



Washington Connections Academy: in partnership with Mary M Knight school district **HANDBOOK SCHOOL SUPPLEMENT**

2023-2024

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

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1 Non Discrimination Statement

Washington Connections Academy Nondiscrimination Policy

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

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

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

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

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

For School Related Matters Other than Employment:

Contact Information	
Title IX Coordinator	<u>Rachel Thomas</u> racthomas@waca.connectionsacademy.org
504 Coordinator	Cynthia Loe cloe@waca.connectionsacademy.org

***All staff can be reached via the main Washington office phone number at (360) 338-6340.**

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

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

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

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

OCR@ed.gov

[OCR Complaint Assessment System](#)

[OCR Regional Office Locations](#)

[OCR Discrimination Complaint Form](#)

2 School Mission and Overview

2.1 Mission Statement

We ensure a high-quality education by providing a supportive structure through the delivery of an individualized, rigorous and innovative curriculum.

Vision

We empower each student to take ownership of their learning and life goals in order to positively impact our world.

Individual Health Plans

Students with epilepsy or other seizure disorders will receive an Individual Health Plan following state regulations and guidelines. Parents/Caretakers will work with the school-based team and their individual healthcare provider to develop these plans.

3 School Organization and Roles

3.3 School Information

School Information	School Contact
School Phone Number	360-338-6340
School Fax Number	360-628-8808
School Address	111 Tumwater SE Suite B203 Tumwater, WA 98501
School Hours	8:00 am- 4:00 pm M-F
Technical and General Support	800-382-6010
School Leader	Jennifer Francis
WebMail	All staff and support services are located in the Education Management System's (Pearson Online Classroom) Webmail address book.

3.4 School Schedule

3.4.1 The 2023-2024 WACA School Year Calendar

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

Event	School Status	Date
<i>First Day of School</i>	School and Office Open	August 28, 2023
Labor Day	School and Office Closed	September 4, 2023
Indigenous People's Day	School Closed/Office Open	October 9, 2023
Veterans' Day	School and Office Closed	November 10, 2023
Thanksgiving Break	School and Office Closed	November 22-24, 2023
Winter Break	School and Office Closed	December 20, 2022- January 1, 2024
	School Closed/Office Open	January 2, 2024
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	School and Office Closed	January 15, 2024
<i>First Semester End Date</i>	NA	January 24, 2024
Teacher Work Day	Staff Work Day	January 25-26, 2024
<i>Second Semester Start Date</i>	NA	January 29, 2024
Presidents' Day	School and Office Closed	February 19, 2024
Spring Break	School Closed/Office Open	April 1-5, 2024
Memorial Day	School and Office Closed	May 27, 2024
<i>Last Day of School</i>	School and Office Open	June 10, 2024
School Closed - Additional Administrator/12 Month Employee Days: July 3, 2023, November 10, 2023, November 22, 2023, December 20-22, 2023, February 19, 2024		
School Status Legend:		
School Closed/Office Open = Students and Teachers are not in school but Admin are on duty		
School and Office Closed = No one is in school		
School and Office Open = Everyone is in school		
Staff Work Day = Students are not in school but Admin and Teachers are on duty		

3.4.2 Required Instructional Hours

Based on a 180 day school year:

- Grades K – 8 = 1,000 hours per year (5.55 hours per school day)

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

Student-Teacher Contact Requirements

As noted in the School Handbook: General Portion, regular communication between students and teachers is critical to student success in this virtual school. Weekly instructional contact with a teacher is required to meet Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) attendance requirements. Therefore, each student enrolled in WACA must have, at minimum, one direct instructional contact with a teacher every school week until the student completes all course objectives or otherwise meets the requirements of the written student learning plan.

Where appropriate, the teacher will also contact the student's parent. Weekly contact forms include but may not be limited to:

- Telephone
- LiveLesson
- In person
- Webmail
- Text

Curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) are important calls teachers make throughout the year to check in on each student's progress; these happen about eight (8) times per year. All instructional contacts will be recorded in the student's Log in Pearson Online Classroom formerly known as Connexus. Throughout the duration of the year, the teacher will be available to the student during regular school hours for questions and to provide assistance.

Written Student Learning Plan

Pursuant to Washington state law, Written Student Learning Plans (WSLP) and Monthly Progress Checks (MPC) are requirements of WACA's Alternative Learning Experience. The student's WSLP DataView will be updated monthly to note their progress in our program. Parents/Caretakers will be required to acknowledge receipt of these updates in the DataView. Students and parents/Caretakers can also find the requirements for making satisfactory progress within the DataView.

Satisfactory Progress is defined as making regular weekly contact and the following:

K-5: Passing English Language Arts, Science and Math

Grade 6-12: Passing all classes, but at most failing no more than two

Students will be considered to have unsatisfactory progress during the month they reach four weeks of cumulative, no weekly contact, and then any month after in which they miss a week of contact and will remain Unsatisfactory once they hit six weeks of no contact

Progress reports will be published monthly and some months may be condensed in order to track all students.

For students who are not making satisfactory progress, a required intervention plan can also be found in the DataView. If after no more than three (3) consecutive calendar months a student is not making satisfactory progress despite documented intervention efforts, the parent/Caretaker, student, teacher(s), and administration will meet to discuss any necessary changes to the student's educational plan, which may include rescinding the Choice Transfer Request with WACA to allow for enrollment in another program. Special circumstances may apply to students with an IEP or 504 Plan.

Schedule Changes

Students may request changes to their schedules within the first two (2) weeks of enrollment or in the first two (2) weeks of the semester. Schedule changes must be reviewed and approved by the school counselor and/or Principal. Schedule changes outside of the two-week time frame will be granted at the Principal's discretion.

