



**Math, Engineering, and Science  
Academy (MESA) Charter High  
School**

*Family Handbook, 2018-2019*

## ***Family Handbook***

*This handbook is intended to be a reference document that outlines some of MESA's most important policies and is not meant to be comprehensive. Those policies not explicitly outlined in this document are left to the discretion of school leadership. Additionally, notices that are sent home from the school communicating policy updates and changes are regarded as additions to our Family Handbook. Please contact the school office with any specific policy questions.*

### **Table of Contents**

School Calendar and Daily Schedule	3
Calendar of Board of Trustees Meetings	3
Communication between School and Family	4
Who do I Contact?	6
Academics	7
Dress Code	10
Cell Phone Policy	11
Student Safety and Health	13
Student Attendance, Arrival, and Dismissal	15
Meals	16
Transportation and MetroCards	17
FERPA (Privacy policy)	18
Freedom of Information Law Policy	20
Complaint Policy	25
Internet Usage Policy	26

## School Calendar and Daily Schedule

Please see School's website ([www.mesacharter.org](http://www.mesacharter.org)) for calendar and daily schedule.

## School Closings

In cases of snowstorms or city-wide emergencies, MESA will follow the directive of the NYC Chancellor regarding school closings or delayed openings. If NYC DOE schools are closed or delayed, MESA will be as well. Announcements of school closings typically occur by 6:00 a.m. on CBS, NBC, CBS, FOX, and NY1. It is expected that if schools open, students will arrive on time and stay until the school's regular dismissal time.

## Calendar of Board of Trustees Meetings

The 2018-2019 Board of Trustees Meeting schedule is listed below; all meetings unless otherwise indicated will take place at MESA (231 Palmetto Street, Brooklyn, NY 11221). All Board meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. on the Fourth Tuesday of the Month except for the December meeting, which will take place on Tuesday, December 18. Date or location changes will be announced no less than 24 hours prior to the changed date, and will be posted on the board in MESA's front office.

All trustee meetings for MESA Charter High School are open meetings subject to the NYS open meetings law. While we encourage public participation and provide a designated time for public comment, individuals are limited to two minutes total of public comment each, unless the Board asks for additional feedback. All trustees and members of the public must abide by MESA Charter High School norms around professionalism and civility in their comments, these norms can be found in our school handbook. Complaints against a specific employee or public comments that may reveal confidential information will, consistent with the open meetings law, be handled through our dispute resolution process or may be heard in executive session.

## Communication between School and Family

MESA understands the enormous responsibility it has to parents, and understands equally the importance of parents in their children's education. MESA believes that all parents are deeply invested in their child's success; the school enlists parents and critical partners in the achievement of its mission.

### ***Calling the School***

You may reach MESA during regular business hours of 8:00a – 4:30p at **(718) 282-7426**. While we will always try to have someone available to answer the phone right away, we have a small staff and each person has many other responsibilities. If your call goes to voicemail, MESA asks that you please leave a message, and the appropriate person will call you back within one business day.

### ***Advisory***

All students are members of an Advisory that supports their success at school. Like all teachers, your child's advisor can be reached at the school and will return all messages within 24 hours. You can also reach your child's advisor via email. You should expect to hear at least once per month from your advisor with a report on your child's progress.

### ***Family-School Association***

Parent participation and involvement is very important to the success of our school. The Family School Association (FSA) is the foundation of the MESA parent community.

Our FSA members regularly:

- Help to plan family events such as game nights, workshops and assemblies
- Meet with the Executive Director, Principal, and other members of our leadership team
- Support the school and students through volunteer work, and encourage other parents to do the same
- Share their voice about the direction of our school during our first year
- Elect a representative to MESA's Board of Trustees

If you are interested in being part of the FSA, please speak with the Family Coordinator or the Director of Culture and External Affairs

### ***Parent/Teacher Conferences***

MESA's term is divided into three trimesters, and we will have Parent/Teacher Conferences at the mid-point of each trimester. Conference dates are listed on the school calendar, which can be found at [www.mesacharter.org](http://www.mesacharter.org).

