

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School

Family Handbook

2019-2020



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Please note: The contents of this Handbook may be changed at the discretion of the school.
Parents/Guardians will be notified of changes when possible.



September 2019

Dear Finn Families,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff we would like to welcome you to Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School. In our 5th year of operation, we continue to offer an educational program that is less scripted and allows children the opportunity to thrive in an environment that focuses on in-depth project work. We know that as parents and guardians you want to provide the best learning environment for your child and we are honored that you have chosen to be a part of this school.

We believe that children succeed when schools and families work together, and an important element is ongoing communication. The Family Handbook will inform you of Finn Academy's policies and procedures so that we can all work together to ensure smooth operation of our school. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with our school leadership, any Board of Trustees member, or your child's teacher.

Once again, thank you for choosing Finn. We are committed to nurturing the character traits of leadership, scholarship, reflection, kindness, perseverance, and aspiration. We look forward to working with you to ensure each child's success.

Sincerely,

Renée Sutton

Renée Sutton

Chair, Board of Trustees

The School

Mission Statement

At Finn Academy, a K through 6 charter school, we promote an inclusive, rigorous and nurturing environment to best prepare our children for their future and to cultivate a community of scholars, leaders, and friends

Graduate Profile

All Finn Academy graduates will have the skills, knowledge and access to confidently explore their dreams. Scholars will successfully engage with critical and creative thinking, and nurture themselves and their community.

Design Elements

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Connections• STEM – Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts & Math• College and Career Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory Program (Crew)• Wellness• Professional Learning & Teacher Support
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Finn Academy Pledge

At Finn Academy Charter School, I pledge to be a scholar; be a leader; be a friend. Every day I will persevere even when it's hard. Every day I will reflect on my choices and learning, so I can grow. Every day I will aspire to be and do my best. I want to go to college, to learn well, and be a good person. Every day I will be kind to greet, smile, and show respect to my friends, family, our guests and teachers. At Finn Academy I will never forget that it matters that I came.

Curriculum Framework

Finn Academy utilizes curriculum developed by EL Education (K-4) and Uncommon Schools Reading Reconsidered for (5-7) English Language Arts. Each unit/expedition takes our scholars through a deep dive into an engaging topic, with a focus on integrating inquiry-based learning and interesting content. All expeditions and units challenge our scholars through reading, writing, research, exploration, and discovery. As a school, we work diligently to ensure that we "Finnify" curriculum by connecting the content to local experts, community organizations, and special area instruction, starting each expedition with an exciting "kick-off", and celebrating learning in a culminating event. Finn Utilizes Go Math! Curriculum K-7. Go Math is written in an inquiry style and ensures programmatic continuity and a common assessment and resources for scholars and Finn staff. A kit-based science and engineering curriculum support our STEM and integrated classroom programs to ensure experience-based lessons and hands-on projects for scholars. Lastly our Social Studies and Humanities program is supported through an inquiry-based program through TCI's History Alive in grades 5-7.

School Organization

At Finn Academy, we currently serve kindergarten through seventh grade, with four sections of fourth grade, three sections of kindergarten, first, second, fifth and sixth grades, and two sections of third and seventh grades. To ensure that each scholar is known as an individual and worked with holistically, our Board of Trustees have pledged to maintain a class size of no more than 18 scholars. This enables scholars and staff to build a tight-knit crew, in which strengths are celebrated and needs are supported by one another.

Who We Are

Authorizer

The State University of New York (SUNY) Charter Schools Institute is our charter authorizer and are charged with holding our school to high expectations and ensuring that we reach our accountability goals through monitoring scholar growth and success, instructional expertise, and behavioral consistencies. SUNY evaluators conduct school visits and renewal evaluations throughout each charter term and require accountability and enrollment reporting throughout the year. For more information, visit: www.newyorkcharters.org.

Board of Trustees

Board Chair – Renée Sutton
Vice Chair – Cynthia Raj
Treasurer – Jill Koski
Secretary – Maya Patel
Trustee – Katie Coletta
Trustee – Katie Stowell
Trustee – Lynn Winner

Parent Reps – Nichole Bocage, Jenica Drehmer

Board Committees:

Academics Committee - Chair: Lynn Winner
Finance Committee – Chair: Jill Koski
Governance Committee – Chair: Maya Patel

Finn Staff

Building Leaders

Martina Baker (Chief Operations Officer)
Aimee Ciarlo (Dean of Scholars)
Jeremy Wheeler (Chief Academic Officer)

Administrative Staff

Theresa Cain (Coordinator of SE&I)
Lia Navone (Food Services Director)
Christy Strobel (Registrar)
Lisa Wildrick (Admin. Assistant)

Instructional Staff

Jamie Clune (K)
Kristen Kramarik (K)
Julie Marhefka (K)

Christi Bond (1)
Katy Cartwright (1)
Kiley Melott (1)
Theresa Nelson (1)

Kristen Lauf (2)
Asha Pugh (2)
Hope Wheaton (2)

Ryan Dunlap (3)
Kayla Fivie (3)
Allison Murphy (3)

Ashley Pennington (4)

Erica Powell (4)

Olivia Rosengrant (4)

Chrissy Smith (4)

Natalie Malanowski (5)

Kieren Pennypacker (5)

Katelin Woods (5)

Travis Carn (6/7)

Wendi Graham (6/7)

Chris Hanford (6/7)

Ann McCarthy (6/7)

Ashley Pennington (6/7)

Special Areas Staff

Amanda Baroody (Art)

Dylan Edwards (Music)

Kyle Lambert (STREAM)

Ivan Purifoy (Fitness)

Autumn Skillman (Instrumental)

Jaymie Snoddy (Dance)

Special Education Staff

Lauren Gleckner (Teacher)

Rebecca Kellogg (Teacher)

Lauren McGuire (Teacher)

Mary Kate Morrison (Teacher)

Sommer Clemens (1:1 Aide)

Holly Gilbert (1:1 Aide)

Tiffany Smith (1:1 Aide)

Intervention and Support Staff

Kimberly Boyle (Guest Teacher)

Deb Breen (IST)

Officer Collins (School Patrol Officer)

Alyssa Beers (Literacy)

Karen Kuty (Literacy)

Kay Mighty-Brown (Literacy)

Kimberly McGrady (Math)

Amber Summers (Social Worker)

Assistants

Tina Butler

Colleen Hogan

Meghan Mack

Nicole Mack

Jennifer Miller

Danielle Moyer

Tayler Pomeroy

Antoinette Smith

Dave Talada

Support Staff

Gordon Fulkrod (Maintenance)

John Lunduski (Custodian)

Lillian Martone (Custodian)

Stephenie Kiessling (Kitchen)

Sheena Narosky (Kitchen)

Rights and Responsibilities

Scholars have the right to an educational environment that is conducive to high levels of learning.

Scholars are expected to:

- attend school every day, arrive on time, and complete all class work
- follow universal expectations and exhibit the core values of the school
- be respectful of the education of others, themselves, and the instruction of staff

Parents/Guardians have the right to ensure that the school is addressing the learning needs of all scholars. Parents have the right to communication of scholar progress, strengths, and gaps.

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- send their child to school every day, on time, and prepared for learning
- cooperate with the school staff in solving academic and/or behavioral problems
- holding scholars to the school's high expectations
- respond to communications from the school pertaining to their child.
- appropriately communicate with staff, families, and scholars

Teachers have the right to teach in a learning environment that is safe, positive, and supported.

Teachers are expected to:

- build relationships with all scholars that are respectful of their diverse needs and backgrounds
- create a classroom culture which honors differences and holds all scholars to high academic and behavioral expectations
- model, encourage, and reinforce scholar understanding of school expectations
- know and consistently enforce all school policies and expectations
- meaningfully connect with families to support all scholars
- engage in appropriate and respectful communication with scholars, families, and colleagues

School leaders have the right to expect consistent cooperation and support of staff, scholars, and families.

School leaders are expected to:

- ensure understanding of, and adherence to, Finn Academy policies and procedures
- support all school staff in maintaining rigorous instruction and appropriate and effective discipline
- be available to staff and families
- carry out of the Finn Academy vision with fidelity and ensure the follow through of the charter Accountability Plan

Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security and FERPA

Please refer to our website for the complete Bill of Rights

Parents' Right to Know

Please refer to **Appendix A**

Admissions and Enrollment

Finn Academy strictly adheres to regulations regarding admission, enrollment, and withdrawals. We are a free public charter school and open to any child residing in New York State and meeting age requirements. Please refer to our **Admissions, Re-enrollment and Transfers Policy – Appendix B**

Communication

We believe that continued communication between home and school is vital to a successful educational experience for each of our scholars. As we have adopted a different curriculum framework and philosophy of education, questions may arise about our specific programming, daily learning, expectations, and progress towards meeting learning standards. We encourage families to connect with staff via email, notes, phone calls, in person meetings, or through school events and celebrations, to maintain a clear understanding of scholars' time at Finn Academy.

Kaymbu

Finn teachers utilize a program called *Kaymbu* that allows more frequent and meaningful communication with families by providing a window into the daily happenings in your child's classroom. The communication ranges from individual family contact to school-wide messages. This is done through staff iPads and is sent via email or text message, depending on the preference of families. Through *Kaymbu* the school can also send voice broadcasts to parent/guardian phones. This is a new communication feature this year.

Wednesday Folders

Throughout the year, Wednesday folders are utilized as a way to get important updates, notices of upcoming events, permission slips, progress, and newsletters to home. Please ensure that you are consistently checking your child's Wednesday folder, so that you do not miss out on any important information.

Newsletters

Grade level/classroom newsletters will go home weekly in the Wednesday folders. A school-wide newsletter will be sent on a bi-weekly basis.

Website – www.finnacademy.com

Our Finn Academy website provides families and community members with another avenue in which to gain information about our school, from yearly calendar to Board meeting updates, to staff listings.

E-mail

Staff will often utilize email as a way to provide ongoing communication with families regarding scholar progress and updates, as well as a way of providing information regarding important updates. We ask that families provide updated email addresses to the school, so that we can ensure proper delivery of messages.

Facebook

We maintain a Finn Facebook page to keep parents up to date on events, details, as well as a way to celebrate scholar learning through pictures of learning celebrations, field work, and other school functions. Our Finn Family Crew also maintains a page that provides additional information for families, grants access based on requests, and is in association with our main Finn page.

When posting to our Facebook page, please keep in mind that this is an avenue to ask general questions about events and programs, and to positively respond to posts about learning and celebrations. Should you have specific questions about a class, a scholar, or have a concern, please direct to the appropriate staff member. Any information regarding absences or dismissal changes should be communicated via phone or email, as we are not always able to receive Facebook messages in a timely manner. We ask that all participants on our Facebook page follow our Finn core values of kindness and leadership.

Communicating Concerns

We aim to build a culture in which feedback is welcomed and discussed openly and honestly. While we strive to create an optimal learning environment for all scholars, we do recognize that there will be times when a concern arises. We welcome all feedback and input in a constructive, solution-focused manner, and while we cannot guarantee all suggestions will be adopted, we can promise that parents will be heard and valued. Again, when addressing or sharing a concern, we ask that parents follow our core values and respect one another as individuals with varying ideas and perspectives. Through honest, direct, and appropriate communication, misunderstandings and misperceptions can be avoided.

