



Student and Parent Handbook



2024-2025

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Mission Statement

The mission of The Concept School is to transform the lives of middle and high school students who learn differently by creating a safe and nurturing educational environment where every student is welcomed, accepted, and becomes their authentic self.

Vision Statement

To provide successful educational experiences by rigorously crafting individualized learning while supporting students and their families in ways that ensure each student will grow their self-confidence and capacity to transition successfully to life after graduation.

Welcome

The Concept School is an amazing place where students build confidence, increase social skills, gain academic knowledge, and become successful young adults. We take pride in the nurturing environment that students find here and work hard to find ways we can become even more accommodating to the various learning styles of our learners. The staff here at TCS, while extremely skilled and patient, can only do so much. Students and their families are encouraged to work with us in order to achieve maximum social and academic growth. Please read over this handbook, familiarize yourselves with its contents, and follow the expectations found herein.

Sincerely,

William M. Bennett

Head of School

The Concept School admits students without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, physical disability, mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship status, national or ethnic origin, and any other protected status.

Board of Directors

Mrs. Nancy Maguire, President
Ms. Leslie Davila, Vice President
Dr. Margaret-Ann Koch, Secretary
Mr. Bruce Johnson, Treasurer
Dr. Peter Herman
Mr. Dan O'Rourke
Mr. Randell Spackman
Mr. Joseph Syernik

Faculty and Staff

Mr. William Bennett	Head of School	wbennett@theconceptschoo.org
Mr. Chris Brady	History Teacher	cbrady@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Kathryn Burtch	Teacher Assistant	kburtch@theconceptschoo.org
Mr. Steven Burtch	Math Teacher	sburtch@theconceptschoo.org
Ms. Annamarie Cuff	Transitions Coord.	acuff@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Mary Culler	Content Area and Reading Specialist	mculler@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Laura Daniels	German Teacher	ldaniels@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Sheila Fredericks	Technology Teacher and Tech. Coord.	sfredericks@theconceptschoo.org
Mr. Paul Giess	Music Teacher	pgiess@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Laura Griffith	English Teacher	lgriffith@theconceptschoo.org
Ms. Shari Levine	Advancement Dir.	slevine@theconceptschoo.org
Ms. Jessica Lofgren	Business Manager	jlofgren@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Camille Piccone	Office Manager & Assistant to the Head of School	cpiccone@theconceptschoo.org
Mr. Evan Schullery	Dean of Students	eschullery@theconceptschoo.org
Ms. Lauren Schwind	Art Teacher	lschwind@theconceptschoo.org

Ms. Shannon Tilmon	Science Teacher	stilmon@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Meghan Wright	English Teacher	mwright@theconceptschoo.org
Mrs. Donna Marie Zoccoli	Math Teacher	dzoccoli@theconceptschoo.org

Absences

Regular attendance in school is of paramount importance. The Head of School will schedule a family conference if any student develops a pattern of absences that is hurting school performance. It is important that a parent or guardian notify, by email (wbennett@theconceptschoo.org and cpiccone@theconceptschoo.org), or telephone (610-399-1135) before 8:30 the morning of a student's absence. Attendance regulations are the same as for public schools. ***Students with excessive, unexcused absences will have course credits reduced, even if course work is completed. Participation is an important part of each class.***

Excused absences include: illness (parent note or email required with a description of the illness), death of an immediate family member, pre-approved participation in school-sponsored activities, attendance at medical or dental appointments, and required court attendance. All absences require a note from either the parent/guardian or the doctor's office. **Upon accumulating ten (10) excused absences, all future absences due to illness will require a note from a physician.** Absences that are not excused are considered unlawful and we are required to notify the student's home school district after the third unlawful absence.

We request that family vacations be planned to match school vacation times for holidays (see the school year calendar). If a student goes away during school time, it is the student's responsibility to make up for missed work. The student's teachers will need notification at least one week in advance of a trip.

Arrival Procedures

Students may enter the building starting at 8:30 am, go to their lockers and immediately to first period. The virtual morning meeting will take place at 8:45 am with students in their first period classes.

Bell Schedule

8:30	School opens for arrivals and students report to 1 st period class
8:45 – 8:50	Virtual morning meeting
8:50 – 9:40	1st period class
9:40 – 10:30	2nd period class
10:30 – 11:20	3rd period class

11:20 – 12:10	4th period class
12:10 – 12:50	5th period class/Lunch
12:50 – 1:30	6th period class/Lunch
1:30 – 2:20	7th period class
2:20 – 3:10	8th period class
3:10 – 3:15	Chromebook return
3:15	Dismissal

Building Maintenance

Maintaining the appearance of the school building and grounds is shared by every member of our school community – students, parents, teachers, and staff.

