



## Parent & Family Handbook

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# **1. SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

## **1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION**

Henry Johnson Charter School  
30 Watervliet Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206

Phone: (518) 432-4300  
Fax: (518) 432-4311  
Email: [info@henryjohnsoncs.org](mailto:info@henryjohnsoncs.org)  
Website: [www.henryjohnsoncs.org](http://www.henryjohnsoncs.org)

## **1.2 MISSION**

The mission of Henry Johnson Charter School is to ensure that all scholars reach the highest levels of scholastic achievement in an environment that instills character, virtue, and “habits of mind” that ensure success both within and outside the classroom: diligence, courage, respect, self-reliance, duty, and responsibility.

## **1.3 VISION**

Henry Johnson Charter School is a learning community where every scholar achieves academic excellence while developing exceptional character.

We call your children “scholars” to reflect our focus on learning as well as our belief that all scholars can succeed in an environment of high expectations with the appropriate support.

## **1.4 HISTORY**

Our school’s namesake, Henry Johnson, grew up in Albany in the early 1900s. He is a true American hero and an inspiration to all who have come to learn of his extraordinary service and bravery as a soldier in the First World War. Sergeant Johnson volunteered to serve his country, becoming a famous member of the New York National Guard’s 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, also known as the “Harlem Hellfighters.” The United States Army was still segregated at that time. The all-black regiment was sent to France to fight with the French 4<sup>th</sup> Army.

In May of 1918, Sergeant Johnson and a fellow soldier came under heavy fire. Greatly outnumbered, Sergeant Johnson fought off the enemy single-handedly and rescued his comrade from temporary capture. He succumbed to heavy wounds during the battle.

For his extraordinary bravery, Sergeant Johnson was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* (the Cross of War) with Gold Palm by the French, their highest military honor. He was the first American soldier to be so honored. But his achievements went largely unrecognized in terms of military honors in his own country until long after his death in 1929. Henry Johnson has been awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross, the U.S. military's second highest medal. President Barack Obama posthumously awarded America's highest military award, the Medal of Honor, to Henry Johnson for his bravery and gallantry at a ceremony at the White House on June 2, 2015.

We are proud to name our school after Sergeant Henry Johnson, for he is a person worthy of such honor. He serves as a compelling touchstone for the school's focus on the character development and academic excellence of its scholars.

## **1.5 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Henry Johnson Charter School is governed by a Board of Trustees that is responsible for the strategic direction for the School.

The current Board Members are:

Mr. Saleem Cheeks – Board Chair

Mr. Robert Pistilli – Treasurer

Mr. Brian Backstrom -- Secretary

Ms. Juanita Nabors

Ms. Sharon Victoria DeSilva

Mr. Kete Barnes

Ms. Danasia Mcfadden

Ms. Kia Sterling

Ms. Emily D'Vertola

## **1.6 ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

Henry Johnson Charter School plans a school year of up to 188 days annually from August through June. It operates on a 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily schedule, with an optional enrichment program after school which runs from 4:00-5:00 p.m. on regularly scheduled school days. The school building is generally open from 7:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during the school year and from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the summer. Copies of the school calendar will be sent to families prior to the commencement of the school year and are available in the school office.

## **1.7 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM**

Henry Johnson is a school of uncompromising academic and social expectations with an unrelenting focus on academic achievement and character development. We embrace an educational philosophy of love and hard work coupled with a rigorous curriculum grounded in basic skills, outstanding literature, and moral virtues. HJCS provides a nurturing environment of high expectations and accountability that equips all scholars with the choice to determine their success in life.

Our school will increase what scholars know and can do by changing *how* they learn, not just *what* they learn. The highlights of the program include:

- A culture of high academic standards
- A committed and caring staff
- Small school setting
- Authentic opportunities for strong parent and guardian involvement
- A safe, nurturing, and respectful learning environment
- Three hours daily devoted to reading and writing
- Rigorous math instruction
- Classes in social studies, science, computers, art, music, and physical education
- Comprehensive and ongoing standards-based assessments
- “Proactivity” character education program
- Monthly all school spirit assemblies
- Two teachers in every classroom
- A longer school day and school year
- School uniforms
- A belief that all scholars can and will succeed

## **2. THE BASICS**

### **2.1 ENROLLMENT**

Henry Johnson Charter School is open to any scholar who is eligible under the laws of New York State for admission to public school. The school is committed to offering its programs and facilities to all scholars whose parent(s) or guardian wishes to have them attend the school.

The school will not discriminate against any scholar based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, or disability or for any other basis that would be unlawful for a public school. The school will ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and section 2854(2) of the New York Education Law governing admission to a charter school.

New scholars will be admitted each year without regard to prior measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, handicapped condition, ethnicity, race, creed, gender, gender identity, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

## 2.2 APPLICATION / LOTTERY PROCEDURES

Henry Johnson Charter School is always accepting applications but begins formal recruitment for new students in January. We advertise open registration through the media and brochures that are sent in the mail or distributed during community events. We encourage you to pass this information along to family and friends if you know a child who would like to attend our school.

Interested families may submit applications beginning on or about January 15 until April 1 (prior to public lottery) to be considered for the next school year. Applications received after April 1 (or after the public lottery) will be placed on a waiting list in the order that they are received.

Reenrollment information for current scholars will be sent home to families during the months of January and February. It is vital that all parents and guardians who wish to reenroll their child for the following year return this information to the school prior to April 1 each year. This will ensure that your child retains his or her seat in his or her grade level and gets proper bussing if needed.

Admission will be granted to all applicants, new and returning, in the following manner:

- First preference will be given to returning scholars, who will automatically be assigned a space in the school.
- Second preference will be given to siblings of scholars already enrolled in HJCS. For definition purposes, “siblings” are two or more scholars that are related either by birth, by means of the same father or mother, or by legal adoption.
- Third preference for admission is for scholars who reside within the Albany City School District.
- Any remaining slots shall be available to applicants residing outside the Albany City School District.

If the number of applicants for a given grade is less than the grade level capacity, all applicants will be admitted, and no lottery will take place. If the number of applications for a given grade is greater than the number of available seats, a random selection process conducted by an individual unaffiliated with the school will be used to assign spaces. Lotteries will be conducted for each necessary grade level on April 1 or the next business day if that falls on a weekend or holiday. The lottery is open to members of the public. A formal notice of the date, time, and place of the lottery will be provided in accordance with Public Officers Law section 104, and the lottery will be held in accordance with section 119.5 of the Commissioner’s Regulations.

Once the available spaces are filled through the drawing, remaining scholars will be randomly drawn to be assigned a place on the waiting list for their grade level; they will be added to this list in the order in which their names are drawn. After the April lottery date scholars will be added to the waiting list on a first come, first served basis.

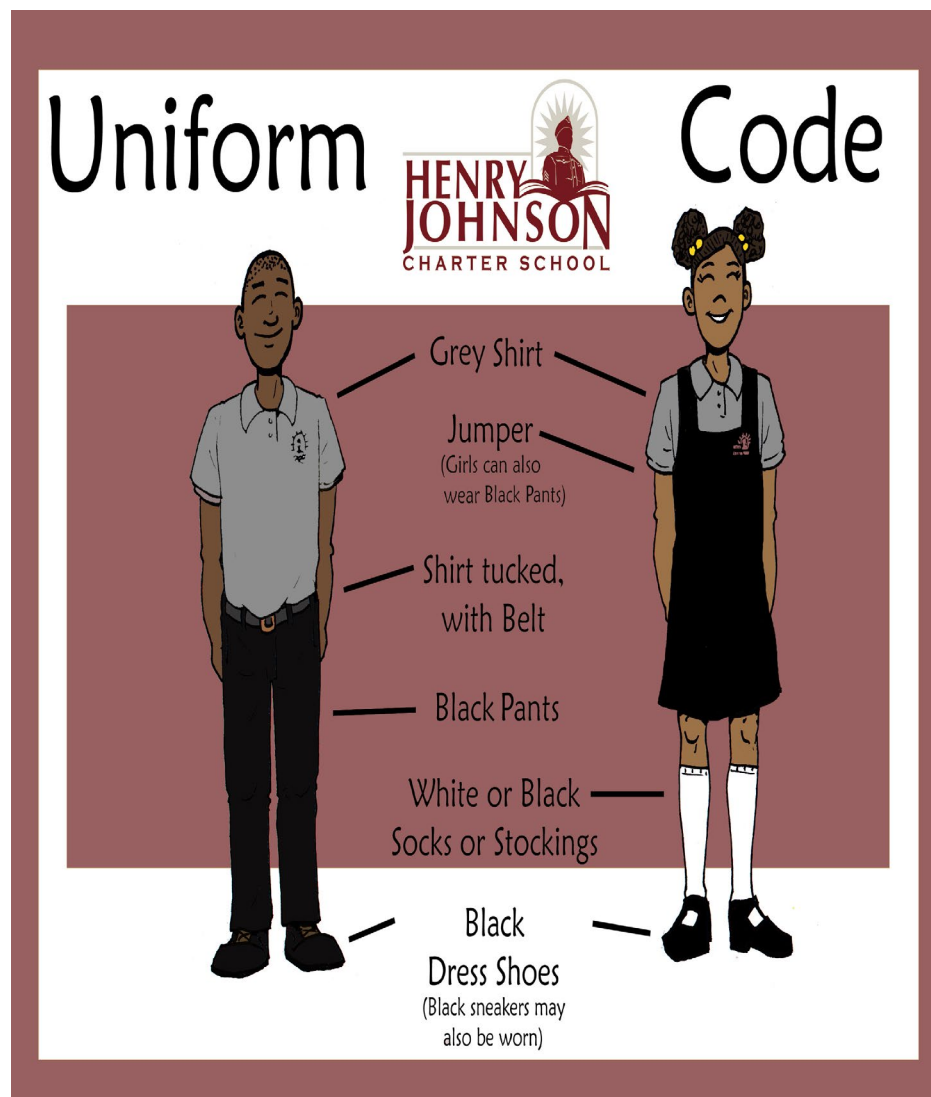


## 2.3 DRESS CODE

Henry Johnson Charter School will maintain and enforce a uniform dress code policy to enhance scholar learning for the following reasons:

- Uniforms reduce distraction and competition based on clothing
- Uniforms reduce costs to parent and guardians
- Uniforms create a sense of group identity and unite us as a community
- Uniforms illustrate to scholars the importance of dressing appropriately for school and work environments

The official school uniform is required for all scholars. All scholars are always expected to be in uniform. Uniforms are available at B. Lodge and Company located at 75 North Pearl Street in Albany; Phone (518) 463-4646. Uniform option A consists of a black jumper, a cardigan sweater, black modesty shorts, black pants, an HJCS polo shirt and black shoes. Uniform option B consists of black pants, a sweater, an HJCS polo shirt and black shoes.