Confidentiality

We value the confidentiality of all scholars, families and staff members, and as a result, we will not discuss personnel issues with families, nor will we discuss business pertaining to scholars with families other than their own. This allows for the creation and maintenance of a trusting and welcoming environment for all involved.

Complaints

Should a parent have a formal complaint against the school, it should be brought to one of the school leaders first. Should it not be satisfactorily addressed or resolved, the complaint should then be provided to the Board of Trustees in writing, for their review and consideration. Please see the Finn Academy **Complaint Policy – Appendix C** for additional information.

Families as Partners

Finn Family Crew

Our parent organization believes as a school community, that we are not passengers in the education journey, instead we are crew, working together to achieve our goal. Finn Academy scholars, staff, families and community members are all part of a crew. Finn Family Crew works to create an engaging culture that reflects our core values throughout our school community. Families will volunteer in various ways and throughout the school year to support Finn Academy's mission.

2018-2019 FFC Officers and Committee Heads:

President: Catie Hatch
Vice-President: Crystal Mitchell
Secretary: Natalie Pipher
Treasurer: Sarah Wellington
Secretary of Committees: Tina Moylinan

Finn Family Crew facilitates multiple fundraising and crew-building events throughout the year, and creates opportunities for families to come together with the goal of continuing to build our Finn community. Monthly meetings are held and open to all family members to discuss events, share ideas, and provide feedback and input. Event information is sent home throughout the year via text, email, Wednesday Folders, and Facebook.

Classroom Visitations and Volunteering

In creating a welcoming environment, we encourage parents and family members to join their scholars in school events and daily learning experiences. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a time to visit or assist in the classroom. If you are interested in volunteering in the school, please contact the Main Office. Individuals who plan to volunteer may be subject to fingerprint clearance and a background check – the cost of which will be incurred by Finn Academy. Please see our **Fingerprint Policy – Appendix D** for more information.

Child Safety Reporting

If you suspect abuse or maltreatment of any child, we encourage you to call the Statewide toll-free number at: 1-800-342-3720. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call TDD/TTY at: 1-800-638-5163, or have your video relay system provider call: 1-800-342-3720.

All Finn Academy staff members are mandated reporters, and as such, are required by law to make a mandated reporter hotline call should they suspect abuse or maltreatment. As a school, we endeavor to build relationships with our families to provide you with support and connections to community agencies in order to best support our scholars.

School Events

Expedition Celebrations

Every grade level expedition concludes with a culminating event that celebrates scholar learning and expertise. Scholar participation in these events is a required part of our program at Finn Academy as it provides scholars the opportunity to showcase their learning and knowledge gained. To accommodate for various family schedules, some celebrations will take place during the day, evening, and on weekends, both at Finn Academy and out in the community. Staff will make every effort to provide ample notice of celebration dates and times so that families can plan in advance. Scholar attendance is **required** at all expedition celebrations, and lack of attendance may directly impact scholar grades. Please see our **Celebration and Performance Attendance Policy – Appendix E** for more information.

Community Circle

Community Circle is an opportunity for crews to come together to share learning, celebrate successes, and further cultivate the Finn culture. We welcome families and local community partners and organizations to join us for this event. As we continue to build our scholar crews, we will be hosting Community Circle twice a month for grades K-5 with support from our middle school scholars, and grades 6-7 at the discretion of Finn staff. A schedule of monthly Community Circles will be provided to families.

Please note that, unless pre-approved by administration, families are **prohibited** from signing out their scholars early from Community Circle. This is to ensure a safe and organized dismissal for all scholars. Families are asked to adhere to the established dismissal times and procedures.

Recognition Ceremonies

While we believe firmly in the cultivation of intrinsic motivation for our scholars, we also know the importance of recognizing scholar growth and success. We will be hosting recognition ceremonies for grade level grouping on a rotating schedule with focus on attendance, academics, and core values. We encourage families to attend, in order to help acknowledge and support scholar success. A schedule of monthly Recognition Ceremonies will be provided to families.

The Classroom and Beyond

Homework

We are dedicated to prioritizing learning opportunities that benefit our scholars and we believe that homework is an integral component of our scholars' education. These assignments are meant to be reasonable, meaningful, purposeful, and differentiated to meet the needs of our scholars. Homework assignments are at the discretion of each individual classroom teacher and may include: spelling tasks, writing assignments, math workbooks, reading components, family assignments, skill building games, and other related tasks.

When assigned homework Monday through Friday, we expect that the assignments combined should not exceed 30 minutes for Kindergarten and first grade, 40 minutes for second and third grade, fourth through sixth grade for 50 minutes, and approximately 60 minutes for seventh grade.

If you are finding that your child is surpassing the recommended homework time or if they are having difficulty completing homework assignments on a regular basis, please contact your child's teacher for support.

Holidays and Birthdays

We appreciate all beliefs and celebrations in the variety of holidays by families, but in order to be sensitive to all families, we focus our time on scholar learning. As a result, we do not have holiday-themed celebrations or parties. Should you want to celebrate your scholar's birthday, we do allow families to provide a small treat to the entire class. Please connect directly with the classroom teacher to schedule the delivery of a birthday treat, and please consider our commitment to wellness. We allow birthday party invitations to be handed out during school hours if there is an invitation for every member of the classroom crew. If your child is not inviting all members of the class, please make arrangements outside of the school day to deliver the invitations.

Dress Code

All scholars attending Finn Academy are required to wear the designated uniforms. Please refer to the **Dress Code and Uniform Policy – Appendix F** for more detailed information regarding our uniform and expectations.

Toys

To maintain focus on learning, toys are not permitted at school. This includes fidgets, unless otherwise approved by a staff member. We equip our classrooms with engaging and appropriate learning tools and materials that are necessary for scholar learning. Please refer to the **Toy Policy – Appendix G** for additional information.

Electronic Devices

We do not permit electronic devices of any kind (excluding cell phones) on school property. Please refer to our **Electronic Device Policy – Appendix H** for additional information.

Field Studies

At Finn Academy, expedition field work is an essential part of our academic program. While our field work is intended to be fun and engaging for scholars, it is also meant to be an extension of the rigorous learning taking place in classrooms. They are thoughtfully planned out to address specific learning targets associated with the current expedition. Field studies are also an opportunity for our scholars to become more familiar with our local parks, museums, landmarks and resources, and elicit deep thinking and problem-solving. Through this rich learning, scholars grow into experts and build upon their expedition knowledge.

Permission Slips

Scholars must have parent/guardian permission to participate in all field work off school property. Staff will do their best to ensure timely delivery of permission slips, so that families have advanced notice and time to complete and return them to school. While we want all scholars to participate in this important aspect of their learning, it is the scholar's and parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that completed permission slips are returned by the necessary date.

Field Work Volunteers

As we are off school premises for field work, it is essential that we have proper and ample adult supervision. Volunteering for field work is a great opportunity for parents/guardians to be directly involved in their child's learning. The responsibilities range from ensuring children's safety, monitoring behavior, and supporting individual scholars and small groups. Please notify your child's teacher if you are available to participate in any field work throughout the year.

Recess

With an emphasis on health and wellness, we strongly believe that scholars should have the opportunity for daily recess. Not only does recess provide children with the opportunity to have time to move, socialize, and play, it also allows them a break from intensive academic work. We aim to provide 20-30 minutes of recess daily, outside when weather allows (no lower than 25°F). Please provide your child with climate-appropriate clothing, including snow pants, boots, gloves, hats, and scarves at school during the winter months, and sunscreen during the warmer months. Scholars will participate in indoor recess in the cafeteria, gymnasium, or classroom when temperatures are excessive in heat or cold, or when there are unfavorable weather conditions due to rain, lightning, ice or snow. Should a scholar exhibit behavior not aligned with Finn behavioral expectations, he/she may lose the privilege of recess, per teacher and administrator discretion.

Agendas

Scholars in grades 3-7 will be provided a school-approved agenda that will be utilized daily to track homework, long-term projects, and goals; they will also be utilized as an additional form of home-school communication, as necessary. We ask that parents/guardians review the agenda daily with their child. The expectation is that scholars take their agenda home daily and bring it back to school each morning. The responsibility of an agenda helps teach our scholars the important skill of organization and being accountable for their own learning and educational tools.

Second Step

For our second year, grade level teachers and our school social worker, will incorporate weekly lessons of the social-emotional Second Step curriculum. The program is an evidence-based program for children and includes everything schools need to integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into their classrooms and schoolwide. Using the Second Step curriculum has been shown to decrease problem behaviors, and it's designed to promote school success, self-regulation, and a sense of safety and support.

Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy

At Finn Academy, we are committed to creating an environment that fosters pro-social and positive interactions, problem-solving and appropriate conflict-resolutions skills. We believe that by holding our scholars to high behavioral expectations, we are preparing them to grow into kind, conscientious leaders with integrity and strength of character. Finn staff members consistently refer to our core values, universal norms, and *Responsive Classroom* strategies, in order to fully support our scholars.

We believe in the idea that all behavior is a form of communication, and that by providing our scholars with the skills to solve problems and work collaboratively, we can support them in appropriately sharing their needs. Through the modeling, rehearsal and reinforcement of our Finn core values and positive behaviors, we aim to cultivate pro-social skills and positive character for all scholars. Our daily morning and closing crew are established to further support our approach in proactively addressing scholar behavior.

Universal Expectations

It is our belief that having a common language around scholar expectations will result in universal and higher-level academic and behavioral outcomes.

Be a scholar

- Learning comes first
- Grow your brain
- Share the air
- Take risks

Be a leader

- Set an example
- Leave no trace
- Be open to new ideas

Be a friend

- T.H.I.N.K.
(True. Helpful. Inspiring. Necessary. Kind)
- Include everyone
- Celebrate successes

Scholar Disciplinary Code and Discipline Procedures

This Code sets forth our policy regarding how scholars are expected to behave when participating in school activities, on and off school grounds, and how the school will respond when scholars fail to behave in accordance with these rules. In all matters pertaining to disciplinary action, scholars will be given notice and all parties will have the opportunity to share their version of events leading up to the misbehavior.

Should a misbehavior occur, we implement a variety of procedures to address it, including, but not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom behavioral strategies • reflective activity (reflection corner) • replacement skill practice • conferencing with the scholar(s) and teacher (and Dean when necessary) • mediation • "go-and-return" break (supervised or with peer) • natural consequences • behavioral contract • removal from activity or event • removal from the crew within the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removal from the classroom • reset room visit • afterschool detention • school service • meeting with the scholar, teacher and parent/guardian (and Dean when necessary) • short-term suspension (ten or fewer days) • long-term suspension (ten or more days) • expulsion (permanent removal of a scholar from school for disciplinary reasons)
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Communication

We know that keeping parents/guardians informed of scholar misbehavior is essential in supporting skill-building and scholar growth. As such, staff is to maintain open and consistent communication with families regarding concerns. If a scholar receives **five** behavior referrals to the office, the Dean of Scholars will contact parents/guardians for a meeting. A referral to the Response to Intervention (RtI) process may also be initiated, if necessary and appropriate.

Reset Room

Providing our scholars with the opportunity to reflect on their choices and behavior is important to us. The implementation of a Reset Room will support scholars exhibiting low level behavioral misconduct in planning for their return to the learning space. Through scaffolded support, scholars will be able to complete apologies, identify positive replacement behaviors, reflect on the universal norms they need to focus on, and to reset their bodies and minds in order to exhibit behaviors for success.