### ***Report Cards & Progress Reports***

Every two weeks during each trimester, teachers will send home progress reports outlining each student's academic progress. At the end of each trimester, students will receive in school (and via mail) a report card detailing final grades in each course.

### ***Classroom Visits***

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit their child's classroom. Please make arrangements with the classroom teacher at least 24 hours prior to your visit to ensure that classroom instruction will not be interrupted and to avoid any scheduling conflicts. When visiting, parents and guardians must first sign-in in the Main Office.

### ***When to contact MESA Charter School:***

- If your child says that he/she never has any homework
- If your child is going to be late or absent for the day
- If your child cannot do the homework assignments
- If your child does not finish the homework assignments
- If your child says the work is not challenging him/her
- If your child does a poor job on the homework or exhibits poor work habits
- If you have any questions/concerns about progress reports/report cards
- If your child is confused about a long-term project

Who do I Contact?

<i>If you...</i>	<i>Then you should contact...</i>
Want to know about your child’s homework in a specific class or want to know more about your child’s academic progress	Your child’s teacher by email: (first initial, last name @ mesacharter.org) Robert Jones = <a href="mailto:rjones@mesacharter.org">rjones@mesacharter.org</a>  You can also contact your child’s advisor.
Have a child who has an IEP and you want to discuss services for him or her	Jessica Bloom, Director Special Education <a href="mailto:jbloom@mesacharter.org">jbloom@mesacharter.org</a>
Have a child who is an English Language Learner (ELL) and you want to discuss services for him or her	Tara Ridgedell, ELL Coordinator <a href="mailto:tridgedell@mesacharter.org">tridgedell@mesacharter.org</a>
Want to discuss your child’s absences, tardiness, safety, or behavior-related concerns.	Anthony Velez, Dean of Students <a href="mailto:avelez@mesacharter.org">avelez@mesacharter.org</a>
Are not hearing back from your child’s teacher, or if you are not satisfied with the responses you are receiving from your child’s teacher. <i>These meetings must be by appointment, or during office hours TBD.</i>	Pagee Cheung, Principal <a href="mailto:pcheung@mesacharter.org">pcheung@mesacharter.org</a>
Have general school questions regarding, nurse services, metrocards or food services.	Main Office at (718) 282-7426 or Lauren Rawles, Director of Operations, at <a href="mailto:lrawles@mesacharter.org">lrawles@mesacharter.org</a>
Would like additional information about Board of Trustees meetings or MESA’s charter, or have not received satisfactory responses after exhausting the hierarchy. . <i>These meetings must be by appointment, or during office hours TBD.</i>	Arthur Samuels, Executive Director <a href="mailto:asamuels@mesacharter.org">asamuels@mesacharter.org</a>

## Academics

The grading system at MESA is very different from most schools in New York City, and probably is very different than what you have experienced in your previous school. MESA uses a standards-based grading approach, where students' grades are based purely on how they perform on assessments that are tied to New York State and Common Core standards. This allows MESA to closely track student progress, ensuring that they are well-prepared for Regents exams and other major assessments.

### *Standards and Assessments*

In each class, students will be earning grades for each individual learning goal. These learning goals are correlated to national Common Core State Standards as well as New York State Standards of these courses. These grades will NOT be on a traditional A-F or 0-100% scale, but rather scored by rubric ratings according to mastery level. Each subject may have its own variation of a mastery rubric. The following is a general rubric:

