evaluation of a student's progress toward IEP goals and objectives;
- Reporting requirements to parents and CSEs; and
- Discipline of students with disabilities.

Professional development is provided by the Center for Educational Innovation and the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence.

In addition to this in-house training, Wildcat provides all staff with opportunities for outside professional development in special education in collaboration with consultants who have track records of service in this area (e.g., already provide such training to existing school districts).

### **Provision of Outside Services**

In any case that Wildcat Academy is unable to directly provide services to the extent mandated by a student's IEP, it will rely on the school district of the student's residence to provide services. If necessary and feasible, the Wildcat Academy will contract with appropriately certified or licensed individuals to provide services under its direction. The services to be provided may include, but are not limited to:

- Speech language pathology and audiologist services;
- Psychological services;
- Physical and occupational therapy;
- Recreation, including therapeutic recreation;
- Early rehabilitation counseling;
- Orientation and mobility services;
- Diagnostic and/or evaluative medical services; or
- Student and/or parent counseling.

Wildcat Academy is currently in the process of identifying a provider of speech services.

### **Referral Process**

For a student to be considered for special education services, he or she must be referred for an evaluation. Upon identification of a student suspected of requiring special education services, a special education staff member completes the DOE form *Initial Referral to the Committee on Special Education* and submits it by mail with a cover letter to the appropriate regional CSE chairperson or other designated CSE contact person. Please note that the CSE should correspond to the student's district of residence.

This referral form provides a space for the special education teacher/coordinator to list interventions that have already been attempted in order to maintain the student in his or her current educational setting. The form also allows the special education teacher/coordinator to communicate the reasons for the referral and the specific nature of the problem that the student is exhibiting. (For those students already receiving special education services who may need a reevaluation prior to their annual review date, there is a separate reevaluation request form.)

After a referral is sent to the Regional CSE, the student's parent will be contacted by the CSE to obtain written consent for an evaluation to begin. Once the case has been opened, the CSE will conduct the evaluation, arrange a meeting to discuss the results, and determine the child's eligibility for special education services.

Please note that an evaluation referral may also be made by parents (or guardians) as well as teachers, administrators, doctors and/or other professionals involved in a child's education.



### *A Note On Child Find Requirements:*

Under federal Child Find requirements, students enrolling for the first time in a New York public school will be screened by a team of teachers (including both regular and special education teachers) to identify any possible indication that the child may need a specialized or intensive education program. Alternatively, they may be referred to the CSE of their district of residence for evaluation.

## **Evaluation**

An evaluation is a series of assessments designed to determine whether or not a student has a disability and needs special education services. The CSE will assign psychologists and social workers to conduct a series of evaluations that include a psychoeducational evaluation, a social history, and a classroom observation. If additional specialized evaluations are required — such as speech or psychiatric evaluations — the CSE is responsible for conducting those evaluations. Wildcat will fully cooperate with the CSE during the evaluation process, allowing for classroom observations, records exchange and the participation of the student, teachers, and/or related service providers if needed.

In addition to those students being referred for an initial evaluation, evaluations can also be conducted for children who are already receiving special education services and for whom an additional evaluation is requested (reevaluation). Additionally, students are required to have a new evaluation every three years (triennial evaluation).

## **Developing an IEP**

Once an evaluation is complete and it has been determined that a student is eligible to receive special education services, an IEP Team meeting is convened. The IEP team must meet to develop an IEP for the child within 30 calendar days after a child is determined eligible.

## **Requirements and Roles for IEP Teams**

Under federal law, the group responsible for developing the IEP is known as the IEP Team. IDEA mandates that a child's IEP Team include the following representatives:

- A child's parent(s) or guardian(s);
- At least one general education teacher (if the student is, or may be participating, in the general education environment);
- At least one special education teacher;
- A district representative who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education and is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum and the availability of district resources;
- An instructional expert who can interpret the implications of the evaluation results in terms of designing appropriate instruction; and
- For initial referrals and reevaluations of students who are English Language Learners, a professional bilingual team member (may be a bilingual psychologist, social worker, special education teacher, general education teacher, and speech teacher or guidance counselor).

### *Parents*

In New York State, parents have long participated in making eligibility and placement decisions about students with disabilities. Under IDEA parents must be informed of and provide written consent to initial and periodic re-evaluations of their child; have their concerns about the education of their child considered during any evaluation; be part of the group that reviews existing evaluation data during any evaluation or re-evaluation of their child; and understand the results of evaluations. Additionally, where the IEP Team determines that no additional data is needed to determine continuing eligibility, parents must receive notice of that determination with a statement of the reasons for that decision. Parents have the right to be provided with the student's IEP and all due process notices in their preferred language or mode of communication. They also have the right to request additional assessments if they disagree with the IEP Team's decision.