Suspension

Suspensions may be short-term (10 days or less) or long-term (more than 10 days). Please refer to the chart below for possible scholar offenses which could result in suspension. Upon suspension, or if a scholar must be sent home early for disciplinary reasons, it is expected that parents/guardians will pick up their child within one hour of notification.

Scholar offense	Potential consequence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Violation of uniform policy• Refusal to participate in learning or work completion• Disruptions preventing learning/instruction• Disrespect and/or defiance towards staff member or peer• Possession of inappropriate property• Misbehavior inside or outside of class• Disrespecting/damaging school property or property of peer (including graffiti and destruction)• Play fighting• Inappropriate gestures• Lying to staff member• Any other behavior deemed by school staff to be inappropriate, endangering the health or safety of other scholars, or disruptive of school operations, or otherwise adversely affecting the educational process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal from activity• Removal from crew within the classroom• Removal from the classroom• Reset room visit• Conference with scholar and teacher• Conference with scholar, parent/guardian, and teacher (and Dean when necessary)• Call or note home to parent/guardian• Loss of classroom privilege• Loss of bus privilege• Lunch/recess or afterschool detention• Paying for/ replacing any damaged or missing property• Verbal or writing public or private apology• Parent requirement to attend class with scholar• Suspension from school event, trip or activity• Performing service for peer or school• Reflection of behavior• In-school suspension or out-of-school suspension• Other consequences deemed appropriate by staff
Scholar offense	Potential consequence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gross and chronic disruption of learning and prevention of instruction• Cheating, plagiarism, and copying of other's work• Gross and chronic disrespect and defiance towards staff member or peer• Possession of inappropriate/potentially dangerous property• Gross and chronic misbehavior inside or outside of the classroom• Fighting and purposeful physical aggression• Threatening statement or gesture• Setting off a false fire alarm• Engaging in inappropriate touching• Harassment• Abusive or continued profane language or treatment• Theft, loss, or destruction of personal or school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prolonged removal from activity• Prolonged removal from class• Reset room visit• Afterschool detention• In-school suspension• Short-term out-of-school suspension (10 days or less)• Other consequences deemed appropriate by school staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistreatment or inappropriate use of technology or school property • Excessive and/or repeated violations of any school rule/expectation • Any other behavior deemed by school staff to be inappropriate, endangering the health or safety of scholars or staff, disruptive of school operations, or otherwise adversely affecting the educational process 	
Scholar offense	Potential consequence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated or excessive out-of-school suspensions • Repeated and fundamental disregard of school policies and procedures • Causing serious bodily harm or injury to staff or peer • Committing assault or assault and battery • Engaging in sexual activity • Possession of a firearm or mock firearm • Using or possessing a weapon or dangerous object • Arson • Use or possession of drugs/alcohol or tobacco products • Selling or transferring tobacco products • Gross harassment • Violating the civil rights of others • Gross theft or destruction of personal/school property • Gross mistreatment or inappropriate use of technology or school property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term out-of-school suspension (more than 10 days) • Expulsion • Other consequence deemed appropriate by school staff

Procedures and Due Process for Disciplinary Action – Short-term Suspensions

If a scholar commits an offense that calls for short-term suspension (10 days or less), the scholar may be subject to the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if necessary, the scholar is immediately removed from class and/or school • the scholar is entitled to be notified of the violation of the code of character and to respond to the charges against him/her • the Dean of Scholars or other school leader addresses the conduct and assigns an appropriate consequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents/guardians are notified and is afforded the opportunity to review and discuss the situation in response with him/her in person or on the phone • a parent or guardian may be required to meet with the Dean of Scholars or other school leader regarding infractions prior to a scholar's return to school or serve a full-term of the suspension
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Procedures and Due Process for Disciplinary Action – Long-term Suspensions and Expulsions

If a scholar commits an offense that calls for a long-term suspension (more than 10 days) or expulsion, the following steps are taken:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• if necessary, the scholar is immediately removed from class and/or school• the parent/guardian is notified by the Dean of Scholar or other school leader• the scholar is entitled to be notified of the violation of the code of character and to respond to the charges against him/her• the school sets a hearing date and the parent/guardian is notified in writing of the:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- charges and a statement of evidence- date time and location of a hearing- notice of the right at the hearing to be represented by legal counsel (at the expense of the family) and present evidence and question witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• any scholar who is expelled or given a long-term suspension has the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Board of Trustees within 10 days of the date of expulsion• any appeal is heard, at the discretion of the Board Chair or the Board of Trustees; in such a case, the school sets a hearing date and the scholar and/or his/her parent or guardian is notified in writing of the<ul style="list-style-type: none">- date, time and place of a hearing- right at the hearing to be represented by legal counsel (at the expense of the scholar's family) and present evidence and question witnesses
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Discipline of Scholars with Special Needs

The school is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing or otherwise disciplining scholars with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations.

Applicability

This section applies to: (1) scholars with disabilities, as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Article 89 of the New York State Education Law and Part 201 of the New York State Code of Rules and Regulations ("NYCRR"); and (2) scholars who have not been determined to be scholars with disabilities at the time of misconduct, but only where the school is deemed to have had knowledge that the child was a scholar with a disability before the behavior precipitating disciplinary action occurred.

The school will be deemed to have knowledge that such scholar had a disability if prior to the time the behavior occurred:

- the parent/guardian of such student has expressed concern in writing to that the scholar is in need of special education, provided that such expression of concern may be oral if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement; or
- the parent/guardian of the scholar has requested an evaluation of the scholar; or
- a teacher of the scholar, or other personnel of the school, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the scholar.

A scholar will not be considered a scholar presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes if, upon receipt of information supporting a claim that the school had knowledge the scholar was a scholar with a disability, the scholar's parent did not allow an evaluation of the scholar, the scholar's parent refused special education services for the scholar, or the school conducted an individual evaluation and determined that the scholar is not a scholar with a disability.

Discipline

Short-Term Suspension (10 days or less): A scholar with a disability, or suspected disability, may be subject to a short-term suspension to the same extent as a non-disabled student.

A scholar with a disability may be subject to multiple short-term suspensions for separate, unrelated incidents of misconduct so long as a pattern does not result (a “disciplinary change in placement”). A disciplinary change in placement is when multiple suspensions result in either (1) a period of more than 10 consecutive school days or (2) a period of less than 10 consecutive school days where the suspensions are based on a pattern of similar behavior, are close in proximity to one another and are of a certain duration.

When a pattern or disciplinary change of placement is present, the school will conduct a “manifestation hearing.”

Long-Term Suspension (10 consecutive days or more or suspensions that result in a disciplinary change of placement):

The school will follow the long-term suspension notification and hearing process. Additionally, a manifestation hearing will be scheduled by the Committee on Special Education.

A hearing will then be held with respect to the long-term discipline. As part of that process, a “manifestation team” will convene to determine whether the scholar’s conduct was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student’s disability or was the direct result of the school’s failure to implement the scholar’s IEP. This determination is based on a review of all relevant information in the scholar’s file, including the scholar’s IEP, teacher observations and any other relevant information provided.

When a manifestation team finds that the behavior leading to the suspension is related to the student’s disability, no further suspension may be imposed and the scholar must be returned to his or her placement prior to the suspension unless (i) the Committee on Special Education decides to recommend a new placement or (ii) the behavior involved drugs, weapons or inflicted serious bodily injury.

If the manifestation team finds that the behavior leading to the suspension is not a manifestation of the scholar’s disability, the scholar shall be referred back to the hearing for the penalty phase, where the discipline imposed can be the same discipline applicable to a non-disabled student.

Alternative Instruction

To the extent required by law, the school will provide alternative instruction to expelled scholars, in-school or out-of-school suspended scholars as soon as practicable and generally within one day of the suspension or recommendation of expulsion is made while awaiting a determination by the Board of Trustees. Scholars are entitled to receive one hour of alternative instruction per day at a reasonable location and time as determined by the School.

Discipline Records

Finn Academy will maintain records of all formal suspensions and expulsions including the name of the scholar, a description of the offending behavior, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a scholar has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

"No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on school property or at a school function; nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex by school employees or students on school property or at a school function." The DASA Coordinator is our Dean of Scholars, Aimee Ciarlo. Complaints regarding discrimination, harassment, or bullying of any scholar should be referred to Ms. Ciarlo at 737-8040. Please refer to our **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy – Appendix I** for more information.

Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994

Pursuant to the 1994 version of the Gun-Free School Zones Act, all states receiving federal funds must have laws in effect requiring local educational agencies to expel for at least one year any students determined to have brought weapons to school. In addition, as a condition of receipt of federal funds, the law requires local educational agencies to develop policies that require the referral of students who bring firearms or weapons to school to criminal justice or juvenile delinquency systems. The one year expulsion provision is mandatory, except that the chief administering officer of each local education agency may modify it on a case-by-case basis. The 1994 act makes no mention or provision for procedural due process other than for students covered by the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA).

Courts have routinely agreed that the Gun-Free Schools Act does not prevent the expulsion of students with disabilities without adherence to the procedural safeguards in the IDEA. However, the IDEA does permit educators to place students in alternative placements for up to 45 days if they bring firearms or weapons to schools. Thus, compliance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, IDEA, and other related statutes requires that discipline of disabled students be determined on a case-by-case basis and in a manner similar to cases that do not involve firearms.

School Transportation

Parents/guardians are required to submit the Finn Academy Transportation Request Form directly to the Main Office prior to scholars utilizing afternoon Finn transportation. Parents/guardians are required to notify the school of any change in bus drop-off location with no less than 24 hours advanced notice. Notification must be provided directly to the Main Office by the parent/guardian. Notification of transportation changes provided by scholars will not be accepted, nor will notifications provided to bus personnel. In the case of an emergency, school leaders may make an exception to this 24-hour notification policy. If the notification procedure is not followed, scholars will be dropped off at their regularly assigned location.

Scholars utilizing morning and/or afternoon transportation provided by their district of residence are subject to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures as set forth by that district.

Scholars utilizing the afternoon transportation provided by Finn Academy are subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the **Transportation Policy – Appendix J**. We see the bus as an extension of the classroom, and as such, scholars are to uphold the behavioral expectations set forth.

The following behaviors have the potential for suspension from afternoon transportation provided by Finn Academy – please note that this list is not comprehensive and that additional behaviors can result in such disciplinary action:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hitting and other forms of intentional physical aggression • profanity or sexually inappropriate language • loud and distracting noises • insubordination • unsafe behaviors, such as being out of seat, in aisle, out of window, or distracting the driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • throwing objects • vandalism or destruction of bus property • possession of a weapon • possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal substance
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While there are times our field work is nearby the school and we are able to walk to a specified location, there are certain field work opportunities that are further away and require transportation. Parents/guardians will be made aware of any field work requiring scholars to be transported by bus. The same behavioral expectations and disciplinary responses will be adhered to.

Reporting Scholar Progress

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards will be sent home four times a year, as well as a Summer Session report card. They will be aligned to NYS Common Core ELA and Math standards, science and social studies standards, and will also highlight growth in the areas of our core values. Should families need updates on scholar progress outside of these communications, please contact the classroom teacher directly.

Conferences

Families will engage in one scholar-led conference and one to two parent/teacher conferences throughout each academic year. These conferences provide an opportunity for families to gain additional information regarding scholar progress and achievement. Parents/guardians can request a conference at any time.