<b>Learning Goal</b>	<b>Mastery Level</b>
<b><i>Advanced:</i></b> Student can explain the reasoning and justify each step of the solution with the correct academic vocabulary. Student has complete and detailed understanding of the topic and can teach this concept to another student.	<b>Level 4</b>
<b><i>Proficient:</i></b> Student can explain the basic reasoning and justify each step using his/her own words. Student has complete understanding of the concept but not in great detail. Student is able to prove his/her answers correct.	<b>Level 3</b>
<b><i>Approaching:</i></b> Student can begin solving the problem but is not confident in his/her answer. Student has basic understanding of the topic but has misconceptions about some of the information. Student requires use of notes to recall the order to approach and apply the skill or concept.	Level 2
<b><i>Below:</i></b> Student can recognize the type of problem, but is not clear about next steps. Student's understanding of the topic is incomplete with significant misconceptions. Even with the use of notes, student is unable to solve the problem. Student can produce a Level 2 response with teacher assistance.	Level 1
<b><i>No learning:</i></b> No attempt at learning has been made.	Level 0

Only scores of "Level 3" or "Level 4" mean that the student has reached a proficient level of mastery. The MESA Standards Based Grading system is a grade replacement system. This means that a student has multiple opportunities to reassess mastery of each standard, until reaching a Level 3 or 4, and the most recent score is always the score used for the report card. This allows students to constantly grow and show improvement as their mastery skills progresses, and also encourages them to remain current on past information. As new and past skills are assessed and reassessed, students' current grades can be viewed on *Illuminate Education*, our online student information system.

### *Report Cards and Transcripts*

Students will receive a report card for each trimester and a final grade for each course that appears on the students' transcripts. In the spirit of growth and Standards Based Grading, each trimester is progressively weighted more heavily. The percentage breakdown of the final transcript grade is as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester	2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester	3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester
25%	30%	45%

For courses that have benchmark interim exams, the Exam Grade is worth 20% of the trimester grade. The remaining 80% of the trimester grade, the Standards Grade, is calculated by the number of standards the student has achieved proficiency in. For example, in a class with 20 standards (see table below), a student must gain a level 3 or 4 in 18 out of the 20 standards in order to receive an "A-" for the course, prior to trimester exam grades. In order for a student to receive an Honors distinction, the student must achieve Level 4 in more than half of the standards.

# Standards Proficient (out of 20)	% of Standards Proficient	Letter Grade	4.0 scale
20	<b>100%</b>	A	4
18	<b>90%</b>	A-	3.7
16	<b>80%</b>	B+	3.3
15	<b>75%</b>	B	3
13	<b>65%</b>	B-	2.7
11	<b>55%</b>	C+	2.3
10	<b>50%</b>	C	2
8	<b>40%</b>	C-	1.7
6	<b>30%</b>	D+	1.3
5	<b>25%</b>	D	1

*Note: Conversion charts for each course may vary depending on number of standards within the trimester.*

If upon calculation of both the Standards Grade (80%) and the Exam Grade (20%), a student receives less than a C- in the course, the student has failed the course and will receive no credit for the course within the calculation for the final transcript grade. However, with the progressive weights of each trimester (and a ton of drive and hard work), it is still possible to pass the course for the year.



### Discipline Policy

MESA's discipline policy can be found on the school's website.

### Safety Procedures

MESA holds regular drills to instruct and train students in emergency and evacuation procedures so that everyone may leave the school building in the shortest time possible and without panic in the event of an actual emergency. On hearing the evacuation signal, all adults and children must exit the building quickly in an orderly manner. This may mean exiting the school without coats, jackets and book bags, but teachers will make every effort to ensure that students are not exposed to cold weather for too long. Visitors must also follow safety procedures.

MESA maintains appropriate safety plans in compliance with "Project SAVE," the state's Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. These plans outline the operations of the School and its emergency procedures.

Under New York's Violent or Disruptive Incident Reporting law ("VADIR"), MESA is required to report violent or disruptive incidents that occur on school property, including incidents occurring in, or on, a school bus (as defined in Vehicle and Traffic Law §142), and at school functions. Reports are submitted to the New York State Education Department between June 25, 2018 and July 20, 2018.