#### UNIFORM EXPECTATIONS:

- Black knit modesty shorts or cotton shorts are to be worn under a jumper when a scholar does not wear tights on gym days.
- No jean shorts or leggings (other than black) should be worn under a jumper.
- Socks and tights must be solid white or black.
- High heels are not permitted.
- No more than two earrings per ear are permitted. For safety, no dangling earrings are permitted. Only ears may be pierced. No necklaces should be worn. Make-up is not permitted.
- No boots or sandals are allowed; however, boots may be worn as outerwear in bad weather. Scholars must bring shoes to change into once in school.
- No non-HJCS sweatshirts, or any hoods or hats can be worn at any time indoors. An exception will be made for religious head coverings.
- For safety, no coats or other outerwear can be worn inside the building during the school day.
- Pants should not have excess pockets, buttons, designer labels, or zippers.
- Sweaters can be a black HJCS button-front cardigan only.
- Sweaters are optional.
- No acrylic or press on nails are allowed.
- If pants have belt loops, scholars **must** wear a belt.
- Black walking shorts can be worn on warm weather days.
- Footwear must be a black leather shoe or a black sneaker.
- Scholars may not alter uniform pieces in any way.
- No items containing words or insignia that are vulgar, obscene, or denigrate others on account of race including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles like braids, locks, and twists), color, creed, religion, religious practice, ancestry, ethnic group, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), weight, or disability.
- No items that promote and/or endorse violence, the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

## 2.4 UNIFORM VOUCHERS

Henry Johnson Charter School will provide each new family with a voucher to B. Lodge and Company, 75 North Pearl Street, Albany; Phone (518) 463-4646 to cover the following uniform items:

#### OPTION A:

- 1 - Black jumper or black plaid skirt
- 1 - Black cardigan sweater
- 1 - Black modesty shorts
- 1 - Black pants
- 2 - HJCS grey polo shirts
- 1 - Black belt

#### OPTION B:

- 2 - Black pants

- 1 - Black cardigan sweater
- 1 - Black belt
- 2 - HJCS gold grey shirts

Parent or guardians will need to provide the following items:

- Socks and tights
- Simple, unadorned black sneakers
- All black shoes
- Backpacks
- Coats, hats, and gloves

We strongly urge parents/guardians to purchase additional uniform items as listed above so that scholars will have a change of clothing during the week.

## 2.5 TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY

At Henry Johnson Charter School, the day begins at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast for those scholars who wish to eat. Homeroom begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and attendance is taken at this time. Scholars who arrive after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. Each morning, scholars participate in a morning meeting routine which is designed to set scholars up for a successful school day. Each grade level will have a 30-minute lunch, recreation time, and a snack break. Scholars are dismissed from 3:30 – 4:00 p.m. If a scholar leaves before this time it is an early dismissal and requires an authorized adult to sign them out.

## 2.6 ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Scholars may arrive for school beginning at 7:30 a.m. **Any arrival after 8:00 a.m. will be considered tardy.** Scholars must be signed in at the office by a parent/guardian when this occurs. Any departure before 3:30 p.m. is considered early dismissal and an authorized adult must sign out the scholar.

It is important that the drop-off process move as efficiently as possible. If a parent/ guardian needs to speak with someone on the school staff, they should contact the individual staff member via email or the main office via phone to schedule an appointment. Parents/guardians should not walk into the building through the main entrance on Hunter Avenue with their scholar without an appointment. Parents/guardians should not stop their cars to get out in the middle of the drop-off line. For the safety of scholars, parent/guardians should never pass the school buses or other drivers in the line when dropping off or picking up scholars.

Parents/Guardians of scholars who do not take the bus must make every effort to pick up scholars on time. **School dismissal is from 3:30 – 4:00 p.m. on normal days** and 12:30 – 1:00 p.m. on half days. Parents/Guardians must park their cars, walk to the cafeteria, and sign their scholar out.

Parents arriving after the regularly scheduled pick-up time must check in at the front office. The Office Manager will document the time the scholar was picked up. In the event a scholar is picked up late on more

than three occasions, the parent/guardian will be required to meet with the School Administration to discuss the circumstances causing the late pick-ups.

Any changes in the departure process must be relayed via phone before 3:00 p.m. by the parent/guardian.

## **2.7 TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

Bus transportation to and from Henry Johnson Charter School is provided by the scholar's district of residence. The Albany City School District provides transportation for any scholar who lives more than 1.5 miles from the school. Transportation for scholars living inside the 1.5 mile radius from school is provided by HJCS. The criteria for other districts may vary depending on specific rules developed by their respective school boards.

All Kindergarten scholars who reside more than 1.5 miles from the school will receive door-to-door service. An adult must meet each scholar when they return home from school. Two attempts will be made to drop the scholar off before the scholar is returned to the school. If a scholar is returned to the school, a parent/guardian will be responsible for picking the scholar up at school. Scholars in all other grades will be picked up and dropped off at corner stops. The corner stops may be approximately two tenths of a mile away from home.

The school provides a courtesy bus to transport all scholars who live in the city of Albany and are within a 1.5-mile radius from school. All scholars on the courtesy bus will be picked up and dropped off at corner stops only. The corner stops may be approximately 2/10 of a mile away from home. An adult must meet each Kindergarten when they return home from school.

Bus schedules remain fixed for the trimester and cannot be changed daily. Scholar behavior on the buses must follow the same rules of courtesy and safety that are expected within the school building. Lapses in good conduct will be taken seriously by the administration and consequences for poor behavior will follow.

## **2.8 INCLEMENT WEATHER / SCHOOL CLOSURE**

Henry Johnson Charter School will close only in cases of extreme weather or for illness of epidemic proportion. Please listen to local radio and television stations in addition to social media.

*If a two-hour delay occurs, school will start at 9:30 a.m. Scholars will not be allowed into the school building until that time. Breakfast will not be served.*

## **2.9 FIELD LESSONS**

Field lessons are an extension of the academic lesson and the classroom experience. We offer field lessons to expose scholars to geographic areas, museums, performances, special events and special places.

At HJCS we consider field lessons to be a privilege. For scholars to participate in experiences outside the building, we expect them to follow classroom and school rules as well as to maintain a positive attitude. It is expected that scholars show respect for their teachers and classmates while in the building in order to sustain respect outside of school. We want scholars to recognize the importance of building and maintaining a sterling reputation.

Scholars that are meeting behavior expectations are expected to participate in field lessons. Parents and guardians must complete a permission form allowing their scholar to attend. Typically, one field lesson will be scheduled for each grade level. Parents/ guardians are invited to participate in field lessons as chaperones when necessary. Scholars are expected to meet the same behavioral expectations of the School when they are participating in a field lesson.

If a scholar does not follow the guidelines provided by the administration, they will not be allowed to attend a field lesson. When a field lesson occurs on a school day, the school uses its discretion as to whether a scholar may remain in another classroom or stay at home on that day. Work will be provided for scholars who do not attend field lessons.

## **2.10 AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

At Henry Johnson Charter School, we believe that scholars should have the opportunity to enhance their education by participating in extra-curricular activities. Scholars are encouraged to participate in afterschool activities that interest them. Examples of the activities are listed below (offerings may change each session).

- Chess
- Step
- Dance
- Science Club
- Reader's Theatre
- Yoga
- Kindergarten Club
- Band
- Basketball
- Ballroom Dance

The programs are offered from 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Notification will be sent home to the parent or guardian so they may indicate if they would like for their scholar to participate in extra-curricular activities.

### **Late Pick-up**

Parents arriving after the regularly scheduled pick-up time must check in at the front office. The After School Program Coordinator will document the number of times a scholar is picked-up late. If they are late more than three times, removal from the program will occur.

### **3. ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

#### **3.1 CURRICULUM**

Our research-based math and reading programs are aligned with the New York State standards. Classes like Social Studies, Science, Art, Music, Computers, Library, and Physical Education complete the array of subject areas that scholars will explore and develop proficiency in. The curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs of our scholars while providing a focus on attainment and mastery of the state standards.

#### **3.2 CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

Henry Johnson Charter School fully embraces the importance of helping scholars develop sound character and positive values. As reflected in our tag line, “Building Character” precedes “Achieving Excellence”—not because character is more important but because it is the primary component necessary to the achievement of excellence, whether in one’s academic or personal life. Attention to character is, therefore, central to the Henry Johnson program and a part of every day in our school.

Teachers use “Proactivity” to support character discussions. As a school community, we place emphasis on the importance of building strong relationships. Each month a different Core Value is explored. Each class discusses the Core Value throughout the month relating it to real-life situations that occur every day. Additionally, classes will perform a poem, song or skit relating to the Core Value at the monthly school-wide assemblies.

#### **3.3 ASSESSMENTS**

HJCS provides a comprehensive assessment program aligned to State Standards to monitor the academic progress of scholars toward meeting individual and school-wide learning goals.

#### **3.4 HOMEWORK POLICY**

The purpose of the HJCS homework policy is to support teachers, parents, and scholars in ensuring that homework is meaningful and supports the learning experience beyond the classroom and into the community. Homework is any activity or assignment directed by the teacher to be performed outside of the classroom that promotes continued learning. Homework will include reading and may include assignments that support the practice, preparation, or extension of learning.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR HOMEWORK**

Homework will be engaging, purposeful, and relevant through its connection to class instruction.

Homework will support scholar learning in the following ways:

- Practice of a skill previously *learned*
- Extension of a previously taught lesson
- Activities or assignments that scholars can complete independently

Scholars and teachers understand that homework must be completed and will be a measure of learner behaviors. Consideration shall be given to *quality over quantity*.

Nightly Reading:

Scholars will be expected to read each night. The amount of reading varies by grade and is listed below:

- Grade K and 1: 20 minutes
- Grade 2: 25 minutes
- Grade 3 & 4: 30 minutes

Reading logs are to be completed by scholars in grades 2-4.