The parent must be invited to participate and efforts must be made to select a mutually agreeable date for the IEP meeting; however, the meeting may proceed without the parent provided that documented appropriate outreach was conducted and attempts were made to arrange a mutually agreed upon date and time for the meeting. If the parents indicate that they will be unable to attend and cannot reschedule, they will be informed that they may participate via a telephone conference. Outreach is defined as at least two (2) attempts at telephone contact at different times of the school day, if the parent has a telephone or a follow-up letter sent to the parent by mail and also sent home with the student, if the parent does not have a telephone. All contacts with (and attempts to) contact the parent (including copies of all letters) and the reason for the rescheduled appointment must be documented on the student contact sheet in the student's file.

#### *General Education Teachers*

The child's classroom teacher is expected to present information about the student's performance in the general education class and to help the IEP Team make decisions about participation in the general education curriculum and other school activities. For students who have more than one general education teacher, only one of the student's teachers must attend the meeting. Input from all the student's teachers who will not be attending should be obtained and presented at the meeting. As a member of the IEP Team, the general education teacher helps the IEP Team determine appropriate behavioral interventions, strategies, supplementary aids and services and program modifications and supports for school personnel that are necessary for the student to participate to the fullest extent possible in the general education curriculum.

#### *Special Education Teachers*

IDEA requires that at least one special education teacher of the student participate in the IEP Team meeting. When the student's only special education service is a related service, that related service provider participates in the IEP meeting.

#### *District Representative*

A district representative is a representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise special education and who is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources in the school district.

#### *Other Participants*

##### *Student*

The student, where appropriate, should participate. Students 14 or older must be invited to participate in IEP meetings where transition planning is or will be part of the IEP.

#### *School Psychologist*

The school psychologist must participate in CSE subcommittee meetings whenever a new psychological evaluation is reviewed or a change to a service option with a more intensive staff/student ratio is considered.

#### *School Physician*

A school physician is also a required participant if the parent makes a request for a physician to attend at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the IEP meeting.

#### *School Social Worker*

The school social worker may participate in an EPC or CSE Review meeting if he/she is involved in any aspect of the evaluation process.

#### *Third-Party Parent Member of the CSE*

A third-party parent member of the Committee on Special Education should participate. The child's own parent has the right to decline their right to have a parent member participate in the CSE Review. If the parent opts to decline their right for the participation of a parent member, this must be documented by obtaining the parent's signature on the Declination Letter for Parent Members declining the parent member.

#### *Translator*

A translator is required to attend IEP Team meetings if the parent's preferred language or mode of communication is other than English.

#### *Additional Participants*

In addition to the participants noted above, the following individuals should be invited to participate in IEP meetings:

- Any school personnel with contributions to make to the decision making process;
- At the discretion of the parent or the district, any individual with special expertise or knowledge of the student;
- Non-Department of Education assessment professionals or service providers involved in conducting providing services to the student.

## **IEP Process**

At the IEP meeting, participants will discuss the evaluation results and which supports and services will be most appropriate to serving a particular child. During this meeting, the IEP will be developed, detailing the services needed, and how and where they will be provided. If parents disagree with the results of their child's evaluation, they should contact their Region's CSE to review their Due Process rights. These rights include requesting an outside assessment, a mediation meeting, or an impartial hearing.

Next, an appropriate placement must be offered based on the needs outlined in the IEP and subject to the parent's consent. The charter school has 60 school days from the time of the parents' consent to evaluation to complete the IEP and offer a placement.

Every teacher of a student with a disability will be provided a copy of the student's IEP and training will be provided by the School's special education staff, as needed, to ensure their understanding of the student's needs and their responsibilities related to the student's IEP.

## **Progress Reports**

Quarterly progress reports regarding each student and his or her IEP, as well as copies of all report cards are provided to the student's parents and to the student's district of residence. The school district is welcome at any time to monitor the school's implementation of its special education program.

## **Reporting Requirements**

In compliance with New York State education law, Wildcat Academy is responsible for providing data regarding its special education program to the SED's Strategic Evaluation Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting (SEDCAR) unit. SEDCAR analyzes data to evaluate the State's progress toward accomplishing the SED's strategic goals for individuals with disabilities.

