

# 2018-2019 Brighten Academy



## Parent Handbook

This handbook serves as a guide to the procedures and expectations of Brighten Academy. Procedures and policies may change throughout the year. Please contact your child's teacher or administration if you need further information.

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**“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”  
W. B. Yeats**

*This handbook is issued to provide detailed information to Brighten Academy families. It is a supplement to the Policies and Procedures of Brighten Academy. This handbook is subject to change based on the needs of the school. The administrative staff welcomes your constructive criticism, comments, and suggestions any time to improve the professionalism of our staff and the efficiency of the school. All policies and procedures herein should be followed and will be strictly enforced.*

The Brighten Academy Board, parents, and staff share this belief – education should inspire children to seek answers, to continually question, and to love learning for the sake of acquiring knowledge and for the betterment of self and community. The founders aspired to create a learning environment for the students of Douglas County which supports this belief about the true nature of education.

### **Vision**

Brighten Academy Charter School is a student-centered learning community dedicated to setting high expectations and building positive relationships. The challenge to succeed is set before all members of the school community by fostering a learning community, being enthusiastic, and providing an opportunity for personal achievement.

Brighten Academy is a safe, friendly place that enables the students to explore, discover, and learn. Together we can overcome challenges, take pride in our achievements, strive for excellence, and build strong character.

### **Mission**

The mission of Brighten Academy is to provide a productive learning environment with a highly qualified staff committed to using an innovative, research-based instructional model that produces measured growth in every student every year.

### **Core Beliefs**

After developing this mission, the Founding Board developed a set of core beliefs that, along with the mission, drove the development of the school and will drive all decisions about operation of Brighten Academy. The core beliefs are as follows:

1. All students will learn.
2. All students have developmental differences, as well as varying levels of experiences, knowledge, and ability.
3. High expectations of every child are necessary to help students reach their full potential.
4. Students learn through active exploration and practical application.
5. Students have different learning styles and should be taught using a variety of instructional strategies.
6. Educating a child is a shared responsibility among the school, home, and community.
7. Appropriate behavior is required of all students and members of the learning community to maximize safety and learning.
8. A nurturing and structured learning environment is essential.
9. Teacher planning, collaboration, and professional development are vital for improving student achievement.
10. The school must cultivate a strong sense of responsibility to self, family, and community.
11. Instructional decisions will be made based on the needs of the students.
12. The school will function as a business and practice fiscal responsibility.

**The object of teaching a child is to enable him  
to get along without a teacher.  
Elbert Hubbard**

Educating a child is more than just providing facts and increasing skill competency. It is development of the whole child. Development of the whole child includes not only cognitive development, but also social/emotional development, character development, and life-long skill competencies that are transferable to any situation.

### **Connections Educational Framework**

Connections is an educational framework that meets the criterion for a comprehensive school reform program. The Connections framework includes the following components:

1. Employ proven methods and strategies based on scientific research
2. Integrate a comprehensive design with aligned components
3. Provide ongoing, high-quality professional development
4. Is supported within the school by teachers, administration, and staff
5. Provide meaningful parent and community involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities
6. Use high quality external support from an external partner
7. Identify resources to support and sustain the school's comprehensive reform effort
8. Demonstrate strong evidence that academic achievement improves
9. This model has been developed to not only meet the above criteria, but also to align with Brighten Academy's mission and core beliefs. In addition, it is also complementary to some of the approaches being implemented in the Douglas County School System,

including the Learning Focused Schools model and the development of Learning Communities.

Brighten Academy will employ an integrated curriculum. The main components of Connections are “The Seven C’s of Character”: craftsmanship, commitment, critical thinking, creativity, curiosity, community, and culture.

### **The Seven C’s**

#### **Craftsmanship**

- Pride in Work
- Quality Projects
- Authentic work
- Student generated projects
- Visually appealing

#### **Community**

- Morning assembly – discuss character traits, thought for the day
- Service learning projects – classroom, school wide, community
- Role models from real life, history, literature
- Peer and adult mentoring
- Students aid in daily school upkeep and maintenance
- Teachers model desired character traits
- Classroom meetings – class discussions, goal setting, and problem solving

#### **Commitment**

- Focus on personal responsibility for learning – (high expectations, goal setting, Individual Learning Plans)
- Increase motivation through engaging learning opportunities
- Learning from failure and the value of perseverance
- Commitment to the task at hand
- Development of concept of personal best
- Safe environment that tolerates mistakes and sees errors as a chance for growth
- Committed staff
- Do what you love, love what you do

#### **Critical Thinking**

- Cultivation of higher order thinking skills (application, analysis, evaluation, synthesis)
- Metacognition
- Development of the attributes of a critical thinker:
- Ask pertinent questions
- Assess statements and arguments
- Is able to admit a lack of understanding or information

- Has a sense of curiosity
- Is interested in finding new solutions
- Is able to clearly define a set of criteria for analyzing ideas
- Is willing to examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions and weigh them against facts
- Listen carefully to others and give feedback
- Sees that critical thinking is a lifelong process of self-assessment
- Suspend judgment until all facts have been gathered and considered
- Look for evidence to support assumption and beliefs
- Is able to adjust opinions when new facts are found
- Look for proof
- Examine problems closely
- Is able to reject information that is incorrect or irrelevant

### **Creativity**

- Teach and reinforce different forms of creativity (fluency, flexibility, elaboration, originality)
- Encourage development of personal expression
- Encourage “thinking outside the box”
- Acceptance and development of multiple intelligences
- Linking the arts with instructional topics
- Creating effective and engaging lessons that inspire creativity
- Role models of creative thinkers from real life, history, literature
- Appreciation of the playful, accepting atmosphere in which creativity flourishes

### **Curiosity**

- Nurture children’s natural curiosity
- Develop inquiring and inquisitive mindsets
- Teach students how to ask important questions
- Refrain from giving answers to problems too readily
- Cultivate a classroom atmosphere that rewards hypothesizing, questioning, and wondering
- Inquiry-based teaching
- Allow students to have more choice in projects

### **Community**

- Develop awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- Teach children to become agents of change in the community
- Establish natural leadership through service learning projects
- Increase school – community interaction
- Professional learning community focus
- Clear lines of communication established within the community via:
  - ✓ website
  - ✓ school and classroom newsletters
  - ✓ parent/teacher conferences

- ✓ Board meetings
- ✓ PTO meetings
- ✓ local newspapers

## **Culture**

- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Orderly, safe, supportive environment
- Students have a sense of belonging and ownership for their school and for their education
- Cultural literacy (that common body of knowledge everyone must have to be culturally literate in our society)
- Focus on cultural awareness
- Development of unique school culture through traditions

## **EL Education (Formerly Expeditionary Learning)**

In EL Education schools...

**Learning is active.** Students are scientists, urban planners, historians, and activists, investigating real community problems and collaborating with peers to develop creative, actionable solutions.

**Learning is challenging.** Students at all levels are pushed and supported to do more than they think they can. Excellence is expected in the quality of their work thinking.

**Learning is meaningful.** Students apply their skills and knowledge to real-world issues and problems and make positive change in their communities. They see the relevance of their learning and are motivated by understanding that learning has purpose.

**Learning is public.** Through formal structures of presentation, exhibition, critique, and data analysis, students and teachers build a shared vision of pathways to achievement.

**Learning is collaborative.** School leaders, teachers, students, and families share rigorous expectations for quality work, achievement, and behavior. Trust, respect, responsibility, and joy in learning permeate the school culture.

EL Education schools create environments that promote deep engagement in learning and support students to achieve at high levels. EL students gain skills critical to college readiness and lifelong success-literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, persistence toward excellence, and active citizenship-as well as mastery of subject-area knowledge.