Teachers will:

- Explain the purpose of each homework assignment and its connection to a particular learning goal prior to assigning the task.
- Provide specific feedback regarding the accuracy and completion of homework as well as the connection between the work and particular learning goals.
- Communicate homework assignments in at least one of the following ways:
  - Send a packet home
  - Write the assignment on the board, and require scholars to record it
  - Make the assignment available through emails and/or the school website
- Communicate with parents to inform them about homework expectations, policies, and procedures - including making up missed or incomplete homework.
- Communicate with parents at the earliest possible opportunity once the scholar has demonstrated consistent inability to complete homework.
- Set up a system in their classroom to support the completion of homework in a timely manner.

Parents should:

- Provide a quiet space and basic materials for homework completion.
- Teach techniques that can help each scholar allocate their time wisely, meet their deadlines, and develop good personal study habits.
- Monitor time management and productivity.
- Review school provided materials (for example: Tuesday Folders, e-mails from school, the school website).
- Communicate with teachers at the earliest possible opportunity if your scholar demonstrates consistent inability to complete homework independently.

Scholars will:

- K-2 scholars will bring assignments home in their HJCS folder.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade scholars will record their assignments in their planner and bring home all necessary materials in their HJCS folder.
- Work diligently and persevere to complete homework as assigned.
- Seek clarification from teachers when unclear about homework.
- Make up any missed assignments in a timely manner.
- Have a quiet space with basic materials for homework completion.
- Make homework part of their daily after school routine.
- Take a break when tired, then resume work when ready.
- Make a note in their homework when they have questions and ask the teacher the next day.

Homework will be given Monday through Thursday. Assignments shall be designed so that scholars can complete all homework (excluding nightly reading), in the average minutes shown:

- Grade K and 1: 20 minutes
- Grade 2-4: 25 minutes

Scholars will have three days after missing an assignment due to an absence to hand it in.

### **3.5 SCHOLAR EVALUATION**

Report cards will be issued each trimester as indicated by the school calendar. Conferences will be held as necessary or as requested by the parent/guardian.

Parents can review their scholar's grades at any time during the year using PowerSchool's Parent Portal that can be accessed with their personal login information sent home during the first month of the year.

### **3.6 PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

A student shall be promoted to the next grade or course level upon demonstrating proficiency in the current grade or course level standards. The student's teacher and other school staff and leadership may participate in the decision to promote or retain a student. Special consideration for promotion and/or retention shall be given to students with special academic, social, and emotional needs. Social promotion is not a practice of the HJCS.

Factors to be considered in the decision to promote or retain a student may include, but are not limited to:

- Report card grades
- Current knowledge and skill level, as determined by formal and informal assessments
- Readiness to learn the knowledge and skills required at the next grade or course level
- Record of previous intervention
- Number of absences
- Previous retention



- Student conduct that may impact academic performance
- Extenuating circumstances that may have adversely affected the student's participation in either the required instruction and/or assessments
- Expected benefits and risks of promotion or retention for the student

Students experiencing challenges meeting grade level expectations will be identified early in the school year. An intervention plan will be developed and implemented in consultation with the parent or guardian. A student's parent or guardian will be involved in any discussion about potential retention well in advance of a decision being made.

If a student is retained, they will continue in the same grade level or content area for another term or school year.

### **RETENTION OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER**

ELL students shall meet the same standards as all students. However, in accordance with federal law, English language proficiency shall not be the sole factor in determining that a student has not met performance standards for promotion. Intervention strategies shall include, where appropriate, assistance in the development of English language proficiency.

### **RETENTION OF A STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY**

Below are guidelines that will be used when determining if a student with a disability will be retained:

- Retention is an administrative decision which should incorporate guidance from the student's IEP team.
- Before making the decision, the school will consider the student's growth on IEP goals and the student's performance levels on cognitive assessments.

### **APPEALS**

The parent or guardian has the right to appeal the school's decision to promote or retain a student. If a parent or guardian of a student attending HJCS is not satisfied with the school-level decision pertaining to retention or promotion, the parent may direct concerns directly to the HJCS Head of School in the form of a written grievance.

## **3.7 SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Henry Johnson Charter School holds high expectations for all scholars and offers programs and support services designed to maximize scholar performance and participation in the general curriculum. The school offers a special education program to ensure that its scholars receive services designed to develop individual educational potential.

Henry Johnson Charter School will educate scholars with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with their non-disabled peers to the extent appropriate and allowed by each scholar's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). IEP's are prepared by the HJCS Special Education Team and approved by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the scholar's home district of residence and are in accordance with all applicable federal laws and regulations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

The school will ensure that the special education programs and services as indicated on each scholar's IEP are provided directly to the scholar at the school during the regularly scheduled school day. The supports available may include remedial academic instruction as listed below.

- One-to-one support
- Small group instruction
- Speech and language therapy
- Counseling
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy

The school will not discriminate in admission and enrollment practices on the basis of a scholar's disability or the suspicion of an assumed disability.

The Henry Johnson Scholar Services staff includes a Special Education Coordinator, a Special Education Teacher, and School Social Workers.

### **3.8 ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE**

The English as a Second Language (ENL) program teaches English to non-native speakers. ENL teachers provide support primarily in small groups, but sometimes with ENL scholars in whole-class settings with native English speakers. The school emphasizes English language learning and development throughout the school day. Our ENL teachers support classroom teachers and help scholars with no or limited English to acquire the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning a second language generally follows the pattern of learning a first language: conversational English is often learned quite rapidly and enables scholars to communicate with their peers and become active participants in the classroom and social environment of the school. Research shows it may take five to seven years for non-native speakers to develop the academic aspects of the language to the same standard as native speakers. For this reason, we have clear guidelines for children exiting the ENL program. ENL teachers work together with the classroom teacher to meet the language acquisition needs of ESL scholars. More information about the ENL program is available on our website.

### **3.9 CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS**

Henry Johnson Charter School adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of scholar education records. A written copy of the law is available from the school office and general provisions are summarized below.

Information contained in a scholar's official record is privileged and confidential. It cannot be distributed or released to anyone unrelated to the implementation of Henry Johnson Charter School's educational program without the written consent of a scholar's parents or guardians except as provided for in the FERPA law.

Per the law, the term "parent(s) or guardian(s)" refers to the adult person(s) who are the birth parent, guardians, the legal guardians or the persons named on the scholar's registration papers as the caregivers for the scholar.

Parents/Guardians will have access to their scholar's records at reasonable times. Requests from parents or guardians will be answered within forty five days. Written requests should be submitted to:

Business Manager  
Henry Johnson Charter School  
30 Watervliet Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206

Please complete the Request to Review Records Form and send it in with the initial correspondence. Upon request for access, the scholar's entire record, regardless of the physical location of its parts, shall be made available. If a parent or guardian requires copies, they will be made available for \$0.25 per page.

The school will maintain a permanent written log in each scholar's record indicating any person to whom information has been released including:

- Name
- Signature
- Position
- Date
- Record
- Portions released
- Purpose of release
- Signature of the person to whom the information is released

Logs are available only to parents, guardians, and school personnel responsible for the record maintenance.

Parents/Guardians have the right to request that the school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parents/guardians have the right to a formal hearing with the Head of School. The parent or guardian has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information in the folder.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or guardian to release any information from a scholar's education record, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, teacher or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform special tasks (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school). Exceptions are also made to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. School employees are educated annually on FERPA regulations to ensure safe handling of scholar records.

Parents and guardians have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

## 4. ATTENDANCE

### 4.1 COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Henry Johnson Charter School we recognize the important relationship between attendance and scholar achievement. This is why scholars are expected to attend school all day, every day. It is required that every attempt will be made to have scholars in school each day on time.

Excessive absences will impair a scholar's opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to be promoted to the next grade. Please do not allow your scholar to miss a day of school except for serious or contagious illness.

If a scholar is absent, his or her parent/guardian must report the absence to the school by 7:30 a.m. on the first day of the absence.

If a scholar misses school, Henry Johnson staff will make reasonable efforts to contact the scholar's parent or guardian by telephone, in writing or in person.

The school building opens at 7:30 a.m. Scholars arriving after 8:00 a.m. will receive an unexcused tardy or absence unless the parent or guardian can provide documentation.

***Breakfast will not be served after 7:55 a.m.***

Please note the following additional points regarding attendance:

- Teachers keep attendance logs on a daily basis
- A note must be provided for any excused absences (scholar's illness documented by a doctor, religious observance, etc.)
- Every effort should be made to schedule appointments and vacations during times when school is not in session
- Parents and guardians are expected to make arrangements with the teacher to receive homework for their scholar during absences
- Any scholar who is consistently absent without good reason may not be promoted to the next grade
- Parents/guardians will be required to confer with the Parent Liaison and/or the Principal if their scholar has excessive absences
- As a general rule, more than three absences or tardies in a trimester or more than nine absences or tardies in a year are considered excessive.

If there is not a significant improvement in attendance after an initial parent meeting, a CPS hotline call may take place to address concerns of educational neglect. Excessive excused absences may also require the actions of letters and a meeting or call to CPS. This will be at the discretion of the Principal.

## **4.2 EXCUSED / NON-EXCUSED ABSENCE**

Only the following are considered excused absences:

- Scholar illness with doctor's note
- Religious observance with parent or guardian note
- Family emergencies (e.g., death in the family)

In order for a scholar to be excused, the school must receive written verification of the reason for the absence from a parent or guardian or a doctor within two days of the absence. If the scholar has a medical appointment, he or she should not be absent during the entire school day.

All other absences will be considered unexcused, including:

- Transportation problems (Missing the bus)
- Family vacations
- Oversleeping
- Truancy
- Other personal reasons

If a scholar is absent from school because of suspension, these absences will be treated the same as an excused absence.

## **4.3 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

Henry Johnson Charter School will implement the following strategies to accomplish attendance objectives:

- Our classroom teachers take attendance every morning at the beginning of the day.
- When a scholar is not present for school the office manager will call the parent or guardian and remind them of the attendance policy. Records of these phone calls are kept in the main office.
- We will maintain accurate record keeping via PowerSchool and the Office Manager to record attendance, absence, tardiness, or early departure of each scholar.
- HJCS will use the Student Information System when available for tracking individual scholar attendance and individual and group trends in scholar attendance problems.
- This attendance policy will be reviewed with parents and guardians at the start of the year.
- Administration will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any changes made to all faculty and staff. Staff will be addressed as to their role in the implementation of this policy throughout the school year.

