



A P u b l i c C h a r t e r S c h o o l

Student & Family Handbook

2016-2017

639 St. Ann's Avenue
Bronx, NY 10455
Main Phone: 929-291-7700
Email: info@sbecacs.org
Website: www.sbecacs.org



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August, 2016

Dear Students and Families,

Last year, the faculty of the South Bronx Early College Academy met began the process of creating the school we have all been imagining and hoping for. We worked to begin asking and answering all the important questions that a great school needs to answer. Here are some of the key questions that we will continue to answer at the Early College Academy:

1. How do we make sure that learning is real and challenging so that students discover the excitement of science as research that answers important and interesting questions, or history as the search for the true story of the past and present, or art as a way to discover and express what matters to us in our lives and our society?
2. How do we support all students in developing and mastering ways of knowing and understanding in mathematics or English, computer science or music, so that every student has the freedom and the know how to choose their own path as they graduate from high school and seek a productive and satisfying place in the world?
3. How do we help students build the capacity for lifelong learning and a deep sense of who they are as individuals with particular interests, a range of skills, and the ability to solve the problems and overcome the challenges that are part of a fulfilling life?
4. How do we create a school that is part of a community committed to the health and development of its children so that families and community organizations are as much a part of the learning process as teachers and classrooms?

During the summer, we made plans, asked more questions, and began our work together to build the Early College Academy learning community. But the next steps are the most important. The Early College Academy will only achieve its mission because of our efforts together. Our success depends on families, students and faculty working together. We know that everyone can learn and that learning happens best in a community that communicates and works together.

Many months ago, we invited you to become a part of the Early College Academy community and you accepted that invitation. We welcome you now as fellow members of this community and we look forward to getting to know each other better as we learn and grow together. We share a commitment to help all learners in the Early College Academy community to flourish and become highly competent, capable, and caring adults.

I look forward to the years ahead as we share this common path.

Sincerely,

Ric Campbell
Executive Director

Mission & Educational Program Overview

Mission Statement:

The South Bronx Early College Academy Charter School will provide a rigorous and comprehensive liberal arts education to students in the South Bronx through a challenging, New York State Common Core standards-aligned curriculum. The Early College Academy will establish a learning environment that emphasizes differentiation and personalization of instruction and a student-centered and fully inclusive approach to teaching and learning. Students will graduate from the Early College Academy prepared for success in college and for active and thoughtful citizenship.

At the heart of the South Bronx Early College Academy's (SBECA) educational philosophy are the following principles:

- 1) *A student-centered approach to teaching and learning, with instructional supports, advisories and other structures that ensure that SBECA identifies and addresses each student's potential and learning needs.***
- 2) *A belief that literacy is the basis of all learning and a commitment to literacy instruction across the curriculum will guarantee success in school and life.***
- 3) *A belief that learning emerges from authentic work and a commitment to project-based instruction and assessments that include portfolios and exhibitions that reflect real world challenges.***

Educational Program Overview

Key elements of the school design include:

- *Small school culture and extended day/year* provide opportunities for increased instruction, alternative approaches to assessment (e.g. portfolio presentations and exhibitions) and the offering of a variety of academic supports.
- *Differentiated and personalized instruction* ensures a focus on student needs and learning styles identified through analysis of a variety of data. Through ongoing assessment and review of data in professional learning communities (PLCs), the school will establish a data culture in which all teachers are trained and empowered to use data effectively in designing and implementing standards-aligned instructional units.
- *Use of research-based, standards-aligned curricula and instructional strategies* emphasize the development of reasoning, problem-solving strategies, and forms of understanding that are the foundations for success in education and adult life.
- *Comprehensive advisory system as core element of the learning community* in which each SBECA faculty member is committed to a small group of students and their families with a focus on monitoring learner progress, providing counsel and advocacy, and supporting effective school-home connections.
- *Parent and family support is provided* by close work with the school's founding partner, WHEDco, to develop and sustain internal capacity to provide a variety of family supports. WHEDco's social workers and school counselors will train and work with school staff and provide ongoing support to students and parents. Additionally, our partnerships with the NYU Metro Center and Lehman College offer additional expertise and support in various forms to address learning challenges and support learner growth.