## **EL Education Design Principles**

1. The Primacy of Self-Discovery
2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas
3. The Responsibility for Learning
4. Empathy and Caring
5. Success and Failure

6. Collaboration and Competition
7. Diversity and Inclusion
8. The Natural World
9. Solitude and Reflection
10. Service and Compassion

### **EL Education- Crew**

An EL Education school culture is planned for, developed, and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew, not passengers. Students in EL schools are known well and supported by adults. The structure of crew allows for relationship building, academic progress, monitoring, and character development. Crew allows students to build positive connections with their peers and with their crew leader. Crew leaders strategically plan crew to address and assess these multiple goals. Outside of school, mentoring, internships, and apprenticeships foster relationships between students and community members.

### **Community Circle**

Community Meetings are a common structure in Expeditionary Learning Schools that help to build a culture of pride, success and celebration in both academics and character. Community Circle is a whole-school activity that will occur three times a year. We will come together to celebrate our achieved goals and accomplishments. Parents are welcome at Community Circle meetings.

### **School Hours**

School office hours are 7:10 am until 4:00 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 7:10 am until 2:00 pm on Wednesdays.

Instructional school hours are from 8:00 am until 3:15 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 8:00 am until 1:00 pm on Wednesdays. Exceptions are noted on the school calendar. All students (grades K-8) must **be seated in their homeroom** by 8:00 am.

### **Privacy Rights**

We will protect your child's right to privacy by following all guidelines set forth the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This Privacy Act gives parents or eligible students the right to inspect and review the student's education records and prohibits the release of education records to third parties without prior written consent.



We may place directory information on our website or share with the Douglas County School System for the purposes of recognizing student achievement or informing the community about events. Parents/eligible students who object to the release of directory information are required to place the objection in writing and deliver to the school administrator within 10 days of enrollment.

### **Non Discrimination**

Brighten Academy will not engage in unlawful discrimination. Brighten Academy does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

### **Administrative Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Business/Student Services Manager: Angi Andrews**

The primary function is to oversee the front office, maintain accurate student and staff records, oversees the school's fiscal operations, human resources, and payroll.

#### **Executive Director Primary Functions: Lisa McDonald**

The primary function is to implement, monitor, and ensure that Brighten Academy is in compliance with state standards and charter objectives as it relates to the curriculum, discipline, student, and staff needs. The Director will also manage the instructional staff by completing observations, walk throughs, employee evaluations, and general HR compliance. The Director will work closely with parents, staff, and students to make sure that we successfully meet our school's mission.

#### **Assistant Director Primary Functions: Connie Arnold**

The primary function is to support the Director and Business Manager in meeting the school's goals. The Assistant Director is a member of the administrative team. The Assistant Director will act on behalf of the Director if this person is not available.

#### **Facilities and Operations Administrator Primary Functions: Kelly Bemus**

The primary function is to support the Director, Assistant Director, and Business Manager in meeting the school's goals. The Facilities and Operations Administrator will also oversee the campus and maintenance. The Facilities and Operations Administrator is a member of the administrative team and will act on behalf of the Director if this person is not available.

### **Instructional Aide Primary Functions: Toni Aybar**

The primary function of the instructional aide is to support the Director and other administrators by monitoring and tracking student discipline, providing classroom instruction when asked, gathering and analyzing student data, and assisting in disseminating school wide communication.

### **Student and Family Support Assistant: Pam Scherer**

The primary function of the Student and Family Support Assistant is to create a warm and welcoming environment for all stakeholders, dispensing medication and first aid to all students when needed, assisting in the maintenance of student data, and supporting the general business and communication needs of the school.

### **Student Services Coordinator: TBD**

The primary function of the student services coordinator is to assist the Business/Student Services Manager in all functions related to finances, human resources, substitute teacher scheduling, and student enrollment. This position also manages the afterschool and extracurricular clubs and programming.

## **School wide Procedures and Expectations**

Student safety and supervision are our first priority.

### **Student Arrival**

Students may arrive as early as 7:10 a.m. They will be monitored by a staff member/s. Students who are participating in the school breakfast program should eat as soon as they arrive to ensure access for all students. Designated breakfast tables should be utilized for eating to facilitate a quick and easy clean-up. All morning arrival areas are to be silent. Students will be required to read or study. Book bags are to remain packed. Students will be dismissed to homerooms at 7:45. Students may not bring drinks (coffee, cups with straws, open containers) into the school building. Closed containers with water will only be allowed.

### **Dismissal**

We certainly appreciate your patience as we work to make sure each child is safely dismissed each day. Any adult picking up students must present a school issued pick up card to the staff member on duty at the doors and to the staff member on duty at the pick up location. Anyone

without the card will be required to go to the office to present their identification to pick up the student.

Dismissal will begin PROMPTLY at 3:15 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 1:00 on Wednesdays. All parents will park in a designated parking space in the parking lot. Students in grades K-2 will remain in their homerooms. Students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades will report to their first floor “partner” room (locations posted at the media center doors and in the hallways) for dismissal. All students in 6-8 grades and their K-5 siblings will report to the gym for dismissal.

Pick up for students in K-5<sup>th</sup> grades will be at the media center entrance. Parents will park and walk in to pick up in a classroom on the first floor after presenting their school issued pick up card to the staff member on duty at the media center doors and in the classroom.

Students who are still in the building at 3:45 will be considered a late pick-up. If more than 3 late pick-ups are accrued, your child will be sent to the ASP program and drop in rates will apply. Drop in fees not paid upon pick up will be charged a late fee.

Any child not picked up by 4:00 pm (regular dismissal days—on the first occurrence) OR 1:45 (1:00 dismissal days—on first occurrence) will be sent to the ASP program and drop in rates will apply. Drop in fees not paid upon pick up will be charged a late fee.

### **Emergency Procedures**

We have developed many procedures to ensure that your child is safe while learning at Brighten Academy. Many of our staff members are CPR and First aid certified, and our Student Services Manager stays current on all required health training.

We ask each family to periodically update all personal information so that you may be easily reached, if the need arises. In case of an emergency dismissal, we will follow the plan you authorize on our “Emergency Release” form. In case of a medical emergency, we will first notify the appropriate medical authorities and then contact the parent or parties under the emergency contact information provided on your enrollment papers. If the need arises for an emergency evacuation of the school, we will be evacuated to the First Baptist Church parking lot.

### **Inclement Weather**

The school will follow the Douglas County School closings. Douglas County School System utilizes WSB TV to announce school closings.

In the event of inclement weather during the school day, the school will utilize the alternate transportation plan provided by parents.

## **Clinic and Accident Reports**

Our clinic is designed to meet the medical needs of minor cuts, aches, and accidents. We are not allowed to apply any topical ointments or administer medication without written permission. Please see our medication policy for more detailed information pertaining to the administration of medication.

If a student is seen in the office, a member of the office staff will assist your child. You will be notified if:

- Your child has a temperature of 99.0 degrees or higher
- Your child has a severe cut/abrasion or head injury
- The problem is persistent or recurrent
- Your child requires immediate medical attention

If a child has the following symptoms, they will be sent home immediately:

- A temperature over 100
- A rash or unknown skin problem
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Green discharge from his/her nose
- Severe pain
- Lice (live bugs)

If your child needs to be dismissed due to illness, we will make every effort to contact the parent/guardian listed as the main contact. If they cannot be reached we will begin calling the emergency contacts listed. All students need to be picked up within one hour of notification so that we can safeguard the health of other students and our staff.

If your child is sent home due to illness (vomiting, diarrhea, fever) he/she must be symptom free (unaided by medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

## **Medication**

To ensure all students' health and safety, we require all medication (inhalers, prescription, and nonprescription) to be housed and administered through the front office. In order to administer medication, the office must have a current copy of the medicine authorization form. The office managers are not authorized to administer non-prescription medicine (Tylenol, cold capsules, cough drops) with a verbal consent. All medication must have:

- The student's name
- Be in the original container
- Dosage clearly marked
- Not expired
- Medicine authorization form signed by parent/guardian

## **Policies**

A full copy of Brighten Academy's policies will be housed in the media center and front office. We will also post policies on our website at [www.brightenacademy.com](http://www.brightenacademy.com). Please also check the Governing Board Agendas as the agenda states policies that are being reviewed. Board Agendas are posted on our website and on the bulletin board in the main building (the building which houses the front office).