### Dignity for all Students Act

MESA creates a safe and supportive environment for all community members; we abide by the New York State Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). This law seeks to "provide students with a safe and supportive environment from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying (including cyber bullying) on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function." Discrimination and harassment is prohibited by employees or students based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex. To read the full Dignity for All Students Act, please visit <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>.

### School Property & Materials

Textbooks and supplementary course materials are provided by MESA to support and enhance learning. Students are expected to use textbooks and course materials as assigned, to care for them and to return them in good condition. Parents will be billed for the full cost of lost, damaged or destroyed textbooks and course materials. Students who lose, damage, or destroy textbooks or course materials may also be subject to disciplinary consequences. Students who do not return textbooks and course materials will not have their report cards and/or transcripts issued to them or mailed home. Parents must pay for

any lost, damaged, or destroyed materials in full before report cards and/or transcripts will be issued.

Desks and other furniture and equipment in classrooms are for student use and must be used carefully and responsibly. Students may not tape materials to desks unless specifically instructed to do so, and in no circumstances may they write on desks or other furniture. Any photographs or printed matter posted on walls must be approved in advance by a faculty member and be consistent with the school's professional atmosphere.

Any student who intentionally defaces or damages the school building, any property within the building, or the campus around it, or who pulls an unnecessary fire alarm, will be subject to disciplinary consequences which may include but are not limited to suspension.

### Searches of Students

In the event of a situation which requires immediate intervention to protect the safety and security of the school community or any individual, if there is a reasonable suspicion that a student is in violation of the law (i.e., rumors of drugs or dangerous weapon, smell of alcohol or marijuana), and/or if it is known that a student has been in recent violation of the school's weapon/drug/alcohol policies, MESA may conduct searches of students and student property. This includes, but is not limited to, backpacks. School desks, lockers and other equipment remain the property of the school and students should have no expectation of privacy in these areas. Prior to any search, students will be given an opportunity to produce any item in his/her possession that should not be in school. Should a student refuse to cooperate with a search request, the school may confiscate the property in question. Law enforcement may also be contacted to assist with a search, as appropriate.

A school search will be justified at its inception if the school officials had reasonable grounds to suspect it would turn up evidence that a student violated or was violating law or school rules. The scope of the search will be permissible if the measures used were related to the objectives of the search, and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

The family of the student who has been searched will be notified of the incident.

### Dress Code

As part of its core value of Professionalism, MESA does not require its students to wear a uniform. Our students are young men and young women, and part of being college-ready is understanding how to dress appropriately in different circumstances. Rather, MESA requires that all students and teachers wear "professional attire" at all times, with the exception of "Casual Fridays," during which jeans will be permitted, and designated "dress down days." Students out

of dress code will not be permitted to attend class. They may either wait in the office for up to an hour until parents have brought appropriate clothes from home, or they will be sent home. If possible, the school will maintain a few items of dress code-appropriate clothing for students. However, it is not the obligation of MESA to supply alternative appropriate clothes for a student who is out of dress code. If a student wears an outfit that is not specifically covered by this dress code but is nevertheless deemed by the Principal, Executive Director or Director of School Culture to be “unprofessional,” MESA reserves the right to deem the student out of dress code and administer the above consequences.

*Boys:* Boys must wear shirts with collars or turtlenecks. Shirts must have sleeves and be tucked in, neatly and completely. Boys must wear full-length pants (not denim, sweatpants, or athletic gear) in good repair. Shoes must have backs, closed toes, and be in good repair. Pants must be worn at the waist with a solid colored belt and may not “sag.” Boys may wear sneakers so long as they are primarily solid black, solid grey, solid white, or solid brown in color. Boys’ button-down shirts must have no more than two buttons from the top open. Boys may wear solid sweaters or sweatshirts with no writing on them. Boys may not wear hooded sweatshirts, hats, scarves, or any other head covering except for religious purposes. Students may not carry or wear flags or bandanas. Any jewelry must be modest and not over-sized.

