



Family Handbook

2021-2022

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THE MISSION AND VALUES OF OUR SCHOOL

Mission Statement

Akili Academy of New Orleans prepares scholars to excel in rigorous high schools, to succeed in college, and to strengthen their community-oriented character.

Values

We believe that it is our responsibility to teach, to live, and to reward a common set of values that will benefit our scholars throughout their lives. These values provide the foundation for academic achievement and a strong school community.

Teamwork:

We are one team working towards a common goal.
We are stronger together than we are alone.
We are a source of support to one another.

Grit:

We welcome challenge because challenge makes us stronger.
We do what's right, even when it is hard.
We are in control of our own destiny.

Excellence:

We know "good enough" is never enough.
We constantly think about improvement
We do our best work every day.

Enthusiasm:

We know that learning is its own reward.
We take joy in the work that we do.
We are fiercely positive.

Kindness:

We are good to each other, our peers, and our community.
We respect and appreciate what makes us unique.
We help others when they are in need.

COVID DISCLAIMER

Policies and procedures in this handbook are subject to change based on directives from federal, state, and local agencies as well as medical and scientific guidance related to COVID-19.

SCHOOL CULTURE

Family Involvement Policy

Akili Academy requires parents/guardians and families to be partners in the education of their scholars. The important task of educating a child calls for the school, the scholar, and the family to all work together to ensure success. We expect families to participate actively in their scholar's education by attending at least two school events per year. We also strive to cultivate positive and productive relationships with all of our families through school sponsored events and activities.

Akili Academy Family-School Relationship Events and Activities:

- Conferences with scholars, families, and teachers (including two report card days per year and one back-to-school open house per year)
- Field trip chaperone opportunities
- Community-wide events, celebrations, and performances
- Scholastic Book Fair (once per semester, including one parent night)
- Family and student breakfasts
- Academic family nights
- Weekly grade and behavior reports
- Frequent dialogue between teachers and parents regarding scholars' academic progress, initiated by both teacher and family

During these events, parents will have an opportunity to, among other things, learn about:

- Akili's programmatic offerings (including those programs and services supported by Title I)
- Akili's curriculum and academic assessments/performance
- How they can be involved and provide feedback on the school's programming, including this engagement policy

Akili Academy Family Requirements:

- Model Akili Academy's values for scholars when visiting the school and interacting with school staff and students.
- Reinforce Akili Academy's academic and behavioral standards at home.
- Establish a daily routine for scholars.
- Provide a quiet space for scholars to study.
- Provide positive reinforcement of student progress and success.
- Discuss academics among family members.
- Help scholars with homework and ensure that they complete their homework nightly.
- Ensure scholars arrive to school on time each day, ready to learn.



Communication Policy

In order to be effective partners, Akili Academy and its families must communicate regularly. In order for each scholar to reach his or her potential, all of us – parents, guardians, families, teachers, and administrators – must work together. The school will communicate in the language/method that the parent/guardian understands.

Modes of Communication

Akili Academy and its families communicate effectively in the following ways:

Newsletter: Most Fridays, Akili Academy sends a newsletter home with its scholars. The newsletter contains school announcements, upcoming events, and school schedule reminders.

Monthly Calendar: On the first Friday of every month, your child will bring home a school calendar of events. This will contain important information about the coming month's school schedule, school events, and field trips.

School Website and Social Media Accounts: We will post reminders of upcoming events, as well as photos and stories that celebrate our scholars and highlight their accomplishments, on our website and social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter).

Behavior and Grade Reports: Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade scholars will receive a weekly grade and behavior summary every Friday. Parents/guardians must sign and return the report by Monday morning to ensure weekly communication with the teacher.

Phone Calls/Notes to Parents: Throughout the year, you may receive phone calls or notes from a teacher or school administrator. If the message requires a response, please contact the school either by phone or in writing within 24 hours.

Meetings: If the school requests a meeting with you and your scholar, we need to discuss something important with you. We expect you to honor the scheduled meeting time and arrive **on time**. If you would like to schedule a meeting with teachers, please call the Main Office to schedule a meeting or reach out directly to the teacher via email or the teacher's work phone.

Lost and Found: We maintain a Lost and Found for clothing and other items that students bring to school. Because lost items accumulate faster than they are claimed, we must periodically donate the excess to charity. Small valuable items such as watches, glasses, and keys are kept in the office.

Visits: To arrange a visit to the school, please see the section on *School Visitor Policy*.

Report Card Conferences: Parents/guardians are **REQUIRED** to come to the school two times a year for Report Card conferences with their scholar's teachers. **Dates will be included on the yearly school**

calendar and the monthly calendar. Report cards will not be distributed without a parent-teacher conference.

Procedure for Addressing Parent/Family Concerns

At Akili Academy, we make cultivating and maintaining positive parent/guardian relationships a priority. When a concern arises, we want to respond quickly to find solutions. Please follow the following procedure if you have a concern:

- Parents/guardians should reach out directly to the teacher or staff member with whom they have a concern to set up a meeting. Parents/guardians should discuss the matter with that staff member and attempt to resolve the concern through the initial meeting.
- If there is no resolution to the concern through the initial discussion, parents/guardians should contact the Principal. The Principal will advise on next steps.
- If the parent/guardian has remaining concerns after discussing the issue with the Principal and staff members, the Principal will provide the contact information for the CEO of Crescent City Schools. Parents/guardians may discuss the issue with the CEO and, if not satisfied after that, may contact the Chair of the Board of Directors of Crescent City Schools. The decision of the Chair of the Board is final. Note: Neither the CEO nor Chair of the Board will discuss the issue with you unless you have spoken to the Principal, so please call her first. In most cases, complaints can be best addressed at the school level.
- Parents and students with grievances related to discrimination, bullying, and/or harassment (conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by the school) on the basis of: intellectual ability, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, national origin or immigration status, disability, or identification as an exceptional child should follow this same procedure. They will be afforded the opportunity to present witnesses and be given a written notice of the outcome of the complaint at each stage in the procedure. The school will not retaliate against any person who files such a complaint and/or participates in a related investigation and will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible. Such discrimination, bullying, and harassment are not permitted by students, staff, or third parties, and the school will take every effort to prevent, remedy, and otherwise correct any that is identified.
- Anyone with concerns about the school's compliance with civil rights laws under Title IX, Title VI, Title II and/or Section 504 or complaints about discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, or disability should reach out to the Principal who serves as the school's Civil Rights Coordinator.



The main office voicemail is checked on a regular basis. Based on the urgency of your message, an Akili staff member will return your call within 24 hours on the next business day. The following information will help us return your call in a timely manner:

- Name of student
- Your name
- Your phone number
- Reason for your call

While Akili Academy teachers do make their school phone numbers available to their scholar's family, there are times during the day when they are not available to take phone calls such as during class time or after 6:00pm. Any urgent message left for an Akili Academy teacher will be returned within 24 hours on the next business day.

All communication with staff - whether in-person, on the phone, via a website or social media, via text, or via e-mail - is expected to be civil and respectful. No profane language, yelling, or other disrespectful behavior or language will be tolerated. Engaging in disrespectful or inappropriate communication during a meeting or phone call will result in the meeting or call being ended immediately and rescheduled for a later date. Repeated usage of disrespectful or inappropriate communication towards a staff member will result in a mandatory meeting with the CEO of Crescent City Schools. The school reserves the right to bar persons from campus who threaten the safety or peaceful operation of the school.

Student Rewards and Incentives

At Akili Academy we partner with families to teach our scholars positive behaviors that will lead to successful futures. Along with our school values, we teach scholars the habits of academic effort, academic grit, academic achievement, and community support. Scholars may be rewarded with Gator Bucks from any staff member when they demonstrate these habits. Scholars may use Gator Bucks to buy prizes from the Gator store or entry into school celebrations.