General Information

Arrival and Dismissal

Students are welcome to arrive at school beginning at 7:45AM each morning. SBECA's entrance is at 639 St. Anne's Avenue between East 153rdth Street and Westchester Avenue. A healthy breakfast will be available every morning from 7:45 and 8AM for all students. Students who are not in class on time marked late.

Sixth graders are dismissed at 5pm every day from the front entrance, and seventh graders are dismissed at 5:45pm every day from the front entrance. Parents of sixth grade students who need a later pick up time than the 5:00PM should make arrangements with the school administration.

Supervision until 5:45PM will be available for a limited number of sixth grade students, and parents will need to come to the main office for purposes of pick up and signing out their child.

For safety reasons, parents must notify the classroom teacher or the main office in writing if they wish their child to be picked up by someone other than a parent or guardian. Children may ONLY be picked up by someone listed on the Emergency form. Children may arrive to and leave from school unaccompanied by an adult as long as the school has written permission from parents, as detailed on the green emergency contact form.

Transportation

You can take the train or the bus to our campus

By Train

Take the #2 or #5 to Jackson Avenue, then walk two blocks to St Anne's Avenue and make a left

By Bus

Take the Bx4 to St. Anne's and Westchester Avenue, make a left and walk down the block to our campus

Field Trips

SBECA believes that project-based and experiential learning is essential to keeping children engaged and creating a love of learning. To this end, we are planning monthly trips to different cultural institutions, organizations, and learning centers for all students. Permission slips will be sent home at the beginning of the week for any upcoming trips and need to be returned before the day of the trip in order for the student to be allowed to participate.

School Wide Key Policies



Shared Expectations for Students and Their Families An Agreement Between Home and School

We know that success in school depends on close collaboration between home and school. We also know that healthy classrooms depend on a school culture that is orderly, with clear rules and expectations that create a respectful and productive learning environment. It is crucial that the message of what is expected in our classrooms begins at home, so that all parties are on the same page, and we are able to work together to reinforce a positive culture of learning. Our work together can be divided into three areas of responsibility or expectations, which are described in detail below:

1. Family Responsibilities:

We depend on parents to help their children take responsibility for certain things before they even come to school. This will allow students to be ready to start their school day the moment they enter our campus.

2. Family/School Responsibilities:

We share a common goal that students will succeed academically and we each have a role in establishing the habits and behaviors that ensures this happens.

3. School Community Responsibilities:

Our job is to provide deep and engaging learning experiences in a safe and productive learning environment. In order to do this, certain core expectations are set and reinforced in school and at home. If these expectations are not met, there are clear and specific consequences that follow.

Key Expectations:

1. Family Responsibilities

This first section describes key responsibilities of families to ensure their children are successful students at SBECA. They represent responsibilities mutually shared by child and parent.

Uniform

Students will wear the official SBECA uniform every school day, from September 6th to June 30th without exception. The SBECA uniform includes grey slacks/skirt, blue and white collared shirts (short and long sleeve are available), and a grey sweater. These are currently only available for purchase from the school. Students may only wear solid black or white shoes. No hats, bandanas, beads, large chains or expensive jewelry are allowed.

Attendance

Students are expected to be present every day that school is in session. Students should be rested and well nourished. Healthy breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks are offered to ALL students daily.

Absences

As per the NYC DOE, “A student with less than 90% attendance is considered chronically absent.” All absences are part of a required, legal record and though absences may be excused for religious, medical, and other reasons that require pre-approval by the school, each absence is part of that record. If a student is absent without prior notice, parents will be called to ensure that they are informed.

Excused Absences

In the event that a student is absent due to emergency or illness, a signed note from parent or doctor is required. This note is to be delivered to the main office on the day of return. If a signed note is not delivered, the absence will be considered unexcused, and parents will be contacted immediately.

Tardiness

Students must arrive on school on time and prepared for classes. Parents will be notified when a student is late to school. Frequent tardiness - more than once per month - will need to be addressed and resolved.