3.5 Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Transfers

Washington Connections Academy is not subject to enrollment limits for the school as a whole, but is committed to sustainable, measured growth and therefore reserves the right to limit enrollment if the school leadership deems it to be in the best interest of the school and student outcomes

Washington Connections Academy, as an online school program, provides comprehensive grade level course work through sequential curriculum and courses designed to be delivered through full-time enrollment. As such Washington Connections Academy is not a course provider and does not offer single course or part-time enrollment options.

Maximum Age to Enroll

The maximum enrollment age of a student is determined by state law. The maximum enrollment age may also vary by student, dependent upon on the program in which a student is enrolled. In Washington State, the maximum age limit is:

- Students who receive special education and related services or General education students who turn twenty-one (21) on or before August 31st

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

3.5.2 Kindergarten and First Grade Admissions Policies

A kindergarten student may enroll in WACA if the student is five (5) years of age on or before August 31.

A first grade student may enroll in WACA if the student is six (6) years of age on or before August 31 of the current school year.

Washington law allows for exceptions to these age requirements. Consideration may be given for the following circumstances: military families, transfers from another state, transfers from a state approved private school; or request for early entry. Families should contact the school for further information. The final decision about enrolling a student under any of these exceptions lies with the School Leader.

In order to verify age eligibility requirements, families should submit a copy of the child's birth certificate, immunization record and medical needs, address, emergency contact information, and previous school records, if applicable.

3.5.3 Enrollment After the Start of the School Year

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

3.5.4 Dual Enrollment in Another K-12 Program

Students who are enrolled at Washington Connections Academy should not be concurrently enrolled in another public school on a full or part-time basis. In certain special circumstances, it may be possible for a student to participate in a course or activity at another local school within the parameters described below. Seeking such permission should be initiated after the start of the school year. The Caretaker's decision whether or not to enroll in Washington Connections Academy should not be contingent on approval to participate in a course or activity at another institution.

To make these arrangements, Caretakers must obtain the Request for Local School Activities form from the Virtual Library. The form essentially outlines the activity, lists contact information, and indicates that the cooperating School Leader agrees to: 1) not claim or collect any state, local or federal funding for the student, and 2) assume all liability for that student while on the school grounds. Once the form is completed and signed, the Caretaker will present it to the Washington Connections Academy School Leader, who will ensure that the student is in good standing and call the local School Leader and make a final approval decision.

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

3.5.5 Enrollment Considerations – Choice Transfer Request

In order to enroll, students should not have the following behaviors noted on the Choice Transfer Request:

1. Conviction of crimes, violent or disruptive behavior or gang membership
2. Currently expelled or suspended for more than 10 consecutive days
3. Having repeatedly failed to comply with the requirements for participation in an online school program such as participating in weekly direct contact with the teacher or monthly progress evaluations
4. Having any formal meeting with school officials regarding truancy in the past two years
5. Under a court order to attend school or a truancy petition is in the process of being filed

Students ages 8-18 who are not enrolled in school (public, private, or homeschool) may be referred to their home district to enroll and re-engage before being able to seek enrollment with us. Students who have these above behaviors may be reviewed by our leadership team to determine enrollment eligibility. Failure to accurately report the above behaviors on the Choice Transfer Request may result in the rescinding of the CTR post-enrollment.

Residency Requirements and Location Change

In order to maintain enrollment at WACA students must remain residents of Washington State. Per Washington State law, student residency is defined as:

1. Where the student sleeps at night and
2. Where they are expected to reside. Students **cannot** be outside of the state of Washington for more than twenty (20) consecutive nights

WACA requires that Caretakers contact the Principal to discuss any travel or relocation from a student's residence **for any trip out of state longer than fourteen (14) days**. Caretakers must contact the Principal prior to officially requesting the location change in order to obtain permission to temporarily relocate and to determine if the student will remain eligible to stay enrolled at the school. Failure to follow this process will result in withdrawal.

If a student is out of country at any time administration must know immediately. We cannot allow access to our program out of country so the student will have to withdraw. Upon return to Washington we may allow a student to re-enroll outside of the enrollment window, based on principal discretion.

The "Location Change Request form" can be found on the Virtual Library going to

Home > Enrollment > 2023-2024 Enrollment Documents > **General Enrollment Documents**. For additional information, please reach out to your Principal.

3.6.3 Mandatory Testing

Students attending WACA are required to complete testing as required by state law. State tests include the following:

- Smarter Balanced Assessment, ELA and Math (taken in grades 3-8)
- Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (taken in grades 5 and 8)
- Washington- Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM) – for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- WIDA English Language Proficiency Screener, required within ten days of enrollment if another language is used in the household (see Conditional Enrollment)
- WIDA English Language Proficiency Annual Assessments (for all students qualifying for English Language Development Services in grades K-12)
- More specific information about which tests will be administered and when will be posted by the school once the school year is underway. Families may also visit the State of Washington’s OSPI [State Testing Overview website](http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/StateTesting/default.aspx) for additional information (<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/StateTesting/default.aspx>).

All state testing is mandatory and Washington is not an -opt-out state for testing.

Conditional Enrollment

Students must complete a lesson and welcome call with their homeroom teacher within their first ten (10) days at WACA. If this is not completed the student may be automatically withdrawn and the Choice Transfer Request (CTR) will be rescinded for non-engagement in our program.

4 Attendance

As an Alternative Learning Experience (ALE), WACA will create a Written Student Learning Plan (WSLP) and will support each student's success in fulfilling the plan through weekly instructional contact between the student and teacher or certified staff member. This will include monthly reviews of student progress. Attendance and progress monitoring will be tracked in Pearson Online Classroom, WACA's education management system, and an intervention plan will be created for any student not making satisfactory progress or in need of additional support.