Our reward system includes:

- Regular, formal awards for academic achievements and demonstrating school values at the Team Geek monthly assemblies.
- Special events for students who demonstrate the habits of academic effort, academic grit, academic achievement, and community support. Invited students can pay into events using the Gator Bucks they have earned. Events include:
 - Gator Store visits and Gator Cart pop-ups
 - Themed and casual dress down days

Behavior Policies

High Expectations

At Akili Academy, we believe it is imperative to hold high expectations for achievement, both academically and behaviorally, for our scholars. For students to thrive and make great academic gains, they need to feel safe and accepted in school and in their classrooms. An orderly school climate characterized by respectful relationships is the necessary foundation for a successful school. It is essential that all students respect the expectations for behavior in the school in order to develop the behavioral habits necessary for success in life and to provide a school climate where teaching and learning can flourish. As a result, we are firm and positive in our approach to behavior management. A firm and caring teacher uses our clear expectations, positive reinforcement, and fair and just consequences in conjunction with strong teacher-student relationships, strong teacher-family communication, and academic motivation. Additionally, Akili Academy staff members lead by example and model professionalism and respect for students. When a scholar chooses to not follow school rules, Akili Academy follows a consistent hierarchy of consequences.

To protect the safety and security of students, staff, and our campus, security cameras are deployed throughout the building. Students, parents, and visitors should have no expectation of privacy in classrooms, offices, hallways, and other common spaces in and around the school.

Classroom Expectations:

- Scholars must be **on task**
- Scholars follow teacher directions and **cooperate** with the teacher. There is no arguing allowed. If they disagree they must comply with teacher directions and wait until the appropriate time and place to discuss an issue in an appropriate tone of voice.
- Scholars must **participate**.
- Scholars must **come prepared** to class with their necessary materials.

Telephone Use

Parents are asked to call the front office if there is an emergency and they need to speak with their child. Otherwise, students will not be allowed to use the telephone. Exceptions will be made only in emergency situations.

Cell Phone and Personal Technology Use

Cell phone and personal technology use is not permitted at school. Parents who allow their child to bring a phone, tablet or smartwatch to school accept the responsibility of loss or damage to the phone. Phones must remain turned off and completely out of sight. If these guidelines are not followed, on the first offense, the phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day. On the second offense, the phone will be confiscated and a parent or guardian must pick it up from the main office. If a phone is confiscated three times from the same student, it will be held for an extended period of time. All families are required to sign the cell phone contract at the beginning of the year. **The school will not be responsible for broken, lost, or stolen phones (even if it is being held by a member of the school staff).**

If your student is using social media we recommend:

1. Have access to all accounts (know their passwords).
2. Check both the public posts and private messages randomly at least once a week.
3. Talk with your student about the dangers of meeting people online who are not who they say they are or who want to harm you.
4. Talk with your student about cyber bullying and what to do if they see it or experience it.

If you notice any inappropriate behavior on social media by Akili students please screenshot (take a picture of it) and send to a member of the culture team for support.

*** Do not take pictures of or send any files that include nudity or sex acts. In that case, confiscate your student's phone and bring it into the school or to the police for support resolving the issue.

The school does engage with students, parents, and the community via social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). Student pictures may be used on these school sanctioned sites, but without identifiable information. If you do not wish to have your or your student's picture used, please submit written notice to the front office within 90 days of enrolling.

Toys, Electronic Games, Beepers, Key Chains, and Sports Equipment

Students are not allowed to bring lasers/laser pointer keychains, water guns, keychains, electronic games, iPods, and other similar personal property to school. The school is not responsible for these items if lost or taken from students. If taken from a student, the parent will have to pick up the item. We will not send these items home with the student since they are not allowed at school. If these items are allowed at school on special occasions, parents will be notified in writing.

Behavioral Expectations Outside of the Classroom and School

Outside of the classroom, we expect scholars to interact respectfully with all staff members and to follow all directions. High expectations for student behavior do not end at dismissal. Because part of our mission is to build student character, we must eliminate the disconnect between in-school and out-of-school behavior. If we see or hear of things happening outside of school that are examples of poor decision making or character, we will use it as an opportunity to counsel our scholars and give them an opportunity to examine their choices.

To this end, please report issues that you witness or hear about to the Director of Student Culture. While we generally do not issue school-based consequences in these situations, we do want to address concerns with students and help them make better choices.

Field Trip Expectations

All scholars are expected to maintain the highest behavioral expectations while on field trips as they represent Akili Academy in the community. Scholars who have a major behavior infraction in the week prior to a field trip may be required to stay at school during the field trip. Scholars who commit a major behavior infraction while on a field trip may have field trip privileges suspended in the future.

Consequences

Akili Academy uses consistent, escalating consequences within the classroom for failure to meet behavior expectations. In each case, the consequences are designed to motivate positive behavior. Parents are an essential part of the process – the effectiveness of consequences is heightened when the scholar is aware that both school and home are working together and standing behind the systems in place. The below chart provides examples of our tiered behavior approach but is not a complete list. Behaviors considered level one (1) are the least disruptive to school culture while level three (3) behaviors earn the most serious consequences.

1	2	3
<p>Examples of Distracting Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running in the hallway ● Talking without permission ● Throwing objects ● Not following directions the first time ● Making inappropriate noises 	<p>Examples of Disrespectful Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talking back ● (PK-2) Pinching, pulling hair ● (PK-2) Intentionally bumping into others ● Repeatedly not following a direction ● Cursing ● Teasing 	<p>Examples of Dangerous/Destructive Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bullying* ● Excessive level 2 behaviors ● Physical aggression ● Using an object as a weapon ● Sexual misconduct ● Unauthorized use of an electronic device ● Refusal to cooperate in TOC ● Theft of classmates’ or school property ● Leaving class without permission ● Controlled dangerous substance ● Possession of weapon

**Using social, emotional, and/or physical power to create an unsafe or uncomfortable environment for another person.*

Possible Consequences

The below actions may be taken at any time:

- Parent Conference
- Time-Out Center Visit (TOC)
- Detention
- In-School Suspensions
- Out of School Suspensions
- Mandatory Parent Class Observations
- District Discipline Conference
- District Expulsion Hearing

In addition, the following behavior is automatic grounds for being sent to the Time-Out Center and can result in additional follow-up actions such as after school detention or in-school suspension:

- Blatant disrespect to a teacher
- Threatening another scholar
- Leaving the classroom
- Lying to a teacher about where a scholar is supposed to be or has been

Parent Meetings

A parent meeting will be required in the following circumstances: truancy, disruptive or defiant behavior, disrespect to adults on campus, refusal to do homework, suspensions or other reasons deemed appropriate by the school principal.

Behavior System

We focus on three main categories of behavior that are categorized as Scholarly Habits. These behaviors are participation, presence, and preparation. Teachers use a point system to track students' success with these three behaviors. Students who earn "Does Not Meet Expectations" will be assigned tutorial to make up missed learning or assignments.

Tutorial

Tutorial will be held during the school day on Fridays during student celebration time. The purpose of tutorial is to minimize time out center visits and lower suspension rates to increase time in class. If a scholar receives a tutorial, a parent or guardian will be notified via phone call.

The following behaviors may result in a detention:

- 3 visits to TOC in one week
- Not adhering to TOC rules
- Blatant disrespect
- Using obscene language
- Pushing/shoving scholars
- Refusal to do classwork
- 3 or more uniform violations
- Leaving the classroom
- Minor vandalism
- Misbehavior during homework club
- Cheating
- 3 missed homework assignments
- Any behavior deemed inappropriate by the Director of Student Culture and or Principal

School Suspension

Although suspension and expulsion are viewed as last resort consequences in dealing with inappropriate and disruptive behavior, both will be used as a consequence for consistent and serious misbehavior. Suspension decisions will be made by the school Principal and the Director of Student Culture; however, no

decision will be made prior to a student's opportunity to be heard. Parents may appeal these decisions to the Crescent City Schools CEO or Board Chair.

The following infractions may result in a suspension:

- Hitting/fighting
- Threatening an adult or fellow scholar
- Bullying
- Chronic disrespect to teacher
- Chronic disruption of learning
- Stealing school or fellow scholar's property
- Leaving school without permission
- Controlled dangerous substance
- Possession of weapon

Scholars who have been suspended, either in-school or out of school, will be required to have a parent meeting before they return to school. If the parent does not arrive for their parent meeting and sends their scholar to school anyway, their scholar will report to the Time Out Center and not attend class that day.