1. SBECA Family Responsibilities	
Expectation - If a student is . . .	Consequence - then . . .
Not in uniform . . .	<p>First Time Student is sent to the office and parent is called to bring uniform before student may return to class.</p> <p>Second Time Student is sent to in-school suspension and parent is called to bring uniform and have a meeting with advisor/admin to discuss and resolve the issue.</p> <p>Third Time Student is sent to the office and parent is called to bring student home for the day.</p>
Absent . . .	<p>Step One Any absence must be pre-approved or verified after the fact by a documented legal excuse such as doctor’s note or verification from parent/guardian regarding the reason for absence. If this document is not submitted within 48 hours of return to school then the absence will be filed as unexcused.</p>

<p>Absent (continued) . . .</p>	<p>Step Two An unexcused absence will require a meeting between parent and administration to discuss and resolve the issue.</p> <p>Step Three Frequent or excessive unexcused absences (2 or more such absences per month) that are not adequately addressed will obligate the school to report to ACS.</p>
<p>Late . . .</p>	<p>Step One Parent will be called as early as possible that school day to notify of and determine reason for lateness as well as be reminded of official school start time. (The only exception is for 6th grade students who depend on the school bus service. Any disruption in such service is the responsibility of the provider, not the student.)</p> <p>Step Two Parent will be called to meet with guidance and administration to discuss and resolve the issue.</p> <p>Step Three Excessive unresolved lateness - 2 or more times in a month - will result in a formal meeting to address the issue and could obligate the school to report to ACS</p>

2. Family/School Responsibilities - Shared Expectations

This section describes expectations and the ways they are reinforced. Though the school faculty monitor and maintain these expectations, they are expectations that depend on family effort and support. Family and school share responsibility for making sure that students meet these basic expectations.

Food and Beverage - At SBECA are committed to the well-being of your child, which includes promoting healthy lifestyle choices and thoughtful nutrition habits. This means that we will actively provide healthy alternatives to junk food, and continue to educate your child on ways good nutrition can positively impact their lives. NO food or beverages are allowed in classrooms or any part of the school except the cafeteria during designated eating times (breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack). Only healthy foods and beverages should be brought to school by students who do not use the school's food service. Students who bring food and beverages to school may only consume them in the cafeteria at designated eating times and unhealthy or non-nutritional foods will be confiscated. At all other times, food and beverages brought to school must be kept in the student's bag. *Water may be carried in clear plastic bottles and consumed according to classroom rules, which may vary.* (For example, there are very clear protocols in classrooms using computers to prevent damage to electronic equipment from spilled water.) In the event of a birthday or other celebration, we would like to continue to promote healthy alternatives, and ask that you plan in collaboration with your child's advisor.

Classroom and Community Standards and Expectations - At SBECA, each teacher sets classroom standards and expectations appropriate to learning in their subject areas. In addition, the SBECA community has established a series of common school wide standards and expectations that include but are not limited to attentiveness, courtesy and preparedness; appropriate entrances, exits, and transitions; respect for the learning of others; active participation and best effort in all school activities; active caring for themselves, others, and the school campus and equipment; and knowledge and respect for school rules.

Preparedness

Students are expected to have required school supplies and to be prepared for all classes. Supplies should be on hand at school daily, and include any pens, pencils, notebooks, folders, etc. as per school supply list and teacher expectations. Students are expected to maintain their notebooks and folders in an organized fashion and care for all materials appropriately. Students are expected to enter classes on time, prepared to participate fully. Coats, bags and extra clothing should be hung and deposited in assigned locations and students should be seated with their class materials and ready to begin class as per teacher expectations.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

No cell phones or electronic devices are allowed to be used on the school campus. If a student brings a cell phone or any electronic device to school, it MUST be stored out of view in the student’s book bag it must remain off throughout the school day. SBECA is not responsible for the theft or damage to any electronic item, even in the event of confiscation. If a student needs to make an emergency phone call, or if a parent needs to contact their child, they may do so through the main office with appropriate approval from school faculty.