*Girls:* Girls must wear shirts or dresses with sleeves (no sleeveless items such as spaghetti straps or tank tops) and modest necklines. Girls may wear solid t-shirts, blouses, or polo shirts. Shirts must fall well below the waistline and midriffs may not be exposed. Skirts and dresses must be knee length. All garments must fit properly without being tight. Girls may wear full-length or calf-length pants (not denim, sweatpants, or athletic gear). Pants must be worn at the waist with a solid colored belt and may not “sag.” Any leggings must be worn under a skirt, dress, or pants that comply with MESA’s dress code; they may not be worn on their own. No see-through garments are allowed. Shoes must have low heels, low soles, backs and closed toes. Girls may wear sneakers so long as they are primarily solid black, solid grey, solid white, or solid brown in color. Girls may wear solid sweaters or sweatshirts with no writing on them. Girls may not wear hooded sweatshirts, hats, scarves, or any other head covering except for religious purposes. Students may not carry or wear flags or bandanas. Any jewelry must be modest and not over-sized.

*Gym Uniform:* Students must wear athletic attire to Gym class.

*School Discretionary Clause:* Notwithstanding the above language, the Principal and Executive Director may, at their discretion, deem a student out of dress code if he or she is wearing clothing the Principal or Executive Director deem “unprofessional.” In this case, the consequences in the disciplinary code would apply.

*Casual Fridays and designated dress-down days:* On Fridays and certain designated “dress down days,” students must follow the above dress code with the exception that they will be allowed to wear jeans and sneakers of any color.

#### Cell Phone Policy

MESA students are permitted to bring phones into the building past the scanners downstairs, but are not permitted to have or use them during the course of the instructional day. Students may check their phones in with the Director of Operations at arrival (see below); they will be secured for the day, and returned to students at the end of last period.

Parents and students should not be in casual contact during the school day, as it is distracting to instruction and makes it very difficult for the teachers to do their job. In the event of an emergency, we ask that you please call the main office, or the cell phone of the Director of Operations. If your child needs to call you, we will send him or her to the main office to call.

If a student elects not to check in a phone, MESA will take that as an indication that a student does not have a phone in his/her possession. Therefore, if that student is later seen or heard in possession of a phone, it is considered a lie of omission, in violation of MESA's core value of Integrity. The phone will be confiscated and held for a week until the parent/guardian comes to pick it up, and additional consequences will be administered.

## Student Safety and Health

### ***Confidentiality Policy***

Personal information about individual students is considered confidential. We store this information in student files that are located in a locked file cabinet. These records are only available to those staff members who work with the students. Files may not be removed from the building except when they are officially requested from another school.

A student's parent or guardian has the legal right to inspect and review their child's file upon written request to the Director of Operations. Parents also have the right to representation during any review of their child's record.

Conversations between teachers, administration, and parents/guardians about students, their specific educational concerns, or their past records, are confidential. Information will not be shared with staff members or school community members that are not directly involved with the student. If an individual believes that this confidentiality has been violated, the individual should bring their concern to the attention of the Executive Director. The Executive Director will review the situation and determine if the policy has been violated. If the Executive Director determines that an individual has violated the confidentiality policy, he or she will be subject to disciplinary action.

### ***Mandated Reporting***

Members of the MESA staff serve as "Mandated Reporters" in compliance with state law. If a member of the staff suspects a child is being abused or neglected, the staff member is obligated to report his or her suspicion to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

### ***Incident Reports***

Any accident involving a student will be documented. The nurse or a school staff person will contact the parent or guardian; in the event that the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the nurse will send a report home with the student.

### ***Suicide Threat***

If a student threatens his or her own life or the life of someone else, this will be brought immediately to the attention of the School Counselor or Social Worker. If the School Counselor or Social Worker feels that the child is in imminent danger, the parent will be contacted and a psychological evaluation will be required before the child can return to school. When a student exhibits potentially suicidal behavior and the parent refuses to cooperate with the school or to take alternative preventative measures, the Counselor or Social Worker must report this information immediately to ACS.