Everyone takes responsibility for cleaning up after him/herself in the lunchroom, in the hallways, near the lockers, and in the classrooms, especially in and around desks or workspaces. A neat and clean environment is enjoyable for everyone; please do your part to help out.

The school has a cleaning company who is here twice weekly. Students assist teachers in daily upkeep of the classroom and halls.

Chores

A clean building requires the cooperation of everyone. Students assist in the upkeep of the facility's appearance by taking turns for daily chores. From time to time, students pitch in to help with outdoor projects.

Quarterly Clean-ups

All lockers, desks, and classrooms are cleaned and reorganized at the end of each quarter.

Food

To keep the carpets in the halls and classrooms in good condition, food and beverages may be consumed only in the kitchen. Students are permitted to have a water bottle in class. No other drinks are allowed outside the kitchen. Do not keep open packages of food or beverages in your lockers or the refrigerator.

Damage

If something is broken, damaged, or defaced, please report it to a teacher.

Anyone who damages or defaces school property intentionally or carelessly will be required to repair the damage when possible or pay all expenses incurred for repair or replacement.

Heating/Cooling

The standard setting is 68-72 degrees in the school. Students may not adjust thermostats, adjust fans, or open and close windows without asking for the classroom teacher's permission.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy for Students

Electronic devices have become a common means of communication and information access in today's society. However, these devices have been found to disrupt the orderly operation of the school. The Concept School has therefore created this policy to govern the possession and use of electronic devices on school premises during school hours.

STUDENT PHONE POLICY & GUIDELINES

Phones are not to be used during the school day. Every student is assigned a personal Yondr Pouch. While the Yondr Pouch is considered school property, it is each student's responsibility to care for it properly.

DAILY PROCESS

As students **Arrive to School**, they will:

- 1) Turn their phone off.
- 2) Place their phone inside their Pouch and secure it in front of school staff.
- 3) Store their Pouch in their backpack for the day.

At the end of the day, students will open their Pouch, remove their phone and put their Pouch in the bin.

*Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones in the **library**.

VIOLATIONS

Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Using Phone During School

- If a student damages their Pouch or is caught on their phone, Administration will collect the phone/Pouch and call home for a:

- **1st Offense: Phone is held in the main office until the end of the day and the**

- parent is notified.
- 2nd Offense: Parent/Guardian will be required to come to the school and pick up the student's phone
- Any pouch with damage will require a \$40.00 replacement fee

SECURITY OF DEVICES

Students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of electronic devices brought to school. The school will not assume responsibility for theft, loss, damage, or unauthorized calls made with an electronic device. If devices are loaned to or borrowed and misused by non-owners, device owners are jointly responsible for the misuse or policy violation(s).

EXCEPTION

With prior approval of the Head of School, the above prohibitions may be relaxed if a student needs their device for health-related reasons.

Dismissal Procedures

All students will be dismissed from their eighth period classrooms at 3:10 pm and return their Chromebooks to the library and unlock their Yondr pouches on their way out of the building. Bus riders and students picked up by parents/guardians are to walk to their rides when they are notified. Please arrive no later than 3:30 pm to pick-up your daughter or son. Families may be billed for excessively late pick-ups.

Dress Code

Standard of Appearance

Be neat, well groomed, clean, and appropriately attired for school. The school reserves the right to define what is appropriate.

Simple rule: if an item of clothing is distracting or provocative, do not wear it to school.

Please use your locker to store all outer garments during the school day. During the cold weather months, some students may want to compensate for the cooler environment by wearing blazers, vests, sweaters, or sweatshirts in their classrooms, clothing/backpacks/equipment may not be left lying in classrooms or hallways.

Items left repeatedly in these areas will be collected. Shoes will be worn at times. All shoes must have a back on them – no flip-flops or slides, please. Tank-tops and/or any item of

clothing that shows midriffs and shoulders are not allowed. Shorts must be an acceptable length, as determined by school staff. Undergarments may not be visible.

THE SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DEFINE WHAT IS APPROPRIATE

Drivers

Driving to school is a privilege. Upon entering the school grounds, all drivers must observe the traffic pattern and proceed at a safe speed – 5 m.p.h. No one is permitted in cars without permission during school hours. Park your cars in the designated parking spaces and enter the building promptly. Register your car and license at the school office. Any violation of these rules or habitual lateness or other violations of school rules may cause a student's driving privileges to be suspended.

Early Dismissal

The school will grant early dismissal for the same reasons allowable for excused absences. Medical/dental appointments should be scheduled at times other than school hours whenever possible.

Hours of School

8:45 A.M. – 3:15 P.M.

Students should arrive no earlier than 8:30 A.M. and leave no later than 3:30 P.M. They should enter the building immediately upon arrival and leave when dismissed. Students report to 1st Period class by 8:45.

