

Palmetto Charter School Student Handbook



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Disclaimer

Palmetto Charter School is consistently striving to improve our policies and procedures. PCS reserves the right to amend any policy or statement in this handbook without prior notification at any time. If anything in this document is found to be unconstitutional, it will not void any other items contained in this document. This handbook should not be construed as a contract.

ABOUT PALMETTO CHARTER SCHOOL

Mission Statement

The mission of Palmetto Charter School is to create a superior learning environment founded upon the shared values of hard work, honor, self-discipline, and community and parental involvement, with the purpose of preparing students for academic and social success, in high school and beyond.

Board of Directors

The current seven-member board (as of March 2021) consists of:

Mr. Ron Witt, Chairperson

Mrs. Debra Woithe

Mr. Evan Guido

Mr. Michael Ameres - Parent Liaison

Mr. David Fernandez

Mrs. Mary Johnson

Mrs. Kelli Douglas

Administrative Staff

Brian Bustle - Principal

Jake Durrance- Assistant Principal

Teri Council – Registrar

Fast Facts

Colors: Green & Gold

Enrollment Capacity: 364

Grades: K-8

Grading Period: four nine-weeks

Mascot: Eagle

Months in Session: August-End of May

Class Size Averages: K-3=18; 4-8=22

Motto: "Champions Start Here"

Standardized Testing yearly: Stanford 10 (grades K-2), FSA (grades 3-8)

Student Days: 180

Website: www.palmettocharterschool.org

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Kindergarten – 4th Grade: 8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

5th Grade – 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

6th Grade – 8th Grade: 8:15 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Summer Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.; Closed Fridays

Philosophy

Our motto is, "Champions Start Here." We stress excellence to our students in all areas of life. A rigorous curriculum is part of this pursuit of excellence. We also realize that not every student is an "A" student. Every student, however, is expected to do their best, and achieve

the level of success for which they are capable.

PCS stresses the fundamentals, especially in the early elementary grade levels. There is a strong emphasis on phonics, reading, writing and basic math skills. With a solid foundation in these important areas, it will be possible for students to master other content areas when they progress to the secondary level.

Palmetto Charter School has adopted the Responsive Classroom Approach to Learning. The Responsive Classroom approach creates a positive power of community in the classroom by fulfilling the three most important social needs of students: the need to belong, the need to feel significant, the need to have fun.

The Responsive Classroom approach is formed by the work of educational theorists and the experiences of exemplary classroom teachers. Seven principles guide this approach:

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control (CARES).
5. Knowing the children we teach-individually, culturally, and developmentally-is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
7. How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

The Responsive Classroom approach is built around six components that integrate learning, teaching, and caring in the daily functioning of a classroom. These six components include **classroom organization, morning meetings, rules and logical consequences, choice time, guided discovery, and communication with parents.**

- **Classroom organization** provides active interest areas for students, space for student-created displays of work, and an appropriate mix of whole class, group and individual instruction.
- **Morning meeting** format provides children the daily opportunity to practice greetings, conversation, sharing, and problem solving, and motivates them to meet the academic challenges of the day ahead.
- **Rules and logical consequences** are generated, modeled and role-played with the children and become a cornerstone of classroom life.

Palmetto Charter School agrees to maintain a safe learning environment at all times and provide criteria for addressing discipline issues that will ensure the health, safety and welfare of all students attending the school. The School has adopted the Manatee County School District's Code of Student Conduct and have further detailed expectations in our Middle School Behavior Plan.

Palmetto Charter School believes that all children can be kind, respectful, caring citizens who are accountable and responsible for their actions inside an academic learning environment. Children learn and practice social skills (cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control) when:

Each day the students state the following:

Pledge of Allegiance:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CARES Pledge:

Today I will strive to exhibit the Palmetto Charter School CARES behavior of cooperating with others, asserting myself appropriately; taking responsibility for my actions; showing empathy to those in our community; and practicing self-control.

PCS Goals:

Palmetto Charter's goals are to create a superior learning and social environment while maintaining a superior academic program.

Academic and Social Development

1. To provide a rigorous academic program which stresses the fundamentals.
2. To provide a safe, disciplined environment where students feel secure and can learn with minimal disruption.
3. To instill within students good study habits, effective time management skills and computer skills.
4. To develop a love of learning through creative and fun classroom activities. To measure academic progress through measures such as, regularly scheduled progress reports, report cards, student portfolios and standardized tests.
5. To ensure that students promoted to the next grade level, and particularly to high school, possess the necessary skills to be successful.
6. To provide meaningful learning experiences outside of the classroom through well-planned field trips.
7. To provide opportunities for creative expression through art classes, music instruction, talent shows and dramatic performances.

8. To provide opportunities for social interaction so that students can establish positive peer relationships.
9. To discourage exclusive boyfriend/girlfriend relationships among students and encourage, instead, wholesome friendships among students of the opposite sex.

Physical Development

1. To promote physical fitness through a regularly scheduled physical education program.
2. To develop in students fine and gross motor skills, especially in the early elementary grades.
3. To foster teamwork and advanced athletic skills through competitive sports during P.E. and after school team sports.
4. To instruct students in important health skills such as good eating habits, bike safety, fire safety, personal safety and disease prevention.
5. To provide a nutritious lunch to students through a daily hot lunch program.

ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Awards

Monthly

“Palmetto Charter Champion”— One student per class will be recognized for all around character, academics, citizenship and effort.

Quarterly

“Principal’s List”— Beginning in third grade, any student earning all “A’s” (4.0 GPA) *and* Satisfactory or higher in Specials/ Elective Classes and excellent or satisfactory in Classroom Conduct will be listed on the Principal’s List.

“Honor Roll”—Beginning in third grade, the Honor Roll List will consist of students who attain a GPA of 3.4-3.9 (with no grade lower than a “C” in any class) *and* Satisfactory or higher in Specials/ Elective Classes and excellent or satisfactory in Classroom Conduct.

Incompletes on a report card not made up by the time the Principal’s List and Honor Roll are determined will automatically disqualify the student from the list for that grading period.

Annually

At the close of the school year, each teacher will nominate students to receive awards during a special assembly in the areas of Academic Achievement, CARES, Perseverance, and Most Accelerated Reader Points. Specials/ Elective teachers will nominate students in each class for Outstanding Achievement in their fields (ie. Athlete of the Year, Musician of the Year, etc.) The Administration will issue certificates for Perfect Attendance, Principal’s List, Honor Roll, and /or other special awards. Students in Middle School will be nominated to receive unique “Named Awards” for each subject area (ie. “Albert Einstein Award” for math, “Noah Webster

Award” for Language, etc.). Student Safety Patrols and students who participated in sports teams will also be recognized during the assembly.

Cheating

Cheating is a serious offense. It involves taking information from an outside source and presenting it as your own. It involves the components of stealing and lying. Cheating includes copying homework, handing in another’s work, plagiarism in research papers or compositions, or unauthorized assistance on tests and quizzes. If it has been determined that students have cheated, the following actions will be taken:

- In all grades, if a student has cheated on a homework / class work assignment, he/ she will be issued a 0% grade for the assignment.
- If a student is found talking, singing, or making other noises (unrelated to test content) during a quiz or test, students may have to re-take the test after school, and his/ her grade will be reduced by 20 %. A second infraction of this kind during a test will result in a “0” grade.
- Where the talking obviously involves cheating, or whereby the student has used other methods of cheating, the offending student will receive a 0% grade for the test.
- Administration and parents will be notified by referral.
- Leadership positions held in a club, class, or athletic team will be in jeopardy.
- Additional infractions may lead to suspension or dismissal from PCS.

Curriculum

PCS is dedicated to stressing the fundamentals of reading, writing, phonics, spelling, and math. As students build a solid foundation, especially in the early elementary grades, they will be prepared for success in all academic areas.

Grading Scale

Letter grades are used to indicate student performance/ achievement in academic classes. The grading scale is as follows:

Middle School academic and semester elective classes will be graded using the following numeric scale:

A (4.0) 90-100

B (3.0) 80-89

C (2.0) 70-79

D (1.0) 60-69

F (0.0) 0-59

Middle School Conduct grades posted may be:

Excellent - 1

Satisfactory - 2

Needs to Improve – 3

Students with two or more 3’s in any grading period will not qualify for Honor Roll or Principal’s List.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade classes and specials area classes will issue the following grades for academic performance as well as conduct:

E – Excellent

S – Satisfactory

N – Needs Improvement

U – Unsatisfactory

2nd – 5th Grade academic classes will issue grades of :

A (4.0) 90-100

B (3.0) 80-89

C (2.0) 70-79

D (1.0) 60-69

F (0.0) 0-59

2nd – 5th Grade special area classes and conduct will issue grades of:

E – Excellent

S – Satisfactory

N – Needs Improvement

U – Unsatisfactory

Students failing to maintain at least a 2.5 GPA (2.0 for ESE/504 students) will be subject to athletic eligibility policies and may be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities (including sports) during the next quarter.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the school program and teachers are at liberty to give homework to encourage each student to advance his/ her studies. Homework is a means of providing training and guidance in the life-long process of self-development. It promotes the development of character, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Homework is given for the following reasons:

- **FOR DRILL** — solid drilling of skills is required to master material essential for educational progress
- **FOR REMEDIAL ACTIVITY** — reinforcing instruction of material previously introduced in class
- **FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS** — book reports, compositions, special research assignments and projects are some activities frequently given for homework

Students in elementary grades are provided with student planners for recording daily homework assignments, project deadlines, and testing schedules. It is the elementary student's responsibility to record daily assignments and turn in homework. Agendas for Middle school will be available by request only. Palmetto Charter School requests parents' full cooperation for ensuring that homework assignments are completed on time by checking their child's planner each evening. Middle School parents can access the homework website link found on the PCS website for daily homework assignments.

Delinquent or missing homework assignments will result in failure to perform well on tests and lower student grades. The amount of homework assigned increases with grade level. While parents may assist in seeing that the work is completed and explaining work when necessary, the student must do the work and he/she must take responsibility for it. The length of the homework assignment will be kept within the reasonable guidelines listed below:

Kindergarten & First Grade - 15 minutes
Second Grade - 30 minutes
Third Grade - 30-45 minutes
Fourth - Fifth Grades - 45-60 minutes
Sixth - Eighth Grades - 1-2 hours

The purpose is to have students use some out-of-school time to supplement their school-work, and to prepare them for future demands. As parents, if you have input regarding the amount or type of homework being given, please contact your child's teacher.

All homework assignments are due on the due date assigned. Assignments turned in one day late are reduced by 25%. Assignments turned in after the second day will receive no score; however, it is recommended that your student still complete the assignments to acquire the mastery needed to succeed. If unusual circumstances arise that prevents completion of homework; parental communication is required for additional time. Middle school students can fill out an appeal form for one extra day, twice a quarter, for each academic class. Work not turned in after the extra day will receive zero credit.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure homework is completed on a consistent basis. Failure to do so, will be considered a violation of the parent contract; thus, resulting in the student not being allowed to re-enroll the following year.

Honors Classes for High School Credit

Upon review of FSA scores, Middle School teachers, and Administrative approval, some eighth grade students will be eligible to take Algebra I Honors, Spanish I Honors, and Digital Info Technology in order to earn high school credit from participating area high schools. A "B" average must be maintained in order for a student to remain in the class and earn high school credit. (Students with an average of 75%-80% for the third quarter may remain in the class with Administrative approval.) Additionally, students who fail to complete assigned work required for the class may be removed from the class and placed in the 8th grade Pre-Algebra and / or a different elective class. Students with an "A" average in 7th grade Language Arts and a level 5 on the FSA ELA will be eligible to take English I Honors through Florida Virtual School.

Make-Up Work

In all grade levels, it is the student /parent (not teacher) responsibility to collect and make up any work missed on that day. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to secure their child's assignments if the absence will be more than one day. Arrangements must be made with the child's teacher (not the office) for missed work.

Most assignments can be received by checking the teacher's website or by e-mailing the teacher.

Please be aware that teachers may not be able to check phone voice mails until later in the school day.