Assessments

Results of formal assessments, i.e.: MAP testing through NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) which will be administered three times a year for kindergarten through seventh grade, and NYS tests which will be taken by third through seventh grade scholars, will be shared with families once available. In addition to these results, informal assessment scores and reading level information from throughout the school year will be shared with families. It is vital to our school and renewal process that all enrolled scholars in grades 4-7 participate in State Testing to fulfill Federal guidelines. New York State does not recognize parent choice to “opt out” their scholar from state testing and classifies it as a “refusal” and a score of 0 is factored into our proficiency rate. Please refer to our **Testing Policy – Appendix K** for additional information and guidelines for state testing requirements and guidelines.

Grade Retention and Promotion

Grade promotion and retention of scholars shall be made at the discretion of the school leadership in collaboration with teachers and parents/guardians. Please review our **Retention and Promotion Policy – Appendix L** for additional information.

Teacher Assignment

We take great care in thoughtfully crafting class lists, taking into consideration crew dynamics, scholar learning and social-emotional needs, and individual styles. While we cannot honor requests for specific teachers, we welcome families to submit written requests for specific teacher styles and attributes that would provide best fit for their scholars.

Scholar Attendance and School Day

Expectations and Policy

At Finn Academy, we make a special effort to ensure that all scholars fully benefit from their education by attending school regularly. Attending school regularly helps children feel more positive and confident about school—and themselves. Consistent attendance in elementary school will help children do well and prepare them for the added responsibilities in high school, college, and at work. It is our focus to collaborate with families to ensure consistent school attendance, and will be notifying parents/guardians of any attendance concerns. Please review our **Attendance Policy – Appendix M** for additional information.

Arrival

Scholar arrival is from 7:30-8:00 am. Scholars being dropped off by parents/guardians should utilize the back entrance on **William Street (K, 3, 6 and 7)** or **Lake Street by the staff entrance (1, 2, 4 and 5)** during the arrival time. To ensure proper supervision and safety of all scholars, parents/guardians should remain with scholars until the doors open at 7:30 am.

No scholars should be left unattended outside of the school for any reason. Finn staff welcome scholars into the building with a greeting each day. Scholars arriving by bus will be dropped off at the bus entrance on Lake Street.

Any scholars arriving to school tardy, after 8:00 am, must utilize the front entrance and be escorted to the Main Office by a parent/guardian to be signed in. To ensure a prompt start to the school day, we will be closing the parent-drop off door at 8:00 am sharp daily. Parents/guardians that do not escort their tardy scholar to the Main Office will be requested to park and exit their vehicle to join the scholar. If a parent/guardian drops off a tardy scholar without coming to the Main Office, he/she will be promptly contacted and reminded of the arrival procedures.

Please note that teachers are focused on greeting scholars and preparing for the day during this time, and are unavailable for lengthy conversations. Please contact them at a more convenient time to share concerns, ask questions, or request a meeting.

Dismissal

Scholar dismissal begins at approximately 3:05, with a staggered release dependent on scholar grade level. We have developed specific dismissal procedures to ensure the supervision and safety of all scholars, while also trying to maintain a smooth and efficient process for families.

Grade Level	Time (approximate times – subject to change)	Dismissal Exit (subject to change)
Kindergarten	3:05 pm	Door 10 (William Street)
First Grade	3:07 pm	Door 14 – across from main parking (Lake Street) lot
Second Grade	3:09 pm	
Third Grade	3:10 pm	Door 10 (William Street)
Fourth Grade	3:12 pm	Door 6 (William Street)
Fifth Grade	3:15 pm	Door 10 (William Street)
Sixth Grade	3:15 pm	Door 9 (William Street)
Seventh Grade	3:15 pm	Door 9 (William Street)

Scholars who will be picked up will be escorted to their corresponding grade level exit and released to a parent/guardian or approved pick-up. For convenience purposes, siblings will be picked up at the entrance of the youngest scholar. If you plan to have an unauthorized caregiver pick up your scholar, it must be reported to the Main Office and classroom teacher prior to dismissal. Staff members are required to ask for identification in order to release the scholar; please notify the designated caregiver that this is for the safety of our scholars.

If a parent/guardian experiences an emergency and will pick up the scholar after the regularly scheduled dismissal time, please call the Main Office as soon as possible. As we cannot provide adequate supervision after hours, please understand that we are unable to accommodate late pick-ups on a regular basis.

Scholars utilizing afternoon transportation will be supervised and escorted by staff members.

To ensure the safe arrival home of all scholars, **only** sixth and seventh grade scholars will be allowed to bike or walk home or to an approved afterschool location. Please review our **Scholar Walking/Biking Policy – Appendix N** for more details.

Summer Session

As Summer Session is an integral component of our school program and charter, scholar attendance is **required**. The session dates are confirmed and shared with families in a timely fashion in order to avoid potential scheduling conflicts. Please refer to our **Summer Session Attendance Policy – Appendix O** for additional information.

School Closings

Finn Academy will close due to snow or other inclement weather when the Elmira City School District (ECSD) closes, or at the discretion of Finn administration. In addition to following school closings, we will also follow school delays decided by ECSD. For updates regarding school delays/closings, please refer to our Facebook page, WETM, WENY, and message via Kaymbu.

Change of Address

Should you experience a change in address, please notify the Main Office immediately. Completion of a *Change of Address Form* is **required** for us to make changes in our information system. Should we not receive this completed document, any school correspondence will continue to be mailed to your original address. In adherence with state guidelines, we must also receive three updated proofs of residency.

Meals and Snacks

At Finn we always strive to provide our scholars with the healthiest food. We have previously participated in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program, but for the 2019-2020 school year, our community demographics have reached the determining mark and we can now offer all Finn families free meals (breakfast and lunch) through the Community Eligibility Program. We will no longer be charging for meals, but there will be a la carte options to purchase, such as extra milk and extra main parts of a meal. The same payment policy applies to purchase a la carte items as in the past for whole meals. The payment portal link is:
<https://schoolpaymentportal.com/Default.aspx>

Please contact our Food Services Director, Lia Navone, for our complete Wellness Policy and Meal Shaming Policy.

Snack

We ask that our parents support us in providing snack for our scholars daily. Grade levels will establish a set system for snack purchase and distribution. Some grade levels may ask parents to contribute a small monetary amount monthly so that the school may then purchase classroom snacks, or grade levels may decide to establish a calendar in which parents are asked to provide a snack each month. Regardless which option is selected per grade level, we ask that families stay committed to assisting in keeping our snacks healthy.

Focus on Wellness

We have a continued focus on health and wellness, not only with our scholars, but also our staff. We provide frequent reminders to our crews to be mindful of the food they are fueling their bodies with, so that they can be successful and ready to tackle each day of learning. While we appreciate the kindness around “just because” treats, we ask that families ensure they are healthy or refrain from sending them in. Our Kitchen Staff works diligently to create healthy and creative snack and meal ideas for scholars to test on “Taste Test Tuesdays”. This is an opportunity for scholars to explore a variety of ingredients that they may not typically partake in. Scholar and staff feedback often results in these items being added to our Finn menu. We also like to recognize scholars exemplifying healthy food or wellness choices by providing them with a healthy choice certificate. Many of our staff members constitute our Wellness Committee – a team dedicated to seeing that our wellness mission is carried out daily by both scholars and staff.

Special Circumstances

Physician's Statement for Children with Disabilities (example: diabetes):

USDA regulations 7 CFR Part 15b require substitutions or modifications in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets.

A child with a disability must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician. The physician's statement must identify: the child's disability;

- an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- the major life activity affected by the disability;
- the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

In Cases of Food Allergy (example; peanuts, tree nuts):

Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or Part B of IDEA, and the school food service may, but is not required to, make food substitutions for them. However, when in the licensed physician's assessment, food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening (anaphylactic) reactions, the child's condition would meet the definition of "disability," and the substitutions prescribed by the licensed physician must be made. (If this is the case for your child, please reference the bulleted list above for your doctor's office.)

Other Special Dietary Needs (example: dairy, gluten):

The school food service may make food substitutions, at their discretion, for individual children who do not have a disability, but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. Such determinations are only made on a case-by-case basis. This provision covers those children who have food intolerances or allergies but do not have life-threatening reactions (anaphylactic reactions) when exposed to the food(s) to which they have problems.

Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs

Each special dietary request must be supported by a statement, which explains the food substitution that is requested. It must be signed by a recognized medical authority.

The medical statement must include:

- an identification of the medical or other special dietary condition which restricts the child's diet;
- the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet; and
- the food or choice of foods to be substituted

Support Services

Health Services

At this time, our School Nurse and health services are provided by our host district, the Elmira City School District. Please see our **Health Services Policy - Appendix P** for more information.

Immunization Requirements

Finn Academy adheres to the New York State Public Health laws regarding immunizations. For scholars entering Finn Academy from New York State, they have *fourteen days* from the start of the school year to produce proof of immunization or the child will be excluded from attending school. For scholars transferring or starting at Finn from previously out of state, they will be excluded from attending school within *thirty days* of the start school if not proof of immunization is provided. The Chemung County Health Department

provides some children with free immunizations. Please contact them at 737-2028 to find out if your child qualifies.

Medication at School

Our School Nurse can facilitate the administering of doctor-prescribed medication at school, following clearly outlined guidelines. Please review our Health Services Policy for additional information.

Defibrillator

In accordance with Education Law, the school maintains on-site AED equipment to ensure ready and appropriate access for use during emergencies.

Please Contact the health office with any concerns/questions.

Academic & Behavioral Intervention Services

We are committed to meeting the needs of all scholars and ensuring they have access to high-quality instruction and learning. **Response to Intervention (RTI)** and **Academic Intervention Services (AIS)** function as a significant educational framework designed to distinguish gaps in scholar learning and deliver targeted interventions to increase academic outcomes in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as behavioral outcomes. Scholars who are not meeting or at risk of not meeting grade level proficiency standards are identified and monitored using this approach. At Finn Academy, RTI serves the K-3 population and AIS supports grades 4-7. Finn Academy's goal is to strengthen scholar achievement for all, which is accomplished through purposeful and high-quality instruction.

Our comprehensive program integrates assessment and intervention within a three-tiered prevention system to raise academic performance. School-wide screenings are utilized to identify scholars at risk for deficient learning outcomes and inform differentiated instruction within the classroom. Thereafter, directed interventions are consistently implemented and monitored to ensure academic progress.

English Language Learner (ELL) Services

We follow the state-regulated guidelines for identification of ELL scholars and work with families to provide the necessary services. Please let us know if you would like additional information on our identification process and/or program.

Special Education

Finn Academy works together with scholar's host district's Committee on Special Education (CSE) to administer special education services, including identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the scholar. It is our goal to provide all scholars with a disability with the individualized instruction and support necessary to achieve their highest academic levels. If you believe your child has a suspected disability, it is your right as a parent to request a referral to special education and provide written consent. Finn Academy is committed to providing all scholars with a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). If you have questions regarding special education, please direct them to Theresa Cain, Coordinator of Special Education & Interventions.

School Social Worker

New to Finn this year, our School Social Worker will collaborate with staff and families to provide social-emotional support to all scholars. Monthly classroom instruction around important topics such as: conflict-resolution and problem-solving, impulse control, and stress management techniques will be provided, as well as individual short-term/crisis counseling, small group counseling, and referrals to community services. We encourage families to reach out with any concerns or requests for support.