Students should be picked up before the building closes at 3:30 P.M. on regular school days or at times designated by teachers after special events. A family who is late picking up a child repeatedly will be charged the rate of \$50.00 for each fifteen-minute period or fraction thereof. Please be prompt.

Lateness

All students should be in their first period classroom before the 8:45 A.M. bell rings.

Excused lateness is due to any official appointment with an official note to the office upon arrival at the school (i.e. a note from the office of a doctor or dentist or a late arriving bus).

Continued lateness may result in a lower citizenship mark and potential loss of driving privileges may be imposed.

Medication Procedures

A student who needs to take any medication at school is required to bring it to the office along with the completed Medication Administration Form (found in this handbook and on-line). All

medications must be taken at the prescribed times in the office, under the supervision of an adult staff member.

School Closing

When it is necessary to close school due to bad weather, a text message will be sent to those who have signed up for the *Remind* application to inform each student's household. Closings will be posted on the website www.theconceptschooll.org, and an email will be sent.

Telephone Use

Students or teachers will not be disturbed during class time to answer the phone unless there is an emergency. Any messages for students that are received during the school day before 2:30 P.M. will be delivered to students either at lunch or during the eighth period. Students wishing to make outgoing calls must have a teacher's permission before the secretary will place a call.

Transportation Changes

When students wish to vary from their usual transportation arrangement, they must bring in a note from a parent stating the variation and approval. In case of an emergency, parents/guardians may call the school. Unless notified otherwise, students will be sent home on their assigned transportation. Students may secure a note at the beginning of the school year from their parents permitting them to ride or drive with other students throughout the year.

Visitors

Visitors who have legitimate business at the school are welcome. All visitors must register at the office upon entering the building. Parents are welcome to visit. So as to not disrupt instruction, parents who wish to observe in classrooms should schedule such visits with the Head of School. No photography/recording is allowed without express permission.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Determination and dedication will help you make your school year a success. Work toward achievement of goals by developing skills, techniques, and strategies. Take responsibility for your own progress by being prepared. The best strategy is to be prepared. Develop good study skills and habits – listen in class, do your assignments on time, read the material, and keep your handouts and notes organized. Working in study groups with others is a helpful way to reinforce what you learn.

Academic Probation

The faculty reserves the right to place a student on academic probation if he/she is not making an effort in school, does not do his/her homework, does not pay attention in class, or fails more than one subject. Without improvement in the situation, a student may be placed on probation which may lead to dismissal.

Cheating

Students are expected to do their own work and rely on themselves during tests and when completing a classroom assignment. Cheating is not tolerated. A person who gives assistance to another student on work designed to be independent is considered cheating, as well. If a student is found to be cheating, the consequence is the student must re-do the assignment or test in private.

Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled at the end of the 1st and 3rd quarters, or more often as determined by teachers.

Grading Scale

97 – 100	A+	67 – 69	D+
94 – 96	A	64 – 66	D
90 – 93	A-	60 – 63	D-
87 – 89	B+	59 – Below	F
84 – 86	B	Incomplete	I
80 – 83	B-	Outstanding	O
77 – 79	C+	Pass	P
74 – 76	C	Satisfactory	S
70 – 73	C-	Unsatisfactory	U

Honor Roll

A student receives recognition on the Honor Roll for a quarter when he/she earns straight A's in a marking period, along with Outstanding in Citizenship.

Honor Society

The Mark Tucker National Honor Society Chapter at The Concept School is an organization that promotes recognition of students who reflect outstanding accomplishments in the areas of scholarship, character, leadership, and service. To be considered a **candidate** for membership, a student must:

1. Be a 10th, 11th, or 12th grader
2. Be enrolled at The Concept School for at least one year
3. Have obtained a cumulative GPA of 3.50
4. Be pursuing a majority of grade-level appropriate classes
5. Have no record of disciplinary actions for the given year of consideration

6. Have community- or school-based volunteer experience
7. Receive 4 out of 5 votes of the Faculty Counsel

Upon being selected as a candidate, the student will be scheduled for an interview with the Faculty Counsel, and they will answer a questionnaire detailing their Service and Leadership activities inside and outside of The Concept School. They will also prepare an essay on the topic of Character.

The candidate will be inducted as a member into the National Honor Society after receiving 4 out of 5 votes from the Faculty Council. Not all candidates will necessarily be approved to be inducted.

Physical Education

Students are to bring sneakers to school on the day of the week for Physical Education activities (some students keep a pair in their lockers). Students may want to consider bringing an extra shirt and deodorant to use after the activities. If a student is unprepared for physical education three times during a quarter, he/she will automatically fail the class. To receive a diploma, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires PE to be passed each year. High school students are required to earn 1 credit in health and physical education to graduate. Repeated unpreparedness for PE is interpreted as defiant behavior and an Unsatisfactory in citizenship is given. Students excused from PE due to physical reasons must have a note from a physician and will be given appropriate alternative activities.