Requests for work made by 9:00am will be sent home with a sibling or will be made available for pick up *in the office after 12:00pm*. Due to teacher responsibilities during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal, parents should not “drop by the classroom” at these times and expect to receive their child’s work unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher. Requests made after 9:00am will not be available for pick up until the following day.

A student will be allowed: one day absent...one day to make up the work. Two days absent...two days to make up the work, etc. Students absent for suspensions will be expected to return in work their first day back.

Students not turning in make-up work and taking make-up tests/quizzes within the allowed time frame will receive a 0% F grade for the work.

If a test or other work was assigned while the student was in school, the student must be prepared to take the test or turn in the work upon their return to school. If a student was absent when the test or assignment was made, the teacher will allow for a rescheduling of the test or work.

Please note: missing pre-determined deadlines for some on-going projects / research papers may result in a grade penalty.

Physical Education

Physical education is required by law and is offered to PCS elementary students two days per week along with 150 minutes per week as various times and to middle school students through semester-long electives. A student who has remedial or accelerated courses can be excluded from this requirement and will be asked to sign a PE Waiver.

Clothing for PE should be comfortable and tennis shoes are a must. Dresses, dress shoes, etc. are not appropriate clothing for PE days. A water bottle with a pop-up mouth piece is recommended for PE.

A doctor’s note must be provided, if a student is unable to participate in P.E. Students unable to participate in physical activity will still be required to attend the scheduled class with the rest of the classmates and will be given an alternative assignment to complete during the scheduled class time.

Promotion & Retention

It is the desire of the entire staff of PCS to help each child achieve their very best. PCS staff will do their best to keep parents well-informed of their child’s progress and give each student special attention and help where needed. Some students are developmentally behind or lack the necessary work ethic, and/or motivation to succeed. Success can be difficult to obtain but through dedication and encouragement, PCS will seek to make a difference. However, students unwilling to give the necessary effort may not be allowed to enroll the following year.

Retention of a student will only take place in 3rd grade if a student does not show mastery of

reading with the available options, or in the case of a middle school student who failed multiple classes and was not successful with credit recovery. All elementary students will be promoted to the next grade through meeting the academic standards or through the good cause process. This is a Manatee County Pupil Progression Policy which allows all elementary students to be promoted. The following may serve as reasons for this decision:

- Unable to pass exit skills
- Insufficient attendance
- Unsatisfactory Achievement
- Low FSA or STANFORD scores
- Student must be in tier 2 & 3 to be good caused

Teachers will communicate with administration and parents when a child is at risk to be retained or is not meeting benchmarks at grade level.

Middle School students must earn at least three points in all subjects (one of the points must be earned in the 2nd semester) in order to pass a subject for the year.

A's = 4 points. B's = 3 points. C's = 2 points. D's = 1 point. F's = 0 points.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards are issued every quarter. Elementary first and third quarter report cards are reviewed with the parent during a Parent/Teacher Conference. (See Conferences for more information.) Middle School report cards and progress reports will be posted to the FOCUS parent portal. Hard copies are available upon request.

Progress Reports are given at the midpoint of each quarter. Please take time to review these reports carefully with your child. If a question arises, please make an appointment with your child's teacher or contact the school for clarification. Requests for a conference with middle school teachers should be made to Mr. Durrance or Mr. Bustle.

Middle School parents are expected to follow/monitor their child's grades and progress through the FOCUS parent portal. Applications for a log-in may be obtained from the Registrar.

Standardized Testing

The State Standardized testing will be administered yearly to students in 3rd - 8th grade. The SAT10 will be administered to K-2 students. Standardized End of Course exams will be given to students in Algebra I and Civics.

It is very important that a student be present during the week of testing. Failure to achieve certain scores may result in a student being required to successfully complete summer course work / Florida Virtual School course work in the subject area in order to be recommended for promotion to the next grade level. Certain scores may also require that a student be enrolled in Intensive Reading / Math classes the following year.

Textbooks

Textbooks are issued to students at the beginning of the school year. Students are expected to take care of books that are issued to them. Parents/ legal guardians are liable for any loss or

damage of the instructional materials or for failure to return the materials. Students / Parents will be expected to pay for damages / replacement costs for books that are damaged or lost while issued to the student as provided by law. Normal wear and tear is acceptable. Normal wear and tear does not include writing in or on the materials, highlighting, or tearing out pages.

Parents must replace any lost instructional material by purchasing a duplicate copy in good condition, by making a payment of 100% of the original cost or, at the discretion of the school principal, by performing community service.

The principal may prohibit students from participating in extracurricular activities until the amount due is paid. This debt shall remain open, active and part of the student's record until paid.

Students will not be allowed to re-enroll at Palmetto Charter School for the following year, until all instructional material obligations are satisfied.

CONDUCT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Bullying Policy

Palmetto Charter School has opted to utilize the Manatee County School Board Bullying and Harassment policy where applicable. You can see the policy in its entirety here: [Anti-Bullying Policy](#). Or by visiting our website at www.palmettocharterschool.org

Discipline

Good classroom discipline is essential for effective learning to take place. Most children learn better in an orderly environment. Palmetto Charter School's philosophy is that everyone has the right and responsibility to achieve his or her educational best.

Our two most important priorities at Palmetto Charter School are to create a superior learning and social environment and to create a superior academic program.

We teach five particularly important skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control (CARES)."

Agreeing with these principles, each student must show respect for those in authority, including teachers, staff and administration. Students must also submit to the authority that has been placed over them. Students must respect and treat fellow students, teachers, staff and administration with the Golden Rule as their guide.

It is important that PCS provide an atmosphere conducive to the social growth and development of its students. Part of our education is learning to respect authority and to observe rules with a proper attitude. At Palmetto Charter School, the teachers, staff and administration have a responsibility to students and parents to build good citizenship within each student. Good citizens are trustworthy, obedient to laws, and considerate to others.

When we are loved, we are disciplined. Discipline is to instruct and to remind us of the line of authority. It is administered in love and compassion with forgiveness and restoration. The ultimate goal of the discipline process is to help students learn self-discipline.

The following plan for discipline is designed to bring uniformity and consistency in correcting misbehavior among the students of PCS. Each faculty member is responsible for discipline at all times, and in all parts of the campus. Teachers have full authority and responsibility to correct student behavior whenever such correction is necessary. This policy is intended to be fairly comprehensive but may not be all-inclusive. It is not intended to limit the school on making, interpreting or enforcing other rules.

Discipline Plan

All children can be kind, respectful, caring citizens who are accountable and responsible for their actions inside an academic learning environment. Children learn and practice social skills (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control) when:

- There is a safe, challenging, joyful learning environment
- Students feel respected, successful and share a sense of belonging
- All staff and families teach, model, and reinforce expected behaviors.
- These beliefs are the foundation for the Palmetto Charter School discipline plan.

At PCS, all employees will use the following strategies or interventions to help children develop self-control.

Proactive Strategy: Creating, Modeling, and Practicing the Rules (Proactive Discipline) Staff and students collaborate to develop classroom and school rules. The rules help us to take care of ourselves, each other, and the school environment. Throughout the day, we model, practice, and reinforce our rules. Teachers use encouraging and empowering language to guide students through daily usage of the rules and procedures.

Intervention 1: Reminding and Redirecting

Reminders and verbal redirections are the primary means of guiding students. We recognize that sometimes children will not follow the rules. When a rule is broken, staff will speak directly and respectfully to the student about the behavior. Some students may need more than one reminder, but it is generally more effective to limit the number of reminders.

Intervention 2: Logical Consequences

Logical consequences are ways to help fix problems that result from children's words and actions when they break or forget the rules. They are used when it takes more than a simple cue to stop a behavior or fix a problem. Logical consequences help children regain self-control, reflect on their mistakes, and make amends for them. Logical consequences should be respectful of the child, relevant to the situation, and reasonable for the teacher.

Logical consequences will include:

- "You break it, you fix it"—Children are expected to fix it if they break something or make a mess, whether intended or not.

- Loss of Privilege is the temporary removal of a privilege to help a child understand the connection between privileges and responsibilities.
- “Take a Break” in the classroom is a brief time away from the class activity to allow a student to gain self-control. Students generally return to the activity when they feel ready.

Logical consequences are not seen as punishments, but as additional forms of redirection. Afterward, the teacher checks in with the student to make sure he/she understands the reason for the logical consequence.

Intervention 3: “Take a Break” in a Buddy Teacher’s Room (Elementary)

If misbehavior continues during or right after a “break”, the students will “take a break” in a nearby classroom. Students will be escorted (visual or accompanied) to and from a nearby classroom.

Once the student is back in his/her classroom and resettled, the teacher and student will talk together about what caused the problem and how it can be prevented in the future.

Intervention 4: Accessing Additional Intervention

If a student is disruptive in a buddy teacher’s room or continues to be disruptive upon returning, the administration will be called. An adult will come to the classroom for assistance, with the goal of getting the student back on track in the classroom as soon as possible. This may involve escorting the student to the office. The purpose of the removal is to help the student regain self-control, problem solve, plan and rehearse how to re-enter the class and deal with similar situations in the future. Once the student is back in his/her classroom and resettled, the teacher and student will talk together about what caused the problem and how it can be prevented in the future.

It may be appropriate to skip earlier interventions and go directly to Intervention 4 for a serious or unsafe behavior issue.

When a child continues to violate classroom rules, even after the warnings have been issued, the teacher will call the parent either at home or work. The teacher will inform the parent of exactly what type of behavior the child is displaying and what the teacher has done to correct the problem. The telephone conference should be recorded on a Parent-Teacher Communication Record and turned in to the Registrar. The classroom teacher will also keep a copy for his/ her records. This step of calling the parents may also be repeated several times.

Except in cases of severe misbehavior, students will not to be referred to the office if the parents have not been previously called by the teacher and the phone conference documented on a Parent-Teacher Communication Record for the administration to refer to in dealing with the child. In cases where there is no telephone number listed either at work or home, a letter sent through the mail will be used to communicate with the parent. The letter will include a request for the parent to call the teacher at school. Like the conference sheet, a copy of the letter is to be filed with the Registrar.

Referral Process

If a child continues to violate the rules, a discipline referral process will be used.

These procedures are designed to provide early intervention into problem areas so as to prevent more long-term difficulties. It is also to be understood that varying degrees of maturity between, for example, Elementary and Middle School students will necessitate different expectations of behavior and consequences for misbehavior. This plan has been developed through the efforts and input of the PCS staff and is meant to be consistently implemented; however, situations may arise where the PCS administration may depart from these general procedures in order to accommodate an unusual situation.

Students that persist in disrupting the learning environment through poor behavior or lack of effort in the classroom will be placed on a behavior contract. Failure to abide by the terms of the contract will result in the student being asked to leave PCS.

Parent Notice

Parents will be notified if their child is continuing to misbehave in the classroom. The classroom teacher will discuss the misbehavior and actions to have the student correct the behavior. Logical consequences and /or strategies that are being utilized will be discussed with the parent. Typical violations at this level would include, but are not limited to:

Excessive talking or being out of seat without permission, having gum or candy, disrespect toward the teacher or another student, refusal to work, dress code violations, bothering another student or their possessions, acts of disobedience, being unprepared for class, refusal to work, etc.

The teacher will keep a record of parent contact and what was discussed in their room.

Parent Conference

Should inappropriate behavior continue, a parent conference will be scheduled to better discuss with the student, parent and an administrator to discuss what steps need to be taken in order for the student to correct the behavior. Failure by a parent to meet for a parent conference in a timely manner will be considered a violation of the Parent Contract and may result in eventual dismissal from the school.

Referral with Administrative Notice

This referral is issued if the student's inappropriate behavior continues following a parent conference, or for severe infractions such as:

Physical aggression, bullying, theft, profanity, sexual harassment, vandalism, willful disobedience, lying, misconduct at school extracurricular activities or special events, arguing with an employee or showing contempt for authority, disrespect to employees through body language / tone/ expression, cheating, entering another student's locker without permission, leaving the campus without permission, public displays of affections between students, intimidation of other students, threats, disrespect toward other students, possession of dangerous or disruptive items, bullying, etc. *sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to vulgar talk or writing, gestures, inappropriate touching, or any demeaning comments based upon another person's gender. Sexual harassment includes unwanted communication in the form of texting, posting, or responding on technology in or outside of school.*

Students receiving this referral will be sent to the office and his/her parents will be notified. A

copy of the referral will be placed in the student's file. Possible Administrative Discipline: Extended work detail, physical activity, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, detention, loss of privileges, denied participation in special classroom or school activity/event/fieldtrip, work/payment to fix broken/vandalized items. (NOTE: A refund will not be issued for pre-paid events/field trips that are revoked due to student misbehavior.)