School-based Mental Health Program

In partnership with Family Services of Chemung County, Inc., Chemung County, we provide community-based counseling services within our school setting. Through the School-based Mental Health Program a Family Services Mental Health Therapist is located at Finn Academy during scheduled office hours. This therapist can provide referred scholars and their families with mental health counseling services to support social and emotional needs. Please contact Aimee Ciarlo, Dean of Scholars, for specifics regarding this program and referral process.

Building Safety and Security

School Visitors

We encourage and welcome parent(s)/guardian(s) and community members to visit classrooms, scholars and staff, and to attend events. We are a place of open work and learning; however, certain safety precautions must be put in place for such visits. As we are responsible for all persons in our building and on school property, the following rules shall be observed:

- 1) Anyone who is not a staff member or scholar of the school will be considered a "visitor".
- 2) All visitors to the school can gain access to the building only through the approved entrances, and through our secured access system. While we appreciate the courtesy shown by guests allowing other guests to enter the building, we ask that this not be done so that all visitor presence is approved and documented.
- 3) All visitors must report to the Main Office upon being allowed access to the building through our secured entry doors and sign in and out. School staff reserves the right to request identification of visitors.
- 4) All visitors must wear a visitor badge throughout their time in the building and return it after their visit. Visitors, including families, are not to access rooms in the building other than Main Office without approval from school administration or being accompanied by a staff member.
- 5) Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Main office. Unauthorized persons may be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.

Emergency Drills

We are required by state law to conduct twelve emergency drills throughout each school year, four of which must be lockdown drills, and the remaining eight to be evacuation drills (i.e.: fire drills). The first eight drills are to be a combination of the two types of drills. As the situation permits and necessitates, we will notify parents of the emergency drills after they have been successfully completed.

Visitors present on school property during an emergency drill will be prompted by school staff to complete the drill with the scholar and staff population. Should a visitor arrive to the school after an emergency drill has begun, he/she will be required to wait outside of the building until the drill concludes.

School Patrol Officer (SPO)

In partnership with the Chemung County Sheriff's Department, a School Patrol Officer will now be housed daily at Finn to assist in ensuring the safety and security of all scholars, staff, and visitors.



APPENDIX A

Parents' Right to Know

In compliance with provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, this notification is to inform you that, because your child's school receives Title I federal funding, you have the right to request information regarding the professional qualification of your child's classroom teacher(s). Specifically included is your right to know the following:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and field of discipline of the certification or degree; and
- Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Should you wish to exercise your right to obtain the above information about your child's teacher please contact the Main Office in writing to make your request, or if you have any questions, please call 607-737-8040.



APPENDIX B

Admissions, Re-enrollment, and Transfers Policy

Admission/Enrollment

As a public school, Finn Academy is open to all children who are eligible under the laws of New York State for admission to a public school. The school follows all applicable state and federal laws in admitting scholars. Finn Academy does not discriminate on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, national origin, religion, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

Families interested in enrolling their child(ren) at Finn Academy are required to submit a completed enrollment application. The applications are made available at enrollment sessions, online, in the school's main office, or via mail at request. There are no fees associated with the filing of an application, nor are there any tuition charges for attending the school.

School staff will assist any family that has difficulty filling out the application.

Open registration will be advertised yearly and interested families can submit applications until the April 1st deadline. If the school receives more applications than allotted slots by April 1st, the school will hold a public lottery before April 15th to allocate available slots. If fewer applications than spaces available are received by April 1st, those scholars who applied by the deadline are admitted to the school. Applications will continue to be accepted after the April 1st deadline or the lottery to fill available slots or to be added to the school's waiting list.

Lottery Procedures

In the event that the school receives more applications than allotted spaces, the school will conduct a random, public lottery. This lottery is overseen and audited by an independent individual or organization to ensure fairness to all interested families and community members. Information regarding the time and location of the lottery will be advertised to welcome enrolling families to attend. The lottery is conducted within the first two weeks of April each year. The following criteria are used in the lottery:

- Only Kindergarten scholars will be admitted, unless unexpected enrollment fluctuations occur, and the school will then welcome new scholars into other grades;
- First preference is provided to children residing in the Elmira City School District;
- Second preference is provided to children with siblings already enrolled in the school;
- Third preference is provided to children with siblings already selected for enrollment during the lottery;

- Fourth preference is provided to children of Finn Academy staff members;
- Remaining applicants are drawn in the order in which their number is selected in the lottery.

Requirements and Eligibility

A scholar's address is the address at which his/her parent or current guardian resides. A parent or guardian is defined as:

1. Parent, by birth or adoption
2. Stepparent
3. Legally appointed guardian or foster parent (including a foster agency)
4. Person in "parental relation"

A person in a parental relation refers to a person that assumes the care of a child because the child's parents or guardians are not available. This could be due to death, imprisonment, mental illness, abandonment of a child, or living outside of New York State. A person can only be a person of parental relation if not other eligible person applies as a parent or guardian. Parental relation must be based on individual circumstances. A person who may provide temporary care (i.e.: babysitting) for a child or children does not qualify as a person in a parental relation.

A sibling is defined as one of two or more individuals having one or both parents in common or "parental relation". The drawing of a scholars' name will also draw that scholars' siblings' name, pending the amount of space available in that siblings' grade level. Finn Academy will determine, in a non-discriminatory manner, when these scholars will be admitted in the school in the situation that their attendance will over-enroll a grade level.

Timely applications will be accepted during dates specified by Finn Academy. Applications received after these dates are considered untimely. As a courtesy, the school will add untimely applications to the bottom of the waiting list for a given class based on the date and time the completed application is received. The waiting list will be the only official, legal document identifying the names of grade-eligible scholars with applications to Finn Academy pending acceptance for the subsequent school year, or when unexpected attrition occurs.

All scholars who are accepted for enrollment must complete all of the school's registration forms by the date required on the forms to secure provisional enrollment. Registration events will be scheduled to support families in completion of the documents. Scholars may forfeit their right to enroll if the forms are not returned by the designated date. A child is eligible for the available grades only if:

- The scholar successfully completes the preceding grade by the opening day of school; and
- The parent/guardian and scholar complete all required forms truthfully.

Vacancies

The primary open enrollment grade will be Kindergarten each year. However, to fill any vacancies, separate waiting lists outside of Kindergarten are maintained for each grade level.

The random lottery used for scholar admission serves to place scholars in preferential order on these waiting lists. If the school chooses to fill a vacancy, the school contacts the parent/guardian of the scholar next on the appropriate waiting list.

Reasonable attempts are made to contact the family to determine whether the scholar remains interested in enrollment at the school before proceeding to the next name on the list.

If attempts to contact the family are unsuccessful, the school may remove the scholar from the waiting list. A letter will be sent to the mailing address provided by the family on the enrollment application outlining the attempts made and the forfeiture of the scholar's spot.

Re-enrollment

Every year, families of currently enrolled scholars will be asked to complete an *Intent to Continue Enrollment Form*, which provides the school with information regarding enrollment retention and attrition trends for the upcoming school year for planning purposes. Completion of this form does not prohibit families from changing their mind at any point.

Withdrawals & Transfers

As a school of choice, we recognize that circumstances may arise in which a parent or guardian wishes to transfer their child to a different school. Parents may withdraw scholars by completing the *Scholar Withdrawal Form*. A scholar who attends another school is subject to being unenrolled at Finn Academy. Once a child unenrolls from the school, the child's spot is forfeited and can be filled by another child from the grade level waiting list. The school ensures the timely transfer of any necessary school records to the scholar's new school.

Finn Academy will maintain and report data on the enrollment and attendance of scholars, including, if applicable, the count of scholars with disabilities attending the school, to the school district of residence, consistent with NYS regulations.



Finn Academy Complaint Policy

From Approved Charter Application, Response 13 RFA Governance

Procedure for handling complaints, including from staff and parents:

In accordance with requirements of §2855(4) of the Education Law, any individual or group may bring a complaint to the Board of Trustees alleging a violation of the provisions of this article, the charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the school. The Board of Trustees of Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School designates its Dean of Scholars as the recipient of complaints, formal and informal, excepting complaints about the Dean of Scholars.

Complaints pertaining to the Dean of Scholars may be directed to the Chair of the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees. If, after presentation of the complaint to the Board of Trustees, the individual or group determines that the board has not adequately addressed the complaint, they may present that complaint to the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York and then the Board of Regents through the State Education Department, which shall investigate and respond. The SUNY Trustees or the Board of Regents shall have the power and the duty to issue appropriate remedial orders to charter schools under their jurisdiction to effectuate the provisions of this section. The grievance process will be prominently displayed and included in all school and parent manuals so that any individual or group may bring a complaint to the Board of Trustees.

Although any individual or group may bring a complaint as discussed above, Finn Academy will establish a complaint process to expeditiously resolve matters in question. The complainant must adhere to the following steps:

1. If the issue is academic in nature, the complainant must contact the child's teacher in writing or verbally.
2. If unsatisfied with the response or if the complaint does not concern the child's teacher, he/she can contact the Dean of Scholars, who may notify the Board Chair. At the discretion of the Dean of Scholars, the complaint may be required to be submitted in writing. The Dean of Scholars may also conduct an investigation into the complaint.
3. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the response of the Dean of Scholars, a written complaint can be submitted to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will make every effort to respond to the complaint in a timely manner, not to exceed 30 business days. To help insure a thorough and timely response, the complaint should include: (i) a detailed statement of the nature of the grievance, (ii) what response, if any, was received from the Dean of Scholars and/or teacher; (iii) copies of any correspondence between complainant and the Dean of Scholars and/or teacher; (iv) what action or relief the complainant is seeking; and (v) the complainant's name, address and

telephone number.

4. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the response of the Board of Trustees, and the complainant alleges a violation of law or a provision of the school's charter, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the Charter School's Institute of the State University of New York.

Please note that if a scholar is expelled or given a long-term suspension (more than 10 days), the parent/guardian has the right to submit a letter of appeal to the Board of Trustees within 10 days of the date of expulsion. The letter must include the reason for the request and any special or extenuating circumstances that may support the reversal of the recommended penalty. The Board Chair will present the request before the entire Board of Trustees for review and determination. A final determination letter will be sent to the student's parent or guardian indicating approval or denial of an appeal.

Finn Academy will adhere to all provisions for due process to ensure students' rights to a free and appropriate public education. Where the student is a student with a disability, Finn Academy will work with the student's host district and its Committee on Special Education to provide a manifestation determination, in accordance with law. Consequences of suspension will be delivered in accordance with state and federal law. Where necessary, Finn Academy will contract with a certified and impartial hearing officer to assist in conducting any disciplinary hearings involving a potential long-term suspension.

Complaints of an Alleged Violation of Law and/or Charter

A complaint of that alleges a violation of law and/or charter involves an alleged violation of law and/or charter. A formal complaint must be in writing and delivered to the Finn Academy Charter School Board of Trustees. To help insure a thorough and timely response, the complaint should include: (i) a detailed statement of the nature of the any grievance, (ii) the response, if any, receive from the principal and/or teacher; (iii) copies of any correspondence between complainant and the principal and/or teacher; (iv) what action or relief the complainant is seeking; and (v) the complainant's name, address and telephone number. The Board of Trustees will make every effort to respond to the complaint in a timely manner, not to exceed 30 business days.