2. SBECA Family/School Responsibilities	
Expectation - If a student is . . .	Consequence - then . . .
Has food or beverages when and where they are not permitted . . .	<p>First Time Food and/or beverage will be confiscated by intervening teacher/faculty member and returned at the end of the day upon dismissal. (Student will be able to eat school meals at appropriate times.) Parents will be contacted and informed.</p> <p>Second Time Food and/or beverage will be confiscated and disposed of and student will meet with teacher and advisor to discuss and address the issue. Parents will be contacted and informed.</p> <p>Third Time Food and/or beverage will be confiscated and disposed of and parents will be contacted for an in-school meeting to discuss and address the issue.</p>
Is not meeting classroom and community expectations or is not prepared . . .	<p>First Time Faculty member talks with student to remind them of expectations and discuss corrective actions.</p> <p>Second Time Faculty member meets with student and advisor to discuss the issue and establish corrective actions. Parents will be contacted and informed. Incident will be recorded.</p>

<p>Is not meeting classroom and community expectations or is not prepared (Continued) . . .</p>	<p>Third and Successive Times Faculty member and advisor contacts parent to discuss issue, and create a plan of action. Persistence of unacceptable behaviors will result in a meeting with parents at school to determine appropriate steps involving home and school. These steps may include a range of options directed at modifying these identified behaviors but may also include in-school and out-of-school suspensions as appropriate.</p>
<p>Has an electronic device that is not properly stored and switched off . . .</p>	<p>First Time The electronic device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.</p> <p>Second Time The electronic device will be confiscated. The parent will be contacted and must pick up by the device at school at a time to be scheduled</p> <p>Third Time The electronic device will be confiscated and returned to the parent at the end of the school year.</p>

3. School Community Responsibilities - A Safe Learning Environment

Bullying and Mismanagement of Conflict

It is our commitment to provide all students with a safe learning environment, free from any aggressions and intimidating behavior, including sexual harassment, making fun of a disability, targeting someone because of their sexual orientation, name calling, physical intimidation, and tampering with another’s property,. While we set very clear expectations and boundaries that support a caring and compassionate school culture, we also understand that it is our responsibility to teach students how to effectively manage conflict through nonviolent approaches. We ask that families support us in this effort by reinforcing the cultural expectations established by the SBECA community.

Violence

Acts of violence are strictly prohibited at SBECA. In the event that there is a violent encounter, students will be suspended and scheduled for a series of disciplinary conversations and meditations to better understand the cause of the behavior, explore non-violent alternatives, and repair with the other party prior to reentry. It is imperative that families uphold the message that there is no place for violence in school. We ask that families continue to help students consider non-violent responses to conflict.

3. School Community Responsibilities

Expectation - If a student is . . .	Consequence - then . . .
<p>Engages in bullying and other confrontational behavior...</p>	<p>First Time Students will meet with teacher/advisor to discuss conflict and resolution</p> <p>Second Time Teacher/advisor will schedule meeting with students and parents to support mediation. Student may be asked to sign an individualized contract outlining intervention strategies and awareness of next steps if behaviour persists.</p> <p>Third Time Teacher/advisor/admin will schedule meeting with students and parents to issue in-house or at home suspension, with mediation/reentry meeting.</p>
<p>Uses violence against another...</p>	<p>First Time Student will be isolated and parent or guardian must come to pick student up. Parent will be scheduled to meet with administration or guidance to address conflict, establish mediation plan, and establish reentry conversation. The student may not return until these three meetings take place.</p> <p>Second Time Student will be isolated and parent or guardian must come to pick student up. Parent will be scheduled to meet with administration or guidance to address the conflict, establish mediation plan, and establish reentry conversation. The student will be scheduled for an in-house suspension determined by administration and may not return until these three meetings take place.</p>

Uses violence against another
(Continued)...

Third Time

Student will be isolated and parent or guardian must come to pick student up. Parent will be scheduled to meet with administration or guidance to address the conflict, establish a mediation plan, and establish reentry conversation. The student will be scheduled for an at-home suspension determined by admin and may not return until these three meetings take place. In the event that a student is prone to violent encounters, they may be scheduled for regular counseling services within the school day.