## **PTO**

PTO is the school's parent, teacher, and student organization which has been organized to support the needs of the school and to facilitate involvement of all parties. All parents are strongly encouraged to join the PTO. Contact the front office for more information.

## **Communication**

Brighten Academy will provide timely, clear, and effective communication to the staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders.

As children advance through the grade levels, the needs and methods for teacher/parent communication change. We utilize a daily notebook system in grades K-2, and an agenda and online system in grades 3-8. Your child's teacher will communicate the specific requirements for daily communication (signing agenda, behavior notes, etc.)

As a school, we primarily rely on email communication so that we can conserve paper. We also post information on our website at [www.brightenacademy.com](http://www.brightenacademy.com). If you do not have internet access and would like to receive a paper copy of school communication, please notify the office. We will distribute (electronically) and post a school wide newsletter monthly (at least) which will include communication from the Board, updated calendar, and other school news. PTO, Board, and other informational meetings serve as another forum to obtain information regarding curriculum, school procedures, policies, or celebrations of learning achievements.

Graded papers, student work, and other classroom information will be distributed by each classroom teacher. Your child's teacher will send this information home on **Mondays** in a special folder, and they will let you know when (if) signatures are needed on graded work or logs. You can also expect a classroom newsletter that will outline special needs, classroom news, and update you on the curricular focus for the month. Staff members will also be available to parents via phone, email, or in person by appointment between the hours of 8:00-4:00 each weekday during their planning time or other time without student supervision responsibilities.

Each teacher is responsible for maintaining a classroom website, which can be accessed from our main web address, [www.brightenacademy.com](http://www.brightenacademy.com). Homework sheets, project notices, additional practice and classroom information will be posted for your convenience. Our middle school teachers post work daily and rely on their websites to communicate important information.

Please help your middle school child develop a routine of checking the website for helpful information.

We also encourage administrative/parent, teacher parent, and student led conferences so that you can best meet your child's needs. Our charter and parent compact require that we have a conference at least twice a year for the following purposes:

- Develop goals and objectives for the student
- Discuss academic and behavioral performance, strengths, weaknesses
- Discuss academic and behavior interventions (remediation or enrichment)
- Progress in achieving 7 Cs goals
- Discuss progress on Individual Learning Plan goals
- Review of portfolio contents

### **Forms of Payment**

Throughout the year, Brighten will sponsor various activities, field studies, and fundraisers that may require a fee or donation. We also have some fee based programs such as ASP and some of our clubs that require fees for participation. We no longer accept cash or checks as we have transitioned to an online bill paying service. Information about setting up an account and payments will be sent home at the beginning of the year or contact the front office for details about how to set up an account and payment procedures.

Our PTO will still accept cash and checks for various events, and our sports and extracurricular programs will accept cash for entrance to games and programs. The school also supports some local charities and may have various activities (dress down days, ice cream sales, etc.) where cash payments will be accepted.

### **Student Attendance, Tardies, Check Outs**

Attendance is an essential part of the learning process. It is the responsibility of the parents to encourage participation in school, and it is the school's responsibility to provide the environment for each student to obtain a quality educational opportunity. It is difficult to replace the classroom experience and learning opportunities when they are missed, particularly with our focus on hands-on learning.

If a student is absent from school or checks out early due to illness, the student may not participate in extracurricular activities after school that day.

### **How are absences calculated?**

Absences are counted when an entire day is missed or when a child attends school for less than 3 hours and fifteen minutes (11:30 a.m.) on any given student day. To be counted present for the

day, students must check in before 11:30 a.m. and stay the remainder of the day or arrive by 8:00 a.m. and stay until 11:30 a.m.

### **Excused Absences**

The following shall be considered excused absences:

- Absence for a temporary or extended period for illness, injury, or for a physical, mental, or emotional disability.
- Absence for a scheduled or emergency appointment or service that cannot be accommodated outside of school hours.
- Absence due to a family emergency
- Absence for observance of religious holidays or restriction in a child's participation in a school activity for religious reasons or strongly held personal beliefs.
- Absence due to a serious illness or death in the family.
- Any condition rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- Out-of-school suspension days.

The parent/guardian must send in written notification of absence prior to (if appropriate) and/or on the day the child returns to school. Teachers will gather missed work before the absence if three or more days' notice is provided. All missed assignments must be completed within a reasonable amount of time, typically 3 days.

### **Unexcused Absences**

- An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the reasons or circumstances noted as an excused absence.
- Any absence for which a written note (handwritten, typed, or email is acceptable) is not received.

Please consult the Brighten Academy policy manual for the full policy on attendance.

### **Make-up Work for Absences**

Students are expected to make up class work missed as a result of absence or tardiness within the guidelines set by the teacher.

### **Administration of Absences**

**Please see the Brighten Academy Policy Manual for the complete details on the administration of absences.**

After 4 unexcused absences, the school will initiate the process for excessive absences with parent contact. Upon subsequent unexcused absences, school contact may include referral to the

school counselor or a school social worker, notification of county representatives or the authorities, or referral to DFACS in accordance with Georgia compulsory school attendance laws.

## **Tardiness**

It is expected that students will arrive at school on time to begin the instructional day. The late arrival of students into the classroom is disruptive to the teacher and to the instructional process. A tardy student misses important morning announcements and the initial directions and instruction for the day.

- Tardiness is the failure of the student to get to class on time and is considered a form of absence. The school day officially begins at 8:00 a.m. All children who **arrive at** or after 7:59 am must be walked into the building and signed in by the parent/guardian at the front office.
- Tardies are recorded as part of a student's attendance record.
- Tardies can be excused or unexcused following the same criteria used for absences.
- Students must be present for three hours and fifteen minutes to be counted present. Checking in after 11:30 results in an absence.
- If your child arrives after 10:00 am, please make sure that he/she has a prepared lunch. It will be too late to order a hot lunch for the day.

## **Early Check-Outs**

Students are expected to complete a full instructional day. We know there are times when early check-outs during a day may be needed.

- The school day ends at 3:15 p.m. Any student leaving before this time will be counted as having an early check-out.
- Early check-outs may be either excused or unexcused, following the same criteria as the attendance policy.
- In order for a doctor's appointment check-out to be excused, a note from the doctor must be returned to school the next day. Without this note, the check-out will be marked as unexcused.
- Students leaving before 3:15 p.m. must be signed out through the office.
- Students will be called to the office for release to a parent/guardian. Parents are asked to wait in the office until the child arrives. This procedure is necessary for the protection of our children.
- Only persons listed on the student's card will be allowed to sign out a student unless we have written permission from the parent. We will ask for identification if we do not know the person who is picking up the child.
- No check-outs between 2:55 and 3:15 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday will be allowed. No check-outs between 12:40 and 1:00 pm on Wednesday will be allowed.



## **Student Make Up Work/ Late Assignments**

Teachers are unable to assess students on skills when there is missing work. Students must turn in makeup work within of the designated time frame, which will be communicated by the teacher.

Outstanding or late assignments will be able to be turned in so that understanding can be assessed. Teachers may apply appropriate consequences for this academic infraction (e.g., work during recess, complete a discipline referral, detention, etc.). Students will be marked down on their Habits of Scholarship under Commitment for missing/late assignments. Failure to complete assignments could result in the issuance of a grade of incomplete. This may mean the student does not receive enough credits to advance to the next grade level.