Additionally, parents will be called in the event of extreme behavior that presents an immediate threat to the scholar or others and Akili Academy will follow its crisis plan. You may receive a copy of the crisis plan by requesting one from our Director of Social Services.

Expulsion

Students may be recommended for expulsion for serious behavior violations. For example, carrying or possessing a weapon (knife, firearms, or other dangerous instrument); possession, distribution, selling, giving, or loaning any controlled dangerous substance; hitting a staff member; or conviction of a felony may result in expulsion. In the case of expulsion, Akili Academy follows the policy set forth by the New Orleans Public Schools. Please contact the Director of Student Culture for a copy of the policy.

Bullying & Harassment

All students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment where mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance are promoted and experienced as the norm. Bullying or harassing behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated for any reason, including: intellectual ability, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, national origin or immigration status, disability, or identification as an exceptional child. A student shall not bully or intimidate any other person through words or actions. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, direct physical contact, verbal assaults, the use of electronic methods, and social isolation and/or manipulation. This policy applies when on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related function or activity, on a school bus or other vehicle, and at designated school bus stops.

Students are expected to report incidents of bullying to a staff member. Reports of bullying or harassment will be promptly investigated and students found to have engaged in such behavior will be subject to consequences as listed above. The school prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any

participant in the complaint or investigation process. Students or parents who are not satisfied with the result of an investigation or complaint may follow the policy for addressing parent concerns outlined in this handbook.

Students With Disabilities

While all students may receive consequences for failing to meet behavior expectations, the consequences used for students with disabilities will not constitute a “change in placement,” - except in the case of emergency circumstances as described below – when the offense is directly related to his/her disability or when the Individualized Education Plan [IEP] or Section 504 plan is not implemented. Consequences constitute a “change in placement” when a student is:

- Suspended for more than 10 consecutive days, or
- Suspended for more than 10 total days in a school year if the suspensions constitute a pattern based on the school’s analysis of the similarity of the precipitating behaviors, the length of each suspension, the total amount of suspensions, and the proximity of the suspensions to one another.

Any student with a disability who is removed from his/her current placement for more than 10 days will receive IEP services beginning on the 11th day of removal.

Within 10 days of any decision resulting in a “change of placement,” the school will meet with the parent and relevant members of the child’s IEP team to review all relevant information in the student’s file, including the IEP, to determine whether the student’s behavior resulting in the “change of placement” was 1) caused by or directly and substantially related to the student’s disability, or 2) a direct result of the school’s failure to follow the student’s IEP.

- If this review team concludes that the answer to either of the above questions is yes, then the student’s behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. The student will be returned to the placement from which he/she was removed unless the parent and the team agree to a change of placement and the school conducts, if necessary, an Functional Behavior Assessment of the student or reviews and modifies the student’s BIP. If the IEP was not implemented, the team will document why it was not implemented and whether this impacted the student’s behavior.
- If this review team determines that the student’s conduct was not a manifestation of his/her disability, then the student may be subject to the same consequences as general education students. The team will identify and document education services the student will receive to enable him/her to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (IAES), and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the IEP

In circumstances related to a student’s use of weapons or drugs or the imposition of serious bodily injury, the school may remove a student for 45 school days. During this 45-day period, the school will convene a meeting (as described above) to determine whether the student’s behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. The student will receive, as appropriate, an FBA and BIP services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior related to the removal so that it does not recur.

Parents who disagree with the appropriateness of the alternative placement or remedial disciplinary setting or services may request an expedited due process hearing. If the school has documented reasons to

believe that keeping the student in the school is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others, the school will request an emergency hearing to ask a hearing officer to transfer the student to an IAES for up to 45 school days. During the appeal of a discipline decision, if disciplinary action was the result of:

- Weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury: the student will remain in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45-day placement, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise;
- Behavior that is not a manifestation of the student’s disability: the student will remain in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the alternative placement, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.

In some cases, a student without a disability may be deemed to have one. This occurs when any of the following factors are present:

- The parent has requested an evaluation;
- The parent expressed concern in writing to the student’s teacher or school administration about the student’s need for special education and related services; or
- The student’s teacher or other school staff told the special education services staff or other school supervision personnel of specific concerns about the student’s pattern of behavior.

Nothing in this section shall prohibit school personnel from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a student with a disability. School personnel reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability will ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the student are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom the crime is reported. Records will only be transmitted to the extent allowed by FERPA and other relevant laws.

School Uniforms

At Akili Academy we take pride in our school and show this through our school uniforms. We have a required school uniform for several very important reasons. 1) Uniforms unite us as a school and community. 2) Uniforms reduce distractions and clothing competition. 3) Uniforms look professional.

Please note that uniform violations will result in consequences that can lead to suspension. All families are required to sign the uniform contract and abide by the uniform policies.

Uniform Requirements	
<p style="text-align: center;">Pre K – 2nd Grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shirt: Official Akili Academy light blue polo shirt ● Pants/Shorts: Navy blue pants or shorts (no jeans, cargos, labels, overalls) 	<p style="text-align: center;">3rd – 5th Grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shirt: Official Akili navy blue polo shirt ● Pants/Shorts/Skorts/Jumper: Khaki (no jeans or designer labels) ● Skirts: Khaki (Only to be worn with shorts or leggings underneath)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pants/Shorts/Skorts/Jumper: Navy blue (no jeans or designer labels) ● Skirts: Navy blue (Only to be worn with shorts or leggings underneath) ● Sneakers/Tennis Shoes: All color shoes are acceptable as long as they are not boots, sandals, moccasins, clogs, or open toe or open back shoes. ● Stockings/Leggings: No stripes, prints, florals, colors, dots, or designs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Belt: School appropriate belt is mandatory with pants that have belt loops. ● Sneakers/Tennis Shoes: All color shoes are acceptable as long as they are not boots, sandals, moccasins, clogs, or open toe or open back shoes. ● Stockings/Leggings: No stripes, prints, florals, colors, dots, or designs ● Socks: School-appropriate
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6th - 8th Grades:

- **Shirt:** Official Akili **white oxford button-down or white polo** shirt (a white t-shirt may be worn beneath).
- **Pants/Shorts:** Khaki pants or shorts (no jeans, cargos, labels, overalls)
- **Pants/Shorts/Skorts/Jumper:** Khaki (no jeans or designer labels)
- **Skirts:** Khaki **(Only to be worn with shorts or leggings underneath)**
- **Belt:** School appropriate belt is mandatory with pants that have belt loops.
- **Majority black** shoes. with no logos, swooshes, prints, stripes in any other color. No boots, sandals, moccasins, clogs, or open toe shoes.
- **Stockings/Leggings:** White, Black, Navy Blue - No stripes, prints, colors, dots, or designs
- **Socks:** School-appropriate

Additional Uniform Guidelines for Cold Weather

- **Sweatshirt:** Only the Akili uniform sweatshirt, hoodie or cardigan[6th-8th Scholars only] may be worn in the building.
- **Undershirts:** Long sleeve undershirts must be solid color in white, navy blue, black or gray. No prints, designs, or stripes.
- **Coats:** Students will not be permitted to wear coats indoors. Please have your child wear an Akili sweatshirt if you suspect they will be cold.

General Uniform Guidelines for All Students

- **Other Logos:** No logos, emblems, markings, designs, or insignias of any kind are allowed on shirts, sweaters, pants, jumpers, belts, or socks.
- **Shoes:** Students must wear closed-toed tennis shoes daily. Because students walk a lot during each day and have exercise time each day, we ask that students wear tennis shoes instead of dress shoes.
- **Uniform Shirts:** Only the top button may be undone on shirts.
- **Fit:** Clothing must fit appropriately.

- **Head Coverings:** Students must remove all head coverings as they enter the building, such as hats and scarves.
- **Shoelaces:** Students are expected to have shoelaces tied at all times.
- **Make-Up:** Make-up is strictly not allowed. Please do not send your scholar to school with make-up. If make-up is found, it may be confiscated by the school.
- **As Necessary:** Whenever **any** element of physical appearance or grooming—even if it is allowable under the school’s current rules—becomes a distraction to one’s self or to others, it is no longer acceptable and steps will be taken to remove the distraction.
- *If your child requires a religious accommodation to the uniform policy, please contact the school to discuss.*
- *If your child is experiencing homelessness or for any other reason needs financial assistance to procure a uniform, please contact the school to discuss.*

Pre-scheduled “Dress Down” days will occasionally occur during the school year. Please be sure to follow all guidelines sent home for those special days or your scholar may not be permitted to participate in future “Dress Down” days.