Failure by the student to return the signed referral to the teacher/administrator may result in additional discipline, such as in-school suspension.

Due to the differing levels of freedoms and responsibilities involved with middle school students, a more detailed behavior plan outlining specific expectations and consequences has been developed.

Middle School Behavior Plan

The first goal of Palmetto Charter School is to create a superior learning and social environment. In order to accomplish this, we have adopted the following behavior plan which represents our expectations for students and progressive consequences for behavior not in keeping with those expectations.

Priority #1: Students and Teachers will work together to create a positive learning environment.

It is the expectation that all students within the classroom will be able to learn at their best and teachers will be able to instruct without unnecessary interruptions. To support this value, we have adopted a plan called **"Take a Break."**

The purpose of **"Take a Break."** is that students having difficulty with self-control will have an opportunity to regain self-control in a designated area of the classroom. Upon being told by the teacher to go to take a break, students will proceed to the designated area immediately and without further disruption of the classroom environment. While there, they will take steps to calm themselves and determine how their behavior when returning can support the learning environment of the class.

Should a student have to return to take a break during the same class period, they will be sent to the office for the remainder of the period. If the student does not utilize take a break in the proper manner, the student will be sent to the office (at the discretion of the teacher) for the remainder of the period.

Students that believe that they were improperly told to go to take a break will have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the teacher at an appropriate time. In no circumstances is the student allowed to argue with or otherwise dispute the matter of going to take a break at that time. Should that happen, the student will be sent to the office and will receive isolated lunch at the next lunch period. In addition, a parent will be contacted if student is sent to the office.

Students who are identified by the middle school teachers as consistently disrupting the classroom environment or do not use take a break in the right manner, will receive the following progressive consequences (the timing of the progressive consequence will vary depending on the frequency of the misbehavior):

1. The student will have a conference with one or more of their teachers to discuss how the behavior can change and a parent will be notified.
2. If the inappropriate behavior continues, there will be a meeting with the student and an Administrator. This will be followed up with a call to the parent. At that time a Parent Conference will be set up.
3. The Parent Conference will include the student, teachers and an Administrator. The purpose of all of these steps will be to provide the student with strategies to correct the problem behavior and to allow the teachers and parent(s) to work together to take appropriate steps to modify the student's environment so that it is more conducive to success.
4. If inappropriate behavior continues, the student will be given a one-day suspension from school.
5. If inappropriate behavior continues, the student will be given a three-day suspension from school.
6. If the behavior does not improve to an acceptable level, the student will be placed on a behavior contract which addresses the specific behavior(s) that must improve. Should the student not meet the terms of the contract they will be given a five-day suspension and after that they will be asked to leave the school and return to their home school within the local School District.

Cell phones and other electronic devices can both support and hinder the mission of the school. The school has adopted the following policies regarding these devices. (This does not apply to approved educational devices.)

1. Cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices are the sole responsibility of the student. The school takes no responsibility for their loss or safety.
2. Cell phones smart watches, and other electronic devices may be used outside of the school buildings before and after regular school hours.
3. During school hours, cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices must be kept in the student's locker. If such a device is not in the locker during school hours, the teacher may take it from the student. If a student forgets to put a device in their locker, they may voluntarily turn it over to the classroom teacher and then put it in their locker during the next period change.
4. Confiscated phones, and smart watches will be returned to the student at the end of the day on the first offense. Subsequent offenses will result in the phone being sent to the office and requiring a parent to pick up the phone.
5. Should it be determined that a student is intentionally in violation of this rule through either the circumstances of the phone being out of the locker (e.g. The student is using it during the school day including class changes) or through repeated violations of this rule, then the student will be given a referral and a half day in-school suspension with cleaning or writing requirements.
6. Failure by a student to turn over a cell phone or electronic device to a PCS staff member for inspection or confiscation will result in a referral and an automatic one-day suspension.
7. Students that use cell phones or other electronic devices at school or in some cases away from school to transmit or display inappropriate or unlawful images or words may be subject to suspension or arrest and referral to the Manatee County School Board for expulsion.

Priority #2: Students and Teachers will treat others in the school community with

kindness, honesty and respect so as to create a superior social environment at PCS.

Words are powerful. They can build up or they can tear down. It is the expectation of the PCS community that all of us use language that demonstrates kindness and respect. To support this value, we expect the following:

1. Students will use words that build up other students. There is no room for unkind, profane or slanderous words at PCS.
2. PCS Staff members will speak to students with respect and students will treat all adults on campus with respect.

It is understood that sometimes individuals make mistakes and will not always live up to the above expectations. Therefore, the following consequences will follow behavior and language that violates these standards:

1. If a student says an unkind or profane word by mistake and then quickly takes responsibility for the improper word(s) and sincerely apologizes, there will be no formal consequences beyond conferencing by a Teacher or Administrator.
2. If a PCS staff member speaks to a student or other staff member in a disrespectful manner, that person will apologize to the offended person before the end of the next school day.
3. If a student utters a profane word and does not meet the criteria described above, they will be given a formal warning by an Administrator and a parent will be contacted. Upon any subsequent violation of this rule, the student will be suspended from school for a day.
4. If a student says an unkind or slanderous word regarding another student or staff member and does not meet the criteria described above, that student will be expected to provide an apology of action designed to help fix the situation. The student issuing the apology of action will do so in consultation with the homeroom teacher. Subsequent incidents may result in a referral, parent conference, loss of privilege or even suspension.
5. Students that consistently use words that tear down, intimidate or slander others may rightly be regarded as acting as a bully. (This includes words communicated through social media such as texting, Facebook, Twitter, etc. – Parents are encouraged to print unacceptable communications where possible and bring them to the attention of the Administration.) If this is the case, a parent conference will be held to discuss the problem and possible solutions.
6. If inappropriate speech continues, the student will be given a one-day suspension from school.
7. If inappropriate speech continues, the student will be given a three-day suspension from school.
8. If the inappropriate speech does not improve to an acceptable level, the student will be placed on a behavior contract which addresses the specific behavior(s) that must improve. Should the student not meet the terms of the contract they will be given a five-day suspension and after that they will be asked to leave the school and return to their home school within the local school district.
9. Students must take responsibility for their actions. Lying is often done to deflect responsibility instead of owning up to it. Students who lie to a PCS staff member will be required to fulfill an apology of action upon a first offense. Failure to fulfill this requirement or for subsequent instances of lying, a referral will be issued, and the student will be suspended for 1 day.

10. In cases of cheating, the student will receive a "0" and will be given a referral. Subsequent instances of cheating will result in a one-day suspension.

At no time will a student speak in a disrespectful manner toward a PCS staff member. Further, at no time will a student intentionally disregard or defy a lawful directive issued by a PCS staff member. Violation of this rule will result in a referral and a suspension of 1-3 days depending on the gravity of the violation and any previous violations.

Priority #3: Students will experience a safe and secure environment when they come to school. In order to fulfill this goal, it is expected that students not physically hurt or intimidate others or harm their belongings through theft or other unsafe or intentional actions. In order to support this value, we expect the following:

As a general rule, students should avoid physical contact with other students, but as we all understand, crowded hallways and games in P.E. or Morning Meetings often result in physical contact. When incidental contact occurs in the hallway, lunchroom or other times during the day, the correct response by both individuals should be to say, "Excuse me." If a person falls or drops something as a result of physical contact, the correct response is to help the individual get up and help them pick up their belongings, followed by an apology or "excuse me." Such is the behavior that is expected in any work environment and will also be expected at PCS.

If a student is engaging in intentional and unwanted physical contact with another student or their belongings, it should be reported to a teacher or administrator and the following steps will be taken:

1. Students engaging in this behavior will have a conference with an Administrator and their parents will be notified.
2. If the behavior continues, there will be Parent Conference with the purpose of better understanding the nature of the problem and presenting possible remedies. As an outcome of the conference, the student may be required to issue an apology of action.
3. If the behavior continues, the student will be given a one-day suspension. In addition, if it is determined that the behavior has the result of intimidating or harassing an individual or group of students, then the offending student will be understood to be acting as a bully. In this case, a behavior contract will be issued, which addresses the specific behaviors that must cease.
4. If the behavior does not improve, the student will be given a three-day suspension.
5. If the inappropriate behavior does not improve to an acceptable level and the student does not meet the terms of the contract they will be given a five-day suspension and if the necessary improvement does not take place after that, they will be asked to leave the school and return to their home school within the local School District.
6. For students whose behavior in this area is not deemed bullying, other appropriate interventions will be utilized; but continual acts of engaging in unwanted touching of individuals or their belongings may also result in the steps above being implemented.

Incidents that involve intentional or potentially serious physical injury toward another person in the school community such as fighting, dangerous pranks, drugs or weapons will be dealt with in the following manner.

1. Students in a brief moment of anger who might engage in minor pushing/shoving, where no physical injury is involved and neither student is seen as an aggressor, the Principal, at his discretion, may implement conferencing and/or other steps to help resolve the situation, including parent contact. This initial step in conflict resolution will not apply where there previously has been such behavior between the two students or where a particular student has demonstrated a pattern of this kind of behavior.
2. If a student engages in behavior resulting in injury to another student or property (or had the likelihood of causing injury), and where it should have been understood that the behavior had the potential for causing injury or damage to property, the student must take responsibility for his/ her actions. Possible remedies include replacement of damaged property, an apology of action or possible suspension.
3. If a student steals or intentionally damages or vandalizes property not belonging to him/her, that student must make restitution. Failure to make restitution in a timely manner established by the administration and in consultation with the parent(s), will result in a suspension of up to ten days or until such restitution is made. Students engaging in a pattern of stealing, damaging or vandalizing property will be subject to a Behavior Contract and possible dismissal.
4. If a student intentionally hits another student with the intent of causing injury or pain, that student will be suspended from school for a minimum of 3 days. If the incident involves significant injury or extreme malice, the Principal reserves the right to increase the number of days of suspension and to involve law enforcement.
5. Students engaging in a fight will each be suspended from school for a minimum of five days. Where one or both of the individuals engage in violence to the degree that one or both of the students suffer significant injuries or engage in particularly violent aggression, the Principal reserves the right to increase the number of days of suspension and to involve law enforcement. If it is determined that one of the students in the fight did not instigate the conflict and their only actions were to protect themselves, the Principal reserves the right to take that into consideration in imposing any consequences.
6. Any student who intentionally hits a PCS staff member with the purpose of causing injury or pain will be suspended from school, law enforcement will be called and the student may be recommended for expulsion. These same consequences will result from verbal threats by the student toward a teacher, their family or their property.
7. Any student that brings a gun to school will be arrested and recommended for expulsion.
8. Any student that brings a dangerous item to school (e.g. knife, explosive device) that could be reasonably deemed to be a weapon, that student will be suspended and recommended for expulsion and possibly reported to law enforcement.
9. Any student that brings an illegal drug to school will be reported to law enforcement and recommended for expulsion.
10. All prescription and over the counter medications must be brought to the office and dispensed according to school policies. Students taking medications at school not in accordance with school policies will be subject to suspension. Students giving other students medicines, alcohol, narcotics or other items deemed potentially harmful will be subject to suspension and possible recommendation for expulsion.
11. Any student that pulls a fire alarm where no fire or emergency exists, or tampers with safety/

security equipment, that student will be suspended from school and may be recommended for expulsion.

Priority #4: Students and Teachers will work together to maintain a clean, attractive and safe school environment.