Reports Cards

Report Cards are issued four times a year. Parents and students will be notified at any time during the quarter when a student is in danger of failing a subject or is making a rapid decline in that class.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Citizenship

A citizen may be defined as a member of a community who shares with others certain rights, privileges and duties as defined by common rules and respect. Students have the right, privilege, and duty to learn. Interference and disrespect in any way of this basic right is unacceptable. Please respect yourself and others.

Learning to be a responsible citizen of TCS is an important part of a student's growth and development while at The Concept School. Therefore, progress in citizenship is reflected with the following grades:

“O” for Outstanding

“S” for Satisfactory

“U” for Unsatisfactory

To qualify for an “O” outstanding in citizenship a student:

- a. model good citizenship with respect and kindness to others and has no citizenship zeros.
- b. cooperates and participates in school community activities.
- c. maintains a perfect homework record.
- d. demonstrates academic achievement.
- e. attends school regularly and punctually

Rewards for receiving an “O” outstanding in Citizenship are:

- a. certificate of merit award.

Boundaries

Between 8:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M., the following outside spaces are off limits unless students are accompanied by a teacher: the front of the building and driveway areas, near the roads, the creek areas, the back of the building, and any areas near classroom windows.

Building Rules

- a. Students are responsible for appropriate behavior.
- b. Food and drink are to be consumed only in the lunchroom. (Exceptions for special occasions).
- c. The library is open to student use only during designated times or with a teacher’s permission.
- d. Sit appropriately.
- e. No running is allowed in the building.
- f. Correct behavior is expected in the halls. No horseplay.
- g. Nothing may be displayed on the outside of lockers. The locker belongs to the school and is loaned to you: it is not your private property. You may decorate inside the door of your locker if you wish. Do keep your locker neat; it is easier to find your books and materials when needed.
- h. Physical contact, of any kind, is not permitted in school.
- i. Swearing or other inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- j. Students should not rummage through cabinets in the kitchen or use the refrigerator without permission.
- k. Students should not interrupt classes in progress.
- l. Students must have a pass in order to leave the classroom.

Students having difficulty remaining in control of themselves may be sent to a “chill out” space or sent home for a “cooling off” period. Repeated inappropriate or offensive behavior may result in any or all the following:

loss of privileges
being dismissed from school

Community Service

Students are encouraged to participate in community service. Bulletin board notices provide information on programs and organizations in need of assistance. Students may submit materials about volunteer opportunities in their communities to be posted on the board. Being involved in community service is an important educational experience. It is a way for students to share their time and talents with others and to expand their understanding of the world around them.

During the school year the entire student body may take on a community service project. Some examples of students' projects include collecting food and gifts for families at the holidays, baking and selling cookies for a donation to the Red Cross, collecting warm coats for the homeless, visiting homes for the elderly, and working at a Habitat for Humanity site.

Drugs/Alcohol Possession

Unauthorized medications or over the counter drugs, including herbal supplements, vitamins and aspirin are prohibited on school grounds or on school trips. (All medications must be registered in the office and administered by office staff).

Possession or evidence of illegal drug usage by any student will result in suspension, mandatory drug testing, and counseling for a first offense. The second offense will require the student to leave the school.

Fighting

Under no circumstances will fighting be tolerated. A violation could result in a Suspension and a "U" in citizenship or a student may be expelled.

Harassment

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Harassment is defined as a repeated pattern of unprovoked aggressive behaviors of a physical and/or psychological nature carried out by an individual or against an individual or group with the effect of causing harm or hurt. All forms of harassment are unwelcome, unwanted, and uncomfortable in the view of the recipient.

They have the effect of creating a hostile environment. In addition to the more obvious forms of physical and verbal harassment – hitting, poking, punching, teasing, tripping, etc. – intimidation may also be carried out as:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. social media postings/texts | 3. name calling |
| 2. negative peer pressure | 4. teasing |

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 5. verbal challenges | 11. spreading malicious rumors |
| 6. dares | 12. negative remarks about religious affiliation |
| 7. threats | 13. negative remarks about political affiliation |
| 8. verbal attacks | 14. remarks about gender identity |
| 9. belittlement | |
| 10. social exclusion | |

Sexual harassment is any sexual advance – either physical or verbal, requests for sexual favors, and any inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any student to another student. Sexual harassment as defined above may include, but is not limited, to the following: verbal harassment or abuse; pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks with sexual or demeaning implications; and unwelcome touching.