Wildcat will provide the following data as requested to SEDCAR in 2007-08:

*Count of Students with Disabilities Provided Special Education (due: December 1, 2010):* This information is submitted to the state via the December 1 Bi-Monthly Charter School Invoice, submitted to the Office of New Schools and is used by the state for the purposes of IDEA fund allocation.

*Students Exiting Special Education (due: July 14, 2011):* This form collects data regarding the manner in which students with disabilities exit special education, including students who are declassified and returned to general education programs, and postsecondary education and employment plans of students with disabilities.

*Special Education Personnel (due February 2, 2011):* This online-only form is designed to collect full-time equivalent (FTE) data on or about December 1, 2005, regarding special education personnel who are currently employed according to their certification status and vacancies.

*Students with Disabilities Suspended for Disciplinary Reasons (due: August 11, 2011):* Online report for detailing in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions and removals to Interim Alternative Education Settings of students with disabilities.

Additionally, Wildcat is responsible for submitting information regarding special education students via the state's BEDS, and STEP (9-12 grades) data collection systems. Special education FTE information is also reported bi-monthly to the NYC-DOE Office of New Schools via the Bi-Monthly Invoice Form.

The special education staff in conjunction with the Principal is responsible for ensuring the collection, maintenance, and reporting of all data regarding students with disabilities.

## **Access to Student Records/FERPA**

Wildcat follows all applicable requirements of the IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) in implementing regulations relating to the confidentiality of student records. All appropriate staff is trained in such requirements, and Wildcat’s special education staff will be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of personally identifiable information within student records.

In accordance with FERPA, parents are allowed to inspect and review all of their children’s educational records. Upon receipt of such a request, Wildcat will adhere to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Law. In all events, the school will comply with such requests for access within a reasonable period of time, but in no case more than 45 days after it has received a request.

Before disclosure of any personally identifiable information relating to a student to someone other than the parent or eligible student, Wildcat will (with the exception noted below) obtain a signed and dated written consent of the parent or eligible student. Personally identifiable information may be released without the prior consent of the parent or eligible student to school officials and teachers only if Wildcat determines that such persons have “legitimate educational interests.”

All files required by law to be kept confidential are kept under lock, in a place and manner that restricts access to only those individuals who are authorized to view these records. More specifically, special education records are kept in a locked file cabinet under the supervision of a designated member of the special education staff in his or her secure office. S/he maintains a list of those staff allowed to access specific files, including the respective student’s teacher(s) and parent(s). A sign-out sheet is maintained by the designated teacher to keep track of record locations at all times.

## **Assessment of Students with Disabilities**

### ***State-Mandated Assessment***

All students with disabilities take state assessments except in cases where a student’s IEP determines that he/she cannot participate in regular state assessments. In these instances, the State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) will be administered as required by law.

### ***Other Assessment***

Additional assessments for special education students may include but are not limited to: student learning portfolios, oral reports and videotaped sessions.

A Wildcat special education teacher will discuss each additional component of the school’s assessment program with the appropriate CSE to make a determination about which, if any, of these measures are appropriate to include in the IEP. If the CSE determines that none of the various assessments administered by the school are appropriate for a given student, Wildcat may create individualized assessment instruments based on IEP goals and objectives, which then will be submitted to the CSE for approval (or denial).

## **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

This topic is covered in the “Code of Conduct” section of this manual. However, as described in IDEA, please note the following:

- If a student with a disability is suspended or removed for more than 10 school days in a year, you must notify your regional CSE. The CSE must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop or review a behavior intervention plan.

- If a student with a disability is suspended or removed in excess of 10 school days in a school year, this constitutes a disciplinary change in placement. The CSE must be notified so a Manifestation Determination Review can be conducted
- The charter school may contact the CSE to request an expedited due process hearing before an Impartial Hearing Officer to request that a student with a disability be moved to an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 days in cases where maintaining the student in the school is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others. A student can also be moved to an alternative educational setting if he or she brings a gun to school or possesses or uses illegal drugs at school.

## **English Language Learners**

### **Overview**

A student should be identified as an English Language Learner (ELL) if he or she: (1) was not born in the United States and/or has a native language other than English; (2) comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or (3) is a Native American or Alaska Native and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on his or her level of English language proficiency.

### **Wildcat Academy follows these overarching principles in the administration of its ELL program:**

- Wildcat will serve any and all students with limited English proficiency using structured English language immersion so that they may achieve proficiency in the English language as quickly as possible
- The school complies with all applicable laws including Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) and the federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.