Dress Down: Once a month the students have the opportunity to earn dress down based on positive academic behaviors. Scholars who have earned this reward must fully participate in the dress down theme and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Scholars must make sure that their clothing does not have holes, rips, tears, etc.
- Shoes have a back
- Shirts with sleeves or tank tops with three finger length
- Shorts meet the tips of fingers
- Leggings or spandex is not worn as pants
- Shirt length meets the waist of their bottoms and covers chest
- Clothing may not have offensive symbols, pictures, or wording

Uniform shirts and Akili outerwear only are ordered and sold through Akili Academy. Please contact the main office at 504-355-4172 with questions pertaining to purchasing. All other uniform components are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Extracurriculars

Enrichment

Akili offers enrichment offerings for all students. In Pre-Kindergarten through fourth grades, students attend art, music, and PE with their homeroom classes. In fifth through eighth grades, students choose their enrichment classes. Students are able to choose from art, dance, technology, band, drumline, and athletics.

Athletics

Akili Academy participates in citywide athletic competitions. Student athletes in 5th-8th grades use our value of teamwork and must uphold a high behavior standards to compete. We offer football, volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, and track.

ACADEMICS

At Akili Academy we believe that all scholars have the right and the ability to succeed in high school and college. The educational philosophy of Akili Academy of New Orleans is driven by our college preparatory mission. Our philosophy is based on four core beliefs:

- Learning happens best when it is joyful and purposeful.
- Learning happens best when it is personalized.
- Learning happens best when it is focused on standards mastery.
- Learning happens best when it requires critical thinking and problem solving.

In support of our commitment to college preparation, Akili Academy bases its academic program on the Louisiana State Standards in all subject areas and focuses on targeted literacy instruction in all grades. As part of our implementation of these standards, we commit to:

- a focus on academic writing and habits of academic discussion in all content areas and grade levels
- close reading instruction across the content areas and grade levels
- teaching scholars a deep conceptual understanding of mathematics across all grade levels

At Akili Academy, we measure a scholar’s understanding of grade level standards through the method of standards-based grading. Standards-based grading (SBG) allows an educator to assess only content students have learned in the classroom that is aligned to state standards. SBG allows educators to keep content rigorous while ensuring that grades always reflect student mastery of content rather than participation. Grading is reflected on a scale from 0-4.

Scale	Description
0	Student has no knowledge of standard
1	Student is able to demonstrate knowledge of some but less than half of grade level standard
2	Student is able to demonstrate knowledge of at least half of grade level standard
3	Student is able to demonstrate complete knowledge of grade level standard
4	Student is able to demonstrate complete knowledge of grade level standard and additional knowledge above the grade level standard

Scholars who consistently earn a score of 2 on grade level standards are eligible for promotion. Please see promotion requirements by grade level for additional information.

Literacy

One vital element of Akili Academy's academic program is our commitment to small group instruction. We know that research shows 74% of students who do not read on grade level by third grade are more likely to struggle academically for the remainder of their school career, are more likely to never read on grade level, and are ultimately more likely to drop out of school. Because of this, we believe that it is imperative that we focus intentionally on literacy development in both elementary and middle school through small group instruction and intervention so that all students read on or above grade level. Literacy is the very foundation of our promise to prepare students for success in high school and college. As part of our literacy program, we commit to:

- on grade level literacy instruction
- twice yearly literacy assessment
- co-teaching and self-contained models for special education at every grade level
- a three tiered intervention program at each grade level

Response to Intervention

Akili Academy uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to provide preventative and remedial services to students who are failing to meet grade level expectations compared to their same grade peers. RTI is a multi-tiered, decision-making framework used for the early identification and support of students with skill gaps in specific areas. An RTI model assumes that student skill gaps can be reduced and prevented through the use of early identification and early intervention services that use evidence-based practice and through frequent monitoring of student progress. Core features of RTI include:

- Use of universal screening data to identify students who may need more support
- Frequent monitoring of student progress to aid in data-based decision making
- Instruction using evidence-based practices, such as direct instruction, modeling, frequent opportunities for practice, and performance feedback
- Multiple tiers with increasing intensity of intervention
- Intervention matched to student need
- Multidisciplinary team meetings to review and make decisions regarding student progress
- Parent communication and involvement in the process

The structure of intervention at Akili Academy can be broken down into three tiers, which are described below.

- Tier I – General Education Setting
 - Tier I instruction is provided to all students in the general education setting through the use of gradelevel reading and math curricula and evidence-based instructional practices.
 - Tier I may include Guided Reading pull-out groups for some scholars as determined by teachers.
- Tier II – Small Group, Targeted Intervention
 - Tier II interventions are provided in addition to Tier I instruction.
 - Tier II groups are no larger than 6 scholars. They may occur at a minimum of 30 minutes/day, four days/week.
 - Tier II reading groups consist of Guided Reading using on-level text with an additional focus on specific skill deficits. Skill deficits are determined through analysis of benchmarking

- testing as well as Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) probes administered by interventionists.
- Tier II math groups focus on basic skill remediation and fluency practice and can consist of small group computer-based intervention programming (i.e. ST math), small group pull-out, or small group push-in.
 - Scholars are considered for Tier II by teacher or interventionist referral, parent request, or based on analysis of benchmark data.
 - Tier III – Intensive Intervention
 - In most cases, Tier III intervention is provided in addition to Tier I and Tier II intervention.
 - Tier III groups consist of 1-3 scholars and occur a minimum of 30 minutes/day, four days/week.
 - Reading, math, and writing intervention are all structured the same way. Interventions consist of intensive practice based on skill deficits at the instructional level of the group – determined through analysis of progress monitoring probes and benchmark assessments. Specific interventions and intervention strategies matched to the skill deficits are used.

All interventions include daily fidelity monitoring. State guidelines require that the fidelity of interventions is monitored in order to ensure that interventions are conducted as planned and that outcome data reliably reflects the effectiveness of the intervention. Additionally, progress monitoring occurs at least every other week in order to track the progress of each scholar receiving intervention services. Skill-specific monitoring probes are used.

School Building Level Committee (SBLC)

All referrals for RTI are reviewed monthly at School Building Level Committee (SBLC) meetings, and the team determines the best placement for the scholar. The School Building Level Committee (SBLC) is a general education committee comprised of multiple disciplines that engages in a problem solving process centered around student progress, interventions, and support services. Including members from multiple disciplines ensures that all aspects of a child’s academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being are considered and addressed. Additionally, a teamwork approach allows for a multitude of evidence-based practices and strategies to be shared among team members, encourages consideration of multiple perspectives, and provides team support for decisions regarding a student’s educational programming. When scholars are referred for RTI, they are placed into groups based on need, level of skill, and group availability. Typically a scholar progresses through the Tiers of intervention, but sometimes a scholar may exhibit such a significant skill deficit that he/she will be placed immediately into Tier III before going through Tier II. After a scholar is placed in the RTI program, progress monitoring outcome data is reviewed by the SBLC at least once per trimester to determine if the intervention is effective. When determining options for the student the options include but are not limited to:

- Conduct no further action at this time
- Continue current intervention and progress monitoring through the RTI process
- Conduct additional interventions through the RTI process (change intervention or change tiers)
- Refer the student to the appropriate committee to conduct a 504 evaluation
- Refer the student for appropriate support services (i.e. counseling, health services, speech-language)

- Refer the student for an individual evaluation if an exceptionality is suspected

English Learners

The school uses home language questionnaires, classroom observations, literacy assessments, and other screeners to identify which students are English Learners (EL). The screening will identify their current level of proficiency of the English Language. The school will notify parents of identified EL students and the extent of their additional services.

The school's program for EL students includes: EL pull out services, English Language remediation through computer program, and a structured immersion program. EL students are not unnecessarily segregated or excluded from other students, programs, or activities. Staff that teach EL students have the appropriate certifications and/or training.