In preparation for instruction beyond Brighten, our middle school students will be required to complete all assignments (home and class) within the guidelines provided by the teachers. Failure to complete assignments on time will result in disciplinary action.

## **Student Withdrawal**

The office requires 24 hour notice to prepare all withdrawal forms. Please contact the office manager.

Brighten Academy will forward all information to your child's new school after we receive a request for records. The office will be happy to make copies of records for personal use at the cost of \$.25 per page.

## **Food Services/Lunch**

### **Breakfast/Lunch Program**

Brighten Academy has contracted our breakfast and lunch services with SLA Management. Students will have the option of purchasing a breakfast and/or lunch provided by SLA Management each day. SLA Management is a foodservice management company dedicated to providing high quality, nutritious, and cost efficient meal programs to the academic community. All SLA Management school lunches mirror the National School Lunch daily requirements for protein, vegetable, fruit, dairy and grain.

The school will communicate the cost of lunch and breakfast at the beginning of each school year. All payments must be received via the online lunch payment portal or through a money order addressed to Brighten Academy Charter School. We no longer accept cash or check payments for lunch accounts.

We understand that students may need to purchase a lunch and not have the funds available in the student's account. Per board policy, a student cannot accumulate a charge over \$8.00. After the \$8.00 limit is reached, a student will be offered a meal which consists of a cheese sandwich and a beverage (this meal still incurs the full meal charge). Adults are not allowed to charge meals.

One milk is provided with each purchased lunch, and students may purchase an additional carton of milk for 75 cents. Students may purchase side items and /or a carton of juice. The charge for individual items varies from \$.75 to \$1.00, and it is not covered by free/reduced-price meal policies.

Brighten Academy also participates in the Free/Reduced Lunch program. If you need information related to this program, please contact an administrator.

If you opt to have your child bring his/her lunch each day to school. Please make every effort to ensure that the lunch follows nutritional guidelines and is something that your child will eat. Please note the following when preparing your child's lunch:

- Include all condiments, utensils, and napkins
- Refrigeration is not available
- Be mindful that little ones cannot assemble or open certain types of packaging. Selection of lunches should be made with this in mind.
- Microwaves will not be available for student use.

Vending machines (water and snacks that meet the USDA guidelines) are available for visitor, student, and staff use during the school day. Each teacher will develop guidelines for its use.

### **Visitors and Volunteers**

All visitors are required to check in at the front office and obtain a visitor tag.

Visitors, who are not properly fingerprinted and cleared by administration, are not allowed to have direct supervision (unattended by a staff member) with children. This includes sitting in the hall with children and assisting with work.

Visitors are discouraged from using student restrooms. They are encouraged to use the adult restroom in the main building or on each floor of the classroom building.

All visits to the classroom should have a meaningful purpose such as volunteering, pre-scheduled conferencing, acting as a guest speaker, etc. Drop-in visits will not be allowed so we can protect instructional time. Parent classroom observations are welcomed, but should be pre-arranged in advance with the teacher. Conferences will be scheduled by appointment only.

Students are not allowed to bring visitors or guests to school to visit classes without prior approval from the classroom teacher and administration.

Classroom volunteers/visitors are expected to refrain from cell phone use while in the classroom. Volunteers with young children (or children not in the designated classroom) may be asked to work outside of the designated classroom so that the learning environment remains conducive to learning.

## **Parking**

Visitors may choose to park anywhere on the campus except in any fire lane, red curbs, and the drop off lanes. The lot to the right as you enter by Prestley Mill Road is designated for staff only, as are the three rows of spaces adjacent to the playing field (in the main lot by the office). Please always park in a parking space and avoid blocking the reserved handicapped spaces.

## **Media Center**

### **Selection Procedures for Library Media Resources**

#### **Purpose**

The philosophy of the Brighten Academy library media services is to provide access to information and ideas that support the mission and the instructional program of the Brighten Academy charter. The school library program, as an integral part of the total curriculum, is the vehicle that provides opportunities for students to develop skills needed to manage complex information formats and to foster a lifelong interest in both reading and knowledge. Library media specialists shall use established procedures for the selection of library media to build the collection through selecting and discarding of library media resources. The procedures will also assist students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members in understanding the principles behind selection and collection management in the Brighten Academy library media center.

#### **Selection Responsibility**

The Governing Board of Brighten Academy is legally responsible for all matters relating to Brighten Academy including library media resources. Responsibilities for the actual selection of school library materials rest with the professionally trained library media specialist who knows the needs and depth of curriculum, methods of instruction, and the interests, individual differences and wide range of abilities of the students. The media specialist will work cooperatively with administrators and teachers to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making selections. Please see the Brighten Academy Policy Manual for the complete policy on the selection process, procurement, and reconsideration of library resources.

## **Position on Intellectual Freedom**

The Governing Board of Brighten Academy subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights* of the American Library Association, a copy of which is appended to this policy statement (Appendix A). The principles of intellectual freedom expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights* are inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. In the event library materials are questioned, the principles of intellectual freedom shall be defended.

### **The Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Material should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibilities to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

## **Technology**

Internet access is available to students and teachers at Brighten Academy. We are very pleased to bring this access to our school and believe the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence at Brighten Academy by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Brighten Academy's technology committee has taken precautions to restrict access to inappropriate materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover inappropriate information.

Students and staff are expected to abide by all Terms and Conditions established by the school. Prior to students being granted access to the Internet, parents will be required to complete an **Acceptable Use Policy** to acknowledge and agree to school policies.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

Brighten Academy Charter School has adopted this dress code to promote an educational atmosphere that minimizes distractions, maximizes learning, and teaches students the importance of dressing for success. Students' dress should reflect self-respect and pride in their school.

Students are expected to follow this dress code whenever they are on campus during school hours or when attending school-related activities (field studies).

It is a violation of the dress code to wear clothing that reveals a student's underwear, midriff, lower back, upper thigh, or cleavage at any time (including when leaning over or raising the arms). Clothing may NOT be excessively baggy, dirty, sloppy, or tight (form-fitting).

The focus of this dress code is on modesty, neatness, cleanliness, and good taste, which must be observed in addition to the specific requirements set forth below. The school administration will provide the final determination as to whether a specific outfit or article of clothing is acceptable under those standards.

### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Shirts**

1. Shirts must be solid red, white, or navy blue in color.
2. Shirts may have a Brighten logo or another logo that is no more than two inches high and three inches wide.
3. The following styles may be worn:
  - a. Oxford button down
  - b. Golf or polo (long or short sleeved)
  - c. Turtlenecks
  - d. Crew neck t-shirt with Brighten logo purchased through school approved vendor
4. Additional adornments (lace, rhinestones, etc.) are not permitted.
5. Oxfords, golf, and polo shirts must be buttoned all the way up except for the top button.
6. Exterior shirts must be long enough to cover the waist (midriff).

7. Shirts must be the proper size for the student wearing them. Shirts may not be form-fitting nor loose enough to show cleavage, chest, or shoulders.
8. Undershirts worn under an exterior shirt must not be visible from the bottom or arms of the shirt and must be tucked in as necessary so they will not be visible. Long sleeve crew neck style shirts may be worn under a collared shirt (which meets dress code requirements).
9. Exterior shirts must not be pinned, rolled, knotted, or otherwise worn to expose garments worn underneath the exterior shirt, with the exception of having collars (in the specified solid colors) visible under a sweater.

### **Pants and Skirts**

1. The following styles are acceptable for boys or girls:
  - a. Slacks
  - b. Shorts
2. The following styles are acceptable for girls:
  - a. Capri pants
  - b. Skirts
  - c. Skorts
  - d. Jumpers
  - e. Dresses
3. Acceptable colors are solid navy blue or khaki.
4. Logos that are no more than two inches high and three inches wide are permitted.
5. All of the garments listed above must be worn at the waist and must extend down to at least two inches from the top of the knee cap.
6. Additional adornments (lace, rhinestones, etc.) are not permitted.
7. Slacks may not be rolled up.
8. Excessively baggy pants and shorts are not permitted.