In order to fulfill this goal, students will take responsibility for their appearance and their surroundings by adhering to the PCS dress code and by helping to clean and maintain the spaces, in which they work, eat and travel. To support this value, we expect the following:

1. All members of the PCS community will take pride in their school and make sure that all trash is placed into garbage cans. Failure to do so may result in an assigned cleaning duty.
2. Students will help maintain a safe and clean classroom environment by keeping their area picked up and by not throwing items in the classroom. Violation of this rule will result in cleaning duty.
3. Students will keep their area clean during lunch and will diligently work as instructed during their days of Cafeteria clean-up. Failure to do so will result in extra cleaning duties.
4. Students will maintain an attractive and respectful appearance by following the school dress code. Specifically, boys will keep their shirts tucked in and wear a belt. Girls will make sure their pants are of the correct length and that their shoes are consistent with the dress code. Failure to abide by the dress code will result in removal from the general school community during lunch. (Teachers may issue a warning if they believe a shirt is untucked by mistake, but this is at their discretion and no warning is required before the above consequence can be issued.)
5. Students may bring small amounts of candy or other treats to be eaten at school as part of a packed lunch. Candy is not allowed at other times except as specified in section 4. Students are not allowed to have gum at school at any time; if it is found, it will be confiscated and not returned. Students caught chewing gum or eating candy at school in a manner not consistent with the rules above will be assigned cleaning duty as determined by the teacher or staff member. Consistent violation of this rule will result in a parent conference and other remedies, including in- school and out of school suspension.
6. Failure to fulfill an assigned cleaning duty will result in a referral and a half day in-school suspension for cleaning duty.

If a student demonstrates progress in one of the areas mentioned above for a significant amount of time (about 45 days), the Principal can work with the student and parents to modify the discipline plan and move the student off the Behavior Contract.

It is the hope of the teachers and staff of Palmetto Charter School to create an environment with clearly understood expectations to which everyone can aspire. Only in such an environment can all of us see our hopes and dreams come true.

Prohibited Items on Campus

In order to promote an atmosphere of learning, it is asked that the following items not be brought to school: *wheeled items such as:* scooters, roller blades, skateboards, Heely's, Ripsticks; *items that could be considered as gang-related or war items /toys such as:* items with gang symbolism or colors, water guns, toy guns; *electronic devices of any kind such as:* handheld games, CD or video players, iPod's, *lighted items such as:* laser pointers, flashlights; *attire such as:* sunglasses & hats (except for certain outdoor activities); *food items such as:*

gum, high energy/highly caffeinated drinks, or candy (except for class activities or part of a packed lunch); and lastly, drug paraphernalia, cigarettes, vaping devices or lighters.

This list is not all inclusive, and PCS reserves the right to confiscate any item that may become a distraction or hindrance to the learning environment.

Confiscated items will be held by the school for up to five days and must be picked up by the parent. After that period, PCS will dispose of the item.

Social Policies

It is essential that students avoid practices which cause the loss of sensitivity to the needs of the world and which have an adverse effect on the physical, mental, or well-being of students. Students are expected to maintain high standards of courtesy, kindness, morality, and honesty.

Some behaviors in or even outside the school environment may be harmful to the atmosphere that PCS seeks to maintain. These would include participation or advocacy of the use of illegal drugs (including illegal use of prescription drugs), underage alcohol use, smoking cigarettes, vaping, sexual activity (including pornography), sexting, profanity, gang activity, vandalism, violence including fighting, assault, and animal abuse, racially motivated taunting/ violence or demeaning speech, (cyber)bullying, maintaining a website which advocates or condones behavior or beliefs contrary to Code of Student Conduct, hacking or gaining unauthorized access to PCS computer systems, programs, databases, and/ or websites, or any involvement in any illegal activity. Participation, advocacy, or support (ie. website posting) of such behavior could result in disciplinary action, including expulsion.

If the web address & passwords are not given or if drug testing consent is not granted, the school reserves the right to dismiss the student. Furthermore, any male or female student that becomes involved in a relationship resulting in pregnancy while at PCS, PCS will work with parents/families and authorities to determine an appropriate placement for those involved. or male student who fathers a child will be expected to withdraw from PCS immediately or they may face dismissal from the school.

Students accused by proper authorities of illegal activity will be subject to possible dismissal from PCS. In such circumstance PCS will follow the Manatee County School Board's Student Code of Conduct.

For most of the PCS students, the discipline steps listed above are never used and the behavior expectations are easy to maintain because they have learned to control their behavior and act in a respectful manner toward others. The preceding steps, however, reflect the way discipline issues are normally handled at PCS. However, the Administration does retain the right to depart from the normal discipline procedures to address more unique situations.

Parents that disagree with a disciplinary action that has been taken by the Administration have the right to meet with the Principal and/or with the Assistant Principal to discuss the situation. If after meeting with a school Administrator, the parent still disagrees with the disciplinary action taken, they have the right to make a written appeal that will be submitted to the school's Board of Directors. All decisions made by the Board of Directors are final.

Student Cell Phones & Smart Watches

Due to the highly technological capabilities of cell phones and smart watches, their Internet access and ability to access information at inappropriate times, students are not permitted to use personal cell phones or smart watches on the PCS Campus during school hours. Cell phones are to remain turned off (not silenced) and unseen during school. Middle School students must keep cell phones and smart watches in their locker. Any cell phone that rings, receives a message notification, or is taken out during school hours will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. A second offense will result in confiscation of the phone by PCS Administration. Phones held by the administration will only be released to a parent/ legal guardian. Repeated violations shall be viewed as Intentional Disobedience and will result in further disciplinary actions.

Zero Tolerance Items

The following illegal / dangerous items on school grounds will not be tolerated, as well as the other items specifically listed in the *Manatee County School District's Code of Student Conduct*, and will result in serious disciplinary action or possible expulsion: firearms, knives, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, vaping items, stolen property, pepper spray, clubs, drugs*, stun guns, matches/lighters, or any other items used in a threatening way.

Evidence may be forwarded to law enforcement as deemed appropriate by school officials.

**Any legal prescription or over the counter medication prescribed to a student must be kept in the office to avoid possible misuse of the medication. (See our Illness and Medication Policy.)*

Drug involvement is specifically defined and prohibited under Florida and Federal Criminal Law. As a matter of policy, PCS will report to the authorities any incident suggesting drug involvement (i.e. consumption, procurement, provision, possession, or sale of) on the part of students, parents, visitors, or volunteers.

PCS reserves the rights to test athletes involved in our athletic programs.

DRESS CODE POLICIES

Tenet

PCS dress code standards make a visible statement about our school and about our character. Regardless of the changes we see in styles and fads from year to year, the need for modesty, neatness and a well-groomed appearance never change. While we are not trying to make a judgment call about every fad that comes along, we do have to pay attention to the groups which align themselves with certain dress styles and grooming fads.

We understand that dress code standards may be subjective, and that everyone has their own ideas. However, we must set definite standards that are clear to the students and can be enforced by the administration.

Parents visiting the school, volunteering at the school, and attending school functions are also asked to respect these standards in their own dress.

It is important that parents be in agreement with us in this area and encourage positive attitudes toward all school policy.

Principles for dress can be summed up with four main questions:

1. Is it modest?
2. Does it call undue attention to itself?
3. Does it identify with an element of society that is contrary to the school's vision / philosophy?
4. Is it appropriate for the age and occasion?

PCS requires dress that is neat and modest while also being suitable for active play.

Dress Code & Uniform Policy

Uniforms and other clothing must be worn properly as per their design with no alterations other than for a modest and proper fit. (Shirts should not be banded/ tied in knots for a tighter fit.) Our vendors provide white, grey, green, or black shirts. Shirts that are Uniform shirts must not contain writing / pictures of any kind other than the PCS name or logo. Only approved vendors are to be used to obtain shirts. Proper attire is required at all school functions.

AT NO TIME ARE STUDENTS PERMITTED TO WEAR THE FOLLOWING: any clothing that is too dirty or stained, too large / tight / small, has holes/ rips/ tears, denim, camouflage clothing (i.e., jackets, coats, sweatshirts), any clothing that reflects the gang culture or other negative culture.

SHIRTS

Students are required to wear the school uniform shirts that are available for purchase through local vendors. All boys and elementary girls are required to have shirts tucked in, with black or brown belts worn and visible for bottoms with belt loops. Kindergarten and First grade students are not required to wear a belt, but they will begin being taught the policy of tucking their shirts in. Kindergarten and First Grade are also allowed to wear elastic pant/shorts. Students may also wear solid green, gray, or black colored, long sleeve under their uniform shirt if they are cold in their classrooms.

At no time are shirts with no sleeves and/or spaghetti straps (less than 2 inches wide), shirts that bear the mid-drift when arms are raised, shirts that are extremely long allowed to be worn.

BOTTOMS

Bottoms, whether they are pants, shorts, skorts, scooters, or jumpers they must fit appropriately at the waist and must be solid navy blue or khaki. Boys and girls may wear shorts to school if they are of proper length. (Whether standing or moving with arms relaxed at side, the hem of shorts - also jumpers/skirts/skorts/scooters for girls - is not to be above fingertip length.). Solid white undershirts (with no writing) may be worn under uniform shirts.

At no time are board shorts, fleece warm-up/ pants, yoga pants, athletic pants or shorts, cargo

pants, sweat pants, skin- hugging or form-fitting pants that reveals body shape, (ie. made of spandex or t-shirt material), pants that are baggy and/or fall below the hips, pants that drag on the ground allowed to be worn. (This includes, Jeans day.)

JACKETS/SWEATERS

Only jackets, sweaters, or sweatshirts bearing the Palmetto Charter School logo are permitted to be worn while inside the hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, or other PCS buildings. When the temperature is 50 degrees or colder in the morning, the normal jacket policy will be suspended. Students may wear other heavier, school appropriate jackets (see below) on those days. Students may also wear solid green, gray, or black colored, long sleeve undershirts on those days.

ACCESSORIES

Modest hair accessories are allowed. Hairbands with ears, horns, or excessive adornment will not be allowed. (The PCS rhinestone headbands are allowed.) Modest jewelry is allowed. Jeweled clothing, including gloves, belts or socks, are not allowed. Belt buckles are to be a standard size which typically comes with the belt. Hats and sunglasses (except for special outdoor activities. Or a doctor's note) during the school day are not to be worn.

SHOES & SOCKS

Acceptable shoes include tennis shoes or other lace-up shoes that are appropriate for PE and recess. On days where middle school students do not have PE, dress shoes (**closed toe**) are allowable. Socks should be solid color of white, navy blue, or black.

At no time are boots, Skele-toes/ FiveFinger or other "barefoot"-style shoes, Heely's or shoes with rollers on the bottoms, cleats, sandals, flip-flops, crocs are to be worn.

HAIR/BODY

Palmetto Charter School seeks to train students for success in the professional world as it relates to their appearance. Extreme hair styles, including mohawks / faux-hawks, words/ designs shaved into head, and partial shaving of the head are not appropriate for PCS students. A student's hair color should be of a natural hair color. Hair should be well-groomed, clean and neat. Extremely long hair that covers the face/ eyes is not acceptable. Boys who have hair styles that require a rubber band holder will not be allowed. At no time are students to display feathers, tattoos (including temporary tattoos, body markings with pens, markers, white out, etc.), black/ dark nail polish, or body piercings (other than modest ear piercings for girls). Boys must be clean-shaven.

Field Trips & Special School Activities

Palmetto Charter School uniforms will be worn on all field trips unless specified otherwise (regardless of day) and on other special days that will be announced in advance (ie., Walk-A-Thon, spirit day, field day, etc.).

Unless otherwise notified, the PCS dress code is expected to be followed for PCS activities/ events that may be held off campus or during non-school hours. The administration of Palmetto Charter School will maintain and enforce the dress code both at school and school-related functions.

Although student spectators at school events are not required to wear school uniforms, they

must wear clothing which conforms to the school dress regulations (ie. proper length/ fit, not advertising drug or gang culture, etc.)

During Spirit Weeks, and Dollar Jeans Days, dress code policies may be amended for the day. Students who wish to participate in Dollar Jeans Days may donate \$1 or more for the designated cause to wear jeans instead of uniform bottoms. All other dress code rules apply, unless otherwise publicized. Jeans worn on these days must not be skin-tight or rolled up.

Violations

Dress code violations will result in the student being sent to the office with a Dress Code Violation Form. PCS will contact the parent to bring appropriate clothes. Certain privileges may be revoked for that day for violations. Repeated dress code violations by a student will be viewed as Intentional Disobedience will result in appropriate disciplinary actions by the administration for such.