Upon resolution of such a complaint, Finn Academy must provide to the complainant:

- (a) a written determination, including any remedial actions to be taken;
- (b) a written notice to the complainant that he or she may file an appeal with the Charter Schools Institute if the complaint involves a violation of law or charter; and
- (c) a copy of the Institute's Grievance Guidelines (available on the Institute's website: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/parentResources.htm#questions>).

Other Complaints

If you have a complaint which that does not allege a violation of law and/or charter, it is recommended that the complainant:

1. Contact the child's teacher in writing or verbally.
2. If the complaint is unsatisfied with the response or if the complaint does not concern the child's teacher, he/she can contact the Dean of Scholars. The Dean of Scholars, at his or her discretion, may require that the complaint be submitted in writing. The Dean of Scholars may also, at his or her discretion, conduct an investigation into the complaint. If the complainant is unsatisfied, he or she shall inform the Dean of Scholars who will notify the Board Chair.

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the response of the Dean of Scholars or complainant is regarding the Dean of Scholars, a written complaint can be submitted to the Board of Trustees (the complainant may bypass the step of speaking with the Dean of Scholars and go directly to the Board of Trustees). The Board of Trustees will make every effort to respond to the complaint in a timely manner, not to exceed 30 business days. To help insure a thorough and timely response, the complaint should include: (i) a detailed statement of the nature of the grievance, (ii) what response, if any, was received from the Dean of Scholars and/or teacher; (iv) what action or relief the complainant is seeking; and (v) the complainant's name, address, and telephone number.



APPENDIX D

Fingerprint/Clearance Policy

Background checks and fingerprinting through the New York State Education Department's Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability are required to obtain a position with Finn Academy and random background checks may be conducted.

All employees of Finn Academy will be cleared prior to employment by means of a fingerprint background check, including janitors and maintenance staff, security personnel and cafeteria workers who are present when children are in the school building.

Fingerprint clearance and background checks will be verified for each new employee by at least two members of the leadership team.

Any volunteer providing more than fifteen hours of service to the school when children are present will be subject to a background check and fingerprinting through the NYSED Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability.

Fingerprinting fees are the potential employees' responsibility.



Expedition Celebration and Performance Attendance Policy

Expedition celebrations and musical performances are important components of our school program, and such, scholar attendance is required. These events provide scholars with the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and mastery of skills. Scholar absences negatively impact the crew, ensemble, or group's cohesive celebration/performance.

Participation in these events is included in the scholar's grade, and unexcused absences will lower the grade for that marking period. For musical performances, absences may also impact the scholar's continued participation in the program.

If the absence from an event is due to an emergency, the teacher must be notified by a parent/guardian as soon as possible. The scholar may be provided with an alternative to showcase their learning and knowledge.

The school will make every effort to provide parents/guardians with advance notice of all celebration and performance dates and times.



Finn Academy Uniform Policy

At Finn Academy, we believe that an environment focused on learning and scholarship is a requirement of a high performing school. The way a scholar dresses has an impact on the learning environment and should create a positive sense of crew and community. Uniforms create a sense of belonging and puts academics at the center of our work. We believe that scholars can celebrate their individuality through their personality and learning, rather than their outward appearance. Finn Academy has adopted and will enforce the following Dress Code. Should a circumstance arise that is not specifically delineated within this policy, the Dean of Scholars shall consider the purpose of this policy and decide the best course of enforcement accordingly. Decisions made by the school Dean related to enforcement of the school Dress Code are final.

TOPS: Long Sleeve Polos, Short Sleeve Polos, Dress Shirts, and Cardigans

- Polos must be black, heather grey, or white (K-5)
- Polos must be black, heather, grey, white, navy blue, or maroon (6-7 ONLY)
- Polos must be logo and graphic free
- Dress shirts must be white
- Cardigans must be black or heather grey
- Cardigans must be non-hooded and contain buttons, not zippers
- Sweater vests must be black

BOTTOMS: Pants, Skirts, Jumpers, and Shorts

- Pants must be black or heather grey dress pants
- Cargo or denim pants are not permitted
- Skirts and jumpers must be black or heather grey
- Athletic and casual cotton skirts are not permitted
- Shorts must be black or heather grey
- Athletic and casual cotton or spandex shorts are not permitted
- Skirts, jumpers and shorts must not be shorter than 2 inches above the knee
- Leggings cannot be substituted for pants, a jumper, or skirt

OUTERWEAR: Coats, Jackets, and Sweatshirts

- Outerwear may not be worn inside the school building during the school day
- Outerwear may be worn only if the scholar is exiting the building for an outdoor activity or recess
- Outerwear may be worn to school and placed in the scholar's locker.

- The Dean and/or the classroom teacher may make an exception if the building/classroom is unusually cold

FOOTWEAR: Shoes and Sneakers

- All footwear must black, or black with small white logo.
- All footwear must have rubber soles.
- Heels should be no higher than 1/2 inch.
- Winter boots are not permitted during the school day. Scholars may wear boots during inclement weather, but must change into appropriate footwear once inside the school.

ACCESSORIES: Headwear, Jewelry and Underclothes

- All undershirts (short and long-sleeve) must be black, grey, or white.
- Leggings and tights must be black, heather grey, or white (patterns in the appropriate colors are permitted) and must be worn accompanied by a jumper or skirt.
- Hats of any kind are not permitted. Scholars may wear them to school, but must remove them and store them in their locker upon entering the school.
- All socks must be black, grey or white.
- Tall socks are permitted with shorts, skirts, or dresses, as long as they are approved colors. A small logo can be visible, as long as it is black, grey, or white.

FITNESS/DANCE

- Scholars in grades K-5 will wear their school day uniform for Fitness and Dance classes
- Scholars in grades 6-7 can wear plain black, grey, or Finn Wear athletic shorts or pants and plain white, grey, black, or Finn Wear t-shirts for Fitness and Dance classes (shorts must not be shorter than 2 inches above the knee). Tank tops are prohibited.

FINNWEAR FRIDAYS:

To encourage school spirit and provide scholars with the opportunity to wear additional colors, scholars are allowed to wear approved Finn Academy spirit wear on Fridays. Finn Wear tops must be accompanied by uniform bottoms.

Uniform Violation Follow-through:

First Violation of the Finn Academy Dress Code will result in a note home to parents/guardians notifying them of the violation. We will do our best to provide the scholar with the necessary clothing item(s) for the day. We ask that families return the item(s) cleaned the following day, so that another scholar may benefit from it.

Second Violation of the Finn Academy Dress Code will result in a phone call to parents/guardians requesting that appropriate clothing item(s) are brought to school for the scholar to change into for the day.

Third Violation of the Finn Academy Dress Code will result in a meeting between Leadership, parents/guardians, and the scholar to discuss the Uniform Policy and any support or help that may be needed to abide by the Dress Code.



Finn Academy Toy Policy

Due to the potential interruption to the learning environment and the danger of them being broken, lost or stolen, any items that can be considered toys are not to be brought on the bus or to school. These items include, but are not limited to, dolls, stuffed animals, figurines, trading cards, balls, toy cars, and electronics. Your child's teacher will notify you of any special activity in which scholars are requested to bring items that may be deemed toys. The school assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged toys or items.

The first time that a scholar brings a toy to school, the item will be returned at the conclusion of the school day.

If a scholar brings an item a second time, it will be held in the Main Office until an adult can pick it up.



APPENDIX H

Finn Academy Electronic Device Policy

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School does not permit electronic devices of any kind (excluding cellular phones) on school property. We are not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices such as cameras, laser lights, iPads, CD players, IPODs, gaming devices, MP3 players, etc.

Cell Phones:

We recognize that cell phones have become a common tool for communication. However, they also pose the potential for a major distraction to the learning environment and are vulnerable to theft. We ask that you allow your child to carry a cell phone only if absolutely necessary.

- if a scholar must have a cell phone on school property, it must be turned off from the moment they arrive to the building in the morning and until after dismissal in the afternoon
- cell phones should be kept in scholar backpacks and in lockers and should not be removed without direct permission from a staff member
- phones may not be used to talk, take pictures, play games, record or text during school hours, including recess
- Finn Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones, nor do we have the resources to investigate if they are lost or stolen. The cell phone must be secured and kept out of sight

If a student violates the cell phone policy, they will have the following consequences:

First Violation
Scholar cell phone will be taken away and returned at the conclusion of the school day
Second Violation
Scholar cell phone will be taken and locked up in the office until a parent/guardian can come to school to retrieve it
Third Violation
Scholars will no longer be allowed to bring a cell phone to school until a parent/guardian conference with a member of the administration team is held



APPENDIX I

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy

It is imperative that all scholars, families, staff, and community members feel safe and valued within the school environment. In accordance with all applicable laws, Finn Academy will strive to create an environment free of harassment, bullying and discrimination and will foster civility in the school to prevent and prohibit conduct which is inconsistent with the school's educational mission.

Finn Academy will promote dignity for all scholars without qualification. Finn Academy condemns and prohibits all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination of scholars by school employees, scholars, school volunteers, visitors, guests or other third parties on school property and at school-sponsored events, programs and activities. In addition, any act of harassment, bullying and discrimination outside of school sponsored events, which occurs on school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property, may be subject to the Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.

Prohibited Conduct

The phrase "harassment, bullying and discrimination" refers to all conduct, communication or physical conduct based on race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and expression), sex, and any other characteristic protected by applicable law and which:

- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a scholar's academic performance or participation in an educational or extracurricular activity, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment; and/or effectively bars a scholar's access to an educational opportunity or benefit;
- Substantially or unreasonably interferes with an individual's mental, emotional or physical well-being;
- Reasonably causes or would be expected to cause an individual to fear for their physical safety;
- Reasonably cause or would be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to an individual; and/or
- Otherwise adversely affects the educational opportunities and benefits provided by Finn Academy.

Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination of Scholars:

Sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination can originate from a person of either sex against a person of the opposite or same sex. Sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature.

Bullying:

Bullying is a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. Bullying may be premeditated or a sudden activity. It may be subtle or easy to identify, done by one person or a group. Bullying often includes the following characteristics:

- Power imbalance: occurs when a bully uses their physical or social power over a target;
- Intent to harm: the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity;
- Threat of further aggression: the bully and the target believe the bullying will continue;
- Terror: when any bullying increases, it becomes a "systematic violence of harassment, bullying and discrimination used to intimidate and maintain dominance."

There are at least three kinds of bullying: verbal, physical and social/relational.

- *Verbal bullying*: includes name calling, insulting remarks, verbal teasing, frightening phone calls, violent threats, extortion, taunting, gossip, spreading rumors, racist slurs, threatening electronic communications ("cyberbullying"), anonymous notes, etc.
- *Physical bullying*: includes poking, slapping, hitting, tripping or causing a fall, choking, kicking, punching, biting, pinching, scratching, spitting, twisting arms or legs, damaging clothes and personal property or threatening gestures;
- *Social or relational bullying*: includes excluding someone from a group, isolating, shunning, spreading rumors or gossiping, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, teasing about clothes, looks, giving dirty looks, aggressive stares, etc.

A single negative act, as enumerated above, may constitute "bullying."

Hazing:

Hazing is an induction, initiation or membership process involving harassment, bullying and discrimination which produces public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule or creates a situation where public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule is likely to occur.