Exit procedures from our specialized language program are:

When a student scores in the proficient range (4 or 5) in all four domains on the English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) he/she will be reclassified from English Learner to Full English Proficiency. At that time, the student will no longer be eligible for English language support. The student will be monitored for two years in which time his/her academic progress will be followed closely. If at any time he/she appears to be struggling due to language demands, he/she will be reconsidered for English language support.

Promotion Policies

Akili Academy of New Orleans follows the promotion policy outlined in the Akili Academy Pupil Progression Plan. Promotion from one grade to the next is based upon the multiple criteria listed below:

- Performance in the courses of study.
- Performance on state standardized testing.
- Attendance.

Occasionally, teachers also find that a student is not ready for the next grade. This may be due to a lack of social-emotional maturity, academic problems, or a combination of these factors. Repeating a grade can give a student the edge he or she needs to achieve success in future grades. A teacher makes the recommendation that a child remains in his present grade for another year after consulting with school administrators and discussing the student with the SBLC Team. We make every effort to inform parents as early as possible in the spring if we feel a child will have to repeat the grade.

Grade	Promotion Requirement
K	Students must achieve a score of 30 or more on the correct letter sound portion of the Nonsense Word Fluency component on the DIBELS assessment and demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
	Students must also demonstrate social and emotional readiness for the 1st grade, and therefore must achieve an average score of 6 on the objectives and dimensions in the Social-Emotional area of development and learning on the <i>GOLD</i> assessment.
1	Students must achieve a score of 34 or more on the correct letter sound portion of the Nonsense Word Fluency component on the DIBELS assessment and demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
2	Students must read 60 words per minute as measured by the Oral Reading Fluency component of the DIBELS assessment and demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
3	Students must read 100 words per minute as measured by the Oral Reading Fluency component of the DIBELS assessment and demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
4	Students must read 112 words per minute as measured by the Oral Reading Fluency component of the DIBELS assessment and demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
5	Students must read 133 words per minute as measured by the Oral Reading Fluency component of the DIBELS assessment or make 1.5 years of reading level growth demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
6	Students must reach 146 words per minute as measured by the Oral Reading Fluency component of the DIBELS assessment or make 1.5 years of reading level growth demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
7	Students must read 146 words per minute as measured by the Oral Reading Fluency component

	of the DIBELS assessment or make 1.5 years of reading level growth demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.
8	Students must read 150 words per minute as measured by the Oral Reading Fluency component of the DIBELS assessment or make 1.5 years of reading level growth demonstrate mastery of 70% of grade level standards.

8th Grade Promotion Ceremony

At the close of the academic year, Akili Academy hosts a promotion ceremony for our 8th grade class. Participation in the ceremony is a privilege designed to honor our scholars who have displayed academic success and who have displayed the Akili values throughout the school year. Requirements to participate include an average of 2 on all grade level standards, excellent behavior in the months leading up to promotion as defined by no out of school or in school suspensions, and official enrollment in high school.

Homework

Purpose: Homework is an essential part of the Akili Academy educational program. It is designed to reinforce skills taught in the classroom, to help scholars develop a deeper understanding of concepts, and to promote good study habits. Homework should always be meaningful and directly related to lessons in the classroom. Ultimately, Akili Academy believes that scholars who develop strong homework habits in elementary and middle school are better prepared for success in high school and college. As a result we work with scholars to develop these habits.

Materials: All scholars are provided with Homework Folders. Homework Folders are designed to teach students essential organizational skills.

Content and Standards: Homework will be assigned EVERY night at Akili Academy. Homework includes 20 minutes of required reading every night (including weekends and holidays), for which a parent/guardian signature is required on the reading log. Homework must be completed in full and in accordance with Akili Academy’s high standards for hard work and professional presentation. The State Library of Louisiana and the local public library may offer after-school online homework assistance. See www.homeworkla.org for more information.

Reading Log: Parents/Guardians should make sure to supervise their scholar in reading at least 20 minutes every night and every day on the weekends. Parents/Guardians are expected to sign the Reading Log on a daily basis.

Procedure: Homework folders are turned in to teachers each morning as soon as scholars arrive at school. If homework is late, missing, incomplete, or of poor quality, then scholars receive a missing homework

point deduction. Parents/guardians will receive a phone call from their scholar's teacher if homework assignments are habitually incomplete.

Assessments

Akili Academy employs multiple assessments to monitor student progress, inform instruction, and ensure that all students succeed. Staff work to ensure that assessments are not stressful times for students; rather they are presented as opportunities to show off all that students have learned. The assessments, which include MAP (a nationally normed standardized test), Dibels (assessments of literacy development) internally developed assessments, interim assessments, and state assessments (beginning in third grade) are administered throughout the year. Teachers analyze the results to inform their instruction, identify students in need of extra help, and assess the overall effectiveness of the school's curriculum. Results are shared with families through weekly grade reports, report cards that are distributed three times each year, and through graded work that is sent home by the teacher every Friday.

***Note:** A schedule of interim and state assessments can be found in the Akili Academy monthly and yearly calendars.

Parents have the right to know whether their scholar's teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas taught and whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status. They also have the right to know the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher. They also have the right to know the qualifications of any paraprofessionals serving their students. Parents can direct any of these requests to the Principal.

Technology

Technology access and usage is an integral part of the education provided by the school. Students will have access to technology while at school, and some students may have access to portable technology and/or Internet connectivity to take home with them. The following acceptable use standards apply to usage of school technology and Internet connectivity at the school and off-campus.

- The technology and Internet connectivity are provided to students solely for academic and school-related purposes as directed by their teachers and other school staff. Students and their families shall not use them for other non-sanctioned purposes.
- Students must take care of any devices the school gives them or allows them to use.
- Students must be kind and safe in all their digital interactions with others.
- Technology may not be used to create, transmit, access, receive, print, download, or solicit material that is illegal, unauthorized, inappropriate, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit, harassing, or disparaging.
- Technology may not be used to lobby, solicit, or proselytize others for commercial, political, or religious purposes.
- Technology may not be used for any illegal purposes, including hacking, disrupting networks, making unauthorized disclosures or personal information, or downloading or disseminating copyrighted material.
- Students may not download any billable or paid applications that are not authorized by the school.

- Students may not remove any hardware, including SIM chips) or software from computers.
- If any technology is lost, damaged, stolen, or becomes inoperable, it must be reported to the school as soon as possible.
- If students are provided with data usage to use off-campus, they must monitor their usage so as not to exceed their per month allotment of data and shall not stream audio, video, or games, except in connection with school-related work.

The school may ask students to use the Google Suite of software, including Google Classroom and Gmail, in connection with its educational programming. Additionally, the school may ask students to access additional online content in connection with its curricula. And in the event of a prolonged school closure, the school may utilize online video conferencing platforms. You may find out more information about these platforms and websites by asking your child's teacher.

Distance Learning

During our period of distance learning, scholars will be expected to comply with our school policies:

- Attendance will be taken daily on Zoom. For students to be considered in good attendance standing, they must attend at least 90% of their online classes and complete 90% of online work. If your family is facing challenges that affect attendance, we will work with you to reach this goal.
- Assignments will be graded weekly in Google Classroom and will be reflected on progress reports and report cards which will be emailed out to families regularly.
- Students do not have to wear an Akili uniform during distance learning, but must show up for live video lessons dressed appropriately..

OPERATIONS

School Calendar and Hours of Operations

Yearly School Calendar: A school calendar is distributed to all Akili Academy families at the beginning of each school year. The school calendar is also readily available in Akili Academy's main office and on our website.

Monthly School Calendar: A monthly school calendar is distributed to all Akili Academy families at the beginning of each month.

Emergency School Closure: In the case of an emergency school closure, Akili Academy will issue an automated phone and text notification to all parents/guardians. In addition, in cases where there is a possibility of an emergency closure, please listen to local radio and television stations.

***Note:** At the discretion of the Principal, any classroom days lost to closure due to inclement weather or other reasons may be made up by adding an equal number of days during or at the end of the school year.