Students who exhibit harassing behavior to any member or visitor in The Concept School community at any time will be appropriately addressed by a teacher and reported to the Head of School, who may address the situation as follows: an assigned sensitivity training after school, suspension, mandatory counseling, and possible removal from the school.

Hate Speech

TCS will not tolerate abusive or threatening speech or writing. This includes, but is not limited to, topics of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or similar grounds.

Leaving School Grounds

Under no circumstances may a student leave the building or school grounds without permission. Police will be notified, along with the student's parents/guardians.

Playground Rules

- a. No standing, twisting, or jumping off while on the swings.
- b. No pushing anyone.
- c. Ball playing is allowed only in designated areas away from the swings and pavilions.
- d. Absolutely no climbing or hanging on trees.
- e. Throwing snowballs on school property is not allowed.

Probation for Misbehavior

- a. Consistent infractions of school rules may place a student on probation at any time. A student will automatically be put on probation if he/she receives two "U"s in citizenship in a school year.
- b. Any student who receives three "U"s in citizenship in a school year will be expelled.

- c. A student placed on probation for citizenship at the end of a school year will be asked to leave if he or she receives a “U” in citizenship during the first quarter of the following year.

Smoking/Vaping

Possession or use of tobacco of any type, inside the building, on the school grounds, or on field trips will result in an Unsatisfactory in citizenship and a repeated infraction will result in a suspension. A district court citation that includes a fine may also be issued.

Terroristic Threats

Such threats are taken seriously, and students usually will be immediately sent home to parents and threats may result in notification of the police, suspension, or expulsion.

Weapons and Explosives

A weapon or potential weapon may be defined, but is not limited to, the following: knives, firearms, any cutting instrument or explosive tool, metal knuckles, straight razors, any noxious gasses, mace, lighters, matches, poisons, drugs or any other items fashioned to use, sell, harm, threaten or harass students or staff and endanger the welfare of the school community.

Incidents of students possessing weapons will be reported immediately to the Head of School who will inform the student’s parents. Appropriate disciplinary and/or legal actions will be taken against students who possess weapons, as well as students who assist possession in any way.



Administration of Medication at School

TCS will administer medication, both over the counter and prescription, only when:

1. This form is completed and accompanies the medication.
2. The medication is in the prescription bottle or original packaging.

Name of Student: _____ Date: _____

Name of Medication: _____

Dosage: _____

Beginning Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

Time(s) for administration: _____

Possible side effects:

All other medications taken by the student at home (if any):

Parent Name (printed): _____

Parent Signature: _____

Physician Information

Name of Physician: _____

Phone Number: _____

Physician Signature: _____

Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Introduction

Parents, please read this document carefully, review its contents with your child, and sign the consent form. To use the school's computer network resources, all students along with their parents must sign and return the attached consent/ Computer Network Usage Agreement form.

The Concept School's small classes and close-knit community enables it to guide students in the development of their unique abilities and talents, to work independently with a personal commitment to academic achievement, to explore new ideas and approaches, and to grow their ability to positively self-advocate.

The Concept School community uses the strategy of *Engaged Learning* to achieve its goals. *Engaged Learning* enables students to find individual pathways to learning through communication, collaboration and investigation modes. Technology in the form of computer networks (i.e. the Internet) is critical in enabling this idea. A technology enriched learning environment promotes an active engagement of learning through real-life tasks, communication, collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking and independent exploration.

Any questions or concerns about this AUP or the attached consent form or any aspect of the computer network should be referred to The Concept School's Technology Coordinator. A copy of this policy and consent form will be available at the school website, theconceptschool.org.

NOTE: This policy and all its provisions are subordinate to local, state, and federal statutes.

Policy Statement

The purpose of the school provided computer network is to facilitate the communication, collaboration, and investigation modes in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, a student's use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of The Concept School and the rules and guidance contained in this policy at all times. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Students utilizing school provided computer network access must first have the permission of and must be supervised by the school's professional staff. Students utilizing the school provided computer network are responsible for good behavior on-line just as they are in a classroom or other areas of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.

Students and staff have a responsibility to promptly report any Acceptable Use Guidelines violations to the Head of School. Students who encounter inappropriate materials by accident should immediately report it to their teacher

Parents and guardians should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet which could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's parent or guardian would be liable.

While the school's intent is to make computer and Internet access available in order to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. The school's methods to regulate students' computer and Internet access, cannot completely guarantee compliance with this acceptable use policy.

The school believes that the benefits to students of access to computers and the Internet exceed the disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Toward that end, the school makes this AUP available for review by all parents and guardians and gives them the option of requesting for their minor children alternative activities not requiring Internet use.