At the present time, Wildcat Academy has no students in need of ELL services. However, school leadership plans to make a concerted effort in its upcoming recruitment efforts to attract more ELL students.

### **Philosophy**

All students that are English Language Learners will be expected to become proficient in the English language at a rapid pace. Wildcat believes that a structured English immersion program is most beneficial to ELL students in improving their abilities to master the language.

Wildcat ensures that ELL students will not be excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction, and also that ELL students will not be assigned to special education because of their lack of English proficiency. Students of limited English proficiency will receive the same academic content as those students who are native English speakers. All instruction will be in English. However, the level of English used for instruction – both oral and written -- will be modified appropriately for each ELL student. Within the School's extended day schedule, there is ample time that may be used for additional intensive English language instruction. Additionally, all teachers will receive professional development on communicating with students designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and in techniques for detecting whether a student has English language deficiencies.

Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from the school in their native language to encourage participation by all members of the school community. A school official and an interpreter may also conduct parental outreach through home visits.

### **Services**

Wildcat plans to provide all necessary staff and specialized curricular materials to enable ELL students to achieve proficiency. The school will directly provide or make referrals to appropriate support services that may be needed by ELL students in order to achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of academic performance. Such services may include individual counseling, group counseling, home visits, and

parental counseling. The School will seek to hire at least one full-time teacher who speaks the foreign language that is most common among its students, which in all likelihood will be Spanish. Parents of ELL students will be kept abreast of their child's progress in English acquisition via communications in their native language.

## **Identification of ELL Students**

As required by law, Wildcat mails or distributes the State Education Department's *Home Language Survey* to every new student's household before the beginning of the school year. All students who are identified using the survey to be of foreign birth or to come from a home where a language other than English is spoken will be subject to an informal interview conducted by school staff (in the English language.)

If this informal interview indicates that a student speaks limited or no English, the school is then required to assess this child using the LAB-R (Language Assessment Battery Revised). The LAB-R measures language proficiency in English and is used to determine ELL status. The LAB-R should be administered within a short time following the student's entry into the school. Such screening with LAB-R is not necessary if the student's ELL status is available from his or her prior school and is based on an appropriate standardized test, such as the NYSESLAT.

In addition to these formal measures, the school's teachers are responsible for observing each student throughout the class day with an eye towards detecting limited English proficiency. All teachers will receive professional development training on techniques for detecting whether a student has English language deficiencies and on communicating with students designated as ELL students. Any student suspected of having limited English proficiency will be tested to determine if and what level of services are necessary.

## **Exit Criteria**

The NYSESLAT (NYS English Second Language Assessment Test) is given in the spring and required for every ELL student. ELL students take the NYSESLAT each year to gauge their English proficiency and progress. This is the test they must pass in order to move into general English language classes. Any student classified and receiving educational services as an ELL student who subsequently tests above the established cut-off point (e.g., the 40th percentile) will be deemed no longer in need of ELL services.

Additionally, the school will regularly evaluate each student's performance in academic content areas to measure the student's progress in those core subjects. No student will be exited from the ELL program unless they can read, write, and comprehend English well enough to participate meaningfully in the school's programs.

## **Assessment / Accommodations**

All ELL students - regardless of the duration of their attendance in a US school - are required to take state-mandated tests (including math and content area exams) and Regents exams in addition to the NYSESLAT.

There are approved accommodations for ELL students on most State tests and Regents exams. Accommodations include allowing for extra time, separate test locations, use of bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, oral translations, and writing responses in the students' native language.



Students with disabilities who are also Limited English Proficient may also receive these accommodations whether or not they are in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Accommodations include allowing for extra time, separate test locations, use of bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, oral translations, and writing responses in the students' native language.

### **Accountability and Evaluation of the ELL Program**

In order to ensure that the ELL program is achieving the desired results (i.e., students are making progress in the acquisition of the English language and making progress academically), the school will annually evaluate the progress of its ELL students on standardized assessments and non-standardized assessments against that of non-ELL students. The school will also track students longitudinally throughout their years at the school to determine if there is significant variation in the academic achievement of students who were once classified ELL and non-ELL students as measured by standardized assessments and non-standardized assessments. The School will track how many students are declassified as ELL and the number of instructional years it takes for this declassification to occur. Wildcat is responsible for submitting this and other information regarding ELL students via the state's BEDS and STEP (9-12 grades) data collection systems.