Hours of Operation

Daily Schedule: Monday through Thursday: 9:00 AM-4:30 PM. Friday: 9:00 AM-1:45 PM.

Early Dismissal: On Fridays and other occasional days throughout the year, the school will run an early dismissal. On these days, school dismisses at **1:45 PM**. These days are marked on the school calendar.

Additional Changes to Hours of Operation

Please consult the monthly and yearly school calendars and refer to the weekly newsletter for any additional changes to the hours of operation that may arise throughout the school year.

Arrival & Dismissal Policies

Arrival Procedures

Drop-off Arrival:

- **Opening Time for Arrival:** Akili Academy officially opens to students at 9:00 AM each day. Scholars are not permitted to gather outside of school prior to 9:00 without a parent or guardian. Because they are preparing for the school day, Akili staff members are not able to monitor scholars before 9:00 AM.
- **End of Arrival:** Arrival closes and the school day begins at 9:10 AM sharp.
- **Arrival Tardy Procedure:** Scholars arriving past 9:10 AM will be tardy and must be signed into the main office by a parent/guardian before reporting to class.

Bus Arrival:

- Parents/Guardians **or** older siblings of scholars below the age of nine (9) years **must** accompany their scholar to their bus stop each morning.

Parents/Guardians who are required to accompany their scholar to and from their bus stop are urged to arrive at their scholar's bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to their scheduled bus pick-up times.

Dismissal Procedures

Dismissal Times:

- The standard academic school day officially ends at **4:30 PM**.
- Early dismissal days officially end at **1:45 PM**.

Pick-up Dismissal:

- **Parents/guardians are responsible for pick-up by 4:30 PM.** Pick-ups should be made in the car pick-up line located by the Alvar Street school entrance.



- Parents/guardians should wait in their cars for an Akili staff member to escort their scholar to them.

Walking Scholars

Scholars who walk home must be 9 years of age or older and have a school authorization form signed by their parent/guardian. Parents/Guardians may request this form from the Akili Academy front office. Scholars under 9 years of age may be walked home by an older sibling (over the age of 9) and must be noted on the walker release form. Scholars who walk home must leave Akili's campus immediately upon dismissal. If issues arise, families will be given one warning and then walking privileges will be revoked.

Parent/Guardian Pick Up and Notification Policy

No scholar will be allowed to leave the school with an adult who is not his or her legal guardian unless the parent/guardian has called the Akili front office or has designated a pick up custodian as that scholar's temporary or permanent transport.

Pick Up Authorization

Parents/Guardians **MUST** submit a release form listing the names and information for any individuals, besides parent/guardians, who are regularly authorized to be a pick up custodian for their children.

In communicating a temporary or permanent change of pick up custodian the parent/guardian must specify:

- The scholar's name, grade, and homeroom
- The name and working phone number for the adult picking up the scholar
- The specific pick-up dates

Parent/Guardian Notification Cut-Off Times

The times by which a parent/guardian must call the Akili Academy main office to provide the details of any change of pick up custodian or transportation change of any kind are as follows:

- Prior to 3:30 PM on standard days
- Prior to 12:30 PM on early dismissal days

Bus Transportation Procedures

Akili Academy offers free bus transportation through Apple Bus Company. The Apple Bus Company dispatch numbers are: Westbank dispatch - (504) 218-0213 and Eastbank Dispatch - (504) 241-4466. The school's point of contact for transportation issues is Rachel Webster. You can reach her at 504-723-0962.

Bus Stop Generation

Any Akili Academy scholar whose parent/guardian does not indicate that their scholar will be picked up from school daily or is to be a walker and who lives at least 1 mile from the school, will have a bus stop generated for them in close proximity to their Orleans Parish residence. Akili Academy will notify parents/guardians of their scholar's bus stop locations and pick up/drop off times prior to the start of the school year.

Special transportation services are also provided to any student with special needs whose IEP requires

special transportation.

Bus Stop Guidelines

Parents/Guardians **or** older siblings (over the age of 9) of scholars below the age of nine (9) years and students with an IEP requiring an adult to deliver and receive them from the bus must accompany their scholar to their bus stop each morning and must be present to pick up their scholar at their bus stop in the afternoon.

These scholars who are not met by an adult will be taken to the local NOPD precinct, at which time the registered parent/guardian will be contacted.

Parents/Guardians who are required to accompany their scholar to and from their bus stop are urged to arrive at their scholar's bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to their scheduled pick up and drop off times.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the safety of students prior to boarding the bus in the morning and upon departure from the bus in the afternoon.

Parents/Guardians and other adults are not permitted on the bus.

Transportation Change Policy (Permanent Changes)

The following transportation changes must be requested through the school's front office. Please allow 3 to 5 school days for permanent changes to take effect.

- Change from pick-up to bus rider
- Change from bus rider to pick-up
- Change of address that requires new bus stop assignment

In addition, please also note the following bus specific transportation guidelines:

- Scholars electing to ride the bus must have a permanent bus stop that they use daily, as generated by Akili Academy.
- Scholars may not switch from their regularly scheduled bus or bus stop to a different bus or bus stop for a day for any reason.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide transportation for any scholar that is suspended from riding the bus.
- Please do not attempt to schedule bus changes directly with the bus company or bus drivers.

Bus Behavior Policy

Bus Riding Behavioral Expectations

Scholars are expected to demonstrate the same high behavioral standard on the school bus as they do during the school day. In order to maintain a safe atmosphere on the school bus, scholars are expected to:

- remain seated at all times;
- talk quietly and use whisper voices;
- keep all parts of the body inside of the bus;

- follow all directions given by the bus driver;
- be safe when waiting for, riding on, and boarding and exiting the bus. Students are expected to look both ways before crossing streets, stay off the street when waiting for the bus, and cross in front of the bus when necessary after disembarking.

Bus Disciplinary Reporting Procedure

Bus drivers have the authority to discipline students on the bus and will report all scholar behavior issues directly to Akili Academy immediately upon completion of the bus route.

- **1st Report:** Scholar is spoken to by Director of Student Culture and family is notified
- **2nd Report:** Parent and scholar receive warning from Akili that another report will result in a bus suspension.
- **3rd Report:** Scholar receives a bus suspension for a length of time determined by the Director of Student Culture.
- **Three incidences of physical aggression on the bus or three bus suspensions will result in expulsion from the bus. Families will have complete responsibility for transportation; however, Akili Academy will provide bus tokens if requested.**

***Note:** Any specific behavioral incident is subject to disciplinary measures or suspension at the discretion of the Director of Student Culture. In order to ride the bus, families must sign Akili Academy bus contract.

Attendance Policy

Akili Academy follows the attendance policy outlined by the Akili Academy Pupil Progression Plan.

Daily Attendance

Students who are absent more than 15 days may be retained in the grade unless they are officially excused from school. A scholar is considered to be absent when they are present for less than 25% of the school day. Student attendance is mandatory.

Policy and Procedure for Notification of Absence

Parents/Guardians should call the school as early as possible if their scholar will not be attending school for any reason. Calls should be made as far in advance as possible and can be left on the school's voice mail.

Truancy Standard

A scholar is considered habitually absent or tardy (**truant**) when either condition continues to exist after all reasonable attempts made by the school personnel have failed to correct the condition after the ***fifth unexcused absence or fifth unexcused occurrence of being tardy.*** (LRS 17:23)

Classifications of Absences

Excused Absences

Absences incurred due to a personal illness, serious illness in the family, or extenuating circumstances are excused. **In each case, the absence must be supported by an official medical, legal, or bereavement notice which must be submitted to the main office within 5 days of the absence.** Scholars are eligible

to make up work and tests, receive credit for work completed, and receive credit for a course and/or school year completed. This does not exempt the scholar from truancy.

Examples of Excused Absences for Extenuating Circumstances

Exceptions to the attendance policy are considered as Extenuating Circumstances. Documentation for excused absences and extenuating circumstances must be submitted to the main office.

- Extended personal physical or emotional illness as verified by a physician or nurse practitioner (original doctor's note)
- Temporary illness
- Extended hospital stay as verified by physician or dentist (original doctor's note)
- Extended recuperation from an accident as verified by a physician or dentist in the state
- Observation of special, recognized holidays of the scholar's own faith
- Visitation with a parent who is a member of the United States Armed forces or the National Guard of a state and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. Excused absences in this situation shall not exceed five (5) school days per year.