### ***Medical and Immunization Information***

All students must be immunized in compliance with New York State law. Students who do not have the proper immunizations will be denied access to MESA until the immunizations are administered.

Parents and guardians are asked to alert their child's teacher and indicate on their child's Enrollment Forms any information about any allergies from which their children suffer.

Parents and guardians are also asked to advise school administration if they grant permission to school administration to take their child to the hospital in the event of an emergency during school hours.

MESA shares a nurse with the other two schools in the building. The nurse is authorized to administer prescribed medication only if the parent or guardian submits signed documentation from a doctor. Over-the-counter medication cannot be administered in the school.

***Student Elevator Use***

Students are not permitted to use the elevator unless they have a health condition documented by a doctor. A staff member must escort students who have permission to use the elevator.

## Student Attendance, Arrival, and Dismissal

### ***Student Attendance***

Students are required to be in school every day unless there is an excused absence for illness or family emergency. School time is crucially important, and students should not miss it unless absolutely necessary. Please call the main office at TBD if your child is going to be absent or late. If your child is not in attendance, you will receive a call from the main office by 10:30 in the morning.

MESA's calendar is included in this handbook. Please schedule your family vacations so as to not miss school time. Students will not be permitted to make up missed school time.

### ***Student Arrival***

School begins promptly at 9:00, which means students must be in their seats in homeroom at 9:00. MESA Students may arrive starting at 8:45 in the morning. All students must pass through the scanner, so students should remove all jewelry, belts, and other metal before passing through the scanner.

Upon passing through the scanner, students will proceed up the designated stairwell to MESA's space on the second and third floors. Students will swipe in at the top of the stairs. *Students should leave enough time when arriving to go to their locker and be in their homeroom on time.*

Students are not permitted to eat in homeroom, advisory, or class. Students may have a small (no more than 20oz) beverage with a lid on it.

***Late Arrival:*** Students who are one minute or more late will go to the Main Office, where they will call their parent/guardian to explain why they are late. Students with unexcused lateness may also receive additional consequences, including detention.

### ***Student Dismissal***

All students are dismissed from school at 4:38 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 1:37 PM on Wednesday. Students may be required to remain after school for extra help or academic support. In these cases, parents will be notified by the school.

### ***Pickup from school***

At regular dismissal time, students will be dismissed on their own. For legal reasons, at any time other than dismissal, students may not be sent home from school without an authorized adult. Only the parent or one of the adults listed on the student's intake form is permitted to pick up the child.

## Meals

### ***Breakfast***

Breakfast is available to students at 8:45 AM, to be eaten downstairs in the cafeteria. Because MESA has a relatively late lunch, we encourage students to be sure to eat a full breakfast in the morning. Food may not be brought upstairs.

### ***Lunch***

Lunch is served every day at 1:40. Students may bring lunch from home to eat in the cafeteria, or they may eat the school lunch. Students may not go out to lunch, and they may not order lunch from local restaurants for delivery. Please do not bring food for students during the school day—if you would like your child to bring lunch from home, have him or her bring it in during the morning. On Wednesdays, students may opt to stay upstairs until 1:40 and then go downstairs for lunch, but they are not required to do so.

### ***Refrigerator/Microwave***

The faculty room is equipped with a microwave and refrigerator. Due to space constraints, this is only available for faculty use. Students may not use the microwave or refrigerator in the faculty room.



### Transportation and MetroCards

MESA complies with the policies set by the New York Department of Education Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). Students may be eligible for full- or half-fare metro cards based on the distance they live from the school. Students who live less than ½ mile from the school will not receive a MetroCard. Students that live between ½ and 1½ miles from the school will receive a half-fare card. Students who live more than 1½ miles from the school will receive a full-fare MetroCard.

*Loss of MetroCards:* Requests for the replacement of lost MetroCards must be completed in writing and given to Ms. Browne, the Director of Operations. OPT cannot guarantee that the request will be granted.