### **Sweaters**

1. Sweaters must be solid red, white, or navy blue in color.
2. V-neck or short-sleeve sweaters (e.g., golf sweaters or sweater vests) are permitted if worn over a shirt that meets the requirements set forth above for shirts.
3. Logos that are no more than two inches high and three inches wide are permitted.

## **Coats / Jackets**

1. All coats and jackets worn during the school day must be solid black, red, white, or navy blue in color.
2. Coats and jackets may have logos that are no more than two inches high and three inches wide.
3. Coats and jackets may not be worn in lieu of shirts.
4. Hooded sweatshirts with a full zipper are considered a jacket and allowable.
5. Hooded sweatshirts with no zipper (with or without front pocket) are considered hoodies and are not part of dress code, therefore not allowed.

## **Shoes**

1. Shoes must be predominantly solid white, navy blue, black, gray, or brown in color.
2. The following shoe styles are acceptable:
  - a. Tennis Shoes
  - b. Athletic Footwear
  - c. Boots
  - d. Loafers
  - e. Closed toe shoes with less than a one inch heel
3. Shoes may have a manufacturer's logo and name
4. Shoes may have a second color for accents or trim, provided one of the colors listed above is the predominant color.
5. Additional adornments/decorations (patterns, lace, rhinestones, etc.) are not permitted
6. Bedroom shoes and slippers may NOT be worn unless permission is given to wear them on a special-dress day.
7. Students are required to wear athletic shoes during Physical Education or Dance and Movement classes.
8. Students in grades 6-8 may wear sandals with back straps.
9. Flip flops are not permitted.

## **Hair**

1. Hair must be reasonably neat and clean.
2. Hair must appear natural in color.
3. Hairstyles (Mohawks, rat tails, etc.) and adornments (bows, barrettes, etc.) must not be distracting to the individual student or those around him or her.

### **Accessories**

1. Socks (that are clearly visible) are to be solid red, white, navy blue, black or gray in color.
2. Tights and leggings (acceptable when worn with shorts or skirts no more than 2 inches above the knee) are to be solid red, white, navy blue, black or gray in color.
3. Logos can be no larger than 2x3 inches.
4. Hats may not be worn indoors unless specifically authorized by the administration for special-dress days.

### **Jewelry**

1. Students (male or female) are permitted to wear earrings in one or both ears. Earrings (studs, bars, chains) may not be visible in any other part of the body other than the ear. Students are not permitted to wear more than 2 earrings in each ear.
2. Students may not wear chains protruding from pants pockets or any other area.
3. Students may not wear jewelry that makes excessive noise or that is distracting to others. Jewelry is to remain modest.
4. Neither Brighten Academy nor its staff is responsible for jewelry that is lost or stolen.

### **Middle School Physical Education Dress Out**

1. Students should come ready to actively participate in class to learn about personal fitness, develop and improve different sport skills, and learn more about a variety of different sports.
2. All students will wear a gray crew-neck t-shirt or a Brighten spirit t-shirt.
3. All students will wear navy blue shorts (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee) or athletic pants.
4. All students will wear tennis shoes during PE. Tennis shoes need to adhere to the dress code standard--predominantly solid navy, brown, gray, white, or black with accent colors allowed. See dress code for shoes.

Students will be given a daily grade for dressing out and participation. This will make up part of their overall grade in the class. After the third time of a student not dressing out the student's parents will be notified.



## **SPECIAL DAYS AND EVENTS**

On certain days, students may (but are not required) to wear clothing that is not solid in color and/or that incorporates colors other than those set forth in the Basic Requirements. However, other than the exceptions set forth below or specifically authorized by the school administration, students must comply with the Basic Requirements of the Dress Code whenever they are on campus during school hours or attending school-related activities.

### **Spirit Day (every Monday)**

On Mondays, students may wear any apparel that has the Brighten Academy logo OR shirts that are purchased for or obtained by participation in any fundraiser and special event sponsored by the school (e.g., Relay for Life, Field Day, etc.). Pants/shorts must adhere to dress code requirements.

### **Middle School Only**

Middle school students (grades 6-8) may also purchase a jersey pass for \$1 to wear their favorite sports team shirt on **Thursday**. Regardless of a purchased jersey pass, middle school students may also wear jeans provided they are free from holes, tears, or fraying and otherwise comply with the Dress Code requirements for pants. Middle school (grades 6-8) may also purchase a hat pass for \$1 to wear on **Friday**.

### **Fashionable Friday (every Friday unless otherwise notified in advance)**

Students may “dress down” on Fridays; meaning that they may wear clothing that is not solid in color and/or that incorporates colors other than those specified in the Basic Requirements. Student also may wear jeans on Fridays, provided they are free from holes, tears, or fraying and otherwise comply with the Dress Code requirements for pants.

It is a violation of the dress code to wear clothing that reveals a student’s underwear, midriff, lower back, upper thigh, or cleavage at any time (including when leaning over or raising the arms). Clothing may NOT be excessively baggy, dirty, sloppy, or tight (form-fitting).

### **Seven C’s Shirts (Anytime)**

Seven C’s Green Shirts are awarded to students in grades 2-7 who, in the opinion of the school staff and administration, have demonstrated achievement in each of the following categories: (1) craftsmanship; (2) commitment; (3) critical thinking; (4) creativity; (5) curiosity; (6) community; and (7) culture. This is a special honor. As a result, Seven C’s t-shirts may be worn at any time by the students who have earned them.

### **School Dances (by written announcement)**

Students who attend school-sponsored dances may wear clothing that is not solid in color and/or that incorporates colors other than those specified in the Basic Requirements. Students may also wear non-crew neck collars that extend no more than two inches from the base of the neck, provided such collars do not expose lingerie or cleavage. Strapless dresses or shirts are not acceptable dress for any school event. Students wearing clothing that does not meet the Dress Code requirements may be asked to leave.

If there are any questions about the acceptability of an outfit, students may bring the outfit to school for consultation with the administration.

### **Costume-Theme Days (by written announcement)**

On costume-theme days, students are invited to wear clothing according to a specific costume theme (e.g., pirates, pajamas, book characters). Students who choose to participate on these days must wear costumes that clearly and obviously follow the designated theme. For example, a t-shirt and jeans with an eye-patch is not a pirate costume, just as a t-shirt and jeans with a teddy bear are not pajamas. Scary masks (e.g., skulls, flesh wounds, etc.) are not permitted as part of student costumes. Students who are not obviously dressed according to the costume theme must wear clothing that otherwise meets the Dress Code requirements.

### **Field studies and Other Special Events (by written announcement)**

The administration and staff may authorize exceptions to the Basic Requirements of the Dress Code during field studies and other events on a case by case basis.

### **Clothes Closet**

Brighten Academy has a Clothes Closet of FREE clothing that is available to all students on a first-come, first-serve basis. Clothing items are donated by parents, staff, and community members. Visit the front office if you would like to look through the clothes closet.

### **Dress Code Violations**

When a student is in violation of the Dress Code, school personnel will generally call his or her parent(s) and ask for an acceptable outfit to be brought to school.

Dress code violations also will be addressed as a disciplinary matter. Upon the third (3rd) documented Dress Code violation the student will receive a disciplinary referral. For additional information, please refer to the Brighten Academy Handbook policy on student discipline.

### **UNSURE?**

Students or parents who are unsure whether a specific outfit or article of clothing complies with this policy should ask an administrator for clarification BEFORE the student chooses to wear the outfit or item to school.

The administration will make final determinations with regard to compliance with this policy, including but not limited to issues of modesty, neatness, cleanliness, natural hair colors, and overall acceptable appearance.