Tips for the Home

MOST IMPORTANTLY, the work of education is a shared responsibility. SBECA takes responsibility for providing a rich and challenging curriculum. We need to understand and address the learning needs of every student. In addition, there are key aspects of success in school that also need to take place at home. We will offer workshops and suggestions as the year progresses to help you establish practices at home that will support your active partnership in your child's learning. Your child's success depends on your commitment and effort, and our collaboration.

Here are some ways to help your child during their time with you at home:

1. Set aside 30 minutes 3 nights each week. During those 30 minutes, turn off the distractions (television, music, phones, computers) and create a time to do something together such as:
 - Ask your child about something they have learned and have them teach it to you,
 - Read a book together,
 - Read a newspaper and discuss current events,
 - Play a game, which is an opportunity to talk about school and ideas and what's going on for your child,
2. Ask your child to bring home projects and assignments from school to share with you. Your child is learning in eight different subject areas and has a lot to share. In health and physical education, for example, your child can teach you exercises, share ideas about fitness, and teach you about nutrition. (You may know these things but listening helps you child know that these things that she or he is learning are important.
3. We will be sending many ideas home to you and offering workshops that will help you think about ways your home can be an extension of school learning. We are expecting that you will do your part to contribute to your child's success by becoming actively involved in her/his education from the home.

In addition to a very fine faculty, SBECA has partnerships with New York University (NYU) and Lehman College to provide a unique set of educational supports and assistance to the teachers and students at the Early College Academy. One such support is the inclusion of graduate students in classrooms to support student learning and another are active partnerships with college faculty as consultants and partners in the development of curriculum and designs for learning. As school begins and these partnerships develop, you will be informed in greater detail about particular innovations and inputs that contribute to school and the culture of learning. The general description that follows offers a perspective on what learning looks like at SBECA from the perspective of the professional educators – scientists, historians, musicians, artists, mathematicians, readers of literature, computer scientists, writers, counselors, and health and fitness experts– who will be guiding learning in classrooms every day.

Problem Solving as the Basis for Learning

The South Bronx Early College Academy (SBECA) offers a curriculum that reflects the values of a liberal arts education and a design framework grounded in project-based learning. At SBECA the idea of a liberal arts education means an emphasis on authentic engagement across a range of human activities in fields of knowledge and creative expression. Thus, art, computer science, music, and physical education share equal time with English, history, mathematics, and science in the weekly schedule of subject area classes that define the core experiences of SBECA students in grades 6-8. As students build competencies and identities across various fields of inquiry and self-expression, they will advance into high school with a sense of purpose and connection to their studies. They will be able to focus their efforts by selecting major areas of study and practice that have emerged as fields of personal interest as they move through high school towards choices in postsecondary education.

Project-based learning is understood as a design for learning that deploys key elements of what we know about how people learn from the best of what cognitive research can tell us to date. Central to project-based learning designs is the idea that students are given a problem to solve, and solving the problem requires the development of skills, collaboration with others, guidance or coaching from experts/teachers, trial and error, and the construction and evaluation of “theories” in an iterative or recursive process that is advanced through analysis and reflection.

At SBECA, faculty work closely together building connections across subjects and helping students to see how ways of thinking and forms of knowledge can be applied across subject areas. In this way we seek to develop learners who can think through problems strategically, applying ways of thinking and reflection to tackle new and greater challenges as they advance as students. One key goal for learning at SBECA is for students to develop forms of understanding within one area and to apply them across other areas. Similarly, ways of knowing and thinking in music, literature, science, mathematics, art, physical education, health and history enrich and inform learning across all domains. Learning is structured around projects that engage students with real world problems.

Students are assessed in ways that give them ongoing and reliable feedback that can help them guide their learning. In the area of sports, good coaches provide ample practice and advice so that athletes can improve their performances. A similar process is equally powerful for academic learning and is the preferred approach in SBECA classrooms. In addition, we ask students to reflect on their learning and become increasingly self-directed. This means that students receive grades that help them measure themselves against recognized standards but – more importantly – students receive feedback from their teachers and peers that help them know how they are doing from day-to-day and help them know how to take steps as learners to master the skills, knowledge, and ways of thinking that guarantee success in school and adult life. These forms of feedback and grades associated with standards will be communicated to families regularly and more frequently than the typical quarterly report card protocol.