## **4.4 CONSISTENT TRUANCY**

Per NYSED, Section 3205 - Title IV, Article 65, Part I:

ALL COMPULSORY AGE SCHOLARS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY OF THE 187-DAY SCHOOL YEAR. PARENTS OF CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILD'S DAILY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. BECAUSE POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IS ASSOCIATED WITH NONATTENDANCE, SCHOOLS WILL RESPOND IN A TIMELY MANNER TO PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATTERNS OF NON-ATTENDANCE, WHICH MAY INDICATE EARLY SIGNS OF TRUANCY. **SCHOOLS WILL COLLABORATE WITH APPROPRIATE LOCAL AND STATE AGENCIES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN TRUANCY PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND JUDICIAL ACTION.**

Non-attendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early dismissal, or absences for all or any part of the day. The maximum number of days that a scholar may be absent without acceptable documentation justifying the absence is five. Thereafter, the scholar must return with appropriate documentation from a doctor.

## **5. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

### **5.1 BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Henry Johnson Charter School believes that a focus on character education through modeling, direct instruction, clear expectations, and consistent follow through helps scholars learn how to become model citizens. It is our goal to help each scholar develop a strong character based on the “habits of mind”, which include diligence, courage, respect, self-reliance, duty, and responsibility.

To encourage scholarly behavior, HJCS expects scholars to have regular attendance, few or no discipline referrals, and behavior that reflects the high expectations of the school.

Scholars may be subject to discipline for behavior that occurs off the school campus or through social media or other electronic means which has an impact on the school community.

### **5.2 SHORT TERM SUSPENSION**

A short-term suspension refers to the removal of a scholar from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of nine or fewer days. A scholar who has committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a short-term suspension, unless the Principal or Head of School determines that an exception should be made based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the scholar’s disciplinary record. The Principal or Head of School reserves the right to adjust the punishment for each infraction per his or her judgment.

Disciplinary Infractions:

- Attempting to assault any scholar or staff member
- Vandalism of school property causing minor damage
- Endangering the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats that reasonably places the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury
- Engaging in conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity
- Engaging in insubordination
- Failure to complete assignments, carry out directions or comply with disciplinary sanctions
- Cheating on quizzes or exams
- Committing plagiarism
- Using forged notes or excuses
- Stealing (or attempting to steal) or possessing property known by the scholars to be stolen
- Committing extortion
- Engaging in gambling
- Abusing school property or equipment
- Using obscene or abusive language or gestures



- Engaging in acts of verbal or physical harassment
- Making a bomb threat or pulling a false emergency alarm
- Possessing tobacco, alcohol, or drugs
- Possessing cellular telephones during the instructional school day
- Wearing inappropriate, insufficient, or disruptive clothing or attire or violating the scholar dress code
- Committing any other act which school officials reasonably conclude disrupts the learning environment of the school
- Repeatedly committing minor behavioral infractions which, in aggregate, may be considered an infraction subject to formal disciplinary action

### **5.3 LONG TERM SUSPENSION**

A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a scholar from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of more than 10 days. A scholar who is determined to have committed any of the infractions listed below shall be subject minimally to a long-term suspension or expulsion, unless the Principal or Head of School determines that an exception should be based on the circumstance of the incident and the scholar's disciplinary record. Such a scholar may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures outlined elsewhere in this document including a referral to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Disciplinary Infractions:

- Possessing, using, attempting to use, or transferring of any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the scholar in school
- Committing, or attempting to commit, arson on school property
- Assaulting any other scholar or staff member
- Intentionally causing physical injury to another person, except when scholar's actions are reasonably necessary to protect him- or herself from injury
- Vandalizing school property causing major damage
- Committing any act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a long-term suspension

A scholar who commits any of the acts previously described as the cause for short-term suspension may, instead or in addition, be subject to a long-term suspension at the discretion of the Principal or Head of School.

### **5.4 EXPULSION**

Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a scholar from school for disciplinary reasons. A scholar who is determined to have committed any infraction that leads to suspension may be subject to expulsion per the Head of School's determination. The Head of School will consider the circumstance of the incident and the scholar's disciplinary record. Such a scholar may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures outlined elsewhere in this document including a referral to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## **5.5 REENTRY TO THE CLASSROOM**

Scholars returning to school following a suspension are required to meet with the Principal. The time of that meeting is at the discretion of the Principal. The meeting may also include the classroom teacher, parent/guardian, and the school social worker. Scholars will not be admitted into class if a reentry meeting is not scheduled.

## **5.6 DUE PROCESS**

Per New York State Regulations, each scholar who is facing suspension or expulsion must be afforded their rights set forth by the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment to due process protections. This includes:

- The scholar and their parent/guardian have a right to know the reason and evidence for the discipline;
- The scholar has the right to tell their side of the story prior to or shortly after commencement of the suspension; and
- The scholar and/or their parent /guardian has a right to an informal conference with the Principal to discuss the conduct prior to the suspension unless the scholar's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process; and
- The right to be informed regarding greater protections for longer term suspension (over 10 days) and expulsions, including the right to Counsel, to confront and present witnesses, and to challenge and present evidence.

The school will arrange a conference with the scholar and his or her parent/guardian to allow for due process per this regulation.

## **5.7 FIREARM VIOLATIONS**

Federal and State law requires the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year for a scholar who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school or possessed a firearm at school. The Principal or Head of School may modify such expulsion requirement for a scholar on a case-by-case basis if the modification is in writing and it is in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended).

Weapon, as defined in this law, means "firearm," as defined by 18 USC§8921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214(3)(d) effectuates this federal law.)

The Principal or Head of School will refer a scholar under the age of sixteen who has violated this law to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act with the exception of a scholar 14 or 15 years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law §1.20(42).

The Principal or Head of School will refer any pupil 16 years of age or older or a scholar 14 or 15 years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status under Criminal Procedure Law §1.20(42) who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

## **5.8 DISCIPLINARY RECORD KEEPING**

HJCS will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions including the name of the scholar, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and the number of days the scholar has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

## **5.9 PROVISIONAL INSTRUCTION DURING REMOVAL**

Any scholar who is suspended for more than one day will be provided a tutor in compliance with the State Compulsory Education laws. A scholar who has been expelled will be provided with tutoring for no longer than a three-week period during his or her transition to a new educational placement. Tutoring will occur at the school from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. A scholar arriving after 2:45 p.m. for tutoring will forfeit this opportunity.

Parent/Guardians must register an expelled scholar in another educational setting immediately after expulsion. Alternative instruction is intended only to cover the transition period between expulsion and enrollment in a new school. The Henry Johnson Charter School Principal may contact the parent/guardian of the expelled scholars at intervals during the three-week period to obtain information in reference to their progress in obtaining an alternate educational placement.

## **5.10 DISCIPLINE OF SCHOLARS WITH DISABILITIES**

Discipline of scholars with special needs, including those students suspected of having a disability or who have a Section 504 accommodation plan, is subject to the provisions of the New York State General Laws, as well as to the provisions of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended to date and outlined in the school's charter agreement. Copies are available in the school's main office.

In general, if a scholar has violated the school's disciplinary code, the school may suspend or remove the scholar from his or her current educational placement for a period not to exceed 10 school days in any school year.

If the scholar possesses, uses, sells, or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event or carries a weapon to school or a school function, the school may place the scholar in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 calendar days. If the scholar has been placed in an alternative educational setting as a result of a disciplinary action, the scholar may remain in the interim setting for a period not to exceed 45 days. Thereafter, the scholar will return to the previously agreed-upon educational placement unless either a hearing officer orders another placement, or the parent or guardian and scholar

agree to another placement.

Any time the school wishes to remove a scholar with a disability from his or her current educational placement for more than 10 school days in any school year, or for more than 10 cumulative days when a pattern of removal is occurring, this constitutes a “change of placement.” A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law.

Prior to any removal that constitutes a change of placement, the school must send the parent or guardian a full statement of his or her procedural rights and inform the parent or guardian that the CSE Team will consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the removal is related to the scholar’s disability. This consideration is called a “manifestation determination.” The parent or guardian should remember that he or she has the right to participate as a member of the CSE Team.

The law provides that the CSE Team must consider evaluation information, observational information, the scholar’s IEP and placement and must determine whether the behavior prompting disciplinary removal was a manifestation of the scholar’s disability. The CSE Team considers whether the scholar understood the impact and consequences of the behavior and further considers whether the scholar’s disability impaired the scholar’s ability to control his or her behavior.

If the CSE Team determines that the behavior was related to the scholar’s disability, the scholar will be allowed to return to school immediately and may not be removed from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapon or drug possession or use) pending review of the Scholar’s IEP and placement by the CSE team.

If the CSE Team determines that the behavior was not related to the scholar’s disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline the scholar according to the school’s code of scholar conduct.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the CSE Team’s decision on the “manifestation determination” or with the decision relating to placement of the scholar in an interim alternative education setting, or any other disciplinary action, the parent or guardian has the right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

## **5.11 THE APPEAL PROCESS**

The Head of School and Principal will be responsible for making decisions with regards to all violations of the scholar discipline code. If the parent or guardian and the scholar disagree with the disciplinary findings, they may file an appeal to the school. All appeals should be directed to the Head of School and should be delivered to the school no later than 10 days from the date of the due process conference.

If the parent/guardian feels that the any part of the discipline or appeal process is in violation of applicable New York State and/or federal law or the school’s charter agreement, the parent or guardian may continue to appeal as it is outlined in the Open Communications section of this handbook.

## 5.12 SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE

Scholars who ride the bus to and from school need to follow the important safety rules below. These rules are intended to make the ride safe and pleasant for everyone riding the bus.

Bus drivers work with the school to keep us informed of scholars' behavior on the bus, and infractions will be dealt with promptly by the school. We follow the steps below to implement bus safety. Each time a referral is sent to the school the Parent Liaison and/or the Principal will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the referral and will speak to the scholar regarding the incident.

The procedures of disciplinary action are listed below.