Unexcused absences

Any absence not meeting the requirements set forth in the excused absence and extenuating circumstances sections above are unexcused. Scholars may be given a failing grade and may not be given the opportunity to make up work. Five or more unexcused absences will be considered as truancy.

Examples of Unexcused Absences:

- Missing the school bus
- Trips not approved by the principal
- Vacations during the school year
- Birthdays or other celebrations
- Caring for a young child or elderly adult
- Trips to homeland
- Skipping or cutting class
- Other personal appointments

Suspensions

Suspensions do not count toward unexcused absences or truancy. A suspended scholar is allowed to make up missed work and is eligible for consideration to receive credit provided it is completed satisfactorily and in a timely manner. This absence is considered when determining whether or not a scholar may or may not be promoted but is not considered for the purposes of truancy. Scholars absent from school as a result of any suspension are counted as absent.

Tardiness

Late scholars miss academics, and every instructional minute counts. Scholars are expected to be in attendance every minute of the day. Scholars that are late miss essential instruction. Parents are expected to cooperate with school personnel throughout the school year. **Tardy shall include, but not be limited to,**

leaving or checking out of school prior to the regularly scheduled dismissal time or arriving late after school officially begins, but shall not include reporting late to class when transferring from one class to another during the school day. Tardies are only excused with an official note from a physician's office. **Habitual tardiness will be considered as truancy and will be referred to the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance.**

Definition of Tardiness

Our doors open at 9:00 A.M. each morning. Students must arrive between 9:00 A.M. and 9:10 A.M. Students arriving after 9:10 A.M. are considered tardy. All tardy students must report to the front office and be signed into school by the adult dropping them off. In cases when a school bus arrives late, those students riding the bus are not considered tardy.

School Visitor Policy

Parents/Guardians are a vital part of the Akili Academy community and partners in their scholar's education. Parents/Guardians may observe their scholar in class and may take part in scheduled volunteer opportunities.

Parent/Guardian Visit Classifications and Procedures

Pre-Scheduled Visits

Parents/Guardians may coordinate with their scholar's teacher to schedule a planned visit to observe class. The teacher and the parent/guardian must agree upon the date and duration of the visit. **Akili Academy does not allow any unscheduled visits.** If a parent or Guardian requests an unscheduled visit at the Front Office, they will be escorted to the classroom by security for a period of 5 minutes to observe their scholar silently.

Visit Procedure

Upon arriving at Akili, all visitors must first sign in at the security desk, then report to the front office to retrieve a visitor's badge. In the case of a scheduled visit, an Akili Academy staff member or security agent will escort the parent/guardian at the scheduled time.

Visit Regulations

- To limit disruption, parent/guardian visitors may not talk to a scholar or a teacher while observing a class.
- For the safety of our scholars, parent/guardian visitors must wear a visitor name badge while in the school.
- Parent/Guardians who travel to Akili Academy to drop off items for a scholar or to leave a message must report to the front office where they may leave the item with the office manager for delivery.

Student Birthday Celebrations

Although we enjoy knowing it is a student's birthday, parties are not allowed at school. Each homeroom class will celebrate birthdays as a class during Celebration time at the end of the day once a month on Fridays. Please do not send gifts (balloons, flowers, candy, etc.) to school except for on the birthday celebration Friday- contact your student's teacher for dates and times of birthday celebrations. Although it



is a nice thing to do, gifts cause a distraction for the student and his/her classmates. On these designated Fridays, feel free to send enough cake/cupcakes or healthy options for the class to celebrate together if you choose.

Student Enrollment Policy

Akili Academy is an open enrollment school in Orleans Parish and abides by the enrollment policies developed by the EnrollNOLA office. This means that we are open to all who live in Orleans Parish: we have no requirements for admission, we do not test prior to entry, and, when there are more applicants than seats available, we use a random lottery to determine placement. We do not charge parents for anything associated with their child’s education, except for the uniform and occasional trips. The admissions process is designed to ensure equal access for all students, and the school does not discriminate in admissions, nor any of its program or activities, on the basis of intellectual ability, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, national origin or immigration status, disability, or identification as an exceptional child.

All enrollment is handled centrally through the city’s EnrollNOLA office. A free appropriate public education, including any necessary special education services, are provided at Akili Academy, as required, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Student Fees

Akili Academy believes in offering an excellent education to all students. It further believes that the inability to pay student fees should not prevent students from having access to a quality education, and that economically disadvantaged students and students whose families are experiencing economic hardships should have the same opportunities afforded to them as to other students.

The following is a list of student fees. All fees may be paid in the school’s main office with cash or with a debit card, money order, or certified check. Collected fees are used to defray the costs of the referenced supply or experience.

Fee	Amount	When Due
Uniform	Cost of uniform piece	When purchased
Field Trip and Activity Fees	PK-7th Grade: \$50.00 8th Grade: \$200 fee for 8th grade supplies & events. \$250 optional fee to attend Civil Rights overnight trip.	September 30, 2020

No student will ever be denied a uniform or participation in an experience because of a lack of ability to pay a fee. Nor will students be denied any other academic opportunity because of a lack of ability to pay a fee.

Furthermore, failure to pay any required fee shall not result in the withholding of a student's educational record. No fees not authorized by this policy shall be assessed.

Families who would like to request an economic hardship waiver of a fee may do so by alerting the front office and speaking with the school's social worker or his/her designee. Waiver requests will be approved or denied based on a family's demonstrated financial need. Waiver requests that are denied may be appealed to the school principal.

Crescent City Schools

Crescent City Schools is the non-profit charter management organization that oversees the workings of Akili Academy. Crescent City Schools is governed by its own board of directors. If you are interested in attending a board meeting, they are open to the public and take place the last Tuesday of most months at 6pm. The location of the board meetings rotates among the three Crescent City Schools. The board meeting and location schedule is always posted online at www.crescentcityschools.org and in our front office. Information on how to join the Crescent City Schools board is also posted on that website.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

School Meal Program

School Meals Offered

Breakfast, lunch, snack, and supper are served to Akili Academy scholars. Akili Academy believes strongly in the value of providing healthy food options to its scholars. Because of the schools' participation in the Community Eligibility Provision, all scholars are given free meals everyday, regardless of a family's ability to pay.

Packed Lunch Policy

Parents/Guardians may choose to send their scholars to school with a packed lunch from home. Parents/Guardians who do so must adhere to the following guidelines:

- The scholar's lunch must contain at least a sandwich or other entree to be considered a nutritious lunch.
- The entire lunch must be in one bag or container with the student's name on it.
- Only milk, water, or fruit juice are allowed as beverages.
- **Candy, gum, packaged noodles, chips, and soda are not allowed to be consumed at school.**
- Scholars are not permitted to share lunch items.

Daughters of Charity Counseling Services

Akili Academy offers counseling services through our partnership with The Daughters of Charity as an additional resource to help students succeed in their academic goals, as well as support social and emotional growth throughout the year. Counseling sessions are typically short-term in nature and focus on solutions to help your child succeed in all areas of their development. The counseling program is optional- your student may be referred to counseling by a teacher, staff member, or a parent/guardian. A permission slip for all counseling services needs to be signed by the student's parent[s] or guardian[s].

Fire Drills

As a safety measure, and in keeping with regulations set up by the New Orleans Fire Department, fire drills are conducted regularly. A steady, continuous sounding of the fire alarm signals a fire drill. Quiet and rapid, but safe, movement towards specified exits are to be observed during these drills. Students and teachers are expected to take all fire alarms seriously. A copy of the fire drill instructions and a chart showing an emergency dispersal plan can be found in each classroom.

Student Records

We understand and respect the importance of student privacy. We are committed to keeping all personally identifiable information about your child(ren) private and only sharing that information when legally required to do so or when necessary for the education, health, or safety of your child(ren). Below are examples of what information may be shared.