### **Discipline**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of Brighten Academy's Student Code of Conduct and Behavior Contract is as follows:

- To create a risk free and safe environment
- To maximize learning time
- To provide information to students and parents about rules and regulations of the school and the plan for consequences for infractions
- To provide uniform administrative and disciplinary procedures

#### **Statement of Student Conduct**

Our goal is to teach students the value and importance of following established rules and procedures in order to maintain a safe, orderly, and respectful environment both in the educational setting and in our communities. To that end, we will positively reinforce honorable conduct and good behavior as often as possible, and we will balance this with appropriate consequences for misconduct. We will continually provide encouragement and support to students in self-management of behavior and control of actions.

Parents and students will be required to sign the Code of Conduct as a pre-requisite for enrollment in the school. As a school of choice, Brighten Academy retains the right to withdraw students (pending a Due Process Hearing) who do not conform to appropriate behavioral expectations that support the learning environment defined in the mission and core beliefs and by this Code of Conduct. Students may not enroll at Brighten Academy unless consequences at a prior school or system have been served.

These rules are designed to notify students and parents about the types and range of behaviors prohibited by Brighten Academy. Every specific variation of conduct may not have been included. Consequently, students should expect to be disciplined for misconduct that is obviously inappropriate and contrary to the mission and core beliefs established in the Brighten Academy Charter.

### **Student Misconduct**

Students generally travel through three levels of the Discipline Cycle before reaching a Due Process Hearing. Students with a singular offense will begin on Level I. Students with a referral for the same offense will then move to Level II. Students may be referred to the office and stay on Level I for up to three (3) singular non-related offenses. Upon the third offense the student is moved to Level II. Students on Level II who incur an additional offense of any nature will be moved to Level III and have consequences which could carry a maximum penalty of expulsion.

**Examples of Level I or II and Zero Tolerance Offenses are outlined in our Discipline policies located in the Policy Manual <http://www.brightenacademy.com/policies.html>**

Certain offenses are considered “Zero Tolerance” and will be immediate grounds for Level III designation and a Due Process Hearing process to begin. These offenses are listed below:

**ZERO TOLERANCE See Board Policy for a comprehensive list, including, but not limited to:**

- Drugs (Possession or Use)
- Assault & Battery
- Causing Danger
- Intimidation/Threats
- Leaving Premises (On or Off Campus)
- Weapons (Possession or Use)
- Bullying
- Theft

### **School Communication/Intervention for Behavior Referrals:**

When a child receives an office referral an administrator or his/her designee will investigate the incident. Parents will be notified of the findings and determined consequence(s).

To ensure Due Process and an opportunity to determine root causes of behaviors once a child reaches Level II, an administrative conference is held. This conference will consist of an administrator, the teacher, and the child’s parent(s). The intent of the conference is to create an action plan to proactively determine the responsibility of the parents, students, and school to help reduce behaviors.

If behaviors persist or the action plan is not upheld by any party, the child will be sent to a Discipline Committee to develop a behavior contract. The Discipline Committee will be composed of an administrator and two lead teachers, and invitees will include the child's teacher, the parent(s), and any other school personnel as requested by the school administration. A concurrent recommendation will be made to begin the RTI process for behavior or a referral to the IEP committee (if applicable).

If the behavior contract developed in the Discipline Committee is not fulfilled, the student will be sent to a Due Process Hearing with a consequence rendered that could include expulsion. The Due Process Hearing policy is outlined in detail in the policy manual. All federal and state law Due Process procedures will be followed for all Due Process Hearings.

A Waiver may be offered in place of a Due Process Hearing at the discretion of administration. The waiver will include stipulations that must be met and takes the place of the hearing.

### **Classroom Discipline Expectations**

Staff members with direct responsibility for supervision of students are expected to follow a discipline plan that supports the overall Behavior Plan of the school. This plan should be multi-leveled and should consist of reasonable, age-appropriate expectations for children, as well as a balance of positive and negative consequences. Staff members are expected to clearly communicate the plan to parents and students at the beginning of the year and provide reminders throughout the school year. Staff is expected to provide frequent communication to parents regarding their child's behavior.

It is our goal to help every child attain a level of appropriate behavior, and every effort to reach this end should be made. We are advocates of children and should remain objective and fair minded in all ways.

### **Electronic Devices and Toys**

Electronic recreational devices (including, but not limited to: cell phones, MP3 players, IPODs, handheld video games, cameras, laser pointers, tape recorders, ITOUCH, IPETS, etc.) and toys are not permitted at school.

Students in grades 4-8 are allowed to participate in a voluntary Bring Your Own Technology Plan. Students must have parent and teacher permission to participate in this program. Failure to comply with this policy for use of the BYOT will result in a loss of BYOT privileges and/or disciplinary action. Further incidents will result in an office discipline referral. The homeroom

teacher reserves the right to revoke a student's privilege regarding BYOT at any time and will inform the parent if such an instance occurs.

The school shall bear no responsibility for lost, stolen, or broken electronic recreational devices or toys. Students who are using and/or in possession of electronic devices when not permitted will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including an office discipline referral. If electronic recreational devices or toys are removed from a child's possession, a parent will be required to pick up the item from the front office.

### **Assessment and Grading**

Assessment and grading will be the cornerstone for planning instruction and for determining success of the instructional programs and methods provided by Brighten Academy. A variety of assessment tools will be utilized:

- Rubrics
- Running Records
- Pre and post tests
- Universal Screenings in reading fluency, reading comprehension, and math computation
- Portfolios
  - Will be structurally defined by grade level curriculum benchmarks
  - Will demonstrate student performance on a broad range of tasks
  - Will be shared with parents during conferences
  - Will be used as an indicator for placement each year
- Yearly state standardized tests (Georgia Milestones, etc.)
- Other standardized test measures employed by the Douglas County School System (e.g., ITBS)
- Common Benchmark Assessments
- Projects
- Discussions, daily skill maintenance, daily learning activities

Reporting of instructional focus and individual progress will take place via a variety of communication vehicles

- Newsletters, parent letters, websites, etc.
- 9 week standards based report cards for K-5 students and 6 week reports for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades
- Graded papers with commentary in graded work folder
- Parent conferences
- Behavior logs
- Student Led Conferences

Where appropriate, thematic and project based instruction of the Common Core Georgia Performance (CCGPS) standards shall be implemented. Students will participate in hands-on, engaging lessons.

Projects involving the curriculum and service learning opportunities will be provided at least twice annually.

A variety of extracurricular opportunities will be provided to extend the curriculum and achieve the goal of producing well-rounded, actively engaged students. Examples of these opportunities include, but are not limited to; clubs, national or state organizations, tutoring, or sports.

## **Grading Policy**

Brighten Academy will utilize standard based assessment. The following definitions will be used when assessing a student.

**Standard** – What a student is to know, understand, and be able to do (multi-dimensional)

**Element** – What a student is to know, understand, and be able to do (uni-dimensional)

**Formative Assessment** – Formal and informal assessment that takes place **WHILE** a student is learning (Ex: quiz, observation, ticket out the door, journal prompt, center work, oral reading, discussion protocols, quick checks)

**Summative Assessment** – Formal assessment conducted at the end of an instructional lesson, unit, or set of lessons or units (Ex: benchmark tests, standardized tests, tests, projects)

**Mastery** – student **consistently** demonstrates **independent** competency free from major errors and omissions regarding any of the information or process (simple or complex) that were **explicitly** taught

**Independent** – Student completes task without teacher assistance. Students who are being served with an **IEP** are entitled to the assistance outlined per content area. For example, a student who requires certain teacher assistance according to goals outlined in the IEP, would be deemed independent. Modifications through **SST** that do not alter the content (extra time, preferential seating, reduced work, etc.) will be deemed independent. The Director or other authorized school leader will support the classroom teachers' development of assessment based on students who are being served through SST, IEP, or a 504.