- After three referrals of unsafe behavior the scholar will be off the bus for a week, for the morning and/or afternoon.
- After six referrals of unsafe behavior the scholar will be off the bus for two weeks for both the morning and afternoon.
- After nine referrals of unsafe behavior the scholar will be off the bus for three weeks both morning and afternoon.

These actions are taken to ensure the safety of all scholars as well as their bus drivers. The Principal or Head of School has the discretion to accelerate a scholar's removal from the bus based on the specific factors of the scholar's behavior and past disciplinary history.

## **6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **6.1 PARENT COMMITMENT**

At Henry Johnson, we recognize that a child's parent/guardian is their first and most important teacher. We know the continued involvement of parents/guardians is essential for the success of scholars and the school as a whole. We are committed to building strong partnerships with parents/guardians.

To help achieve our goals parents/guardians are asked to sign a Commitment Form that lists their responsibilities to assure the academic success of their scholars. Among the ways parents and guardians can participate in their scholar's success at school are the following:

- Check folders and return phone calls and emails promptly.
- Ensure that your scholar is at school every day and is on time.
- Communicate regularly with your scholar's teacher. This includes letting us updated about your scholar and coming to meetings and conferences.
- Participate in creating high standards for behavior, including supporting the school's code of conduct and working with our school to solve any problems that may develop.
- Talk to your scholar about values such as work, responsibility, and the importance of education.
- Show interest in your scholar's homework and schoolwork. Follow through on signing papers and participating in family projects.
- Ensure that your scholar wears his or her uniform daily.
- Keep your scholar's emergency phone numbers and information in the school office up-to-date.
- Get involved! We always have volunteer opportunities available, and we do our best to create events that scholars and their parents/guardians can participate in together.
- Attend report card conferences.

We will review the Commitment Form with parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

### **6.2 OPEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Should a parent/guardian have a concern, they should first discuss the matter with the relevant staff member and attempt to resolve the concern through informal discussion (if they feel comfortable doing so). If there is no resolution to the concern or if the parent or guardian does not feel comfortable speaking directly with the relevant staff member, the parent or guardian should then contact the Principal, who will mediate with all parties involved.

The next level of contact should be the Parent Liaison or the Head of School.

Any parent, guardian, individual or group may bring issues to the Board of Trustees of Henry Johnson Charter School. These should be submitted at least one week prior to the Board meeting. Board meetings

are a matter of public record and are advertised on our website, and the days and times of meetings are also publicly displayed in the school's entryway. Anything submitted less than one week prior to the meeting will be addressed at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regular public meeting. Every effort will be made to respectfully address each matter to the satisfaction of the parent, guardian, individual or group that presented the complaint.

The Board and Head of School, as necessary, may direct the Principal or other responsible party to investigate the concern and report back. The Board of Trustees shall render a determination in writing if appropriate or required.

Any person who wishes to file a complaint alleging a violation of the law or the school's charter may initiate the complaint directly with the Board of Trustees. If it is alleged that there is a violation of applicable New York State and/or federal law or the school's charter, the Board's response will be provided to the parent, guardian, individual or group that alleged the violation, along with a copy of the current State University Charter School Institute's appeals process as published on its website ([www.newyorkcharters.org](http://www.newyorkcharters.org)).

In accordance with Education Law § 2855(4), if, after presentation to the Board of Trustees, the parent, guardian, individual or group determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the issue, that individual or group may present the complaint to the school's charter entity, the State University of New York Board of Trustees, through the Charter Schools Institute, which shall investigate and respond.

If, after presentation to the Institute, the parent, guardian, individual or group determines that it has not adequately addressed the issue, they may present to the Board of Regents through the State Education Department, by writing to the Office of Charter Schools at the State Education Department at the following address:

All appeals must be made in writing and must clearly state on what grounds the appeal is being made. Appeals of suspensions or expulsions should be made within 30 days of the determination of the Board of Trustees to uphold the suspension or expulsion recommendation. The SUNY Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents shall have the power and the duty to issue appropriate remedial orders to the Board of Trustees of the charter school under their jurisdiction to effectuate the provisions applicable under Education Law.

### **6.3 PARENT AND GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT**

Parent/guardian involvement refers to participation in regular, two-way, meaningful communication with the school about scholar learning and other school activities. It includes:

- Ensuring that parents/guardians play an integral role in assisting their scholar's learning.
- Encouraging parents/guardians to be actively involved in their scholar's education at school.
- Making parents/guardians full partners in their scholar's education by including them, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist the education process.

We seek to involve parents/guardians in the school primarily to ensure their scholars' strive for excellence, meet high expectations, and make genuine academic progress. Parents and guardians will have a role in the governance of the school and opportunities to contribute to its work through volunteer activities.

#### **OPEN DOOR POLICY:**

The school maintains an open-door policy. Parents/guardians should feel free to contact the administration at any time via phone or email. Parents/guardians are asked to not disturb the learning environment when they visit a classroom.

#### **ONGOING COMMUNICATION:**

Staff and parents/guardians have ongoing communication through the ClassDojo. Phone calls and conferences occur as needed throughout the school year and can be either at the parent/guardian's request or at the school's request. Phone calls during instructional hours will not be transferred to the classroom so parents/guardians can speak with a scholar, however, a message will be delivered to the scholar's classroom during non-instructional time.

#### **WORKSHOPS:**

Henry Johnson hosts meetings and workshops throughout the year to give parents and guardians information about the school's program and to provide suggestions on how to help their scholars with



academics.

#### **6.4 TITLE I INVOLVEMENT**

Henry Johnson Charter School implements the following statutory requirements outlined in Section 1118 of the Title I legislation in order to ensure that parents and guardians are involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating the Title I program:

- Creation of a Title I team that includes building administrators, teachers, and parents or guardians.
- An annual meeting held during the summer; parents/guardians of all participating scholars will be invited. The purpose of this meeting shall be to explain the programs and activities provided with the Title I funds, including any set aside funds.
- HJCS will individually solicit parents and guardians of Title I scholars to participate.

#### **ANNUAL EVALUATION:**

HJCS will conduct, with the involvement of parents and guardians, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and guardian involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the Title I school. This includes identifying barriers to greater participation. The school will use the findings of the evaluation to design strategies for more effective involvement and revise the policy as necessary. The Title I team will meet with the Principal and an ad hoc committee of parents and guardians during the spring to assess and discuss the effectiveness of the involvement program and program design, operation, and evaluation for the coming year. Other meetings may be held as needed.

#### **IMPROVEMENT CYCLE:**

The school will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other supports to assist in planning and implementing effective involvement activities to improve scholar academic achievement and school performance. Relevant staff will review current information on research-proven practices to improve involvement, attend workshops to improve best practices, and provide sufficient allocations to support activities as identified.

#### **TRAINING & CAPACITY:**

The school will coordinate and integrate involvement strategies by providing parent and guardian training in conjunction with other agencies or supplying materials, space, or personnel for such training opportunities.

Henry Johnson Charter School will build the capacity for strong involvement in order to ensure effective involvement of parents or guardians and to support a partnership among the school, parents and guardians, and the community to improve academic achievement. In doing so the school will provide assistance to parents and guardians of scholars served by the school in understanding such topics as the National Common Core Standards, state and local assessments, the requirements of Title I, how to monitor

a scholar's progress, and how to work with educators to improve the achievement of their scholars.

The school will provide materials and training to help parents and guardians to work with their scholars to improve achievement, such as literacy training and technology use training.

The school will educate teachers, pupil services personnel, the Principal and other staff (with the assistance of parents and guardians) in the value and utility of the contributions of parents and guardians. This includes how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents and guardians as equal partners, including how to implement and coordinate parent and guardian programs.

Henry Johnson will coordinate and integrate, to the extent feasible and appropriate, parent and guardian involvement programs to encourage and support participation in the education of scholars. This includes the list below.

- Head Start
- Reading First
- Early Reading First
- Even Start
- The Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters
- The Parent/Guardian as Teachers Program
- Parent/guardian resource center

The school will ensure that information related to programs, meetings and other activities is sent to the parent or guardian of participating scholars in a format and (to the extent practicable) in a language the parent or guardian understands.

## **6.5 RIGHT TO KNOW**

In compliance with the requirements of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, the parents and guardians of scholars attending a public school that receives Title I funding may request (and the school must provide in a timely manner) information regarding the professional qualifications of their scholar's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals.

This information may include the status of a teacher's state qualification or license, graduate or undergraduate degree, or other qualifications. This information is collected and disseminated in a manner that protects the privacy of individuals. Parent and guardians with questions regarding the qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals serving their scholar should address them to the Principal.

## **6.6 SCHOOL VISITS**

The school welcomes parents, guardians, and community visitors. Parent/guardians are welcome in the school at any time and may visit classes, as long as arrangements have been made in advance to ensure the

safety of all students and staff. We request that the presence of parents/guardians be unobtrusive and not interfere with the regular course of instruction.

All visitors must sign in at the main office and pick up a visitor's pass. Teachers and staff will direct any unidentified adult in the building to the main office. This includes any time parents or guardians need to pick up their scholar for an early release.

## **6.7 PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

Henry Johnson Charter School offers opportunities for parents, guardians, and school supporters to share skills, contribute to our learning environment, or take on responsibilities that support our school. Volunteer opportunities will comply with applicable New York State Labor Laws.

From helping to organize Picture Day, to overseeing the Scholastic Book Fair, to playing with scholars on the playground, to chaperoning field lessons and school events, adults with a desire to serve the school and its scholars will find their offer gratefully accepted.

The following guidelines are set forth for volunteers and will need to be acknowledged in writing prior to volunteering.

- Respect confidentiality. Respect the privacy of each scholar, as you would like others to respect your scholar's privacy. Do not talk to others about a scholar's ability or any particular events that happen during the day.
- Be reliable. Teachers will plan on your availability and promptness. Please let them know if you cannot attend.
- Scholars sometimes behave differently when their parents and guardians are present, and usually a discussion about appropriate behavior helps. If it is too difficult for you to work in your scholar's room, we may ask you to work in another room.
- Never administer discipline. If a scholar is acting out, talk to the teacher or a school administrator about the situation. We encourage scholars best by noticing their achievements and giving appropriate praise.
- Never administer first aid or clean up any bodily fluids. Call staff for assistance.
- Sign in and out each time you volunteer.