Even if a hazing victim participated "willingly" or there is no "intent" by the hazer to harm or injure another, hazing is still against school policy and Finn's Code of Conduct and may be in violation of New York State law.

Retaliatory Behavior:

Finn Academy prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed at complainants, victims, witnesses and/or any other individuals who participated in the investigation of a complaint of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

DASA Coordinator and Reporting and Investigation

The Dean of Scholars shall serve as the school's Dignity Act Coordinator ("DASA Coordinator"). The DASA Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Policy.

Reporting:

Any person who believes they have been a victim of harassment, bullying or discrimination in the school environment, or has otherwise witnesses such harassment, bullying or discrimination, is strongly encouraged to report the alleged harassment, bullying or discrimination to the DASA Coordinator, the Chief Operations Officer or Chief Academic Officer. Reports may be made verbally or through the DASA Complaint Form.

School staff who witness or who receive a report of alleged harassment, bullying or discrimination must promptly notify the DASA Coordinator within one school day. If school staff make a verbal reporting first, they must promptly provide a written report to the DASA Coordinator within two school days after making the verbal report.

Investigation:

Upon receipt of a complaint alleging that a scholar has suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination the DASA Coordinator, or his/her designee, will inform the parents/guardians of the scholar alleged to have suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination and the parents/guardians accused of having committed the harassment, bullying or discrimination. If any accused scholar has been identified as having a disability, or is suspected of having a disability, pursuant to Section 504 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, a referral will be made for appropriate action in accordance with state and federal law and regulations.

An investigation into the complaint will be initiated promptly and will be completed as quickly as possible. An investigation may include interviewing the scholar(s) alleged to have suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination, the scholar(s) accused of having committed such conduct, any witnesses and/or a review of all relevant documents and other materials.

In the event that an investigation confirms harassment, bullying or discrimination, the school will take prompt action to resolve the issue to create a more positive school culture and climate, be proactive in preventing further behavior, and ensure the safety of the scholar/scholars against whom such harassment, bullying or discrimination was directed.

Any individuals whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline in accordance with school policy, including the Code of Conduct. If necessary, individuals may be removed from the premises or referred to law enforcement officials. Data reports and trends will be reviewed on a regular basis related to harassment, bullying and discrimination, and disseminated to any necessary parties.

Training

Staff training and professional development will be provided regarding the method of reporting of an incident believed to be in violation of this policy, the investigation procedure and the prohibition of retaliation for reporting an incident.

Finn Academy will review this policy on an ongoing basis and make any necessary changes as required by the applicable laws and regulations.



Finn Academy Transportation Policy

Safety is the primary concern for every child that rides a bus provided by Finn Academy. Therefore, every precaution will be taken to make sure each child arrives at their destination safely. This can only be accomplished if we have the cooperation of both scholar and parent/guardian.

We recognize that transporting children and driving a school bus can be a difficult and demanding task. The driver's attention must remain on the task of driving at all times; deviation from this focus has the potential to negatively impact the safety of scholars and bus personnel. It is vital that scholars are responsible for their own behavior and held accountable for any behavioral infractions. We view the bus as an extension of our classrooms, and as a privilege; as thus, we expect that all scholars will adhere to our behavioral guidelines and core values.

The following behaviors will not be permitted on school-provided transportation, to ensure the safe and efficient operation of our buses. Please note that this list is not inclusive of all behavioral misconduct.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hitting and other forms of intentional physical aggression• profanity or sexually inappropriate language or gestures• insubordination• loud and distracting noises• unsafe behaviors, such as being out of seat, in aisle, out of window, or distracting the driver• throwing objects• vandalism or destruction of bus property• possession of a weapon• possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances	First Warning Will result in a discipline referral to be completed, and a conference with a member of the administration team (and bus personnel, if possible). Note: if the infraction is severe, a suspension may be necessary at the discretion of administration
	Second Warning Will result in suspension from school transportation for a day, with notification to parents/guardians and scholars
	Third Warning Will result in suspension from school transportation for up to a week, with notification to parents/guardians and scholars. Bus privileges will not be reinstated until a conference is held with parents/guardians and scholars.
	Special permission situations and exceptions are decided upon by the school administration on a case-by-case basis.

If the behavior is a violation of the law, authorities shall be notified and all transportation privileges for the scholar shall be suspended for a period up to and not to exceed the remainder of the school year. If the behavior results in property damage, restitution must be paid or a plan for restitution must be agreed upon before riding privileges are reinstated.

Notification of Transportation Needs:

Parents/guardians must complete the Finn Academy Transportation Request Form and submit directly to the Main Office, prior to scholars being able to utilize afternoon school transportation.

Parents/guardians are required to notify the school of any change in bus drop-off location with at least 24 hours advanced notice. Notification must be provided directly to the Main Office by the parent/guardian. Notification of transportation changes provided by scholars will not be accepted, nor will notifications provided to bus personnel. In the case of an emergency, school leaders may make an exception to this 24-hour notification policy. If the notification procedure is not followed, scholars will be dropped off at their regularly assigned location.

Electronics on the Bus:

Many scholars use electronic devices as part of their daily lives. We understand that they are fun to use and often can make the ride from school more enjoyable. Unfortunately, misuse of these items can be detrimental to the safety and well-being of other scholars, monitors and drivers.

The following electronic devices are approved for scholar use on the Finn-provided afternoon transportation: cellphone, smart watch, iPod, and tablet. When these approved electronic devices are in use, scholars must abide by all rules and guidelines, as outlined below:

1. Scholars are permitted to access **only** age and developmentally appropriate content, as determined by the bus monitor and driver.
2. Phone calls and texting are not allowed on buses unless in an emergency where immediate communication is necessary and with permission of the bus monitor or driver.
3. Video/audio recordings and pictures are not allowed to be taken by scholars.
4. Scholars must utilize headphones when utilizing the audio function on their device.

If a scholar is determined to be misusing approved electronic devices (at the discretion of the monitor, driver, and school administration), the following courses of action may be taken:

- A reminder of the expectations and warning to be appropriate may be provided.
- Scholars may be asked to power down the device and store safely in backpack or coat.
- The device may be confiscated by the monitor or driver for the remainder of the ride.
- Scholars may have their electronic device privilege suspended or revoked.
- Scholars may receive suspension from Finn-provided afternoon transportation.

In certain situations, Finn Academy reserves the right to address issues on a case by case basis.

At this time, use of personal gaming systems, such as DS, Vita and Switch, is **prohibited**.

Finn Academy and our contracted bus company are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged devices, nor do we have the resources to investigate if they are lost or stolen. Scholars utilize devices at their own risk.



Finn Academy Testing Policy

It is important for our families to understand that while we at Finn believe in our families' choice to refuse testing for their scholar, the term "opt-out" is not one that New York State validates. Opting-out in New York State is recognized as a refusal, which results in the scholar receiving a 0 as a score on their assessments, which is then factored into Finn Academy's overall proficiency rate. Thus, having a direct correlation as to whether our charter is renewed.

At Finn Academy, we believe in utilizing all forms of testing and data to inform our instructional program. The use of data and state standards is an important element of our school design and fosters our purpose of providing scholars with an opportunity to reach their highest academic potential. Parents, scholars, and teachers can utilize testing results and data to identify and measure scholar growth and to measure the strength of the overall instructional program.

It is very important to our school and our renewal process that all scholars enrolled participate in State Testing to fulfill Federal guidelines. These assessments include the New York State English Language Arts Test, the New York State Math Test, and the New York State Science Performance Test.

Process for Refusing State Testing:

In the event that the parents/guardians elect to refuse state testing for their scholar, a printed letter/form must be provided to the scholar's teacher which includes the following details:

- the scholar's name
- the name of the test and which subject units
- reason for opting out of the assessment
- parent/guardian's name and signature
- parent/guardian's contact information

Please note, Finn Academy will not provide alternative in-school activities on scheduled testing days for scholars whose parents submit a refusal letter.

All refusal letters submitted during any school year will only pertain to state assessments administered during the school year in which they were submitted.

Should you choose to keep your scholar home from school on testing days, their absence will be marked as an unexcused absence. Testing usually lasts approximately 2 hours and we always recommend sending scholars to school to make the most of all learning opportunities.



Finn Academy Retention and Promotion Policy

We are committed to ensuring that all scholars are placed in the appropriate grade levels. Although generally scholars will be promoted to the next grade level on an annual basis, there may be instances that it is in the best interest of the child based on academic and social-emotional performance to recommend grade level retention. The following guidelines and procedures shall apply in the case of grade level retentions:

No later than the end of the second grading period the grade level teacher shall determine whether any of the scholars in his/her classroom are in danger of requiring retention based on lack of significant academic progress. By this time, if the grade level teacher determines that a scholar may be in danger of requiring retention, the teacher must provide notice to the parents/guardians as soon as possible. Communications should be supported with evidence of scholar work and documented for future reference.

Prior to discussion of retention, the teacher shall refer the scholar to the Response to Intervention (RtI) Team for recommendations on support and intervention.

The decision to retain a scholar in a grade shall be made by school administration in concert with the instructional support team, grade level teacher, and parent/guardian. The teacher shall make the recommendation to retain the scholar no later than May 1st of that school year, and provide the parent/guardian with notice of the decision to recommend retention. The determination to retain a scholar shall be made by building leadership no later than May 31st and provide the parents/guardians with a verbal and written notice of the decision to recommend retention. Please note that school leadership reserves the right to adjust the notification timeline as needed.

The building leadership may consider the following factors when determining whether to retain a scholar:

1. Academic performance, especially in ELA (English language arts) and mathematics
2. Age and physical size
3. Attendance/tardiness
4. Work habits
5. Cognitive, social and emotional
6. Parental support

The Lights Retention Scale may be utilized in assessing the appropriateness of a recommendation for retention.



Finn Academy Attendance Policy

At Finn Academy, we make a special effort to ensure that all scholars fully benefit from their education by attending school regularly. Attending school regularly helps children feel more positive and confident about school—and themselves. Consistent attendance in elementary school will help children do well and prepare them for the added responsibilities in high school, college, and at work.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

We miss your scholar when they are gone and we value their contributions to our school crew. We would like you to help ensure that your scholar attends regularly and is successful in school. If your scholar is going to be absent or tardy, please contact our Registrar, Christy Strobel directly, at 737-8040 or christystrobel@finnacademy.com. In order for your scholar's absence or tardy to be documented as excused, we need a phone call or a note within 24 hours of the absence. If we do not receive any notification, the absence/tardy will be marked as unexcused.

Excused	Unexcused
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal illness• Death in the family• Impassable roads due to inclement weather• Religious observance• Required court appearances• Attendance at medical, mental health, or other critical appointment• Special circumstance approved at the discretion of administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversleeping• Missed transportation• Family vacation• Non-critical appointment• Athletic event• Any other reason which does not fall into the categories listed under "excused"

Staff/School Responsibility

We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that scholars are absent from school, from health concerns to transportation challenges. There are many people in our building prepared to help you if you or your scholar face challenges in getting to school regularly or on time. We promise to communicate with you to understand the absence, and to identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges in helping your scholar attend school on a consistent basis.

School Policies and State Law

The Compulsory Education under New York State Law states that school age minors 6-16 must attend school regularly as prescribed where the student resides. The student must attend school the entire time classes are in session (*NYS Education Law 3205*). The compulsory education law is designed to require school attendance and insure that no child is denied the opportunity to receive an education. At Finn Academy, a child who turns 5 by December 31 during a school year is eligible to attend Kindergarten starting in the beginning of the school year.