Assessment should be a tool that provides positive feedback and accurate representation of what a child has learned compared to the standard. The following Grading Scale will be employed throughout Brighten Academy to provide consistency among grade levels. Grades will be given on all report cards and posted on all permanent records in grades K-8, using this scale.

3D

In addition to score a 3.0 performance, in-depth inferences and applications go beyond what was taught.

3.0

No major errors or omissions regarding any of the information or process (simple or complex) that were explicitly taught.

2.5

No major errors or omissions regarding any of the simpler information or processes and partial knowledge of the more complex ideas and processes.

2.0

No major errors or omissions regarding any of the simpler information or processes but major errors or omissions regarding complex knowledge, ideas, and processes.

1.5

With help, partial knowledge of the simpler details or processes, and major errors or omissions regarding complex knowledge, ideas, and processes.

1.0

With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler ideas, concepts, or processes.

\*Please note that a child who is not working independently will not be able to obtain a score higher than a 2.0.

### **Homework**

The purpose of homework is to reinforce skills which have been taught at school. Homework should be based on the academic skill level of the child, and differentiation is expected. Homework should have a specific purpose (e.g., mastery of basic facts; mastery of the spelling pattern).

The following guidelines have been established to ensure that appropriate amounts of homework are provided to allow for a balance of work and home time. These guidelines are based on nightly averages and may change periodically to be either less or more as particular needs arise throughout the school year. Projects are expected to be provided regularly and homework assignments adjusted accordingly to allow for work on the projects. However, parents are expected to guide students in time management for completion of projects.

Teachers are expected to coordinate homework assignments with their co-workers to ensure that assigned homework stays within the guidelines. The time frames listed in the guidelines are TOTALS for the number of minutes students should be assigned homework on average each night and should not be interpreted to mean per subject area or class.

Reading time is expected nightly and should be incorporated as part of the guidelines provided:



Kindergarten-1 <sup>st</sup> Grade:	15-30 minutes nightly
2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade:	30-45 minutes nightly
4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade:	45-60 minutes nightly

### **Recess and Playground**

Brighten Academy has an area where our students can play in a safe, age appropriate environment. The faculty and staff feel that physical activity is very important to students, but we view recess as a privilege. Students who demonstrate inappropriate behavior or work habits may be restricted from free play at the teacher's discretion.

As long as the temperature is 40 degrees or higher, the children are allowed to go outside when conditions are dry and as the teacher permits. On days where air quality is poor, outdoor play will be suspended.

Students must be dressed appropriately for the weather. Students not dressed appropriately will not be permitted to go outside.

On days where air quality is poor, outdoor play will be suspended.

### **Parent Involvement Compact**

#### **Family School Connection**

The goal of the Parent School Covenant is to create the strongest possible partnership between home and the school and to nourish and facilitate the individual abilities of each child. To succeed in our mission and foster intellectual and social growth, education must extend beyond the classroom walls by recognizing and incorporating the family and home as vital parts of success.

#### **Brighten Academy's Pledge to Parents:**

- To provide a program of academic excellence that fulfills the goals expressed in our mission and core beliefs
- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- To communicate regularly regarding a child's progress and needs
- To continually reflect on, evaluate, and develop the learning environment
- To provide meaningful parent and student programs and extracurricular activities
- To communicate effectively regarding school and classroom events and policies

- To be courteous and respectful to parents and to work collaboratively to help the child find success

**Parents’ Pledge to the School:**

- To read, understand, and support the mission of Brighten Academy
- To provide a home environment that nurtures a love of learning
- To ensure the child is on time with appropriate materials and assignments
- To provide a nutritious breakfast and lunch each day
- To read to/with the child each day and assist with homework as needed.
- To be courteous and respectful to staff and work collaboratively to help my child find success
- To stay abreast of school communication and follow school policies and procedures
- To attend at least 2 conferences per year to discuss academic progress
- To attend extracurricular activities and events to support the child or the school
- To volunteer and earn a minimum of 20 credits (see attached list of ways to earn credits)
- To maintain an updated Volunteer Log of volunteer activities

Upon enrollment, parents must sign the Parent-School Covenant, acknowledging they are in support of these requirements and ensures the parents are fully involved in their child’s learning. Failure to meet requirements set forth in the parent contract will result in loss of extracurricular privileges such as field day, ASP, clubs, school dances, and other non-instructional events throughout the year. Report cards and other documents will be maintained in the office until the requirements are met. Please note that half of the hours must be completed by January 1 of each school year. Families who join us later in the year will be asked to earn two hours per month enrolled. If a circumstance exists that may impede a family from earning their volunteer credits, please notify the school administration.

**Ways to Obtain Volunteer Credits (10 credits must be earned by January 1<sup>st</sup>)**

<b>Volunteer Activity</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Per</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Participate in a committee or subcommittee	1	Hour	
Serve as a Board Member or PTO Officer	20	Year	
Serve as a PTO Committee Chair	10	Event	
Serve as a mentor or tutor	2	Hour	
Classroom room parent	5	Year	
Volunteer in the classroom	1	Hour	
Volunteer in the media center (admin, storytelling)	1	Hour	At home work = ½ credit per hour

			(Requires signature of media specialist on log).
Volunteer in the office	1	Hour	
Volunteer at Car Riders	1	Hour	
Volunteer as a Lunch Buddy (per ½ hour)	½	½ Hour	
Volunteer at extracurricular activity (Spring Fling, chaperone dances, Birdies for Brighten, etc.)	1	Hour	
Volunteer at the Book Fair	1	Hour	
Volunteer as a proctor during testing (per hour)	1	Hour	
Sponsor a club or sport (per hour)	1	Hour	
Attend extracurricular activities or school events, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Classroom performances</li> <li>❖ School performances</li> <li>❖ Competitions</li> <li>❖ Curriculum, Community and Conversation</li> <li>❖ Board Meetings</li> <li>❖ Board Work Sessions</li> <li>❖ Award Celebrations</li> <li>❖ Classroom Parties</li> <li>❖ Learning Celebrations</li> <li>❖ Open House</li> <li>❖ Brighten Basics</li> <li>❖ Parent/Teacher Conferences</li> <li>❖ Student-Led Conferences</li> <li>❖ Other School Visits</li> </ul>	1	Event	
Complete at home projects for teachers, staff, clubs, PTO, etc.	½	Hour	Requires staff member signature
Lawn maintenance	2	Hour	
Chaperone on field studies	3	Day	Overnight trips = 8 credits per day
Saturday Volunteer Days	1	Hour	
Participate in school-wide programs including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Career Day</li> </ul>	1	Event	

❖ Red Ribbon Week ❖ Charter Schools Week ❖ Community Circle			
Donate materials, supplies, snacks, or services that benefit a whole classroom, grade level, or the school	½	Per \$50	Or equivalent Does not include school supplies or fees related to individual child
Charitable donations to our non-profit organization (may be earmarked for your intended purpose)	1	Per \$100	Company match applies
Attend focus groups and/or workshops	1	Event	
Complete parent survey	1	Per survey	
Donation of clothing to the Clothes Closet ( <b>must be in good condition and comply with uniform standards</b> )	½	Per 10 articles	
Facilitating the Completion of 7 C's Deck	5	Per Family	Teacher's Signature
Join Booster Club for Band, Sports, or Other	1	Per Family	
Student attendance—0 absences and 0 tardies per month	1	Per Family	
Sign and return important school documents (i.e. report cards, standardized test information, etc.)	1	Per Child	
Any other way the parent, teacher and administrator deem would be appropriate and beneficial in fulfilling the mission of Brighten Academy	TBD by admin.	TBD by Admin.	Submit request for <u>prior</u> approval to administration.

If a circumstance exists that may impede a family from earning their volunteer credits, please notify the school administration.