4.2 Marking and Verifying Attendance and Participation

Learning Coaches document student attendance in the Education Management System (Pearson Online Classroom) and the school verifies that the attendance records are accurate. The school will also track weekly contacts with the student as part of the attendance requirement. Please note, vacation time is built into the School Holidays on the School Calendar. Students are required to log attendance and maintain contact with their teachers every week.

Pearson Online Classroom Attendance Codes

The following attendance codes are available in Pearson Online Classroom:

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

Hours of Schooling

In order to meet the state's requirements (located in the School Schedule section of this Supplement), families should complete the following minimum hours of schooling each week:

Grade(s)	Recommended Hours per Day	Recommended Hours per Week	Required Hours per Year
K-8	5.6	28 hours	K-8=1000

Learning Coach Responsibilities

- **Record Hours of Schooling** - For each instructional day, Learning Coaches enter a 0 – 9 in Pearson Online Classroom to indicate the number of hours of schooling that occurred. They should aim to meet the weekly totals listed above to ensure compliance with state regulations. Learning Coaches may also ask for assistance from the school to enter attendance records if they are unable to access a computer on a given day, per the Marking and Verifying Attendance section of the School Handbook: General Portion.
- **Alert School of Excused Student Absences** – Learning Coaches cannot enter “E” attendance codes in Pearson Online Classroom. If a student is absent, the Learning Coach must send information to the school about the absence, and the school determines if the absence can be classified as excused, per the guidelines listed in the School Handbook: General Portion.
- **Complete defined school year** – Regardless of the number of hours of schooling a student may complete prior to the last day of the school year (as defined in the school year calendar in this Supplement), students are required to meet the weekly required instructional hours up to and including the last day of the school year.
- **Holidays or Days Off:** Holidays are specified per the official WACA calendar.

School Responsibilities

- **Review Attendance Records** – Teachers monitor and review attendance records on a weekly basis, including reviewing the weekly contacts report to ensure that the required weekly direct personal contact has occurred. They remind Learning Coaches to enter hours of schooling for all days of the week. If a teacher has concerns about the validity of a student’s attendance records, they may place the student in an “alarm” status, and contact the school’s designated attendance coordinator for further assistance.
- **Monitor Attendance Issues** – The school’s attendance coordinators monitor student attendance. They contact families with low attendance rates, and work to help them stay in compliance. Attendance Coordinators also identify and record excused absences, and can alter Learning Coaches’ attendance records (with proper documentation), if necessary.
- **Maintaining the Integrity of the Attendance Data** – The attendance system prohibits further editing of attendance data at certain points. Any requests for adjustments to the previously verified records must

be submitted in writing to the school for review, approval and adjustment.

- **Official Attendance Record** – the Pearson Online Classroom attendance system is the record of Learning Coach documented attendance. It is however only one of many sources used to determine if a student is meeting the minimum instructional hour's requirement. In

certain cases, where it has been determined that a student has not completed enough work, met the weekly contact requirement, or that certain other program requirement have not been fulfilled, the attendance coordinator may invalidate the Learning Coach record resulting in sanctions up to and including withdrawal.

4.3 Attendance Status and Escalation System

Enrolled students are in one of three escalation statuses at all times:

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

This status is based on several criteria, as outlined in the School Handbook: General and is a combination of measures that indicate if a student is demonstrating adequate participation and attendance in the program. This not only includes the actual attendance hours recorded by the Learning Coach, but also lesson and assignment completion rates and amount of attendance in the program. This not only includes the actual attendance hours recorded by the Learning Coach, but also lesson and assignment completion rates and amount of communication with the teacher. Therefore, even though a Learning Coach may record a high number of instructional hours in the attendance records, if a student's work completion rates are not on track or they fail to communicate on a regular basis with a teacher, he /she is placed in an escalated (Approaching Alarm or Alarm) status. It is important to recognize that just marking proper attendance is not enough to keep a student's escalation status On-Track.

When a student is in the Approaching Alarm status, they are in danger of being withdrawn. The school works with the family to help get the student's status back On-Track. If these efforts fail, the student is escalated to the Alarm status which could quickly lead to the student's official withdrawal.

4.4 Truancy/Student Engagement

In order to maximize student learning, regular attendance is imperative. The WACA program offers a great deal of flexibility about how many hours students spend each day on school work and on what days of the

week they complete that work. Due to this flexibility, WACA has zero tolerance for truancy. Caretakers are held legally responsible for ensuring that their students are fully participating in school, even if they have designated another individual as their student's Learning Coach. The information below is intended to help Caretakers understand how to avoid having their student be considered truant, and to understand the consequences of truancy.

In order to avoid truancy, the Caretaker must ensure that the following activities are taking place:

- The student completes assigned lessons and assessments.
- The student participates in educational activities for an appropriate number of hours, as outlined in the *Required Instructional Hours* section (Section 3.4.2) of this Supplement, and the Caretaker or Learning Coach records these attendance hours in Pearson Online Classroom on a daily basis.
- The student maintains a minimum of one (1) instructional contact with a teacher every week.
- The student is available for regularly scheduled telephone calls with teachers.
- The student attends any *assigned* mandatory LiveLesson® sessions
- The student is able to demonstrate that they are doing their own schoolwork.
- The student attends mandatory state testing.
- The Caretaker or Learning Coach has communicated with the homeroom teacher in advance if they need to deviate from the regular school calendar

If the student's teachers become aware that the student is not fully participating in school as outlined above, the student will be marked absent at the teacher's discretion. The Principal or homeroom teacher may override the number of attendance hours previously entered by a Learning Coach, changing the attendance hours to a 0, if the student's teacher(s) believe the student has not participated as required. These absences will be considered "unexcused."