Specific issues not covered within this policy are subject to the Administration's approval. It is expected that all clothing is neat and clean in appearance. Offensive, distracting and non-modest appearance will not be allowed and is under the discretion of the faculty.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Admitting Policy

Palmetto Charter School provides a rigorous academic program utilizing a traditional classroom environment. Palmetto Charter School is a "Tuition Free" public charter school. Parents wishing to enroll their students will need to complete an "Intent to Register Form". A lottery drawing will be held of those completing the "Intent to Register Form" in order to determine placement in classrooms (when space is available) and /or position on a waiting list. Students with special needs will be reviewed by the Manatee County School District on a case by case basis with the understanding that we may not be able to provide the best program for a child with acute special needs.

Siblings, children of active military personal, staff, and board member children may be given preferential consideration for enrollment. Parents who believe that they have a hardship may petition the PCS board for review.

Enrollment

All current and incoming students must fill out a PCS Registration Packet. Students transferring from another school will need to withdraw from that school and will need to complete a PCS Record Release Form to obtain their former school records. Registrations found to be incomplete, lacking pertinent health, academic, discipline or custodial information concerning the child, and/or dishonest or omitted information, will be subject to dismissal from PCS. A certified copy of a Birth Certificate for each student and / or documentation that shows proof of legal guardianship is required for enrollment. In addition, a certified copy of court orders showing custody, visitation, etc., if applicable, must be provided to PCS in order to enroll or withdraw a student.

Students who will be five years old on or before September 1st may enroll in Kindergarten in August of the same year. For Kindergarten and children entering a Florida school for the first time, Florida laws (Statutes 232.0315 and 232.032) require that students have the following documentation on file in their school health records:

- A physical exam form HRS-H 3040 (March 91) must be completed and signed by a licensed physician, (The exam must be within the 12 months prior to the child enrolling in a Florida school.)
- A certificate of immunization with all immunization dates (month, day, year) or proof of all immunizations on a DH 680 or 681 form. The fifth dose of DTP, fourth dose of OPV, and the second dose of MMR should be given after the fourth birthday, preferably at or just before the time of entry into Kindergarten.
- Kindergarten entrance requires proof of the Varicella vaccine or record of the Chicken Pox.
- A series of three shots of Hepatitis B are required before 7th grade.

All Kindergarten through 12th grade students will have documented history of a second dose of the measles vaccine.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Palmetto Charter School admits students of any race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school administered programs.

GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Attendance & Absence Policy

Regular school attendance is required by law and is necessary for good scholarship. Regular and punctual attendance at PCS is expected and required. Irregular attendance is a major cause for poor academic work, and continual tardiness is disruptive to the normal flow of school activities. Absences from school should be kept to a minimum since they do cause a considerable amount of extra work for both teachers and students. With this in mind, regular and punctual attendance is expected and required at PCS.

Students in attendance are expected to participate fully in classroom activities. No student will be excused from class activities without a written note from the parent or physician. Students too sick or sleepy to participate will be sent home.

Students who are not in attendance during the school day will not be allowed to participate in after school or extra-curricular activities on that day.

The school year will consist of 176-180 days. Florida State Law 232.10 states that a written excuse signed by a parent must be submitted for each absence and the specific reason for the

absence must be stated before the absence can be excused. Students absent more than ten (10) days in a semester, without extenuating circumstances, may not be promoted.

Morning attendance will be recorded for elementary students; Period attendance will be recorded in middle school classrooms.

As much as possible, it is urged that appointments with a dentist or a doctor be made during non-school hours or days.

Excused Absences

The following reasons are considered valid excuses for school absences. Work must be made up in these cases with no grade penalty. Teachers will give make-up tests and help with assignments only when absences are excused.

- Illness or injury of the student
- Death or emergency in the immediate family
- Documented medical appointment
- Educational, family, and religious-based trips when approved in advance. Assignments equal to the number of days for the trip must be gathered in advance, completed and turned in the first day of return from the approved trip
- Religious instruction (requires a note in advance and is not counted against perfect attendance)
- Religious holiday
- Subpoena or forced absence by law enforcement agency
- An occurrence of head lice, with a maximum of two excused days
- In advance, special excusal may be granted by the Principal for extenuating circumstances when:
 1. The student has had few absences.
 2. The student has satisfactory grades and has kept up with current work.
 3. Missed work is submitted to the teacher the day of return to school.

Unexcused Absences

The following reasons are considered unexcused for school absences. Students may receive failing grades for all assignments and tests missed during unexcused absences.

- Neglecting to pre-arrange a foreseeable absence
- All non-emergency absences
- Absences for the sake of a parent or student (ie. Skipping school, parents allowing older students to remain home to baby-sit, sleeping in after a late return from a school event the night prior)

If a student is absent, a parent (not the student) is requested to notify the school office by 9:00am on the day of the absence. Students who have been absent must bring a note signed

by a parent/ guardian on the day of their return to school, stating the date and reason for the absence. All notes received for absences will be placed in the student's file.

Students who miss school to participate in school activities will not be counted as absent.

Excessive Absences

If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to be excused from attendance. Excessive absences will lead to a parent conference, referral to social work services, referral to Truancy Court, and the involvement of the State Attorney.

By State law, any student missing more than ten (10) days per semester will find his/her credits for the semester's work in jeopardy.

Upon the accrual of fifteen absences; (seven missed classes equals one absence) students may not be allowed to return to Palmetto Charter School the following year. In the event of prolonged hospital stay or other extreme medical issues, the Principal retains the right to waive the requirement. All other extenuating circumstances must come before the PCS Board at the May Board Meeting.

If a student is absent more than three days due to illness or injury, a note from a physician is required. If there are reasons why a student should be absent from any class more than 20 days during the year, the parents must receive special approval from the administration. For lengthy absences, parents may have to provide additional tutoring for the student to keep up with his/ her studies.

Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and will have a negative impact on student achievement. Students should arrive at school on time so that they will not miss instruction as teachers begin their lessons promptly.

Students are considered tardy, if they are not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. It must be noted that tardies are not classified as "excused" or "unexcused". Realizing there may be an occasion that a tardy will result from an unforeseen circumstance, it is in the student's best interest to make a habit of arriving on time.

Students who arrive to school tardy must be signed-in in the office by a parent and will receive a pass to class. Teachers will notify the office if a student arrives tardy to the classroom without a pass.

When a student reaches eight (8) tardies, parents will be required to meet with the Administration for a conference.

Twenty (20) or more tardies in a school year will result in the student not being allowed to re-enroll at Palmetto Charter School for the following year.

As much as possible, it is urged that appointments with a dentist or a doctor be made during non-school hours or days.

Calendar

Palmetto Charter School's annual calendar will typically coincide with the Manatee County School District. PCS does not participate in the early release Wednesdays. A calendar of activities is maintained online at www.palmettocharterschool.org and can be accessed through the website or the school office.

Change of Address

A change of address, phone number, change of employment, emergency contact phone numbers or e-mail should be reported immediately to the school office. A prompt note, e-mail or phone call will help PCS maintain correct information and provide effective communication, especially in case of an emergency.

Gifts & Memorials

Financial gifts or donations of new items that would benefit the school are tax deductible. Parents or friends who would like to donate books, videos, classroom equipment, etc. in memory of a loved one, or make a financial donation should speak to someone in administration prior to making the donation. A tax-deductible receipt will be issued upon request.

Lost & Found

Lost articles will be collected and held in the office for a period of time. All unclaimed items will be taken to a local Salvation Army or Goodwill at the end of each quarter.

Messages & Telephone Use

Parents should not rely on the school office to arrange transportation or to be the message courier between parents and students. Arrangements for transportation should be made before the school day begins. Students may use the school telephone in the office *only in case of an important need*, with a permission slip from their classroom teacher. Requests of this nature must be very limited.

Teacher Qualifications

The academic teachers at PCS have a minimum of a four-year college degree and are certified or are eligible for certification by the State of Florida Department of Education. PCS teachers are qualified to teach in other schools but feel called to teach in a charter school. Students who adequately fulfill the standard requirements of PCS will be fully prepared to enter any school according to state standards.

HOME AND SCHOOL COOPERATION

Communication

Palmetto Charter School will communicate with parents primarily via e-mail. Telephone communication via "One Call Now" will notify parents of school wide news. Occasionally, office / PTO information will be sent home in elementary Monday folders and student planners. If a family does not have access to the internet, parents may request printed copies of this information be sent home.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT PARENTS / LEGAL GUARDIANS UPDATE CHANGES TO E-MAIL

ADDRESS(es) WITH THE OFFICE.

Please make sure that Palmetto Charter School is added to the e-mail “safe senders” list. Parents and students are encouraged to visit the PCS website regularly at www.palmettocharterschool.org for updated information regarding school activities.

Conferences – Parent/Teacher

Elementary teachers will schedule conferences with parents during the first and third quarters of the school year. First and third quarter elementary Report Cards will be distributed during these conferences. Student progress exit skills and other information will be reviewed at this time.

If a parent desires an additional conference at any time during the year, they may contact the teacher to schedule a conference. In addition, classroom teachers may occasionally contact parents to request a conference if they have concerns related to a student’s progress / behavior. Specials teachers should be contacted regarding questions related to specials class grades / conduct marks.

Middle School Parent/Teacher conferences are held on an “as needed / requested” basis. Middle School conferences may be scheduled by calling the school office.

Home Life

The home and the school together, as a unit, serve a common purpose. Parents and teachers must join hands so that this work can be done efficiently and effectively.

Having said that, it is very important that Palmetto Charter School is able to count on parents to support the values that are taught at PCS. The activities and lessons of the weekend are usually the topic of conversation at school on Monday mornings. If students are involved in wholesome activities at home, this helps create a positive atmosphere at our school.

The opposite is also true. Wrong behavior at home can poison the environment at PCS. When improper behavior is condoned at home, it becomes more difficult to create the kind of atmosphere PCS desires for its students. While no student is perfect, it is important that parents and teachers are on the same side when it comes to some of the issues facing children.

With this in mind, policies have been developed for behavior in the home that should be agreed upon.

- Use of illegal drugs will not be condoned.
- Underage drinking will not be condoned.
- Underage use of tobacco will not be condoned.
- PCS students should not watch “R” rated movies or play “Mature” video games.
- PCS students should not be exposed to sexually explicit material.
- PCS students should not be involved in sexual activity.

The faculty and staff of PCS cannot take responsibility for the behavior of students outside of school. However, where this behavior affects the climate of the school, PCS must take a stand. Palmetto Charter School understands that children make mistakes and participate in activities that would warrant disapproval. For the expectations listed above, PCS is simply asking that parents cooperate in expressing that certain behaviors are inappropriate.

Parental Support

PCS and parents together should be dedicated to the important work of preparing children to be strong citizens and of strong character. Especially in matters of discipline, there may be times when parents or students will have questions about a particular incident or decision. When this occurs, please keep the following in mind:

- Until you have heard both sides of the story, please give staff the benefit of the doubt.
- Realize that your child's reporting of the information is from a child's perspective.
- Help PCS enforce to the child that there are reasons for all rules and that they are enforced without favor.
- Never criticize or complain about the school or staff in front of the child or other parents including via Facebook, chat rooms etc.
- Support the administration and call the school for all the facts.

Appeal Process

Parents are encouraged to bring any of their concerns to the teacher promptly. Keeping a grievance will only cause bad feelings and friction between the parent and school. Grievances should be brought to the right person. Differences should first be discussed with the specific individual involved in an attempt to resolve matters. Discussion with anyone else will cause a negative undercurrent and will not solve the problem. In the event that an issue has not been resolved after attempts to work it out with the individual involved, the matter may be brought to PCS Administration for review.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Palmetto Charter School has an active PTO, which is open to all parents, guardians and grandparents. The PTO works with the administration on special school projects and making recommendations for school policies.

Partner in Education Volunteer Policy

Parents play a vital role in the educational process for students. Seeing parents and family members involved in the school sends a strong message to children that school is an important place.

Parents with students attending Palmetto Charter School have entered into a contract where they are responsible to perform twenty (20) hours of volunteer time per family each year. The last due date to complete the volunteer hours in order for your child to be enrolled the following year will be the end of the second week in May. (Note: Parents with more than one child are not required to double their time.)