Scholar Arrival

We allow a thirty-minute window of arrival time for all scholars, kindergarten through fifth grade, from 7:30-8:00 am. Any scholars arriving after 8:00 am will be considered tardy. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to accompany the scholar to the Main Office to sign in. To ensure scholar safety and accurate record-keeping, scholars are not permitted to be dropped off without parent/guardian presence.

School Response and Follow-through

Number of Absences or Tardies	School Response
1 absence	Phone call or other communication home regarding absence
5 absences	Letter to parent/guardian regarding absences
10 or more absences	A conference with the parent/guardian, classroom teacher, and member of administration will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time to discuss any supports needed to overcome obstacles with attendance
5 tardies	Letter to parent/guardian regarding tardies
15 or more tardies	A conference with the parent/guardian, classroom teacher, and member of administration will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time to discuss any supports needed to overcome obstacles with timely attendance
<i>*Please note that additional actions may be taken to assist families in ensuring consistent scholar attendance</i>	
<i>*A conference is not required if your scholar has provided a doctor's note, or pre-arranged the absence in writing, and the parent, scholar and school have made plan so your scholar does not fall behind academically. If your scholar has an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan the team that created the plan should reconvene to address any potential barriers.</i>	

First Five Days Policy

Scholars who are not in attendance due to an unexcused absence by the conclusion of the fifth day of the start of the school year will be formally unenrolled. If the scholar is ill, parents/guardians must notify the school of the absence and provide documentation.

Scholars absent on the first day of the new school year will be contacted by phone or email to ensure their intent for continued enrollment.

If the intent is for continued enrollment, but the scholar has not attended by the conclusion of the third day, parents/guardians will receive a phone call, letter or email, indicating that the scholar will be unenrolled after the end of the fifth day.

If the intent is for continued enrollment, but the scholar has not attended by the end of the fifth day, the scholar will be formally unenrolled, and parents/guardians will receive notification via phone, email or letter, indicating the unenrollment.



APPENDIX N

Finn Academy Scholar Walking/Biking Policy

To ensure the safe return home for all scholars, permission to walk and/or bike from school after dismissal will be granted to scholars in **sixth and seventh grade only**.

Approval will be granted based on the below guidelines:

- Advanced written (phone calls will not be accepted) notification by parent/guardian, containing the following information:
 - Scholar name
 - Teacher name
 - Mode of transportation (walking or biking)
 - Address where scholar is walking or biking to
 - Date range of parent/guardian permission for scholar to walk or bike to the location
- Scholars who will be biking must have a safety helmet

Scholars not in sixth or seventh grade may walk or bike from school premises at dismissal if a parent/guardian accompanies them.

Families are expected to provide their own bike lock and understand that Finn Academy is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged bikes or bike equipment



APPENDIX O

Finn Academy Summer Session Attendance Policy

As Summer Session is an integral component of our school program and charter, scholar attendance is **required**. The session dates are confirmed and shared with families in a timely fashion in order to avoid potential scheduling conflicts. Should a scholar not attend part or all of Summer Session, the following may take place:

- Absences to be included in the upcoming school year's overall attendance and the Finn Academy Attendance Policy will be followed
- Absences will be reflected in Summer Session progress reports and factored into grading for the upcoming school year
- Continued enrollment at Finn Academy may be jeopardized

The Finn Academy Administration will take into consideration the following circumstances when concerning scholar absences during Summer Session:

- Lack of transportation services as a hardship to families
- Extended scholar illness
- Death in family

Notification from families is required for any of the above situations for consideration.

Please note that scholar attendance and participation in other camps or activities during Summer Session will be unexcused and subject to the above actions.



APPENDIX P

Health Services Policy

Immunizations

Public Health Law (NYS Law Section 2164) requires that all scholars must meet immunization requirements for grades Kindergarten through seven. Before a child can enter or attend Finn Academy, parents/guardians must present documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or that their child is scheduled to receive the subsequent doses.

Immunization	Number of Doses Required
<i>Kindergarten, and 1st-5th grades</i>	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTaP)	5 doses; or 4 if 4 th dose is given at 4 yrs. of age or older; or 3 if series started at age 7 or older
Polio	4 doses; or 3 if 3 rd dose given at 4 years of age or older
Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)	2
Hepatitis B	3
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	2
<i>Grade 6</i>	
DTap/DTP	4 doses; or 3 doses if 3 rd dose given at 4 or older
Tdap	1 dose by 11 th birthday
Polio	4 doses if all before age 4; or 3 with the 3 rd dose at 4 years of age or older
MMR	2
Hepatitis B	3; or 2 doses if given at ages 11-15
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	2
<i>Grade 7</i>	
DTap/DTP	4 doses; or 3 doses if 3 rd given on or after 4 th birthday
Tdap	1 dose by 11 th birthday
Polio	4 doses; or 3 doses if 3 rd given on/after 4 th birthday (if doses before age 4, and 4 th given before 8-7-10, no further doses needed)
MMR	2
Hepatitis B	3 doses; or 2 doses if given between ages 11 and 15
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	2
Meningitis A (MCV4: Menactra or Menveo)	1

Immunization Exemptions - On June 13, 2019, legislation was signed to remove non-medical exemptions from school vaccination requirements for children. As such, we can no longer accept religious exemption requests from families.

Medical exemptions will continue to be reviewed and all required documentation must be provided.

Physical Examinations

New York State Education Department requires all students to have a physical examination as follows: all new entrants - all students who enroll in the school for the first time at Kindergarten or any other grade; all students in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7; at least every 3 years for students receiving special education services (students with an Individualized Education Plan)

The school nurse must have documentation from the healthcare provider of the physical examination findings. We cannot accept parent's report of a physical or a jotted note on prescription pad saying only that student had a physical, without the findings. Your child's pediatrician or other healthcare provider will probably have the proper form to fill out for school.

Medication Administration

The following guidelines must be required for any medication to be taken in school. This applies to all prescription and non-prescription (over the counter) medications, including pain relievers and cold/cough medicine. The school can provide families with a *Medical Provider Order Form*.

- The parent/guardian must provide school nurse with a written order by a licensed prescriber and a written request from the parent or guardian to give the medication in school as ordered by the prescriber.
- An adult must deliver the medication in a properly labeled original container to the school. Medication in baggies, foil packets, etc. cannot be accepted. The label on the bottle must match the prescriber's order. If you need a second prescription bottle, so that you have one for home and one for school, your pharmacist will provide one for you upon request.
- All medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the health office.
- It is the parent's responsibility to take care of these matters during school hours.
- Any child who has medication of ANY kind in school without fulfilling all requirements, is in violation of school policy and may be subject to discipline.

Medication Self-Management

The school will work toward assisting scholars in the self-management of their chronic health condition based upon the scholar's knowledge level and skill by:

- a. Adequately training all staff involved in the care of the child, on a "need to know" basis, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality;
- b. Assuring the availability of the necessary equipment and/or medications;
- c. Providing appropriately trained nurses as required by law;
- d. Providing additional appropriately trained adults to complete delegated tasks as allowed by law;
- e. Developing an emergency plan for the student; and
- f. Providing ongoing staff and scholar education.

Common Conditions and School Attendance

Condition	Can Scholar be in Attendance?
Chicken Pox (varicella), and hand-foot-mouth disease	No, until all pustules are dry and crusted
Viral or allergic pink eye (conjunctivitis)	Yes, if drainage is clear (like tears)
Bacterial pink eye (conjunctivitis)	No, if drainage is thick, creamy and yellow (can return after 24 hours of treatment)
Fifth disease	Yes, no longer contagious after rash appears
Impetigo	No, until 24 hours after beginning treatment
Head lice (pediculosis)	Yes, if nits only . No, if live lice; will be sent home treatment if able to reach parent/guardian.
MRSA skin lesion	Yes, if any open or draining wound is covered with dressing/bandage
Pertussis (whooping cough)	No, until 5 days after beginning treatment
Ringworm (tinea)	No, until 24 hours after beginning treatment; must provide document stating that child is being treated
Scabies	No, until 24 hours after beginning treatment
Shingles (varicella zoster)	Yes, if lesions are covered; no, if lesions are not covered – must wait until all lesions are dry and crusted
Strep throat	No, until 24 hours after beginning treatment
Fever/general illness	No, until fever is less than 100 degrees
Vomiting/diarrhea	No, until 24 hours free of symptoms

Additional conditions and scholar attendance may be discussed with family at discretion of School Nurse and leadership.

Emergency Medication (EpiPen and Glucagon)

The administration of emergency medication to a student may be performed by a (non-nurse) school staff member responding to an emergency situation, when such use has been prescribed by a licensed prescriber. The only medications that can be given by non-nurse staff in schools are EpiPen for serious allergic reactions, and Glucagon for severe low blood sugar in students with diabetes. The registered professional school nurse, nurse practitioner, physician or physician's assistant must have trained the staff member to administer the emergency medication for that particular emergency situation and given him/her approval to assist the student in the event of an emergency. Such a response would fall under the Good Samaritan exemption for rendering emergency care during a life-threatening situation. Non-nurse staff cannot administer any other medications in the school setting, including extra-curricular and off-campus activities (e.g., sports and field trips).

Blood Glucose Monitoring

Children with diabetes have the right to care for their diabetes at school in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which provide protection against discrimination for children with disabilities, including diabetes. Accordingly, blood glucose monitoring is allowed in the school setting at any time, within any place,

and by anyone necessitating such testing. Children will receive assistance, if needed, with the procedure. The school nurse oversees any arrangements that need to be made for testing, and a system to report the results to the nurse as needed. Proper arrangements will be made for the disposal of sharps.

Disposal of Unused Medication

Any unused medication (including unused routine medications, or expired prescription and nonprescription drugs) must be picked up by the parent/guardian by the end of each school year. Scholars are prohibited from transporting medications home. If the parent/guardian does not pick up the unused medication by the end of the school year, the school nurse or designated health office personnel must document that the medication was abandoned and destroy it.

Non-FDA Sanctioned Requests/Herbal Remedies, Dietary Supplements and Natural Products

At this time, the school cannot honor requests for use of herbal remedies, dietary supplements, and natural products, including essential oils, as they are not sanctioned by the FDA. Such matters will be discussed with parents/guardians to whose cooperation will be sought to have such medications administered outside of school.

Treatment of Ill or Injured Scholars at School

In most instances, first aid should be given, and, if necessary, the parent may be contacted to come to school and transport the scholar to a medical professional. Beyond first aid, the medical care is the responsibility of the parent.

The school provides first aid care only. We are unable to make a medical diagnosis of what is wrong with a child, nor are we able to provide treatment needed, beyond basic first aid.

If a scholar has a problem, the school nursing staff will:

- Provide first aid care.
- For a serious problem, use the phone numbers provided by the parent to reach someone.
- For a mild or a minor problem, routine first aid care will be given.

Unfortunately, we cannot call every parent whose child reports to the nurses' office for minor injury or illness. We will attempt to reach the parent/guardian in cases of more serious illness or injury, or if there are particular signs or symptoms the parent/guardian needs to watch for at home, especially when pertaining to an injury to the head.

If there is a serious or potentially life-threatening situation, the 911 system will be activated, and/or an ambulance may be called.