## **6.8 PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

Henry Johnson Charter School has a Parent Teacher Association that we encourage all parents and guardians to join. The Parent Representative to the Board of Trustees may lead the organization. The purpose of the organization is to increase a sense of community within the school, more fully involve parents in their scholar's education, raise funds for extra-curricular activities, and hear parent suggestions on how our community can run most effectively.

The parent representative to the Board of Trustees will report back to the Board on a monthly basis. Reporting topics include parent and guardian suggestions, activities planned or completed, and the financial position of the Parent Teacher Association.

## **6.9 HJCS IN THE COMMUNITY**

It is the goal of the school to be recognized as a leader within our community. We want to participate in local events and partner with local organizations to grow the connection between our school and our community. If you know of an event in the community that you would like us to participate in, please contact the Principal or the Parent Liaison to make us aware.

## **6.10 SCHOOL NEWSLETTER**

In an effort to keep parents as well informed as possible, Henry Johnson Charter School utilizes ClassDojo as a means of mass communication. We want you to know what is going on in the school and how our scholars are achieving. If you have great news that you would like to share with the school community, please contact the Office Manager to make sure it is included in our postings.

## **7. SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM**

### **7.1 FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM APPLICATION**

We ask all parents and guardians to complete the federal Family Application for Free and Reduced Meals form every fall.

### **7.2 BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS**

Henry Johnson Charter School wants its scholars to enjoy rich, rewarding, and healthy lives. Following healthy eating habits is an important component in meeting this goal and the school is committed to providing nutritious meals and snacks that will keep scholars on the path to a healthy diet. School breakfast and lunch are served daily and there is no charge for meals.

A monthly breakfast and lunch menu will be distributed to all scholars and will be posted on the school bulletin board and school website. On a daily basis families are welcome to have their scholars eat breakfast at home and/or bring a bag lunch to school.

### **7.3 SNACK PROGRAMS**

**Scholars should not bring snack foods to school.** The school provides all afternoon snacks, and the school will serve healthy and nutritional snacks only. Families should not send in soft drinks, cakes, candy, potato chips, cheese puffs, or other such snacks with scholars.

### **7.4 SCHOOL LUNCH BOX AND BAG SUGGESTIONS**

Parents and guardians should not bring or have delivered to scholars any fast food lunches and/or soft drinks during the school day. Scholars should refrain from bringing cakes, candy, and other such foods in their school lunches. Whole grain breads, fresh fruit, vegetables, and nuts make lunches healthy and nutritious for growing scholars.

### **7.5 FOOD FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

From time to time there may be special occasions that homerooms wish to celebrate, including the birthdays of scholars in the class. Parents/guardian may send or bring in treats such as cupcakes or muffins for the entire class if they wish to provide these refreshments, which will be served at the end of the day prior to dismissal.

Teachers may invite parents/guardians to contribute refreshments for class parties celebrating holidays or other events (there are exceptions due to allergies; please see the section below). The opportunity to enjoy such occasions is a privilege for scholars and the school reserves the right not to serve these refreshments should class behavior warrant that decision.

## **7.6 FOOD ALLERGIES**

For the safety of any scholars who may have allergies, parents/guardians providing treats should note we are nut free school.

If your scholar has an allergy, please make sure that we are aware so we can take proper precautions when it comes to his or her nutrition. Parents/guardians should notify the school nurse and the scholar's classroom teachers of any allergies or intolerances.

## **8. SAFETY, HEALTH & MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

### **8.1 NURSING SERVICES**

Henry Johnson Charter School expects that any scholar sent to school is well enough to participate fully in all curriculum activities, outdoor and indoor. If a scholar is sick in the morning, the school expects him or her to stay home for the day. If a scholar becomes ill or injured during the school day and is not well enough to stay in class, the parent or guardian will be called to pick the scholar up.

*It is vital to have updated emergency contact numbers on file in the school office in case no one can be contacted at home.*

Henry Johnson has a registered nurse assigned to the school by the Albany City School District on a full-time basis. The nurse is responsible for maintaining all health records.

### **8.2 HEALTH RECORDS**

Henry Johnson Charter School requires a New York State Health Record for each scholar enrolled, which is to be completed and signed by the scholar's family health provider. This document must reflect a complete, up-to-date immunization record. Each family must provide documentation of up-to-date immunizations within 15 days of the start of school.

### **8.3 SCHOLAR PHYSICALS**

Per New York State regulations, scholars are required to have regular physicals in Kindergarten, second, and fourth grades. If the parent or guardian does not provide us with records within a timeline that has been clearly communicated, our school nurse will perform that physical for the scholar. Physicals will also include vision and hearing exams as required by New York State.

If for some reason a scholar who has a physical conducted by the nurse has results that are not within normal limits, the school nurse will notify the scholar's parents/guardians immediately.

### **8.4 DOCTOR'S NOTES**

When a scholar is absent due to health-related reasons for five or more days, HJCS requires that the parent or guardian send in a doctor's note explaining the nature of the absence and documenting the appropriateness of the scholar's return to school.

### **8.5 MEDICATIONS**

Medicine cannot be administered without the written order of a physician that indicates that the medication is for the specific scholar as well as the specific dosage required by that scholar.

Parent or guardian consent is required for any medication to be administered at Henry Johnson Charter School. Scholars are not allowed to transport medication to or from school. It is the policy of Henry Johnson Charter School to administer medicines only in situations when it is required and only by personnel licensed to do so. Self-directed medications will be allowed only with a doctor's order. All medication needs to be in a pharmacy marked container with the scholar's name. All medications are kept locked in the Health Office and dispensed from there.

## **8.6 ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESSES**

In the event that a scholar becomes ill or injured during the course of the school day first aid will be administered, and the scholar's parent or guardian will be notified as necessary. In the case of an accident, the staff person who witnessed the injury shall fill out a report and a copy of this report is given to the parent or guardian.

If a scholar must go to the hospital, the Principal or Head of School will determine whether the situation calls for an ambulance to transport the scholar at once, or whether the parent or guardian can transport the scholar. In either case, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately of the appropriate plan, if possible. Emergency slips and immunization records will accompany the scholar to the hospital.

*Once again, it is imperative that up-to-date parent or guardian information and emergency telephone numbers are on record at Henry Johnson Charter School for each of our scholars.*

## **8.7 CONTAGIOUS DISEASES AND CONDITIONS**

Scholars who have contagious diseases or conditions must stay at home until all contagion has passed. Parents and guardians are required to inform Henry Johnson Charter School in the event of such incidence, so that the school can notify other parent and guardians of the incidence of the condition. When a scholar is ill and has symptoms of vomiting or a fever over 100 degrees, parents/guardians are required to keep their scholar home for a minimum of 24 hours.

## **8.8 SCHOLAR ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

The Henry Johnson Charter School staff has received training pertaining to the indicators of child abuse and neglect and are required by law to follow established procedures for notifying the authorities about any issues of suspected abuse. As mandated reporters, all HJCS staff has a professional responsibility and obligation to make a report whenever such abuse is suspected in order to protect the safety and well-being of all scholars.



## **8.9 DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACTS**

A scholar's ability to learn and to meet high academic standards, and a school's ability to educate its scholars, are compromised by incidents of discrimination or harassment including bullying, taunting, or intimidation. The Dignity for All Students Act makes it official policy of New York State that all scholars in public schools have the right to an education free of discrimination, intimidation, harassment and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. Harassment, discrimination, and bullying are not tolerated in the HJCS community.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is the act of denying rights, benefits, justice, equitable treatment or access to facilities available to all others, to an individual or group of people because of the group, class or category to which that person belongs.

The discriminating behavior or harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived:

- Race (including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles like braids, locks, and twists)
- Color
- Weight
- National origin
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Religious practice
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender (including gender identity and expression)
- Sex
- Other

Discrimination or harassment within the meaning of this policy shall include a single severe incident or multiple incidents that are pervasive in nature that creates a hostile environment.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited, to:

- physical violence
- threats, taunts, and teasing
- aggressive or menacing gestures
- exclusion from peer groups designed to humiliate or isolate
- using derogatory language
- making derogatory jokes or name calling or slurs including racial name-calling or ethnic slurs
- written or graphic material, including graffiti, photographs, drawings, or videos, containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically circulated or are written or printed.
- Sexual harassment is not tolerated in the HJCS community and includes but is not limited to:
- sexual flirtations, advances or propositions
- verbal remarks about an individual's body
- sexually degrading words used towards an individual
- the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Any Scholar, who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination on school grounds or at school activities, should immediately report the alleged misconduct to school administration.

In the absence of a victim's complaint, the school, upon learning of, or having reason to suspect the occurrence of any harassment, will promptly begin an investigation and take action as deemed appropriate upon the results of the investigation.

"Hazing" means any intentional, knowing or reckless act directed against a Scholar for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club or athletic team whose members are, or include, other Scholars, where public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule is likely to occur. Soliciting, encouraging, aiding or engaging in hazing is prohibited.

"Bullying" is defined as repeated physical, verbal (including spoken and written language), and/or cyber teasing or threats made to another person.

Henry Johnson Charter School prohibits bullying in all forms. This policy may be applied regardless of the physical location in which the bullying behavior occurred, whenever the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are Scholars attending HJCS.

- **Physical Bullying:** The repeated use of force toward a person's body or personal belongings, including but not limited to:
- *Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, tripping, spitting, elbowing, shoulder checking, pinching, flicking, throwing objects, hair pulling, restraining, inappropriate touching, damaging physical property, etc.*
- **Verbal Bullying:** Repeatedly using negative and/or inappropriate words (including both spoken and written) toward or in regard to another person, including but not limited to:

- *Negative comments, name calling, lies, rumors, racial slurs, teasing, cursing, threats, fake compliments, attacks on sexual orientation, etc.*
- **Cyber Bullying:** Repeatedly using social media, email, or electronic devices/communications in a negative manner toward or in regard to another person, including but not limited to:
- *Posting negative comments, fake profiles, sexually explicit texts, photos aimed at humiliation, tagging photos without consent, posting negative videos, texting photos without consent, hate blogs, hate pledges, texting false information (spreading rumors through texts), hacking profiles, nasty emails .*

Scholars found to be engaging in harassing ,hazing or bullying behavior will be subject to one or more of the following disciplinary actions but not limited to:

- Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- School suspension
- Referral to appropriate law enforcement agency

One or more employees at Henry Johnson Charter School has been designated as a DASA Coordinator trained in methods to respond to human relations in the areas of race(including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles like braids, locks, and twists) , color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression) or

### **Reporting And Investigation**

Anyone who believes that a Scholar has possibly been or is the victim of hazing, bullying, harassment, or discrimination must immediately make a verbal or written report of the incident to a staff member. Any person who makes a report of bullying, harassment, or discrimination and requests to remain anonymous will not be personally identified as the reporter or complainant to the extent permitted by law.