Parents are given credit for volunteer time any time they take time out of their day to show their child that their school is important to them also. Children need this parental involvement in order to thrive. Parents may perform some of their time at home and persons important to the child, other than parents, may also volunteer toward this time.

Volunteer Hours

Enrolling parents/guardians will still be required to complete twenty hours during the school year (hours completed during the summer before can count toward the upcoming school-year). Anyone 18 or over that plays an important role in the student's life can complete volunteer hours for the student under the enrolling parent's name. Here are some important clarifications:

At least ten of the hours must include direct service to the school in one of these categories:

- a. Assisting a teacher at school (verification form must be completed)
- b. Correctly completing teacher assigned take-home tasks in a timely manner (verification form must be completed)
- c. Helping to clean the school facilities
- d. Helping to supervise during student drop-off 7:45-8:30 am
- e. Helping to keep our grounds and flower beds looking nice
- f. Helping with any PTO function, including meetings
- g. Assisting with supervision and clean-up in the Cafeteria and playground during breakfast or lunch
- h. Assisting with special projects as directed by the Principal or Assistant Principal
- i. Standardized testing preparation or proctoring
- j. Assisting with coaching or other after-school clubs
- k. Assisting with fundraisers
- l. Bringing food, snacks, or drinks for the school staff community (1 hour each time)

The remaining ten hours can be earned in any of the ways above (section 1) or in the following ways:

- a. Participating in field trips
- b. Attending PCS athletic events (one hour per game, per person)
- c. Attending school wide events such as recognition ceremonies, school musical performances, Dinner Auctions, Field Day, Celebration Success
- d. Eating lunch with your student at school
- e. Donations to class baskets (up to one hour will be given for the time taken to buy and bring in donated items)

- f. Attending PCS Board Meetings
- g. Attending Open Houses, Parent Conferences, IEP Meetings or other scheduled events on campus

Additional policies and procedures:

- a. Volunteer hours cannot be transferred (given) from one log-in sheet to another
- b. Volunteer hours must be logged using the on-line software that we use in a timely manner.

(Note: In accordance with the Jessica Lunsford Act, everyone visiting campus must sign in at the office and receive an official photo ID in order to be on school grounds. In addition, all volunteers going on field trips must also have been screened through the raptor system. Forms are available in the office.)

Please note: Palmetto Charter School strictly enforces the volunteer time requirement. In accordance with the parent contract you signed, failure to complete your obligation will result in the student not being allowed to re-enroll for the following year. Our parental involvement is part of what makes our school special. So, please start early on your volunteer time.

Press Release

Parents, students, faculty or staff members should not release any information concerning Palmetto Charter School or its students to members of the press, radio, or television stations without special authorization from the administration.

Room Parents

The Palmetto Charter School PTO helps coordinate room parents for each classroom at the beginning of the school year. Parents who would like to volunteer as a room parent should contact their child’s teacher or a PTO officer for more information.

Parents must bring their license to be scanned and sign in and out with the office each time they work in the classroom. Volunteering siblings must be 18 years of age and/or approved by administration. Parents must notify administration if a volunteer will be volunteering on their behalf and must be approved by administration.

As a matter of privacy, room parents should not discuss or comment on a student’s behavior, work habits, and/ or academic achievement that they may observe while assisting in the classroom with other parents, teachers or students. Any concerns for a student should be brought to the attention of the child’s classroom teacher privately.

The room parent may be asked to assist in a variety of ways. For example:

- **Assisting** - assist the teacher in the classroom by helping to organize Monday folders, checking homework papers, assist with reading groups, making copies, helping with bulletin boards, etc.
- **Planning activities** - which includes delegating responsibilities to other parents with children in the classroom
- **Communication** - calling parents of the students to relay important information

- **Supervising** - providing adult control in various activities
- **Information center** - serving as a person any parent in the room could call when planning special events for the class and/or the teacher
- **Chaperoning**- providing transportation or serving as a chaperon on a field trip
- **Provisions** - bringing or arranging to have brought, to the classroom, items needed for an activity. This could include art supplies food and/or drink.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Arrival & Dismissal

Elementary – Students are to arrive no earlier than 7:45 a.m. Free breakfast is available in the cafeteria from 7:45-8:10. Students will be permitted to enter the building at 8:15 a.m. Classroom doors will open at 8:15 a.m. and classes will begin at 8:30. Students arriving to the classroom after the 8:30 a.m. bell will be marked tardy. Kindergarten – 4th Grade Dismissal time is 2:45 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. 5th grade students are dismissed at 3:00. Typically, special Early Out days on the calendar will hold dismissal from 12:30-12:45.

Middle School – Students are to arrive no earlier than 7:45 a.m. Free breakfast is available in the cafeteria from 7:45-8:10. Students will be permitted to enter the building at 8:00 a.m. Classroom doors will be open at 8:00 a.m., with classes beginning at 8:15 a.m. Any student not seated in their classroom by the 8:15 a.m. bell will be marked tardy. Dismissal time is 3:00 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. Special Early out days on the calendar will hold dismissal earlier in the day.

Parents should make every effort to have their child arrive and leave within these limits. Only students with written permission from the Administration are permitted to waiver from these times.

Because supervision of students is not provided prior to the established arrival times, students who arrive earlier should be seated, and remain on the steps in front of the office until 7:45. Habitually early drop offs may result in dismissal from PCS.

Because supervision of students is not provided after to the established dismissal time, elementary students who are not picked up promptly by 3:00 p.m. will be taken to the office. Parents who are repeatedly late will be in violation of the Parent Contract and could be cause for dismissal from the school. PCS will contact the Palmetto Police Department to take students who are not picked up by 4:00pm. Habitually late pick up will result in dismissal from Palmetto Charter School.

Parents who pick up both elementary and middle school students should arrive at dismissal just before the end of the elementary dismissal time.

All students should be dropped off and picked up in the designated car loop. For safety reasons, students are not permitted to be dropped off or picked up in the staff parking area along the side of the Kids on the Rock Daycare/Preschool building, behind the PCS buildings.

For students attending breakfast, parents may also drop off students in the Church on the Rock parking area in front of the cafeteria. Elementary students under third grade should be escorted to the school by a parent or responsible middle school sibling from this area.

After the first few weeks of school, student safety patrols will be able to assist students being dropped off in the loop.

Parents wishing to walk their student to the classroom may park in the designated area and escort their child through the circle area. Parents may walk in and drop the student off at the door. The students are responsible for the procedures of unpacking and preparing for their day and it is recommended that parents allow them to be successful independently. To start the day on a positive note, the teachers meet and greet each student at the door. We ask that parents do not interrupt this important event. Teachers will not be able to conference with parents that drop off their students.

Parents waiting to pick up their student in the circle should not arrive at the dismissal area before 2:45 and should not block the path of the circle by parking along the side of the road, but rather should continue to circle. Parents arriving early must park in the COTR lot until the time their child is dismissed. Parents should not park in the designated handicap or "timed" spots unless they are complying with the spot restrictions.

Only those authorized to pick up students are allowed to do so. If someone other than the regular pick up person is coming to pick up your child, they must be on the approved list in your child's file and must present a Driver's license in order to pick up your child.

If parents are changing their child's after school plans, it is mandatory that they contact the office before 2:00 (same day) If known in advance, please provide a note in writing for the student's teacher. Do not call the teacher and leave a message, as they may not receive it before dismissal. We need your help to make sure that everyone gets home safely, which is our first priority!

Dismissal cards (car tags) to be placed in a vehicle's window will be issued to families at the beginning of the year. They should remain visible in your car for at least the first month of school. The cards will help staff learn to identify family vehicles and allow students to be ready when their vehicle has arrived to the pick-up area. If you are participating in a carpool, please request and additional car tag for your child.

Parents should not stop and get out of their vehicle in the pickup circle. If your child needs assistance with a seat belt or car seat, please pull forward to the first available parking space.

If an employee has a question of whether or not someone is authorized to pick up a student, the employee will ask the person to park and go to the office to verify their authorization to pick up the child. They will have to provide a Driver's License. This requirement will also apply to any student who is picked up during the school day. Only those authorized by the student registration form, or clearly authorized by the parent may remove a student from the school. PCS has no legal right to withhold a student from a legal parent unless court-ordered restraint documents have been placed on file with the school.

PCS does not actively supervise the departure of 5th grade or middle school students. Parents should notify the school of any possible concerns regarding the safe departure and travel of their 5th grade or middle school student. Where possible, PCS will intervene to aid in the safe travel of students from school to home.

Please be patient during the first few weeks as PCS staff learns student names and the adults/cars that go with each student. Please understand that PCS administration may need to make some adjustments after the year begins.

Bus Safety

Students using PCS buses must adhere to the following rules:

- Stay seated with back against the seat back while the bus is in motion
- Keep arms and heads inside the bus at all times
- Do not throw anything out of a bus window
- Obey the bus driver
- Eating or drinking on the bus is not allowed
- Take all belongings when leaving the bus
- Exit in an orderly and respectful fashion

Riding the bus is a privilege for students. The bus is an extension of PCS and students will be held accountable for the adherence of PCS CARES and PCS expectations while on the bus. Students who choose to disobey the rules may be suspended from using the bus for a time or lose the privilege of using bus transportation altogether. Further guidelines for students using bus transportation can be found in the Manatee County School District's *Code of Student Conduct*. The bus company that provides transportation services may have additional regulations for the bus riders to follow.

Child Protective Services

It is the policy of PCS to cooperate with any Child Protection Specialist during any investigation that might involve a PCS student. These Specialists are agents of the Sheriff's Department and Florida State law gives these Specialists a broad range of authority to interview students with or without parental permission or notification. During any child interview, PCS will attempt to have an administrative or faculty member present where this is agreeable to the Child Protection Specialist. When granted permission by CPS to do so, we will notify the parent / guardian that a representative was here and that they interviewed the child.

Registered Sex Offenders are prohibited from being on the Palmetto Charter School Campus or other locations during times Palmetto Charter School activities are being held. This includes, but is not limited to, drop-off / pick-up attending school assemblies & programs, sporting events, parent conferences, field trips, PTO-sponsored events, etc.

Searches

By entering the PCS campus, a student is subject to search. Lockers, desks, and other school storage facilities are school property, and remain under the control, custody and supervision of the school even when they are assigned to individual students. Students have no expectation of privacy in school storage facilities or for any items placed in such facilities. School officials have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and without notice or consent.

School officials may also search students' wallets, purses, backpacks, pockets, or other property when they have reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law, school policies, and/or school rules.

Cameras- PCS utilizes cameras inside and outside school facilities to enhance school safety and discipline. Classroom cameras record video and sound.

Severe Weather & Emergency Procedures

To prepare students for possible scenarios, all students will participate in safety drills throughout the year.

Weather

When weather or emergency conditions exist that would affect the safety of students, parents and/ or teachers, either at school or in route to school, PCS will cancel classes. To determine if school will be in session, please refer to the local television/radio stations and follow the attendance recommendation for Manatee County Public Schools. If there is no school for Manatee County schools, then PCS will not conduct classes. If students are already at school, PCS staff will contact parents to pick up their child, if necessary. **For this reason, it is essential that parents keep school records current with any telephone number, e-mail, job or resident changes, etc.**

Lockdown

When there may be the possibility of a threat to the safety of PCS students or staff, PCS administration or local authorities may issue a Lockdown of school facilities. When a Lockdown has been issued, any students/ staff who are outside will immediately be brought into a secure building, and students who are inside will be secured in the classroom. All classrooms and buildings on campus will be secured by PCS teachers / staff. This will include the PCS administration building. Until the Lockdown is cleared, no one will be permitted to enter or exit any PCS facility for any reason. For personal safety, and the safety of PCS students and staff, parents should not come to the school campus or call the office with questions until the Lockdown has been cleared. Lockdown and Active Shooter drills will be practiced monthly.

Parents should note that regular dismissal procedures may be altered.

In cases where a dangerous person is known to be at large within the community but is not considered to be an imminent threat to Palmetto Charter School students, the administration may elect to issue a "Soft Lockdown". Students moving between buildings will be under the supervision of two adults where possible, recess and PE will be held indoors, and all facilities will be locked.