Absences are generally considered "excused" only as described in the School Handbook: General Portion. The final decision about whether an absence is considered excused or unexcused will be made by the Principal.

As part of an ALE in the state of Washington, students must make weekly contact with a teacher to avoid truancy. Being excused from the weekly contact requirement is generally only allowed for valid justifications pursuant to state law and must be submitted to the office via our Contact Excusal Form for approval.

Caretakers can also request contact verification if there are any concerns or discrepancies.

Weeks without contact will accrue cumulatively throughout the year. After one (1) week without contact, the student and Caretaker will receive a warning notification. After two (2) weeks without contact, an absence screener will be completed. After three (3) weeks without contact, another warning notification will be sent out and administration will follow up with the family. After four (4) weeks without student academic contact with their teachers, the student is now considered Truant and there will be a warning notification. After five (5) weeks without contact, a call from administration will be made and a child welfare check may be requested. Should the student reach a total of six (6) weeks without contact and without valid justification, the school will issue a Truancy Contract or may withdraw student from the school. Special circumstances may apply to students with an IEP or 504 Plan.

Our attendance and truancy team can be reached via email for requests as follows:

- Attendance (waca-attendance@waca.connectionsacademy.org)
- Truancy (waca-truancy@waca.connectionsacademy.org)

Definition of “Missing a Day of School”

Missing a “day” of school is defined by WACA as “missing a day’s worth of hours in a week.” Missing a day’s worth of hours in a week may be considered a day of unexcused absence if the

student or Caretaker does not provide acceptable documentation to the school for those missed hours to be considered excused.

5 Grading and Student Evaluation

K-8 Grading Scale

Grade	Grade %	Passing?
A	92-100	Yes
A-	90-91	Yes
B+	88-89	Yes
B	82-87	Yes
B-	80-81	Yes
C+	78-79	Yes

C	72-77	Yes
C-	70-71	Yes
D+	68-69	Yes
D	60-67	Yes
F	0-59	No

Grades 1-8 Whole-Grade Acceleration Policy

Within the first four (4)-weeks of enrollment for the current school year, the parents/Caretakers of interested students may contact school administration to request to promote their student's grade level. A team of teachers and administration will consider all factors brought up by the parents, will review relevant data and may ask for additional testing to ensure the grade level promotion is appropriate. Please see information about Gifted & Talented in the Virtual Library for on-grade level acceleration options.

6 High School Programs and Policies

Grades and Grade Point Averages (GPA)

Students are awarded credit only for courses in which they have earned a grade of D- (60%) or higher. This applies both to courses taken at WACA and at other schools. Courses required for graduation must be re-taken by the student if a grade of D (60%) or higher is not earned and re-taking such courses may delay the student's graduation. The grading scale is below.

Grade	Grade %	Passing?	Non Weighted
A	92-100	Yes	4.0
A-	90-91	Yes	3.7
B+	88-89	Yes	3.3
B	82-87	Yes	3.0
B-	80-81	Yes	2.7
C+	78-79	Yes	2.3
C	72-77	Yes	2.0
C-	70-71	Yes	1.7
D+	68-69	Yes	1.3

D	60-67	Yes	1.0
F	0-59	No	0.00

Semester and year-end GPA calculations follow a four (4) point scale (below). Grade point averages only include graded courses; pass/fail courses are not averaged into a student's GPA.

Release of High School Educational Records

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

To ensure that application deadlines are successfully met, we require advance notice of at least ten (**10**) **working days for requests to provide educational records** to students, parents/guardian, and/or third parties. We require thirty (**30**) **days prior notice for letters of recommendation**. Note that class rank is only calculated twice a year.

Requests for records should be made using the *Authorization for Release of High School Records and Letter of Recommendation Form* available in the Virtual Library.

Our records team can be reached via email for requests as follows:

- K-8 records (waca-records@waca.connectionsacademy.org),
- HS transcripts (waca-transcripts@waca.connectionsacademy.org), and
- SPED records (waca-SPEDrecords@waca.connectionsacademy.org)

Prerequisites

Students must meet all course prerequisite requirements in order to register to take a course. Prerequisites are listed by each course's overview in the course catalog. Semesters A and B of a course cannot be taken concurrently (during the same semester).

Schedule Changes

Students may request changes to their schedules within the first two (2) weeks of enrollment or in the first two (2) weeks of the semester. To add or drop a course, a parent/guardian must make a request of the school counselor. Schedule changes must be reviewed and approved by the school counselor and/or Principal.

High School Courses Taken in Middle School

Students may earn high school credit for high school level courses taken during the middle school years. A middle school course for which high school credit is granted must cover the same content as the equivalent

high school course and must be taught by a teacher licensed at the high school level. Per Washington State law, all high school courses taken and passed by students in grades 7 and 8 will be awarded high school credit and placed on the high school transcript. The credits can be removed if requested by the student or parent/guardian prior to the end of the student's grade 11 school year. At the request of the student or parent/guardian, credits that are to remain on the high school transcript may be transcribed with a non-numerical grade, (e.g., Pass or Credit). The non-numerical grade is not included in the student's GPA calculation, but the credit will apply to fulfilling graduation requirements. The grade can be changed to a non-numerical value if requested by the student or parent/guardian prior to the end of the student's grade 11 school year. Please contact the student's homeroom teacher or school counselor for more specific information.