We offer this broad description of how learning is structured at SBECA as an introduction. In the weeks that follow the opening of school, you will receive ongoing communications about learning challenges, reports on student progress, invitations to demonstrations of student accomplishments, and a much more detailed description of how curriculum is structured at SBECA. The role of family in student learning is part of the school curriculum and we look forward to your participation in the learning life of the school.

(No) Homework Policy

At SBECA, students will not leave school with daily homework assignments. Here are the reasons why:

- Students are engaged in learning from 8AM to 5PM, and this is a full workday. We expect active and committed participation in learning all day long and that is enough.
- Families should be able to have free and open time to be together without the distraction of schoolwork. Evening (and weekends) is often the only time families have to be together and share and enjoy each other's company.
- Typically, school homework can be stressful for the student and the source of tension at home between parents and children. This is not good for the family or for school. No homework means that family life is more enjoyable and school is not associated with required work beyond the school day.
- Research shows that homework is most useful in advancing learning when there is adequate support from more experienced learners who understand the subject and the purpose of the work. At SBECA, we have designed classrooms and the schedule so that the guidance and support for effective practice and learning happens during the school day with teachers and tutors helping all students as needed.

Will students ever bring work home?

- Yes, a student can always bring home reading, writing, problems to solve, music to sing, dance steps to practice, or ideas to discuss with family but it is not required.
- We encourage students to bring work home that they want to share with family. There is a lot to be proud of and there will be many interesting things to share.

- There may be times when students want to continue working on a project that has captured their interest or practice a presentation they will be making. Bringing schoolwork home because a student is interested and motivated is a good thing.

BUT, it is important to know that schoolwork done at home is not directly connected to grades. It may move learning forward but sometimes it may be more important to have some time away from work, to rest and enjoy other activities. Balance is a very important thing to learn for life and productivity.

School Culture & Discipline

The South Bronx Early College Academy Charter School (Early College Academy) community holds to the idea that responsible behavior, respect for others and oneself, self-discipline and thoughtful action emerge from a culture of positive expectations and respect developed through valued relationships within the community. A responsive, caring community with a clear set of lived values reduces the need for disciplinary measures or interventions by reducing the instances that call for such actions. The Early College Academy will strive at all times to maintain a culture in which all stakeholders respect one another and in which students care about maintaining positive relationships with teachers and peers. The Early College Academy will establish a school culture that promotes positive values, habits and character traits for all students and that supports the academic, emotional and developmental needs of students in a variety of ways.

To this end, the Early College Academy will follow a PBIS model (<https://www.pbis.org/>) for the creation of a school wide culture that is consistent with school values and places a primary emphasis on helping students take increasing responsibility for themselves as members of the school community – respectful of their peers, teachers, and the learning environment as well as demonstrating behaviors and dispositions aligned with the social values and academic goals of the Early College Academy. Teachers will receive training and ongoing professional development related to helping students become increasingly self-directed and creating a culture that supports learning and the resolution of any conflicts in responsible non-confrontational contexts.

Finally, the strategic use of advisory groups as a standard part of the school community structure; closely integrated work between teachers, social workers, and family outreach personnel; active parent participation; and a curriculum and assessment system designed to engage students in learning through challenges with appropriate supports ensure that community expectations related to individual behavior and social interactions are reinforced and practiced through every aspect of school life as a learning community.

The Early College Academy believes that its approach to student discipline is consistent with that of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Discipline Code, which will provide the structure and guidelines for communicating to students the range of behaviors and actions that are impermissible and/or unacceptable within a public school and the consequences for such behaviors and actions if they do occur, as well as the rights and responsibilities of all parties when

discipline policies are exercised. The preamble to the NYCDOE Discipline Code emphasizes that schools should create a culture that promotes desirable behaviors and outcomes, stating:

“Each school is expected to promote a positive school climate and culture that provides students with a supportive environment in which to grow both academically and socially. Schools are expected to take a proactive role in nurturing students’ pro-social behavior by providing them with a range of positive behavioral supports as well as meaningful opportunities for social emotional learning.”