Fire

Fire drills are held at various times throughout the school year. When the alarm sounds,

students are expected to evacuate the building quickly, orderly, and quietly, following the proper exit route to the designated area as posted in the classroom. During drills, as well as emergencies, PCS staff will ensure that all students are a safe distance from the building and see that they remain quiet and follow directions. Teachers and students will remain in their designated areas until PCS administration instructs them to return to the building or directs them to an alternate location. Fire drills will be practiced monthly.

Transportation & Parking

Parents are expected to pick up their children within 15 minutes after the end of classes for the day. If there is a change in your regular transportation routine, parents must notify the school before 2:00pm in order to give personnel ample time to contact teachers. If you email the change and do not receive a confirmation please do not assume that the change has been communicated.

It is requested that parents drop off / pick up students without parking when possible due to the shortage of parking spaces in front of the school. Parents should park properly in designated spaces or continue circling the car loop in front of the school until their child's class is in the dismissal area. **At no time is parking permitted along the sides or within the car loop!** Parents who are in the car loop should proceed cautiously and slowly, free from distractions such as cell phones, loud music, etc.

Because supervision of students is not provided after the established dismissal time, elementary students who are not picked up promptly by 3:00 p.m. will be taken to the office. PCS will contact the Palmetto Police Department to take students who are not picked up by 4:00. Habitually late pick up will be considered a violation of the Parent Contract and may result in not allowing the student to be enrolled at PCS the following school year.

Parents are not permitted to drop off or pick up students in the bus loop that goes along the side of the Kids on the Rock Daycare / teacher parking area behind the school. Parents who need to park their vehicles because they have school business to attend to during morning arrival and/or afternoon dismissal should use the spaces provided in the front of the school, rather than the designated staff spaces along the side of the Kids on the Rock Daycare/ Preschool building behind the PCS buildings. Additional parking is available in front of the Church on the Rock Sanctuary.

While every effort is made by PCS to communicate with after-school programs regarding dismissal times and differences of days that PCS is in session, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child's after-care program is aware of differences between the PCS calendar and the public school calendar, so that their child is picked up at the proper time and on the proper days. In addition, parents should provide the PCS office with the director's name and a reachable contact number for their child's after-care program.

Parents who are going as chaperons on a school trip should park their cars in front of the Church on the Rock Sanctuary, so as to not tie up the limited parking spaces in front of the school during arrival and dismissal times.

Palmetto Charter School / Church on the Rock and their staff members are not liable for damage / theft to vehicles that are parked in its parking lots, or damage/ injury/ death that is

caused by other drivers who do not adhere to the policies set forth in this document.

Video Surveillance

The school /district has installed and will utilize video surveillance systems on school property, including school buses.

Any activities that are recorded on the video cameras may be used for school discipline or for law enforcement purposes. Federal and state law governs disclosure and use of video material, and such material could become part of a student's record. Cameras in classroom record video and audio.

Visitors

Visitors are welcome and must sign-in at the school office to obtain a visitor badge to wear while on campus. A valid Driver's License or government-issued ID will be required for first-time visitors / parents to obtain a visitor badge. Visitors are expected to sign out in the office before leaving the campus. Visitors will not be permitted during test weeks.

Parental Visits & Lunchroom Visits

Parents are always welcome to visit our school. However, PCS requires everyone to sign in at the school office to obtain a visitor badge. Parents are not allowed to make unscheduled visits to the classroom during school hours as this disrupts the classroom environment. Parents that bring items their child may have forgotten at home (homework, backpack, etc.) should deliver them to the office, not the classroom.

If a parent is dropping off lunch for a student, they are to bring it to the cafeteria where there is a designated table with a pen and sticky notes to identify your child's lunch.

If parents wish to observe in a child's class, they will need to obtain administrative approval at least one day prior to the visit. Conferences with teachers or administrators require an appointment. Parents may contact the teacher or school office for arrangements.

Parents are welcome for lunch room visits. All parents need to check in with the office to get a visitor badge before going to the lunchroom. Parents may only bring food for their student. They may not bring food for others or share food with others. There are tables designated for parents. PLEASE REMEMBER there are children with severe allergies on campus!

Student Visitors

Student visitors are welcome to visit Palmetto Charter School. The visiting student must have administrative approval, and teacher permission, at least one day prior to the visit. The visitor must sign in at the school office and obtain a visitor pass prior to going to class.

SCHOOL SERVICES

Access to Records

Student records are maintained in the school office. Materials in these files are strictly confidential. Access to student records will be granted in compliance with state and federal

laws. A verbal or written request is required to inspect and review educational records. Records will be viewed in the presence of a PCS staff member so that any questions may be answered accurately.

Computer / Internet Use

Computers, laptops, iPads, Kindles and all programs, files, and e-mail are PCS property. Palmetto Charter School reserves the right to track network use and review all student files created or accessed on the school's computers. Computers may only be used with permission and for school purposes. Students using computers without permission or inappropriately may have their privileges revoked and/or be suspended or dismissed from school. Inappropriate use of the computer system includes the following:

- Sending messages with inappropriate content (ie. derogatory comments, threats to another individual, sexual in nature, jokes, etc.)
- Writing personal messages or creating personal documents
- Initiating or perpetuating gossip, harassment, or slander towards others
- Accessing the Internet without permission
- Accessing inappropriate or restricted web sites
- Any other use interpreted by administration as detrimental to the student, faculty, staff, or Palmetto Charter School

Internet Use Policy

Palmetto Charter School uses a content filter to block inappropriate web sites. Students shall not access the Internet without permission and only under the direct supervision of faculty. If a student inadvertently accesses inappropriate content, they should turn off the monitor / screen immediately and report the incident to the supervising teacher to avoid student consequence.

The following types of web sites may not be accessed by students on PCS computers under any circumstances:

- Facebook, and alike social networking sites
- Google images, Bing Images or Wiki-pedia
- Personal e-mail or chat rooms
- Music, Video, or Game sites
- Any site containing offensive/inappropriate material

All students are required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy. Students will lose the privilege of using technology if they do not follow these parameters. Students will be responsible to complete any missed assignments at home.

Health Services

PCS employs a licensed or registered nurse. PCS personnel is available to assist the students

in meeting their medical needs through monitoring the taking of medications and providing basic first aid.

In the event that students become ill or injured, the teacher /nurse will administer general first aid, and the student will be referred to the office for an assessment of the problem. Minor first-aid will be administered as needed by school personnel. Parents will be called with all serious concerns, and emergency services will be called when necessary. In case of serious injury or illness and the parents are not available, the family physician or a designated guardian will be contacted.

It is the parent / legal guardian's responsibility to ensure that the school office has current emergency contact information, including a reachable parent phone number, for their child at all times. **Parents, or a designee, are expected to arrange to pick up a sick / injured student within 1 hour of being contacted.** Failure to pick up an ill / injured child within this time frame may result in dismissal from the school. Designees must be on the approved list in your child's file and must present an official ID in order to take the child.

If parents are leaving their children in the care of another family member or adult, a notarized statement granting permission to authorize any emergency treatment that may be necessary should be left with the care-giver. In serious cases where no parent/guardian can be contacted, school personnel will call 911 or transport the student to the appropriate emergency care facility.

Communicable Diseases

Palmetto Charter School desires to maintain a healthy school environment and has implemented controls designed to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. The term "communicable disease" shall mean an illness or communicable health hazard that arises because of a specific infectious agent which may be transmitted either directly or indirectly by a susceptible host, infected person or animal.

A Palmetto Charter School staff member who reasonably suspects that a student has a communicable disease shall immediately notify the administration.

Students with a communicable disease for which immunization is required by law or is available shall be temporarily excluded from school while contagious. Students with communicable diseases for which immunization is not available shall be excluded from school while ill.

If the nature of the disease and circumstances warrant, PCS may require an independent physician's examination of the student to verify the diagnosis of the communicable disease. Parents must submit a written physician release for students to be permitted to return to class.

PCS reserves the right to make all final decisions necessary to enforce its communicable disease policy and to take all necessary action to control the spread of communicable diseases within the school.

Diseases and Conditions Prohibiting Attendance

Parents should not send students to school with fever, diarrhea, vomiting, persistent cough, green/ yellow running nose, rash, or pinkeye. If a child develops one of these symptoms after they are dropped off, PCS administration will contact the parents to have the child picked up.

Consistently bringing a sick child to school or refusal to pick up a child puts other students and PCS staff at risk and is grounds for dismissal.

If at any time a student is found to have a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, someone will be required to pick the student up from school. Any rashes or eye infections may require a child to go home when there is a question of contagion. Parents are encouraged to keep their child home from school and should inform PCS when their child has a sickness that might be contagious.

In cases where a virus has been spreading within a classroom or through the school, students may be required to be free from a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school. At the school's discretion, a student may be requested to bring written consent from a physician prior to returning to school after having the following diseases or conditions:

- Chicken pox
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pneumonia
- Whooping cough
- Scabies
- Ringworm
- Impetigo
- Pinkeye
- Head lice
- Pinworms
- Fifth disease

After any illness, including a fever, a child may return to school when the symptoms disappear, the child has been symptom free for 24 hours or more, and there is no longer a possibility of contagion.

Head Lice

Students who are displaying signs of head lice, may be sent to the school clinic to be checked as needed. Siblings will be checked for live infestation as well.

If only nits (eggs) are present, a notification and treatment letter will be sent home with the student. Students can return to class that day with a pass from the clinic. Students must report to the school clinic on a daily basis to monitor process of nit removal until no nits are found. Students must report to the clinic in 10 days for a final recheck.

If lice are present, the parent will be called to pick up the student. (Note: If the parent does not pick the student up, he/she can be given the information and ride the bus home at the discretion of the principal.)

After lice treatment, the student must report to the clinic with parent/guardian to be examined for lice/nits before they can return to class.

If no lice or nits are present, student can return to class. Student must report to the school clinic in 10 days for a final lice/nit recheck.

Immunizations

In accordance with state laws, immunization records must be on file at school and kept current. The State health Department audits immunization records annually to assure compliance with state regulations.

Medication Policy

If a student must take a prescription drug or over-the-counter medication during school hours, parents are asked to complete an Authorization for Medication Form. The medicine, in its original container, must be submitted to the school office by the parent. All over-the-counter medication must have a signed doctor's prescription.

Non-aspirin or other pain killers, vitamins, etc. will not be dispensed without a completed Authorization for Medication form.

Cough drops will need to be sent in with a note from the parent and given to the teacher to dispense at the teacher's discretion. The note will only be valid for 5 days and not to be considered that it's applicable for an in-definite amount of time.

Student's name, name of medication, dosage information, times and dates that the medication is to be administered, pharmacy name and phone number must be readable on the original label. PCS will not accept medication that is not in its original container, or medication without an approved measuring spoon or cup. Designated school personnel will administer oral or topical medication as long as a current Authorization for Medication form is signed and on file in the office. All medication will be stored in a secure place in the PCS office.

Students are not allowed to personally have any type / form of medicine while at school.

Exception: Metered Dose Inhalers, for the use by asthmatics /diabetic Insulin pumps, may be carried and self-administered by the student if doctor's prescription and a current Authorization for Medication form has been completed that indicates a need for the student to have medication on his/ her person at all times.

Lockers and Backpack Hooks

Middle school students are provided locker space. Any properties, money and other valuables left in lockers are the responsibility of the student to whom the locker is assigned. Only items that support / uphold the mission and philosophy of PCS may be placed inside lockers. Clearly appropriate materials or appropriate pictures of friends are acceptable. Students will be asked to remove anything that is considered inappropriate by the administration.

Only locks provided by PCS may be used on lockers and all other locks will be removed.

Students may request a lock and will be responsible for returning it at the end of the year. The locker is the property of Palmetto Charter School and is subject to inspection by authorized personnel.

Students found littering or leaving belongings around lockers in disarray may be subject to

disciplinary action. In addition, any student found entering another student's locker without permission may be subject to severe disciplinary action by the Administration. Middle School students will be assigned a hook for their backpack. No items are allowed on the hallway floor.