## FERPA (Privacy Policy)

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a students' education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. Those rights include:

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the school. For records including information on more than one student, parents will be limited only to information pertaining to his/her child. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Student records or other identifiable information are maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or need to be disposed will be done so in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.
- Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school corrects records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest; Other schools to which a student is transferring; Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes; Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student; Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school; Accrediting organizations;
  - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; o Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may also disclose, without consent, "directory" type information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school. This handbook constitutes the means of notification at MESA.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 or TDD (202) 260-8956 or contact: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

## Freedom of Information Law Policy

This policy provides information concerning the procedures by which records may be obtained. Personnel shall furnish to the public the information and records by the New York Freedom of Information Law.

### *1. Designation of Records Access Officer*

- (a) The Board of Trustees is responsible for insuring compliance with the Freedom of Information Law, and designates the following person(s) as records access officer(s):

Arthur Samuels  
MESA Charter High School  
231 Palmetto Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11221  
asamuels@mesacharter.org  
(p) (917) 257-6876  
(f) (718) 919-1479

- (b) The Records Access Officer shall insure that School personnel maintain:
- i. Maintain an up-to-date subject matter list;
  - ii. Assist persons seeking records to identify the records sought;
  - iii. Contact persons seeking records when a request is voluminous or when locating the records involves substantial effort, so that personnel may ascertain the nature of records of primary interest;
  - iv. Upon locating the records, take one of the following actions:
    - a. Make records available for inspection; or,
    - b. Deny access to the records in whole or in part and explain in writing.
  - v. Upon request for copies of records:
    - a. Make a copy available upon payment or offer to pay established fees, if any, in accordance with Section 5; or,
    - b. Permit the requester to copy those records.
  - vi. Upon request, certify that a record is a true copy; and
  - vii. Upon failure to locate records, certify that:
    - a. MESA Charter School is not the custodian for such records, or
    - b. The records of which MESA Charter School is a custodian cannot be found after diligent search.

### *2. Location and Hours*

Records shall be available by appointment for public inspection and copying at:

Arthur Samuels  
MESA Charter High School  
231 Palmetto Street

3. *Definition of Records*

- (a) A record is defined as any information kept, held, filed, produced or reproduced by, with or for an agency or the state legislature, in any physical form whatsoever including, but not limited to, reports, statements, examinations, memoranda, opinions, folders, files, books, manuals, pamphlets, forms, papers, designs, drawings, maps, photos, letters, microfilms, computer tapes or discs, rules, regulations or codes.
- (b) The School will maintain
  - i. a record of the final vote of each member of the Board of Trustees in every Board meeting in which the trustee vote;
  - ii. a record setting forth the name, public office address, and title and salary of every officer or employee of the School; and
  - iii. a reasonable detailed current list, by subject matter, of all records in the School's custody or possession, whether or not available under the Freedom of Information Law.

4. *Availability of Records:* The School may deny access to request records or portions thereof that:

- (a) are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute, like certain student records;
- (b) if disclosed would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- (c) if disclosed would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- (d) are trade secrets or are submitted to the School by a commercial enterprise or derived from information obtained from a commercial enterprise and which if disclosed would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of the School;
- (e) are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would:
  - i. Interfere with law enforcement investigations;
  - ii. Deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or impartial adjudication;
  - iii. Identify a confidential source or disclose confidential information relating to a criminal investigation; or
  - iv. Reveal criminal investigative techniques or procedures, except routine techniques and procedures.
- (f) if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- (g) are inter-agency or intra-agency materials which are not:
  - i. statistical or factual tabulations,
  - ii. instructions to staff that affect the public,
  - iii. final agency policy or determinations;

iv. external audits, including but not limited to audits performed by the comptroller and the federal government

(h) are examination questions or answers which are requested prior to the final administration of such questions; or

(i) if disclosed, would jeopardize the School's ability to guarantee the security of its information technology assets; or

(j) are photographs, microphotographs, videotape or other recorded images prepared under authority of Section 111(a) of the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

5. *Fees*

(a) Fees for copies may be charged, provided that:

i. the fee for copying records shall not exceed 25 cents per one-sided page for photocopies not exceeding 9 by 14 inches;

ii. the fee for all other records shall not exceed the actual reproduction cost.