If a report of suspected bullying, harassment, or discrimination is substantiated through an investigation, then HJCS will respond appropriately and will take appropriate interventions consistent with policy and procedure. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the process of minimizing bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Parents should report suspected acts of bullying or discrimination to an appropriate school official.

All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and HJCS policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

### **Student-on-Employee Bullying, Harassment, or Discrimination**

Any student who engages in bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination towards any HJCS employee will be subject to disciplinary consequences consistent with the Code of Conduct.

## **8.10 SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RULES**

Scholars who ride the bus to and from school need to follow the important safety rules below. They are intended to make the ride safe and pleasant for everyone riding the bus. School bus safety rules are listed below.

- No eating or drinking is allowed
- Seat belts must be properly fastened
- Legs, feet, and book bags must be kept out of the aisle
- No yelling or loud talking is permitted
- No throwing of items is allowed
- No hitting, pushing, or tripping is permitted
- No foul language will be tolerated
- Scholars must remain in their seats until the bus stops
- Scholars may not change seats once the trip is underway
- No standing is allowed
- No trading cards are permitted
- No part of the body is to be placed out the window
- Scholars must leave other people's property alone

The school reserves the right to suspend any scholar's bussing privileges for disruptive behaviors on the bus.

## 9. GOVERNANCE

### 9.1 BOARD MEETINGS

To meet the educational and social needs of the scholar, to obtain feedback and direction on how to best serve scholars, and to assist parents and guardians as they help their scholars be successful in school, Henry Johnson Charter School plans for and expects an active role for parents and guardians in the governance of the school.

Specifically:

- The parent or guardian of a scholar in the school shall fill at least one seat on the school's Board of Trustees. The parent or guardian will be selected by the Board, thereby giving him or her a direct role in the governance of the school.
- The school's Principal or Parent Liaison will serve as a direct contact to parents and guardians and will work with them to set up school events, field trips, and promotion of the school throughout the community. This Liaison role will also serve as a means for parents and guardians to have direct input in the administration of the school.
- At each regular meeting of the school's Board of Trustees, parents and guardians are welcome to attend and contribute during public comment periods.

From time to time, as the Board of Trustees, school leadership, or faculty requests, parents/guardians will be asked to participate in or be members of advisory committees to study or implement a specific policy or action of the school. For example, committees may be formed to study and advise the Board on budget issues, scholar recruitment activities, use of the school building, scholar discipline practices and other issues.

### 9.2 OPEN MEETINGS LAW

The Henry Johnson Charter School Board of Trustees meetings and Trustee committee meetings shall be open to the general public.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

- A calendar of all board meeting dates will be posted at the Charter School at all times. The notice of meetings will also be posted on the school's website.
- The school will provide notice of the time and place of any board meeting that is *scheduled at least one week in advance* to the news media and shall conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

- To the maximum extent possible, the school will publicly post notices of Board of Trustees meetings immediately after such a meeting date is determined.
- Trustees may participate in Board Meetings in person or by videoconferencing. The Board of Trustees shall provide an opportunity for the public to attend at any site where a member participates. If videoconferencing is to be used, the public notice will say so, to ensure that the public has the right to attend at any of these locations.

#### MEETING MINUTES:

- The Secretary of the Board of Trustees will take minutes at all open sessions. All minutes will contain the date of the meeting, a summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally voted upon as well as a record of how each board member voted.
- Minutes from open meetings will be made available to the public within two weeks of the meeting date. Minutes from executive sessions will be made available within one week. Minutes will be available at the school.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSIONS:

Henry Johnson Charter School will conduct all executive sessions as part of an open meeting; executive sessions will not be considered separate meetings. An executive session may be called via motion and majority vote by the Board of Trustees to enter an executive session. The motion must specifically identify the general area or areas of subjects to be considered. All Board members may participate in executive sessions and the Board may authorize others to attend as well. The Board of Trustees will only conduct an executive session for one or more of the following reasons:

- Matters that pose public safety perils
- Matters that may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer
- Discussions of information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would impact effective law enforcement if disclosed
- Discussions regarding proposed, pending, or current litigation
- When such law applies to charter school employees, collective negotiations that are within the scope of Article 14 of the Civil Service Law
- When discussing the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation
- When discussing matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation
- When discussing the preparation, grading, or administration of examinations
- The proposed acquisition, sale, lease of real property or the exposed acquisition of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

In no case shall public funds be appropriated during an executive session.

#### EXEMPTIONS:

The following matters are exempted from the Open Meetings Law and therefore need not be discussed at open meetings.

- Judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings (for example, suspension hearings and employee grievance hearings)
- Any matter made confidential by the State or Federal Law (for example discussions regarding a particular scholar's records or scholars with handicapping conditions in violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

#### ENFORCEMENT:

Any individual wishing to assert a violation of the New York State Open Meetings Law has standing to bring a proceeding in accordance with Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules and/or action for declaratory or injunctive relief.

### 9.3 FOIL REQUESTS

The amended Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), which first took effect on January 1, 1978 gives persons the right of access to many public records, which may include records at HJCS.

Our school has adopted regulations regarding when, where and how one can see its public records. These regulations and the Public Officers Law, Article 6, Sections 84-90, are available in the Business Office where records are stored and are posted on the school website. According to these regulations, records may be available for viewing at:

Henry Johnson Charter School  
30 Watervliet Avenue  
Albany, New York 12206  
518-432-4300

Requests for public access to records will be accepted and records will be produced during all regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. The school's Head of School, Principal, or the Director of Finance and Operations will help with all requests.

A written request may be required, but oral requests may be accepted when records are readily available. A response will be given within five business days of receipt of a

request granting or denying access to records in whole or part. There will not be a fee charged for inspection of records. Copies will be made available for \$0.25 per page.

A failure to comply with the time limitations described constitutes a denial of a request that may be appealed. Please contact the person listed below to appeal denials.

Mr. Saleem Cheeks  
Board Chairperson  
Henry Johnson Charter School  
30 Watervliet Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206

Complete FOIL regulations are available in the school's main office.



**PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMITMENT:** We fully commit to HJCS and my scholar in the following ways:

- ✓ We have read the *Parent / Scholar Handbook* and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures.
- ✓ We will always help our scholar in the best way we know how, and we will do whatever it takes for him or her to learn.
- ✓ We will make sure our scholar arrives at HJCS by 7:30 am (Monday-Friday) or boards a HJCS bus at the scheduled time.
- ✓ We will make arrangements so our scholar can remain at HJCS until 3:30 pm (Monday-Friday) or schedule to be pick-up by the HJCS bus.
- ✓ We will make sure our scholar follows the HJCS dress code.
- ✓ We understand that our scholar must follow the HJCS rules to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom and the school. We also understand that our scholar may lose privileges or have disciplinary consequences if he/she violates the rules and values of the school, and we will support the school in its efforts to enforce high standards for behavior and citizenship.
- ✓ We will always make ourselves respectfully available to our scholar and the school and listen to any concerns they may have. We will return phone calls from the school within 24 hours, and if we are asked to attend a meeting regarding our scholar's education or behavior, we will make every effort to be there.
- ✓ We will communicate regularly with our scholar's teacher. This includes letting us know how things are going and coming to meetings and report card conferences.
- ✓ We will show interest in our scholar's homework and schoolwork. We will follow through on signing papers and participating in school related events.
- ✓ We will read with him or her for at least 20 minutes every night.
- ✓ We will check Tuesday folders – read carefully all the notices and papers the school sends home to us.
- ✓ We will keep our scholar's emergency phone numbers and information in the school office up to date.
- ✓ We always have volunteer opportunities available and we do our best to create events that scholars and their parent or guardian can participate in together.
- ✓ We attest that information given on all registration forms is true and understand that false information may result in our scholar's being dismissed from HJCS.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent(s) of: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER COMMITMENT:** I fully commit to HJCS and my scholars in the following ways:

- ✓ I will arrive at HJCS every day by 7:30 a.m. ready to proactively engage and embrace my scholars in a positive and productive way. I will remain at school until 3:30 p.m.
- ✓ I will always teach in the best way I know how within the framework of the school's methodology, and I will do whatever it takes for my scholars to learn.
- ✓ I will always make myself respectfully available to scholars and parents, and listen to any concerns they may have.
- ✓ I promise to communicate regularly with parents about their scholar's progress and make myself available in person and by phone. I will return parent phone calls within 24 hours.
- ✓ I will assign productive, worthwhile homework each night to reinforce and support concepts and skills learned in class.
- ✓ I will enforce Henry Johnson's rules and policies consistently and fairly.
- ✓ I will always ensure the safety and protect the interests and rights of all the individuals in my classroom.

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

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

### **Physical Restraint Policy**

For purposes of this policy, physical restraint is defined as any personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move their arms, legs, body, or head freely. It does not include (1) a physical escort, a temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location; or (2) brief physical contact and/or redirection to promote student safety, calm or comfort a student, prompt or guide a student when teaching a skill or assisting a student in completing a task, or for other similar purposes.

At HJCS we understand that some of our Scholars may have great difficulty regulating themselves and their behaviors. Accordingly, we have put in place social and emotional supports which include enhanced counseling, relaxation techniques, and other interventions to help scholars self-regulate. In certain circumstances, when scholars are not able to self-regulate on their own, progressive measures are needed to ensure the safety of all community members. We have put in place the following procedures that will be employed by staff members when crisis intervention is needed to protect the safety, health or welfare of all students and staff in the school setting.

The scholar will first be asked to use one or more of the self-regulation techniques he or she has learned previously. If it appears that these techniques will not be effective, the classroom teacher will notify the Dean who will determine if restraint is appropriate and if so will intervene or will arrange for assistance of another staff member who has been trained in physical restraint techniques. Staff who may be called upon to implement a physical restraint will be provided with appropriate, evidence-based training in safe and effective physical restraint procedures consistent with the requirements in Section 19.5 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

The use of physical restraint on any scholar shall be limited to situations when other less restrictive and intrusive interventions and de-escalation techniques would not prevent imminent danger of serious physical harm to the scholar or others. The type of physical restraint utilized must be the least restrictive technique necessary and be discontinued as soon as the imminent danger of serious physical harm has resolved.