7 Services for Special Populations

7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligible Students

Enrollment Requirements

At the time of enrollment, all Caretakers who indicate their student has special needs are asked to submit a copy of the student's most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP), if available. If Caretakers cannot provide this documentation, the school will request records from the previous school after the student is enrolled. It is important that the IEP is current and complete, and that any educational assessments and evaluation reports that support the IEP are also submitted.

All documents are reviewed by the Manager of Special Education, and if necessary, a member of the special education staff contacts the family to discuss specific student needs or to clarify the information.

The student's annual review date is noted, and once enrollment is complete the team begins to schedule IEP meetings, as necessary.

During the School Year

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

Conducting IEP Meetings

The special education team plans for and schedules all annual reviews and other IEP-related meetings. They contact families and establish mutually beneficial meeting times. Although typically held virtually, the IEP meetings occur in compliance with all state and federal laws.

Special Education and Related Services

According to their IEPs, some students qualify to receive special education and related services. Due to the

virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. Students must attend these LiveLesson sessions in order to receive special education services. The IEP team ensures the service is provided in

compliance with the IEP. The team locates and secures the provider and handles all contracting and financial issues.

New Referrals/Child Find

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for special education assistance. If this is suspected, the teacher will first help the Learning Coach implement a series of interventions. If those documented strategies fail, they will then refer the student to the school's Student Support Team (SST). This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the special education team. If after all the recommended strategies fail, the SST (along with the Caretaker) will consider referral to the school's special education team. Once the team receives the referral, they will begin the process of determining if the student is in need of a special education evaluation, an IEP, and ultimately special education services. The parent may request an evaluation to determine special education eligibility at any time during the intervention process.

7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students

Enrollment Requirements

Caretakers of students with Section 504 plans seeking to enroll in the School are asked to submit a copy, if available, of the Section 504 plan during the enrollment and academic placement process. When a student enters the School with a Section 504 plan developed by a prior school, the School will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with Section 504. If the Caretakers cannot provide this documentation, the school will request records from the previous school attended after the student is enrolled. These documents are not required as a condition of enrollment.

During the School Year

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

Students who have Section 504 plans will participate in the regular education environment, with the use of supplementary aides and services. The regular education teachers (with the support of the Section 504 coordinator and/or special education staff) will implement the provisions of Section 504 plans. A case manager will be assigned to notify teachers about the accommodations and to

assist with and monitor implementation of the Section 504 plan. Teachers will also have access to information as to accommodations and modifications on their home page.

Reevaluation

The School shall establish procedures for periodic reevaluation of students, consistent with the requirements of Section 504. Transitions from primary grades to intermediate grades, elementary school to middle school, and middle school to high school are often appropriate times to review and update a student's Section 504 plan. For students who enter the School with an existing Section 504 plan, the schedule for the reevaluation will be determined by the Section 504 coordinator based on the following: how recently the plan was developed, the appropriateness of the plan for the virtual school setting, changes to the student's impairment, etc.

Section 504 Accommodations

According to their Section 504 plans, some students qualify for accommodations to access their educational program. Due to the virtual nature of the School, accommodations are provided virtually. The 504 Coordinator ensures the service is provided in compliance with the student's Section 504 plan.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with major life activities and they may believe there could be a need for accommodations as required under Section 504. If documented strategies fail, the student will be referred to the school's Student Support Team (SST). This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the special education team and/or Section 504 Committee. Once the team receives the referral they will begin the process of determining if the student is in need of evaluations and a Section 504 plan. To become eligible for Section 504 accommodations, the team must determine that the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as learning, breathing, walking, thinking, etc.

Federal law requires WACA to provide its students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. Washington Connections Academy is committed to providing its students with equal access to its education program. The school provides students with accessibility through resources tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support. If your student is in need of assistance in order to fully participate in Washington Connections Academy's education program, please contact the school's special education coordinator or the school's 504 coordinator. You can also obtain twenty-four (24)-hour technical support by calling the Accessibility Hotline at 888-639-5960.

9 Conduct, Due Process, Grievance, and Communication

9.1 WACA Student Dress Code

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

Approved dress and grooming:

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

Not-Approved Dress and Grooming:

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

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

9.2 Bullying and Other Forms of Prohibited Behavior

Connections Academy is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community. The Non-Discrimination Policy for Washington Connections Academy can be found [here](#).

It also can be found on the Virtual Library and on the school's website.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or toward any student, staff, Learning Coach, Caretaker, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse; and violence within a dating relationship.

These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether or not the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected group, such as sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability or any other category protected by state or federal law.

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

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

Sexual Harassment – any unwelcome behavior or communication that is sexual in nature when:

- a student is led to believe that they must participate in sexual conduct or communications in order to gain something in return, such as a grade;
- the conduct interferes with a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:

- unwelcome touching of a sexual nature
- writing graffiti of a sexual nature
- distributing sexually explicit texts, e-mails, or pictures
- making jokes of a sexual nature, rumors, or suggestive remarks
- physical violence of a sexual nature

Sexual harassment can be reported to any school staff member or to the Title IX Officer. Please contact WACA for the school's sexual harassment policy and procedure.

Bullying – a course of abusive treatment (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) that typically involves

the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when habitual and involving an imbalance of power. It may involve verbal, written or cyber harassment, physical assault or coercion and may be directed persistently towards particular victims.

Cyber-bullying – the use of information and communication technologies, such as, but not limited to, cell phone, email, instant messaging, social media websites, Twitter, etc., to support deliberate and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that (i) is intended to harm others or (ii) that an objectively reasonable person would expect to cause harm to others. Cyber-bullying includes the posting or other transmission of text, video, or images that are embarrassing, demeaning, or threatening in nature, regardless of whether the subject of such text, video, or images directed, consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue posting or other transmission.