Notwithstanding the emphasis on a positive and supportive approach to discipline, the Early College Academy recognizes the need for clear rules, expectations and consequences and has established a Disciplinary Code of Conduct that follows NYCDOE guidelines and is available in full as part of the SBECA Discipline Policy on the school website - <https://sbecacs.org>.

School & Family Communication



SBECA believes that successful outcomes for children require an active, supportive partnership between schools and families. Our school aims to foster frequent communication through phone and email contact, our website, school visits, parent/teacher conferences, portfolio days and family workshops.

A primary mode of communication is through the advisory group of structure. Students are organized in advisory groups of 9-12 students with a faculty member as their advisor. This faculty advisor meets with the students in advisory group to discuss school issues, monitor individual progress, and provide individualized support. The advisor acts as the primary advocate for her/his students as advisees and is a primary point of contact for families. In the first week of school, the advisor will reach out to each student’s family to establish communications and build a relationship of support and regular dialog between school and home. The advisor can be counted on as a responsive partner and primary advocate for the students they advise and as such should be in close relationship with family and home.

This year SBECA will be putting a digital student information system in place that will provide student and parent access to information about grades, academic assignments and progress, behavioral record, and other important information about student life in school. This system will also communicate directly with parents when a student is late or absent in real time so that safety and compliance issues related to attendance and lateness can be addressed in the shortest amount of time. The system, provided by Infinite Campus, will be launched in phases beginning November 1, 2016 and we will offer informational meetings as we roll out what we believe is a system of communication that will serve our school community well.

Faculty Phones & Emails

All faculty members can be reached by the phone numbers listed below or through the main office number, 929-291-7700. Families are encouraged to leave voicemail messages if a faculty member is not able to answer the phone. All calls will be answered within 24 hours.

See attached faculty contact sheet for names and contact information for all faculty members.

School Website

Our website, www.sbecacs.org, is updated regularly with reminders about family workshops, conferences, portfolio days, field trips and more. The website also has the contact information for all staff.

We will be establishing a schedule of days and times for various school activities – family conferences, student portfolio exhibitions, Friday elective performances, open house days, etc. – please check in on our website. We will also send notices to all families as these events are scheduled.

Family Support Services

SBECA believes is committed to providing family and support services through our community-based partner, WHEDco. Katie McCaskie, leader of the social work team, is available every school day to provide counseling and referral services to families for a range of issues including, public benefits, legal assistance, ESL classes, job training and medical insurance. Please contact her at 929-291-7700 with any questions. Information about educational and informational workshops for parents and guardians will be regularly updated on our website as well, www.sbecacs.org.

Safety & Security



Emergency Procedures

Emergency drills are an important part of keeping the staff and students of SBECA safe. Drills will be held throughout the year and ensure that the school complies with all the legal requirements related to emergency and evacuation procedures.

We will have security posted at the entrance of the school building from the hours of 7am-6pm. If children are not picked up or given permission by parents to return home by themselves by 6pm, SBECA staff will contact the parents and emergency contact.

Mandated Reporting of Abuse

All members of the SBECA staff are Mandated Reporters in compliance with state law and are obligated to report to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) if they suspect a child is being abused or neglected.

Health & Medications

Immunizations

All Early College Students must be immunized to attend school, in accordance with New York State law, except in cases of approved exemption. Requests for religious exemptions must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director before the beginning of the school year. The Executive Director reserves the right to require students to be immunized in order to enroll at SBECA.

Health Conditions and Prescription Medications

Any child with life-threatening allergies or a serious medical condition like asthma should alert the school staff prior to August 31st. As part of the enrollment process, every student has to provide a completed Medical Administration Form (MAF). If a student requires prescription medication during the school day, the medication must be supplied by the student's family and will be dispensed as per the MAF.

Counseling and Student Support Services

Students at Early College Academy will have access to various forms of support services. All students will participate daily in Advisory, brief small group meetings with a member of the school staff that will provide life skills, academic guidance and other kinds of support as necessary.