### **Parental Notification**

In instances of physical restraint, same day notification to parents will be made following the use of a physical restraint by phone, e-mail, or in person. When the student's parent cannot be contacted, after reasonable attempts are made, the Principal or Principal's designee shall record such attempts. For students with disabilities, the Principal or Principal's designee shall report such attempts to the student's committee on preschool education or committee on special education. The notification must offer the parent the opportunity to meet regarding the incident and provide the parent or person in parental relation to the student a copy of the documentation of the incident within three school days of the use of a physical restraint.

### **Debriefing:**

Debriefing should take place as soon as practicable, and after every incident in which a physical restraint is used on a student. A school administrator or designee shall meet with the school staff who participated in the use of physical restraint to discuss the circumstances leading to the use of physical restraint, the positive, proactive intervention strategies that were utilized prior to the use of a physical restraint and planning for the prevention and reduction of the future need for a physical restraint with the student including, if applicable, whether a referral should be made for special education programs and/or other support services or, for a student with a disability, whether a referral for review of the student's IEP and/or BIP is needed, direct a school staff member to debrief the incident with the student in a manner appropriate to the student's age and developmental ability and to discuss the behavior(s), if any, that precipitated the use of the physical restraint.

### **Documentation/Recordkeeping:**

HJCS shall maintain documentation of each incident involving the use of a physical restraint on each student, which shall include: (a) the name and date of birth of the student; (b) the setting and location of the incident; (c) the name of the staff who participated in the implementation, monitoring, and supervision of the use of a physical restraint and any other persons involved; (d) a description of the incident including duration; (e) whether the student has an IEP, Section 504 accommodation plan, BIP, or other plan developed for the student by the school; (f) a list of all positive, proactive intervention strategies utilized prior to the use of a physical restraint, and for students with disabilities, whether those strategies were consistent with the student's BIP, if applicable; (g) the details of any injuries sustained by the student or staff during the incident and whether the student was evaluated by the school nurse or other medical personnel; (h) the date and method of notification to the parent or person in parental relation and whether a meeting was held; and (i) the date of the debriefing. Documentation of each incident shall be maintained by the school and made available for review by the State Education Department upon request.

### **CHILD ABUSE/CHILD ABUSE IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING POLICY**

All personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment **immediately** when they have "reasonable cause to believe that a child who is 17 years of age or younger and known to them in a professional or official capacity has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed—physically, sexually, or through neglect—and that a caregiver either

committed the harm or should have taken steps to prevent the child from harm.” Once a mandated reporter becomes aware that a scholar may be the victim of abuse or neglect, **they must:**

1. *Notify the Social Worker and/or Principal of the situation,*
2. *Call the New York Statewide Central Register (SCR) of Child Abuse and Maltreatment hotline at 1-800-635-1522, and*
3. *Within 48 hours of the oral report, file and sign a written report with SCR. The form, LDSS-2221A Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment may be downloaded at <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>.*

The social worker will assist the mandated reporter and the scholar in understanding the ramifications of the call. The social worker will debrief the scholar and, when appropriate, will contact the parent(s)/guardian. No one in the workplace, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who willfully fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect may be subjected to license suspension or revocation, and may be charged with a misdemeanor. Falsely reporting information to the hotline also may lead to a misdemeanor.

**When calling the hotline, the mandated reporter must have the following information** (or as much as is known): the name, birth date, and address of the alleged victim; the name, address, age or birth date, and relationship of the alleged perpetrator; what type of injury or harm was allegedly done to the victim; and a description of the incident (time/date, place in which it occurred, and indication of intention to harm). If a report is taken (the intake worker will inform you of this over the phone), the report must be confirmed in writing to the local investigation unit within 48 hours of the hotline call. Forms and addresses are available at the School.

**Physical abuse** is defined as occurring when a parent or person responsible for the child’s welfare “inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury, by other than accidental means.” Common injuries include bruises, human bite marks, bone fractures, and burns. Physical abuse also occurs when the caregiver or parent “creates a substantial risk of physical injury” by shaking, throwing, choking, smothering, or pushing the child into fixed objects. Acts of torture are defined as “deliberately or systematically inflicting cruel or unusual punishment which results in physical or mental suffering.” When reporting physical abuse, it is important to document any injuries, as a report may not be taken unless evidence of harm exists.

**Sexual abuse** is defined as occurring when a person responsible for the child’s welfare commits sexual penetration, sexual exploitation, sexual molestation, or when a young child contracts a sexually transmitted disease. A child’s disclosure of sexual abuse must be handled sensitively. When a scholar attempts to disclose sexual abuse, observe the child closely and listen attentively while maintaining a calm demeanor. The mandated reporter must pay very careful attention to the disclosure of sexual abuse, but should not encourage the scholar to disclose information in addition to what is being given voluntarily. Take very careful notes, writing the scholar’s words verbatim as much as possible. Refer the scholar immediately to the social worker and inform the Principal.

**Neglect** occurs when a person responsible for the child “deprives or fails to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment,” or when an adult “provides inadequate supervision of a child (particularly small children).”

## B. Child Abuse in an Educational Setting

Allegations of child abuse by school personnel and school volunteers shall be reported in accordance with the requirements of [Article 23-B of the Education Law](#).

### Required Reporters

Any person holding any of the following positions shall be required to promptly (within one workday) report written and oral allegations of child abuse by an employee or volunteer in an educational setting:

- school board member
- teacher
- school nurse
- school guidance counselor
- school psychologist
- school social worker
- school administrator
- other school personnel required to hold a teaching or administrative license or certificate
- licensed and registered physical therapist
- licensed and registered occupational therapist
- licensed and registered speech-language pathologist
- teacher aide
- school resource officer
- any staff whose duties involve direct student contact and who is paid by a school or contracted to provide transportation services to children; or who is an employee of

a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school under a public assistance employment program, pursuant to [title nine-B of article five of the social services law](#).

For purposes of this policy, persons holding these positions shall be referred to as "required reporters."

Other employees may, of course, report allegations of child abuse allegedly committed by staff and volunteers and are encouraged to do so.

### **Definitions**

For purposes of this policy,

"Administrator" or "school administrator" shall mean a principal of, or the equivalent title, in a public school, charter school or board of cooperative educational services, or other chief school officer.

"Child" means a person under the age of 21 and enrolled in a school.

"Child abuse" means any one of the following acts committed in an educational setting by an employee or volunteer against a child:

- Intentionally or recklessly inflicting physical injury, serious physical injury or death; or
- Intentionally or recklessly engaging in conduct that creates a substantial risk of physical injury, serious physical injury or death; or
- Any child sexual abuse as prohibited by [sections 130](#) or [235 of the Penal Law](#); or
- The commission or attempted commission against a child of the crime of disseminating indecent materials to minors pursuant to [Article 235 of the Penal Law](#).

If a required reporter or any other employee has a question as to whether alleged conduct constitutes "child abuse," he or she shall promptly raise the question to the Principal of the building where the abuse is alleged to have occurred. The Principal shall consult [Article 23-B of the Education Law](#) or the school attorney, if necessary, to determine whether the allegations constitute child abuse.

"Educational setting" means the buildings and grounds of the school, the vehicles provided directly or by contract by the school for the transportation of students to and from school buildings, field trips, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities both on and off school grounds, all co-curricular and extra-curricular activity sites, and any other location where direct contact between an employee or volunteer and a child has allegedly occurred.

“Employee” means any person who is receiving compensation from a school. Additionally, for the purpose of this policy, one whose duties involve direct student contact and is receiving compensation from any person or entity that contracts with a school to provide transportation services to children or is an employee of a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school under a public assistance employment program, pursuant to [title nine-B of article five of the social services law](#), whereby such services performed by such person involve direct student contact.

“Law enforcement authorities” means any officer or office of municipal, sheriffs, or division of the state police department.

“Parent” means either or both of a child’s parents or other persons legally responsible for the child.

“School” generally means any school district, public school, charter school, non-public school board of cooperative educational services or special act school district and additional entities as defined by [section 1125\(10\) of Education Law](#),

“Volunteer” means any person, other than an employee, who has direct student contact and provides services to a school or school district which involve direct student contact and who provides services to any person or entity which contracts with a school to provide transportation services to children.

### **Reporting Requirements**

In any case where a written or oral allegation of child abuse by an employee or volunteer in an educational setting is made to a required reporter, the required reporter shall:

1. Promptly (within one workday) complete the required New York State Education Department report form; and
2. Personally deliver the form to the Principal of the school in which the child abuse allegedly occurred.

If the allegation involves a child who was allegedly abused by an employee or a volunteer of another school, the required reporter must promptly forward the report form to the Superintendent of the School or Executive Director where the child attends school and the Superintendent of the School or Executive Director where the abuse allegedly occurred (if different).

Upon receiving a written report, the Principal shall determine whether there is reasonable suspicion to believe that an act of child abuse has occurred.

In any case where the employee the allegation is being made against is the Principal, the report of such allegations shall be made to the Board of Trustees.

If the person making the allegation of abuse is someone other than the child or the child's parent, the Principal/Executive Director shall contact the person making the report to learn the source and basis for the allegation.

If the Principal determines there is reasonable suspicion to believe that an act of child abuse has occurred, he or she shall promptly notify the parent of the alleged child victim (assuming that the parent is not the person who originally reported the alleged abuse) that an allegation of child abuse in an educational setting has been made and promptly provide the parent with the written statement setting forth parental rights, responsibilities and procedures prepared in accordance with the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The notice shall be given by telephone (if possible) and in writing, sent via overnight mail and certified mail to the parent.

The Principal shall also promptly provide a copy of the written report to the Executive Director and send a copy to the appropriate law enforcement authorities

The Principal shall send to the Commissioner of Education any written report forwarded to the local law enforcement authorities where the employee or volunteer alleged to have committed an act of child abuse holds a certificate or license issued by the department.

All current and new mandated reporters will receive on-going training on reporting child abuse in a domestic setting and in an educational setting.