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

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

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

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

Prohibited behaviors include all of the above.

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

This policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards; and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on school property.

This policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources.

Any student or student's Caretaker who believes that student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation to the school counselor or School Leader. The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate school administrator.

Complaints about prohibited behavior against the School Leader should be filed with the Connections Academy Director of Schools or the Vice President of Schools. Complaints about prohibited behavior against the Connections Academy Director of Schools or the Vice President of Schools should be filed with the Connections Academy Senior Vice President of School Operations.

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

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

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process. This may include up to expulsion for students; up to discharge for employees; exclusion for Caretakers, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any

official position. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for employees will follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in the School Handbooks.

When appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s) Caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, when appropriate, that action has been taken. In providing such notification care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying, and/or dating violence.

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

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

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

Complaints

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

Students and/or their Caretakers may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged

conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing by completing the *Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form*, found in the My School section of the Virtual Library. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the School Leader for review, investigation, and appropriate action.

Complaint to the School District Process

If a student believes they have experienced unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment, they have a right to file a complaint with the school district in addition to filing a complaint with WACA. Before a complaint is filed, any concerns can be discussed with the School Leader, Section Coordinator, Title IX Officer, or Civil Rights Coordinator.

Step 1: Written Complaint - Complaints must be filed within one (1) year from the date of the incident or conduct. Complaints may be delivered by mail, fax, e-mail, or in person to the District Superintendent or Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. All complaints must be in writing and must include the following:

- Description of the conduct or incident
- Explanation of why the student believes discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment has taken place
- Description of the desired outcome from the district.

Step 2: School District Investigation – Once the written complaint is received, a thorough investigation will take place. The Superintendent or designee will respond in writing within thirty (30) calendar days, unless the complaint involves exceptional circumstances that demand a longer investigation. The district will provide written notification to explain if an extension is necessary.

Step 3: School District Response – The district will include, in writing, the results of the investigation, a decision of whether or not the district failed to comply with civil rights laws, notification of the appeal process, and any measures necessary to bring the district into compliance with civil rights laws. Within thirty (30) calendar days after the written response, corrective measures will be put into place.

Appeal Process – You may appeal the school district's decision to the school district's board of directors if you disagree with the decision. The notice of appeal must be filed in writing to the secretary of the school board within ten (10) calendar days after the response has been received. The school board will schedule a hearing within twenty (20) calendar days of receiving the appeal. A written decision will be sent by the school board within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the appeal. The school board decision will include information

explaining how to file a

complaint with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

You may file a formal complaint with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), if you do not agree with the school district's appeal decision. This complaint process can take place if: (1) you have completed the district's complaint and appeal process, or (2) the district has not followed the complaint and appeal process correctly.

This formal complaint must be filed within twenty (20) calendars days of receiving the appeal decision. This written complaint may be sent to the Equity and Civil Rights Office at OSPI by:

- Email - equity@k12.wa.us
- Fax – 360-664-2967
- Mail or In-Person – PO Box 47200 Washington St. S.E., Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Additional information regarding the District's policy can be found [HERE](#).

Privacy/Confidentiality

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

9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students

All students enrolled in WACA are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the school, and Caretakers are expected cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. Student codes of conduct are set forth in this Supplement.

School students are also guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

Discipline Measures

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

may occur.

1. Warning

Students who receive warnings from the school have documented communication with their Caretaker(s) and the school administrator(s). The incident is formally documented in writing and becomes part of the student's permanent record. Students do not have a disruption in schooling and are not removed from the class (Pearson Online Classroom).

Warnings are issued when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct but not as serious as those listed under the suspension and/or expulsion categories in this Supplement.

2. Suspension

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

During a period of suspension as defined by the School Leader, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of Pearson Online Classroom is restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or all of Pearson Online Classroom may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to Pearson Online Classroom and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension.

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

- *Cheating on tests or daily work:* A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another's work, and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- *Plagiarism:* A student's use of another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying-and-pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.
- *Unexcused absence:* An unexcused absence is the absence of a student due to truancy, illegal

employment or parental neglect.

- *Illegal absence:* Illegal absences are unexcused absences by a student who is under the age of seventeen (17) who are absent from school due to avoidable absences, parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations, and truancy.
- *Abusive conduct:* A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.
- *Bullying:* A student that repeatedly engages in negative actions against another student in an attempt to exercise control over him/her.
- *Harassment:* A student who demonstrates verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the school's programs that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment, 2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance, or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.
- *Vandalism:* A Student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances, the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency(ies).
- *Theft and robbery:* A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances, the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.
- *Sexual harassment:* A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.
- *Violation of acceptable use policy:* Students who violate the acceptable use policy in one form or another are open to disciplinary action including suspension. This would include signing on as Caretakers.
- *Repeated violation of any disciplinary issues.*

3. Expulsion

When a student is expelled, they are separated from the school for an extended period of time, or permanently,

for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion is documented in writing and becomes part of a student's permanent record.

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

Due Process for Students

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

Suspension (no more than 10 days)

An informal hearing will be convened with the student, Caretaker, School Leader, and other staff members as appropriate. The Principal will inform the student and Caretaker of the allegations and an explanation of the evidence that supports the allegations. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his or her version of the occurrence. If the School Leader determines that the incident(s) justifies suspension, written notice will be provided to the student and their Caretaker. The student will be provided all due process as required by law.

Suspension of an additional 10 days

The Principal may extend the temporary suspension an additional ten (10) school days.