In addition, students and families will have access to counseling through the WHEDco social worker, Katie McCaskie as part of the school's Family Support Program. She will also be providing counseling to any students who have an IEP.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Notification of Rights

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day South Bronx Early College Academy (Early College Academy or the “School”) receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit a written request to the Executive Director or the Principal that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Executive Director or the Principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the School to amend the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask Early College Academy to amend a record should submit a written request to the Executive Director or the Principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specifying why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to provide written consent before the School discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the Early College Academy Board of Trustees. A School official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the School who performs an institutional service or function for which the School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the School with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another School official in performing his or her tasks. A School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School will disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer; however, the School will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request.

(cont.)

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Early College Academy to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202

Disclosures that Early College Academy may make without parental consent

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures.

Early College Academy may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other School officials, including teachers, whom the School determines to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the School has outsourced institutional services or functions;
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer;
- To authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf;
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid;
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released;
- To organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the School, in order to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction;
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions;
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency; and
- Information the school has designated as "directory information".

Complaint Procedure Policy

General Procedure

Any individual or group may bring complaints or concerns of any kind to the Executive Director or the Principal of South Bronx Early College Academy Charter School (Early College Academy or the “School”). The Executive Director or the Principal will work to resolve conflicts fairly and informally, as quickly as possible. If the Executive Director or the Principal is unable to resolve the complaint to the individual or group’s satisfaction, or if the complaint is about the Executive Director or the Principal, the individual or group may bring their complaint to the Board of Trustees of Early College Academy. The Board of Trustees shall investigate and respond to all complaints in a timely manner, and shall serve as the appeals body for any complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved.

Procedure for Complaints under Section 2855 of the Charter Schools Act

Section 2855(4) of the New York Education Law (part of the New York State Charter Schools Act (CSA)) provides that any individual or group may bring a complaint directly to the Board of Trustees of Early College Academy alleging a violation of the CSA, the School’s charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of Early College Academy. All such complaints should be in writing and include the following:

1. the name, address, and phone number of the complainant;
2. a detailed statement of the complaint, including the specific provision of the School’s charter or law that allegedly has been violated;
3. the relief sought by the complainant; and
4. the response, if any, received from the School thus far.

The Board of Trustees will respond to the complaint within the earlier of 30 days of receipt of the formal written complaint or the date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees, unless extenuating circumstances outlined in the complaint require an expedited review.

If the complainant believes that the Board of Trustees has not adequately addressed the complaint, the individual or group may then present the complaint to the School’s authorizer, the Board of Regents of the State University of New York (“Board of Regents”). The process for bringing a complaint to the Board of Regents can be found here: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/complaint.html>.

The Board of Regents has delegated authority to handle complaints concerning charter schools to the Commissioner of Education. The Charter School Office of the New York State Education Department, on behalf of the Commissioner, will investigate and respond to complaints concerning charter schools that have been appropriately filed, and has the power and the duty to issue appropriate remedial orders involving any such complaint.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice for Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that South Bronx Early College Academy (Early College Academy or the “School”), with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, Early College Academy may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the School to the contrary in accordance with School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Early College Academy to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student’s role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs), such as Early College Academy, receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without their prior written consent.¹

If you do not want Early College Academy to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the School in writing by **Wednesday, September 16, 2016**.

Early College Academy has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance and grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of member of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student’s SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

¹ These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).

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Student & Family Annual Commitment

2016---17 School Year



In signing and submitting this commitment form,

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the South Bronx Early College Academy Charter School's Family Handbook.

I fully understand and accept the rights and responsibilities of families, students, and faculty who make up the SBECA community. As a student or parent/guardian, I am committed to upholding the values of the SBECA community and acting in accordance with the expectations and standards as described in the Handbook and as designed to support the health, welfare, and development of SBECA students as framed by the SBECA mission.

This commitment form must be signed and submitted to the main office by August 19, 2016.

If you have any questions regarding the Family Handbook, please contact the main office at 929-291-7700.

Student Name: _____

Entering Grade: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student & Family Annual Commitment

2016---17 School Year



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