The Concept School makes no warranties of any kind, neither expressed nor implied, for the computer network access it is providing. The school will not be responsible for any damages users suffer, including but not limited to the loss of data resulting from delays or interruptions in service. The school will not be responsible for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information stored on the school's memory media (disk, CD's, etc.); nor for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information gathered through the school's provided Internet access. The school will also not be responsible for personal property used to access the school's computers or networks (including the school provided Internet access). The school will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from school provided access to the Internet. The school is also not liable for any violations of the copyright laws by a student or staff member

Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses

Some specific examples of acceptable uses could include (but is not limited to):

- Class assignments
- Career development activities
- Educational research
- Extra-curricular activities
- Access of reference materials
- Communication activities

Some specific examples of unacceptable uses could include (but is not limited to):

- Personal email use
- Playing games (without permission).
- Installing software
- Accessing social networking websites
- General computer network use:
 - ☐ Tampering with the school network's wiring, software, or hardware.
 - ☐ Installing illegal or unauthorized software, shareware, or freeware.
 - ☐ Trying to gain unauthorized access to the school system.
 - ☐ Using another person's login information.
 - ☐ Accessing someone else's files
 - ☐ Using the network for commercial purposes.
 - ☐ Damaging the network by purposely activating a virus.
 - ☐ Making unauthorized electronic transfer of funds
 - ☐ Access, upload, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material.
 - ☐ Transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, or threatening language.
 - ☐ Violate any local, state, or federal statute.
 - ☐ Vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization.
 - ☐ Access another individual's materials, information, or files without permission
 - ☐ Violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission.
 - ☐ Downloading copies of copyrighted commercial software, music, images, or other materials
 - ☐ Making copies of commercial software, music, images, or other materials that would violate copyright laws.

Students have the responsibility to use computer resources for academic purposes only. Playing games or using networked resources is not permitted unless **approved and supervised** by school staff.

All students must take responsibility for keeping down costs and avoiding system disruption. No use of the school network shall serve to disrupt its use by other individuals or by other connecting networks. It is beneficial for all users to keep the network running efficiently.

Students **may not** bring their own computers to school.

Privacy, Security and Safety

All file student storage areas will be treated as school lockers. Student files are not guaranteed to be private and may be reviewed by The Concept School Staff at any time. Parents/guardians will have access to all their children's computer files.

Students will be instructed on the dangers of the Internet as part of their computer classes and orientation. The Internet makes it easy for someone to misrepresent themselves. Students will be instructed before using the school's computer network not to disclose their (or other student's) personal contact information (student's last name, address, phone number, parent/guardian name, and other information that would put them at risk before using the network.)

Students using the school computer network must comply with the following acceptable behaviors regarding Privacy, Security and Safety:

- Never get together with someone they meet online without first checking with parents and teachers.
- Notify a school staff member of the school if a student identifies a security problem on the school network.

Any student work published on the web (with the approval of the student's parent/guardian) will include only the student's first name.

Netiquette (Network Etiquette)

Netiquette is a set of rules or manners for online behavior. These rules or manners are not laws that the Internet communities are forced to follow; they are the accepted behavior the Internet community expects from its citizens. Many of the rules or manners have been established to address the limitations that are imposed on us by electronic communications. Misunderstandings can occur. Feelings can be hurt. The cleverly worded message fails to be read the way it was intended. Netiquette helps us avoid most of these misunderstandings.

General acceptable netiquette when online:

- Be polite!
- Do not send abusive or derogatory messages to anyone.
- Use appropriate language.
- Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language in any messages or web pages.
- Respect your and others privacy.
- Do not give out personal information about yourself or other students/staff.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Do not waste network resources (bandwidth, file storage space, printers, paper).

Students will be given more specific instruction in netiquette as part of their computer classes and orientation.

Property

Students using the school computer network must comply with the following acceptable behaviors regarding property:

- Students must respect others' privacy and intellectual property.
- Students are responsible for citing sources and giving credit to authors during the research process. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.
- Students will honor the legal rights of software producers, network providers, copyright, and license agreements.
- Students have a right to be informed about personal information that is being, or has been, collected about them, and to review this information.

Behaviors and Consequences

Consequences for inappropriate behavior are as follows:

- Any violation of this AUP could result in a cancellation of a student's computer and network privileges in the building for the marking period and may result in disciplinary action. The Head of School will rule on what is appropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the school professional staff may deny access to a student at any time as required.
- Tampering with school computer systems and/or applications will be considered vandalism, destruction, and defacement of school property and will be addressed accordingly..
- Vandalism is also defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Internet, or another computer network accessible from the school network. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

Drug and Alcohol Policy for Students

The Concept School's commitment to the development of the whole student includes a commitment to educating students about and protecting them from the dangers of illegal use of drugs and alcohol. The Concept School recognizes that the misuse and abuse of drugs and alcohol is a serious problem with legal, physical, and social implications for the whole school community. Therefore, The Concept School is committed to maintain a school community that is drug and alcohol free, and it is the responsibility of all students, parents, faculty, staff and administrators to work together to achieve this goal.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, controlled substances shall mean: all dangerous controlled substances prohibited by law, all "look alike" drugs (non-controlled substances packaged so as to appear to be, or about which a student makes an express or implied representation that the substances are drugs or non-controlled substances capable of producing a change in behavior or altering a state of mind or feeling), all alcoholic beverages, any mood-altering substance or health-endangering compounds including inhalants and solvents (e.g. glue, paint thinner, or nitrous oxide) and any prescription drug, patent drug, or anabolic steroid, except for those for which permission to use in school has been granted.