Expulsion

If the School Leader determines that a student's conduct may warrant expulsion, they will provide written notice to the Caretaker of the student of this determination and the student's right to a hearing. Such notice shall include (1) date, time and location of hearing; (2) description of the incident(s) that is the subject of the hearing; (3) notice that the student and/or Caretaker have a right to review the student's school records prior to the hearing; (4) description of the hearing process and explanation of the consequences of an expulsion. At this hearing, the allegations and supporting evidence will be reviewed. The student shall have the right to present his or her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by counsel. After the hearing, the School Leader will make a recommendation for or against expulsion to the school's discipline committee.

Once the committee rules on the expulsion, the School Leader and/or committee will provide notification to the student and Caretaker of the committee's decision and discipline determination. The decision of the discipline committee is final.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

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

9.4 Academic Integrity

Cheating and/or Plagiarism

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

content is taken from other sources when these sources are not allowed to be utilized (e.g. during an assessment), this conduct will be deemed a violation of academic integrity.

Academic Integrity violations include but are not limited to: copying material from a book, copying and pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework. Offenses tally up throughout the entire school year and are moved to the next level once contact about that offense was made and documented.

First Offense

The first time a student is determined to have violated the school's Academic Integrity Policy the student will receive a warning. The teacher will contact the student and Learning Coach to explain the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered a violation. The student will be required to resubmit the question/assignment with original work. If the student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a zero for that question/assignment.

Second Offense

When a student earns a second Academic Integrity violation, they will be required to redo the question/assignment, but can only receive up to half credit. The Assistant Principal will contact the student to explain the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered a violation. If the student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a zero for that question/assignment, dependent on grade level.

Third Offense

The third time a student earns an Academic Integrity violation, they will receive a zero and will not have the opportunity to redo the question/assignment. The Assistant Principal will contact the student to explain the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered a violation. A virtual detention will be assigned.

Fourth Offense

Additional repeated offenses after this violation will result in a determination to suspend, withdraw, or expel the student.

9.5 Grievance Policy for Caretakers

The school is committed to ensuring stakeholder satisfaction and takes its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to the student very seriously.

These school responsibilities are set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) and the School Handbooks and include such things as: contacting the family regularly, delivering educational materials and equipment, and providing accessible support.

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

Caretaker Remedies

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

Addressing Issues

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

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

provided with all due process procedures as required by law.

Where a Caretaker feels that there has been discrimination on the basis of sex, or on the basis of disability, allegations of sexual abuse, or any other misconduct on the part of the school or its employees, then the Caretaker must activate the grievance procedures set out below and can directly report the complaint to the Academic Success Partner formerly known as Director of Schools.

If charges are brought against a student for a breach of the PLCA, which could result in a suspension of an additional ten (10) days or an expulsion, the due process procedures in the Discipline and Due Process for Students section of this Supplement are to be followed.

Grievance Process

1. A Caretaker with the grievance must, in writing, report the dissatisfaction, and submit it to the student's teacher (or other appropriate Connections Academy staff member, as necessary). All parties involved must be appropriately defined, and the concern must be clearly outlined.
2. The recipient of the grievance must review the concern with his or her supervisor and respond to the Caretaker within three (3) school days.
3. If the original recipient did not resolve the grievance, the Caretaker should request a meeting with the recipient's supervisor. The supervisor should investigate the matter, and schedule a meeting with the Caretaker, the student, if necessary; and any other staff member, if necessary, within five (5) school days.
4. If either party does not resolve this grievance, the Caretaker should then request a meeting with the Director of Schools. The Director will investigate the matter, and schedule a meeting within five (5) school days.

If the school has not been able to address the Caretaker's concern through the grievance process set out above, or if there has not been a prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint prohibited by Title IX and Section 504, the Caretaker can contact the School District (Mary M. Knight School District No. 311) for further recourse. The Caretaker can also resort to contacting the state Department of Education.

9.6 Religious Exemption of Curriculum

The asynchronous curriculum developed for and delivered through Pearson Online Classroom for students at Washington Connections Academy is expected to present information to students without pushing specific ideologies. Students will be exposed to curriculum in science, social studies, language arts, math, world language, and elective courses that discusses world cultures and contributions of members of various cultures. Within their LiveLessons, teachers are instructed not to emphasize some holidays, celebrations, or icons over

others. Should a family feel that the content being shared in a lesson is objectionable based on religious beliefs, they are encouraged to speak with the teacher and the grade-level principal to share their concern and determine a plan of success, including taking part in the curriculum as it stands or being provided with alternative curriculum or assessments. We are not able to make accommodations that are costly, compromise safety, or infringe on the rights of other students or employees. The final decision will rest in the hands of the grade-level principal.

9.7 Transgender Students

Washington Connections Academy believes in fostering an educational environment that is safe and free of discrimination for all students, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. To that end, WACA recognizes the importance of an inclusive approach toward transgender students with regard to official records, confidential health and education information, communication, restroom accessibility, sports, and physical education, dress codes and other school activities, in order to provide these students with an equal opportunity for learning and achievement. This policy and its procedure will support that effort by facilitating district compliance with local, state and federal laws concerning harassment, intimidation, bullying and discrimination.

Rights

Civil rights laws prohibit discrimination and discriminatory harassment on the basis of gender expression and gender identity in Washington public schools. **All** students have the right to be treated consistently with their gender identity at school.

Gender identity and gender expression are protected classes under Washington state law, which means schools cannot discriminate against students based on their gender identity or gender expression. All students have the right to be treated consistently with their gender identity at school and express their gender at school,

Official Records

The standardized high school transcript is the only official record that requires a student's legal name. School staff should adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of the student's transgender or gender expansive status.