- Directory information and educational records may be shared with employees of Crescent City Schools, including teachers and administrators, to be used for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational programming and academic achievement.
- Directory information and educational records may be shared with high schools, postsecondary educational institutions, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance to be used for processing applications for admission and financial aid.
- Directory information and educational records may be stored on third-party computer systems for data storage and back-up purposes.
- Directory information and educational records may be shared with the Louisiana Department of Education and third party providers to provide and bill for special education and mental health services and evaluations. (This includes billing Medicaid when applicable.)
- Directory information may be shared with third party providers to provide educational programming, co-curricular programming, and assessments.
- Directory information and health information may be shared with medical professionals and third party providers to provide medical care or billing for medical care services. (This includes billing Medicaid when applicable.)
- Directory information may be shared with third party providers for the provision of transportation and food services.
- Samples of student work and accomplishments may be displayed in the school or published to recognize your child(ren)'s achievements.

We will NOT share personally identifiable information with any person or entity who desires to use the information for purposes that do not benefit the education, health, or safety of your child(ren).

Parents may withdraw consent for sharing information in this way by submitting a request in writing to the main office.

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

- The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access. Requests for access should be submitted to the office manager and include what records are to be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Requests to amend records should be submitted to the principal and should clearly identify the part of the record wished to be changed and the reason. The school will notify the parent or eligible student of its decision and the right to a hearing.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. School officials include employees of Crescent City Schools and contractors, consultants, or other individuals performing a function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under control of the school with respect to use and maintenance of education records. Legitimate educational interests include professional responsibilities related to the student’s education. The school may also disclose educational records to other schools in which a student seeks to enroll or is already enrolled.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

The school may also disclose directory information unless you have advised us to the contrary in writing. The primary purpose of disclosing directory information is to allow the school to include information from your child’s records in certain school publications and displays. Examples include:

- Bulletin boards located throughout the building
- Honor rolls and other recognition lists
- Event programs
- Sports activity sheets and rosters

Directory information is only disclosed for planned school purposes. It is never disclosed upon the request of an external individual. If you do not want the school to disclose any or all types of directory information listed below, you must notify the school in writing within 90 days of the first day of school (or within 90 days of enrolling if enrolling mid-year). The school has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student’s name and grade level
- Participation in activities and sports
- Honors and awards received

Dates of attendance

Parents may also review a child’s records upon request.

Request for Student Information by Law Enforcement

The following procedures shall apply if law enforcement agents seek disclosure of student personally identifiable information (PII) or other student record:

- If a law enforcement agent presents a valid subpoena, warrant, or court order, the school will photocopy the agent's picture identification and/or badge, as well as the subpoena, warrant, or court order.
 - If presented with a valid warrant, access to the records shall be provided immediately. The school shall call the student's parent/guardian to notify them of the disclosure.
 - If presented with a valid subpoena or court order, the school shall attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian prior to disclosure of the information. The parent/guardian may seek protective action prior to disclosure of the information.
- If a law enforcement agent does not present a valid subpoena, warrant, or court order, the school should not disclose student PII or other student records.
- School administrators may disclose PII and student records without consent in connection with a health or safety emergency presenting imminent danger to students or other members of the community, or that requires an immediate need for information in order to avert or diffuse serious threats to the safety or health of the student or others. The reasons for this disclosure shall be documented.
- School administrators may disclose student PII and other records as needed to comply with Article 609 of the Louisiana Children's Code (regarding mandated reporting requirements).

Request to Interview a Student by Law Enforcement

The following procedures shall apply if law enforcement agents seek to interview a student at school:

- If a law enforcement agent does not present a valid subpoena, warrant, or court order, the school should not produce the student for an interview, nor disclose student PII or other student records, unless the school has requested the interview.
- If a law enforcement agent presents a valid subpoena, warrant, or court order, the school will photocopy the agent's picture identification and/or badge, as well as the subpoena, warrant, or court order.
- The school shall attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian before allowing the interview to commence, unless extenuating circumstances exist, such as:
 - A delay in the interview may pose imminent danger to the health or safety of the student or others.
 - The student's parent/guardian is suspected of a felony or other crime posing an imminent danger to the health or safety of the student or others or poses a risk of flight.
 - Law enforcement officials need to act promptly to prevent destruction of evidence of a crime posing an imminent danger to the health or safety of the student or others.
 - If the parent/guardian desires to be present, the interview should be delayed until the parent/guardian arrives.
 - Investigators from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) may make a determination to interview a student independently of his/her parents. The school will respect such decisions.

- If the student refuses to speak to the law enforcement agent, the interview may not proceed on school grounds.

Request to Arrest a Student

The school shall cooperate with law enforcement authorities who present a valid warrant, attachment, or subpoena for a student. The school shall make a photocopy of the warrant, attachment, or subpoena and shall attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian.

Nursing Services & Medication

Nursing Services

On-site nursing services are available to all scholars through Akili Academy's School Nurse.

Immunization Records

The law requires Akili Academy to collect completed immunization forms for every student. These forms are made available by the School Nurse and can be obtained by contacting the Main Office.

Medication Administration and the MAF

Akili Academy's School Nurse is available to administer prescribed medication to scholars. However, all medication—even over-the-counter medications—can only be administered after a parent/guardian has returned a Medical Administration Form (MAF), completed by a healthcare provider. Families can get a copy of this form by contacting Akili Academy's main office. Scholars with conditions requiring the administration of medication who have not completed the MAF may be restricted from attending school at the discretion of the School Nurse and Akili Academy administration.

***Note:** All student medicines will be kept in a locked cabinet and Akili Academy will keep a detailed log of all medicines that are administered.

Severe Allergies

Anaphylaxis is a severe systemic allergic reaction from exposure to allergens that is rapid in onset and can cause death. Parents of students with known life threatening allergies and/or anaphylaxis are encouraged to notify the School Nurse and should provide the school with written instructions and prescribed medications from the student's health care provider for handling anaphylaxis, on an annual basis.

It is the policy of the Akili Academy to follow the medical and legal guidelines developed for students with an identified severe allergy to food, insect stings, latex, and/or unknown allergens, in addition to those who may have not yet had an identified allergy or condition which puts them at risk to experience an unexpected event, that are at a potential risk for a life-threatening reaction (anaphylaxis).

These guidelines include:

- Education and Training for school personnel on the management of students with life-threatening severe allergies, including training related to the administration of medication with a cartridge injector.

- Procedures for responding to known and unknown life-threatening allergic reactions.
- A process for the development of individualized health care and allergy/anaphylaxis emergency action plans for every student with an identified allergy.
- Protocols to prevent exposure to food allergens or precautions to avoid exposure to other allergens.

Akili Academy will make every effort to provide at least two (2) doses of auto-injectable epinephrine (hereinafter called 'unassigned or stock epinephrine') on site, under the standing order of a Louisiana licensed physician, to assist those persons who may experience anaphylactic emergencies and do not have a prescribed treatment. The stock epinephrine may be administered by a school nurse or employee of the school who is authorized and trained in the administration of epinephrine to any student or other person, who in good faith, is believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction. This policy is not intended to replace or override student specific orders or currently prescribed medications for anaphylaxis.

Accidents

All accidents that occur on school grounds or at school events must be reported immediately to the teacher on duty. School personnel may administer first aid when necessary. Parents will be notified in case of an accident and are expected to come to the school immediately if requested to do so.

Human Services

Below are emergency telephone numbers that may be useful to parents/guardians and students:

Akili Academy Main Office: (504) 355-4172
Child Protective Services: 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437)
Domestic Violence Hotline: 504-837-5400
Drug Dependence Hotline: 800-662-4357
Mental Health Hotline: 800-248-1152
Police/Fire Emergency: 911
Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
Rape Crisis Hotline: 504-482-9922
Runaway Hotline: 800-RUNAWAY (800-786-2929)
Suicide Prevention: 800-784-2433



Akili Academy Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form

By signing below, I am stating that I have thoroughly read and reviewed the Akili Academy Family Handbook for 2020-2021 and am aware of and understand all school policies. I know that if I have questions about any of the policies in this document that I am to direct them to the Main Office.

Please sign and return this form to your scholar's Homeroom Teacher.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Scholar's Name: _____

Scholar's Grade: _____

Scholar's Homeroom: _____