Authority

A. The Concept School prohibits the use, possession, distribution, sale, exchange or being under the influence of any controlled substance at any time in the school building, on school grounds, on The Concept School-owned school buses or vehicles, on school buses transporting students to and from school, and at any function or activity sponsored by The Concept School on or off school property, unless the substance involved is a prescription medication prescribed by a licensed physician and taken in accordance with the physician's directions under the direction of office staff. Parents must notify The Concept School in writing of any long term or narcotic drug prescription which their child is taking.

B. The use, possession, distribution, sale, exchange or being under the influence of drugs off school property and not at any function or activity sponsored by The Concept School is still of concern to the school. The Concept School reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to apply this policy, in whole or in part, to any student involved in such activity off school property and not at any function or activity sponsored by The Concept School.

C. The possession, sale, or exchange of drug paraphernalia is prohibited under any circumstances at any time in the school building, on school grounds, on The Concept School-owned school buses or vehicles, on school buses transporting students to and from school, and at any function or activity sponsored by

The Concept School on or off school property. Drug paraphernalia includes all equipment, products and materials of any kind which are used, intended for use or designed for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, harvesting, manufacturing, producing, preparing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, concealing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the human body a controlled substance. This includes pipes, needles, screens, rolling papers, and clips used to hold burning material such as a marijuana cigarette. In determining whether an object is drug paraphernalia, school authorities shall consider among other things statements by an owner or by anyone in control of the object concerning its use, the proximity of the object to controlled substances, and residue found in or on the object in question.

Response

If a student is suspected to be in violation of any of the above, The Concept School will respond using the following protocol:

A. Evaluation

Students whose academic performance and/or behavior is of concern and may indicate that drugs are a factor should be referred by their teacher(s) or other The Concept School staff members to the Head of School or his/her designee. The Head of School or his/her designee, in consultation with appropriate faculty and/or the school counselor will determine if the student should be referred for medical evaluation. If, after an evaluation by school personnel, there is any question as to the immediate health and welfare of the student (e.g. labored breathing, slurred speech, loss of consciousness), the student will be immediately transported to the hospital by ambulance at the parents' expense. The student's parents will be informed following such a meeting and evaluation or as soon as possible in the event that a student has been transported to the hospital. Evaluation may require testing for establishing whether there has indeed been drug use, as well as for purposes of therapy and rehabilitation.

B. Testing

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of, or intoxicated by drugs while on school property, a school bus or vehicle, or at a school-sponsored function or activity off school property, The Concept School may require that the student submit to a drug or alcohol test. The student's parents will incur any expenses associated with a drug or alcohol test. A refusal to do so without delay will subject the student to all remedial and disciplinary measures under this Policy, including expulsion.

C. Release of Information

The student and his/her parents or legal guardian(s) must authorize release of all medical, evaluation and test reports and records related to a violation or suspected violation of this Policy. Such reports and records will be maintained and held by the school in strict confidence.

D. Student Search/Examination of Property

In the case of suspected possession of illegal or controlled substances, The Concept School administration is authorized to conduct appropriate inspections and searches and to seize contraband on school premises. This search will include student lockers, personal belongings, clothing, and vehicles located on school grounds. Such examinations may also be conducted at any The Concept School function or activity held off campus. If a student fails to cooperate with or consent to a search, the

students' parents will be asked to consent to the requested search of the students' person, belongings, or car. Failure on the part of a student and his/her parents to cooperate fully with any such requested examination will subject the student to immediate expulsion.

1) Lockers: Lockers are the property of The Concept School, and therefore, students have no right to expect that the contents of their lockers are private. If an administrator has reasonable grounds to suspect or believe that a locker contains items that are illegal or violate school rules, he/she is permitted to conduct a search.

2) Cars: Cars parked in authorized school parking areas are under the jurisdiction of the school administrators. Therefore, students shall have no right to expect that the contents of their cars are private. If an administrator has reasonable grounds to suspect or believe that a car contains items that are illegal or violate school rules, he/she is permitted to conduct a search.