The school will change a student's official records to reflect a change in legal name upon receipt of:

1. Documentation that the student's legal name or gender has been changed pursuant to a court order or through amendment of state or federally-issued identification; or
2. A written, signed statement explaining that the student has exercised a common-law name change and has changed their name for all intents and purposes and that the change has not been made for fraudulent reasons.

The school may change a student's gender designation upon parent/student request, by using a process similar to the one they use to change a student's ethnicity. The change should be recorded in the district's Student Information System and sent as the new value in the next CEDARS submission. The new value will replace the value previously sent for the student.

The school must use the name and gender by which the student identifies on all other records, including but not limited to interactions with student, LiveLesson rosters, state testing seating charts, webmails, diplomas, and directory information.

Confidential Health or Educational Information

Information about a student's gender identity, legal name, or sex assigned at birth may constitute confidential medical or educational information. Disclosing this information to other students, their parents, or other third parties may violate privacy laws, such as the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232; 34 C.F.R. Part 99). Therefore, to ensure the safety and well-being of the student, school employees should not disclose a student's transgender or gender expression status to others, including the student's parents and/or other school personnel, unless the school is: (1) Legally required to do so; or (2) The student has authorized such disclosure.

9.8 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As a learning community dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), we at WACA know that recognizing and celebrating our diversity is only the first step to creating and maintaining an inclusive and equitable school for all.

Washington public schools are responsible for providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students and staff, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, language, socioeconomic status, and ability. This includes the recognition that students, staff, and families have the right to be addressed by their requested name, pronoun (e.g., he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.), and gender designation, as well as recognition that there is a need to do so. This also includes celebrating and respecting all aspects of diversity in and outside of our classrooms.

As an online Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) that uses a national, though state-aligned, curriculum in the State of Washington, our curriculum is required to be reviewed and approved by the state before it can be delivered. Our curriculum has been approved by the state for meeting the guidelines for state standards, social-emotional learning (SEL) standards, and civil rights standards. Pearson is committed to ensuring diversity and inclusion through integrating multiple perspectives in a bias-free curriculum and through recognizing the accomplishments of various cultural, racial, and global figures.

Within these guidelines, we at Washington Connections Academy believe in creating a safe, positive environment for learning within a welcoming and inclusive community where diversity of cultures, thoughts, and ideas thrive. We hold true to our Student Well-Being Charter.

STUDENT WELL-BEING CHARTER

Our School:

- Is a safe, positive environment where learning is valued highly.
- Is a welcoming, inclusive community where diversity thrives and students feel like they belong.

As a Student, I Have the Right To:

- Be safe physically and emotionally, without fear of bullying, intimidation, or peer pressure.
- Be accepted exactly as I am without being judged by skin color or ethnicity, gender identity, religious beliefs, physical or learning disabilities, body size or appearance, financial or family status, or any other perceived differences.
- Be treated as an equal with respect, kindness and fairness.
- Feel comfortable asking for help, making mistakes, and learning from them without being judged.
- Have trustworthy teachers and staff who respect, encourage, and support me.
- Expect teachers, administrators, and staff to care about me personally, to listen to me, and to find solutions if problems arise in school.
- Focus on learning and growing as a person without stress and distractions.
- Feel confident being myself, to express myself creatively and share my feelings, ideas, and opinions without ridicule.

As a Student, I Will:

- Treat others as equals, with respect, kindness, and fairness.
- Accept others as they are, even if they are different than me.
- Listen thoughtfully to the feelings, ideas, and opinions of others, and have polite discussions, even when we disagree.
- Support and encourage other learners, even when they make mistakes.
- Help make others feel safe and welcomed in the school community.

10 Educational Materials Provided by the School

10.2.2 Technology Provided by Connections Academy

Consult the Hardware and Connectivity section of your school website to find out what technology the school loans to families for use during the school year.

Student and Staff Communications

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

Academy. All communications must be appropriate and remain educationally relevant.

10.2.4 Use of Personal Equipment and Software

Families who use their own equipment and software should check the minimum system requirements detailed on the school website and in the School Handbook: General Portion.

Internet Safety Policy

It is the policy of WACA (the “school”) to:

- Prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Prevent unauthorized access to and other unlawful online activity related to inappropriate material via the Internet;
- Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personally identifiable information; and
- Comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) (Pub. L. No.106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h)).

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be made available for all computers accessible by students and placed on the computers located at the school site locations. As required by CIPA, this blocking technology is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or any other material deemed to be harmful to minors.

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

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

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

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

The School will provide age-appropriate training for students who use Connection Academy’s Internet facilities.

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

External Video and Web Conferencing Services

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

APPENDIX I: Title IX-The Final Rule

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

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

Definitions

Actual Knowledge

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

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

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

Complainant

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

Formal Complaint

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

Respondent

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

Sexual Harassment

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

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

Supportive Measures

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

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

Supportive measures may include:

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

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

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

Title IX Coordinator

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

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

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

Formal Complaint

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

Current Designated Title IX Coordinator or Manager of Counseling

OBLTitleIXCoordinator@pearson.com

School Address: 111 Tumwater Blvd SE, Ste B203, Tumwater, WA 98501

School Phone Number: 360-338-6340

Initial Response

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

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

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

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

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

Required Grievance Procedures

Formal Complaints

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notice

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

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

Dismissal

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

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

The school may dismiss the formal complaint if:

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

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

Consolidation of Formal Complaints

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

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

Investigation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hearings

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

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

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

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

Determination

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

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

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

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

Appeals

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

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

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

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

Informal Resolution

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

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

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

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

Recordkeeping

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

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

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

Retaliation

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

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

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

Speech protected by the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation.

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

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