Breakfast & Lunch Program

Breakfast is provided by Manatee County for free for all students. Breakfast is open from 7:45 to 8:10. PCS also provides a daily hot lunch program through Manatee County. Monthly menus are made available on the Manatee County Schools website. Daily costs are determined by the school district. All concerns/ issues regarding school lunches / accounts should be directed to the Lunch Room Manager at Palm View Elementary or the Manatee County School District.

Manatee County maintains a website where you may apply for free and reduced lunches, make payments, block snack purchases, check student purchases and lunch balances. It is preferable that lunch money is applied to your account online. It is also accepted in the form of a check written to Palm View Elementary Cafeteria, or cash in an envelope with your child's name, grade, and amount given. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child has money in their account if they do not qualify for free lunch.

Students may bring a lunch from home on any day. Forgotten lunch boxes may be dropped off in the cafeteria. Students without a lunch from home will be served and billed for a school lunch. Refrigeration space is not available to students who bring lunches from home.

Microwaves are not available for heating food. Glass containers are not permitted. Sodas and high-energy/caffeine drinks are not allowed to be brought from home. Food sharing is not allowed.

Students with special dietary requirements / food preferences should bring a lunch from home or create an allergy plan if possible with the district. A peanut free table is provided in the lunchroom.

Palmetto Charter School participates in the Free and Reduced Lunch program. Free and reduced lunch does not transfer from the district to a charter school. You must reapply for those benefits when you enter a charter school. Applications must be submitted online. Families who have submitted applications after school starts should plan to pay for lunches or bring lunches from home until the application has been approved (approximately ten days). PCS does not make the determination on qualification. All appeals should be made to the Manatee County School District.

Sharing food is not permitted. This applies to hot lunches as well as bagged lunches. If a parent would like to bring outside food into the cafeteria, it can only be shared with their child.

Lunch supplies, utensils, cups, napkins, etc. are provided by PCS and are for the exclusive use of students who purchase lunch from the school.

Parents / family members are welcome to join their child for lunch on any day. All parents /visitors must first sign in with the office to receive a visitor's pass. Adults wishing to purchase a lunch may go through the lunch line with their child and pay cash. Payment can be made to

the cashier in the cafeteria. Adults not purchasing a school lunch do not need to notify the school ahead of time, but still must sign in with the office upon arrival.

Snacks at School

Elementary students (Kindergarten through 4th grade) are given the opportunity to have a healthy snack daily that has been brought from home. All food/snacks brought to the school, which are not part of a packed lunch, requires approval by a PCS staff member or administrator according to the “Healthy, Hunger-free kids act.” Unapproved food/snacks that are brought to the school will not be distributed but will be returned to the student to take home or be held in the office for parent pick-up. Food that is not picked up on the same day may be discarded. Some classes are restricted on the food they can bring in due to Peanut Allergies in the classroom. Your teacher will inform you in writing if your class is under “peanut warning” protocol. K-2 classes are peanut-free at this time.

Media Center

Use of the PCS Media Center is a great opportunity to enhance learning. Students misusing this opportunity through disruptive behavior or destruction of library or computer materials may have their privileges suspended.

Students will be permitted to check out library materials on a regular basis. Students are responsible to pay for damaged or unreturned books.

Students will also be permitted to utilize the computers that we have in our Media Center to access the Internet and work on remedial software. The Media Center Director, parent volunteer, teacher aide or other adult will supervise the students while they are in the Media Center. Please note that Palmetto Charter School will do all it can to protect students from accessing inappropriate areas of the Internet. Students found to abuse this privilege will be subject to disciplinary action. (See also Computer / Internet Use Policy)

School Pictures

Fall and spring pictures are taken for students and are available for purchase through a school photographer. Fall pictures are taken in uniform of every student and will be included in the school yearbook. Spring pictures are considered “personality portraits” and may be taken in non-uniform clothing. Class pictures are taken in late fall and will also be available for purchase through a school photographer. Students will receive notice for picture dates and purchase options.

STUDENT ACTIVITY POLICIES

Athletic Department Policies

At the middle school level, students are learning concepts such as cooperation, team unity, school spirit, and the fundamentals of the sport. Although every effort will be made to involve each athlete, our ultimate goal is to play to win. Our philosophy at PCS is that the students will get better through practices with their coach in their specific sport, and through this practice we hope it translates into being better prepared for the game if given the opportunity to perform. Please understand that every athlete will not get to play an equal amount in each

game. In games that will determine the team's post season eligibility or in tournament play, it is possible that every athlete may not play every game. We never want to put an athlete in a situation that may result in undue pressure to perform. We appreciate the support and understanding of parents as we endeavor to fairly apply this policy.

- We charge an athletic fee of \$20 per sport. The reason we do this is to help pay for our ref fees, sports equipment, uniforms, and facility rentals. Checks should be made to Palmetto Charter School and may be turned into the athletic director or the front office.

Athletic Department Objectives

- To recognize that everyone has a unique set of skills, and to provide the opportunities for maximum participation for all students in a variety of activities and play.
- To develop within each athlete the individual and team skills necessary to compete successfully.
- To develop within each athlete strong team spirit and loyalty to the school
- To teach good sportsmanship.
- To provide opportunities for athletes to encourage self-confidence, sociability, initiative, and belonging.
- To promote an understanding of body growth and development, and to stress the importance of good health habits in aiding that growth and development.
- To provide the leadership, rules, and disciplines necessary to assist each athlete in attaining these objectives.

General Beliefs

- PCS believes that athletics are an integral part of our total educational program.
- We believe that each sport provides an activity through which students may express themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally.
- We strongly encourage parents to get involved with coaching opportunities.
- We believe that coaches have the unique opportunity to direct and encourage students in the development of their life.
- We believe that parents play a vital role in supporting the coaching staff; therefore we ask that parents should wait until the following school day to discuss any issues or concerns with the athletic director.
- The athletic director has been assigned by the principal to administer the athletic program. Head coaches are directly responsible to the athletic director and are charged with the supervision of the student athletes related to their program.
- We believe that the "student athlete" should be held to a higher standard because they are representing the schools character.

Athletic Discipline/Eligibility Policy

- Athletic contests may be forfeited due to a students' conduct or behavior within school. (Example: A team with a roster of 5 players that needs all 5 players to participate, and 1 player is suspended for the game, the game will be forfeited by PCS. This is to teach the students that they have a responsibility to the team and that they need to take ownership of their actions.)
- Student athletes **MUST** maintain a **GPA OF 2.5** or higher for each quarter or a 2.0 with no grades lower than a C. Failure to maintain this standard will result in that player missing games until their GPA is higher than a 2.5. The player will be able to practice and stay a part of the team, but will not be able to participate in the game.
- **Practice Seasons-** Athletes are expected to attend all practices. Athletes must be excused in advance by the coach for any practices missed. Injured athletes who can attend sessions shall be expected to do so.
- **Language** – Profanity will not be tolerated in any form. A violation of this rule will be referred to the administration.

- **Absence from school** – The student may not participate in practice or in a contest on a day that they are absent from school, unless excused by an administrator.
- **Appearance** – Students involved in interscholastic athletics are required to follow the school’s guidelines for proper appearance as well as any additional requirements from the coach.
- **Disciplinary action** – Students having received disciplinary penalties by the administration must satisfy these obligations as assigned before they may return to practice or competition.
 - **1st referral: 1 game suspension**
 - **2nd referral: 1 week suspension**
 - **3rd referral: Removal from team**
- **Quitting without coach’s consent** – Suspension for the rest of the season, and the next sport season. Athletes must fulfill their obligations and learn that quitting is not tolerated.
- **Missing of a contest** – If a student must miss any game or contest he/she must notify the coach at least 1 week in advance. If it is an excused absence, no penalty will follow.
- **Transportation** – PCS parents will be responsible for transportation to and from all athletic events.

Field Trips & School Sponsored Activities / Events

Field trips and other school sponsored activities may be planned during the course of the year to enrich the educational experience of the students. Participation in these trips/ events is a privilege.

Notice giving complete information, along with a permission slip, will be sent home to the parents before most field trips. Impromptu outings within close proximity of the school (i.e. public library, ice cream parlor, etc.) may occur on a few occasions with administrative approval.

Parents are welcome to provide “scholarship donations” for students who may otherwise be unable to afford the cost of a field trip.

Chaperones

Chaperones are always welcome and needed! Some venues limit the number of chaperones allowed, therefore, teachers planning the trip may establish a chaperone selection policy for that particular event.

In accordance with the Jessica Lunsford Act, all volunteers going on field trips must have completed FDLE checks before they can chaperone. (Forms are available in the office.) It is preferred that chaperones are scanned by the school’s raptor system at least one day prior to attending a PCS field trip /activity.

All chaperones are expected to abide by PCS student policies and any other standard/ rule set forth by the venue or teacher. In addition, chaperones should never ask to divert from or change the teacher’s schedule, rules, plans and /or policies established for a particular trip/ event. Because the primary responsibility of the chaperone is supervision of the students in his/ her care, parents are not permitted to bring siblings along while chaperoning a field trip.

Conduct Standards

Students attending school sponsored trips or activities are bound by the same standard of conduct required of students at school. Students are reminded that they are representatives of PCS, and that their actions, attitudes, and behaviors should always reflect the school. Unless

otherwise directed, PCS uniforms will be worn by all students on all field trips. All dress code requirements are expected to be followed.

8th grade students with twelve or more Incident reports, referrals for disruptive behavior in the first 3 quarters or have not passed all core classes by the 3rd quarter will not be able to attend the Washington DC trip.

Eligibility for Participation

A child will not be allowed to participate if the permission slip and/ or fees are not returned to the teacher by the stated deadline, or if the child's behavior does not warrant this special privilege.

Scholarship monies are available for those students who may need financial assistance to attend a field trip. If a student has excessive incident reports or multiple referrals while on campus he may be prohibited from attending fieldtrips throughout the year. A student will be notified if her is in jeopardy of losing fieldtrip privileges. If any student is absent or does not attend the field trip/ activity the teacher may assign the student a written / research report on a topic related to the field trip.

Transportation

Students will only be allowed to travel on PCS-provided transportation or on a vehicle in which a family member / guardian who is chaperoning is travelling (with prior teacher approval).

Palmetto Charter School and/ or their staff members will not be held liable or responsible for injury, death, or harm that may come to a student or chaperone as a result of providing their own (non PCS-provided) transportation.

Music Performances/Productions

Each year, PCS will present special programs. The programs are typically held at Christmas and in the spring. Students must have written permission from parents in order to participate in after- school auditions.

Because these events require much preparation, a student's grade will be severely impacted if the student does not participate in the program. Program dates are published on the school calendar at the beginning of the school year; therefore, very few students should have a prior commitment that would hinder them from participation in the program. A written notice from a parent documenting a student's conflict with the performance date should be submitted to the music teacher *no later than two weeks prior to the program*. Students who do not participate in the program will be expected to participate in all rehearsals and may be given an extra assignment to complete at home. All parents, friends, and relatives are encouraged to attend PCS programs.

Parties Parties/Classroom Events / Holidays

These are held for special events / holidays during the year for each class. These parties are generally one hour or less in length at the end of the day with the teacher in charge. Room parents may be contacted to help with these parties and their cooperation is appreciated. Student families (not teachers or PCS) are responsible for providing approved food items / treats for the party.

Birthday Parties

Many students celebrate a birthday during the school year. Birthday parties will be celebrated once a month on dollar jeans day, during the last period of the day. During the month your child has a birthday, please contact the teacher (or homeroom parent) as to what you might want to bring. (No homemade items, items must come from a vendor such as Publix, etc) Birthday items such as cupcakes that are delivered to school on other days will be returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Invitations

For various reasons, families sometimes have to limit the number of children invited to parties held for their child. When this is the case, parents will have to mail or make arrangements to deliver invitations away from the PCS campus. Neither the PCS office nor teachers will provide telephone numbers and /or addresses of other students. In order to limit disruptions and to prevent hurt feelings in the classroom, students may only distribute invitations for parties held outside of school by first asking permission from the classroom teacher, and only for parties where an invitation is provided for every student in the class. An exception to this policy will be made for every-girl-in- the-class only /every-boy-in-the-class only sleepover parties.