3) Other Searches: If an administrator has reasonable cause to believe that a student or other person has an item or substance in his/her possession which is illegal or constitutes a danger to the health or safety of any person, property, or to the school, he/she may conduct a search of the student and seize any such item or substance. If a student's clothing is searched, administrators are permitted to search the pockets, waistbands, pant legs, socks, shoes, and any outer garment such as a jacket or sweatshirt. Students may be asked to remove an outer-layer garment during the search, as well as his/her socks and shoes. The Concept School will not conduct strip searches of students. When conducting a search, The Concept School will ensure that those doing the search are the same gender of the student being searched.

4) Canine Search: The Concept School reserves the right to conduct a canine search of the school building, student cars, student lockers, and student book bags. Canines will not search individual students.

E. Violations of Policy

Violations of the above policy will be categorized as follows, and the actions taken by The Concept School in each circumstance is detailed below.

1) Possession with or Without the Intent to Distribute, Distribution, Sale, or Exchange:

Any student who is found to be in possession of a controlled substance with or without the intent to distribute, who distributes, sells, or exchanges controlled substances, or who is in possession of drug paraphernalia at any time in the school building, on school grounds, on The Concept School-owned school buses or vehicles, on school buses transporting students to and from school, and at any function or activity sponsored by The Concept School on or off school property may be expelled from The Concept School for the remainder of the school year and may not reapply for admission for a minimum of six months from the date of the offense. The Pennsylvania State Police will be contacted, and any contraband produced by the search of the student and his/her belongings will be turned over to the police.

2) Use or Being under the Influence of a Controlled Substance:

Any student who is found to have used a controlled substance before or during the school day, on school property, or during a school event or is found to be under the influence at any time in the school building, on school grounds, on The Concept School-owned school buses or vehicles, on school buses transporting students to and from school, and at any function or activity sponsored by The Concept School on or off school property may be suspended from The Concept School for a minimum of 15 days and as many as 30 days. The student will undergo an assessment by a school-appointed professional substance abuse counselor or other appropriate medical professional approved by the school and must complete any and all recommendations of said counselor to the school's satisfaction before returning to active status. If the recommended program exceeds 30 days, the school reserves the right to extend the suspension until the requirements of said program are met. The parents and/or student (depending on the student's age) must sign a release to grant permission to The Concept School and the chosen counselor to exchange confidential information. The student will be placed on disciplinary probation for a period of two years. A second offense or failure to comply with the stipulations of the Head of School or outside counseling agency will result in immediate expulsion and notification of the Westtown Township Police.

3) Self-Reporting, Parent Reporting, or Teacher Reporting:

In the event that a student, parent, or teacher report that a student is having difficulty with drug or alcohol use and/or abuse beyond the campus, the student will be immediately referred to The Concept School counselor and will be asked to work closely with the School counselor to assess the matter. Also, the parents will be notified if they were not otherwise aware of the issue, and the student will remain off campus for a minimum of three days. During this time, the student will undergo an evaluation by a school-designated professional. Recommendations made as a result of the evaluation will have to be in process before the student returns to The Concept School, and all recommendations made by the outside professional must be completed to the school's satisfaction for the student to remain in good standing. The parents and/or student (depending on the student's age) must sign a release to grant permission to The Concept School and the chosen counselor to exchange confidential information. If the student does not satisfy the recommendations of the outside counselor, he/she will be put on disciplinary probation for one calendar year, and should the school become aware of further drug or alcohol use, the student will be expelled. In cases in which the student is not found to be in possession or under the influence of drugs or alcohol on campus or during the school day, the school, parents, student, and outside professionals will work collaboratively to address the behavior and any and all issues contributing to the behavior.

F. Minimizing Drug and Alcohol Use Among Concept School Students

The Concept School wants our school to be an alcohol and drug free environment. Hence, we will take the following actions to minimize drug and alcohol use among The Concept School students.

- 1) Reinforce the unacceptability of illicit drugs and underage drinking in and out of school by consistently carrying through on the above stated actions.
- 2) Apply consequences for drug and alcohol usage consistently and fairly to users and suppliers.
- 3) Establish an environment in which all school community members have enough care and concern for each other that they will confidentially pass on information about people using, carrying and/or selling drugs.
- 4) Work collaboratively with law enforcement personnel to address matters involving drug and alcohol usage and possession.
- 5) Inform the whole community about the processes, possible consequences, and potential outcomes of being found with drugs or alcohol at school.
- 6) Review and evaluate strategies and procedures regularly and revise them as required.



Handbook Receipt Signature Page

Our signatures below indicate that we have received and reviewed the Student and Parent Handbook of The Concept School for the 2024-2025 school year.

Furthermore, our signatures indicate understanding and acceptance of all policies, procedures, and expectations as Concept School students.

Student Name Printed

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name Printed

Parent Signature

Date