Failure to comply with the parent compact may result in loss of, extracurricular privileges (dances, field days, field studies). See section on extracurricular activities in this handbook for more information.

### **Students Not in Good Standing**

As a school of choice, we have the responsibility to make sure all parties (school, parent, and student) are working together to provide an optimum learning environment. Student, parent, and school expectations are outlined in our Parent Contract, Discipline/Student Code of Conduct, and our charter.

Since we are a team, we pledge to help you and your child meet his/her learning goals and comply with Brighten's procedures and policies. To be deemed in good standing we have the following criteria:

- \*Meeting expectations of parent compact, including being current on volunteer hours
- \*No grades of "incomplete" due to not turning in assignments
- \*No outstanding fees related to lunch charges, returned check charges, ASP, book returns, returned check fee, etc.
- \*Meeting expectations of student contract/discipline code

If the expectations above are not met we will notify you via phone or email and give you an opportunity to discuss the concerns. If the issues cannot be resolved you may be deemed as "not in good standing." This will impact your child's ability to participate in extracurricular activities and the school will maintain all records in the office (including report cards) for your review.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

We work hard to offer a robust extracurricular program for our students. Some of these programs are free and others are fee based to help offset the operational and supply costs for the program. We begin (most) of our clubs and extracurricular programs in late September. You will receive a listing of all available activities in September.

Students must be deemed in "good standing" in order to participate in extracurricular programs. In good standing is defined as:

- \*Meeting expectations of parent compact, including being current on volunteer hours
- \*No grades of "incomplete" due to not turning in assignments
- \*No outstanding fees related to lunch charges, returned check charges, ASP, book returns, returned check fee, etc.
- \*Meeting expectations of discipline code

In addition to our club program, Brighten Academy considers the following activities as extracurricular and subject to the provision of being in "good standing."

- \*Participation in Field Day (K-8)
- \*Participation in Behavior Reward Days (6-8)
- \*After School Program (ASP)
- \*Beta Club Convention
- \*Permission to check out books through the media center

### **Field Study Student Guidelines**

Field studies are considered an extension of the regular academic school day. Therefore, all school and discipline policies will be enforced at all times.

**Field study dress:** Students must always dress for a field study in the regular Brighten Academy dress code attire unless the teacher states otherwise. The teacher has the right to suggest jeans along with the dress code shirt.

**Field study early check outs:**

All children are required to remain in school until the end of the day, unless the teacher states otherwise. In order to accommodate personal schedules and avoid additional trips to school, students will be allowed to check out AFTER a field study with an excused check-out after 2:15pm. Checking out early (excused or unexcused) may compromise your child earning a perfect attendance award. Another child in a class that is not a part of the field study would not be considered an excused check out.

**Field study check outs from field study site:**

No child will be allowed to be checked out from the field study site for the day under any circumstances. All children must ride on the transportation provided by the school both to and from the field study location

**Chaperone Lottery:**

A lottery drawing will be held to determine who can fill chaperone spots if interest exceeds vacancies.

**General Field Study Policies:**

1. Any adult chaperoning a field study will be subject to a criminal background check and fingerprinting. A full criminal background check and fingerprinting must be completed every three years for those wishing to chaperone field studies. Every year a free local background check must be completed. See office personnel for more information.
2. When completing the background check application please note that all information must be disclosed on the application. Any information NOT disclosed that is noted on the background check will constitute an automatic dismissal from eligibility for chaperoning on the trip or any future field studies. There will be no exceptions to this rule. The administrator will make determinations about suitability for a chaperone to attend if criminal findings are denoted on the background check.
3. While away on an overnight field study, an adult chaperone must remain with the students at all times. This includes evening times.
4. During overnight field studies, students must always travel using transportation provided for by the school and may not ride in personal cars at any time.
5. Students are not permitted to leave the group's location at any time, even with a parent. (e.g., walking to a near-by restaurant.)
6. Students must be accounted for at all times by school personnel or approved chaperones.

7. All school rules and policies apply while on a field study. Consumption of alcohol, use of drugs, and use of tobacco is prohibited.
8. Chaperones may not bring additional siblings or other children.
9. Chaperones must sign the chaperone policy before each field study.

A detailed field study chaperone policy is located in the school's policy manual.

### **Awards**

The school shall endeavor to recognize student achievement whenever possible. The following avenues (not intended to be exclusive) will be utilized to formally recognize such achievement.

- **Sunshine Slips/Rise Up Slips** should be awarded at the discretion of a staff member to students who demonstrate exceptional qualities from the list of 7 Cs.
- **Attendance** shall be recognized annually.
  - **Annual attendance** awards will be presented as follows:
    - **Perfect Attendance** – 0 absences, 0 tardies
    - **Excellent Attendance** – 0 absences, 0 unexcused and up to 2 excused tardies
- **Director's Honor Club** – Students who achieve a 3D for any Standard shall be invited to participate in a Director's Honor Club each grading period. Special privileges shall be granted to club members.
- **Yearly 7 Cs Awards** – Students who earn "meets" **in every category** of the 7Cs Habits of Scholarship and who achieve all required tasks for the 7Cs Deck shall be awarded a certificate of achievement and the privilege of earning a special green 7Cs Brighten tee shirt. Students who are a part of the discipline cycle during the school year will not be eligible for the green 7 Cs shirt.

### **Class Parties and Celebrations**

Parties of a non-instructional nature shall be limited to twice yearly – one at the winter holiday break, and one at the end of the school year. Please be sure to discuss special plans and activities with your child's teacher before the event.

We enjoy celebrating birthdays with our children, but we have several students who have food allergies. Please contact the teacher before sending in snacks for these special occasions. We also prefer that birthday snacks are eaten and passed out in the cafeteria. Please make sure the snack is prepared so that individual servings can be quickly distributed. We do not have the proper materials to cut and serve whole cakes and cookies, so please adhere to individual servings.

### **After School Program (ASP)**

## **Mission**

The mission of the After School Program (ASP) is to provide a safe, relaxed, and engaging environment for its elementary and middle school students.

The ASP provides enrichment activities, social interaction with peers, and homework help in a well supervised, structured setting for its students. ASP serves students who are enrolled in the school. Students take part in experiences that encourage creativity, social relationships, appropriate behavior, and a positive self-image.

ASP maintains separate policies and procedures. Please refer to the ASP Handbook or see the ASP Director with any questions.

Students who are still in the building at 3:45 will be considered a late pick-up. If more than 3 late pick-ups are accrued, your child will be sent to the ASP program and drop in rates (\$25 per day per child) will apply. Drop in fees not paid upon pick up will be charged a late fee (\$5 per family).

Any child not picked up by 4:00 pm (regular dismissal days—on the first occurrence) OR 1:45 (1:00 dismissal days—on first occurrence) will be sent to the ASP program and drop in rates (\$25 per day per child) will apply. Drop in fees not paid upon pick up will be charged a late fee (\$5 per family).

## **Lost and Found**

Parents and students are encouraged to label all clothing and personal items and to visit the Lost and Found area frequently. The lost and found area is located by the cafeteria. We will donate all items to charity after each monthly Saturday work day.





## Brighten Academy Technology Acceptable Use Policy Permission/Acknowledgement Form

Please sign and date the following and return it to your child's teacher.

I understand and will abide by the Terms and Conditions set forth in the Technology Acceptable Use Policy. I further understand that any violation of the regulations is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked and school disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT OR GUARDIAN:** As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Terms and Conditions for Internet access. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes and that the Brighten Academy Technology Committee has taken available precautions to eliminate access to controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold the Governing Board of Brighten Academy or Brighten Academy responsible for materials acquired on the network. I have also discussed this acceptable use policy with my child.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my child to have access to the Internet at Brighten Academy.

\_\_\_\_\_ I **DO NOT** give permission for my child to have access to the Internet at Brighten Academy.

Parent or Guardian Name (please print):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_