6. *Requests for public access to records*

(a) Requests to inspect or secure copies of records shall be submitted to the Records Access Officer on a form prescribed by the Records Access Officer. The request shall reasonably describe the records or records sought.

(b) A response shall be given within five (5) business days of receipt of a request by:

i. informing a person requesting records that the request or portion of the request does not reasonably describe the records sought;

ii. granting or denying access to records in whole or in part;

iii. acknowledging the receipt of a request in writing, including an approximate date when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part, which shall not be more than twenty (20) business days; or

iv. if the receipt of request was acknowledged in writing and included an approximate date when the request would be granted in whole or in part within twenty business days of such acknowledgment, but circumstances prevent disclosure within that time, providing a statement in writing within twenty business days of such acknowledgment specifying the reason for the inability to do so and a date certain, within a reasonable period under the circumstances of the request, when the request will be granted in whole or in part.

7. *Denial of access to records*

- (a) Denial of access to records shall be in writing stating the reason therefore and advising the requester of the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees.
- (b) If requested records are not provided promptly, as required in Section 6, such failure shall also be deemed a denial of access.
- (c) The Board of Trustees shall determine appeals regarding denial of access to records under the Freedom of Information Law:

Maureen Ryan, Board Chair  
MESA Charter High School  
231 Palmetto Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11221

- (d) Any person denied access to records may appeal within thirty days of a denial.
- (e) The time for deciding an appeal shall commence upon receipt of a written appeal identifying:
  - i. the date and location of requests for records;
  - ii. a description, to the extent possible, of the records that were denied; and
  - iii. the name and return address of the person denied access.
- (f) A failure to determine an appeal within ten business days of its receipt by granting access to the records sought or fully explaining the reasons for further denial in writing shall constitute a denial of the appeal.
- (g) The Board of Trustees shall transmit to the Committee on Open Government copies of all appeals upon receipt of appeals. Such copies shall be addressed to:

Committee on Open Government  
Department of State  
41 State Street  
Albany, NY 12231

- (h) The Board of Trustees shall inform the appellant and the Committee on Open Government of its determination in writing within ten business days of receipt of an appeal. The determination shall be transmitted to the Committee on Open Government in the same manner as set forth subdivision (g) of this section.

8. *Public notice:* A notice containing the title or name and business address of the records access officer and the Board of Trustees and the location where records can be seen or copies shall be posted in a conspicuous location wherever records are kept and/or published in a local newspaper of general circulation.

9. *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act:* The School will not disclose any information from a student's permanent record except as authorized pursuant to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act or in response to a subpoena as required by law. The parents or guardians of a student under the age of 18 years of age, or a student 18 years of age or older, are entitled to access to the student's school records by submitting a written request to the school leader.

**MESA CHARTER SCHOOL  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Freedom of Information Law, which took effect on January 1, 1978, gives you the right of access to many public records.

MESA Charter High School has adopted a policy governing when, where, and how you can see public records.

The policy can be seen at all places where records are kept. According to this policy, records can be seen and copied at:

MESA Charter High School  
231 Palmetto Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11221

The Records Access Officer will help you to exercise your right to access these public records. The Records Access Officer is:

MESA Charter High School  
231 Palmetto Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11221

If you are denied access to a record, you may appeal to the following person(s) or body:

Maureen Ryan, Board Chair  
c/o MESA Charter High School  
231 Palmetto Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11221

## Complaint Policy

Section 2855(4) of the New York Education Law provides that any individual or group has the right to file a complaint with the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Math, Engineering and Science Academy Charter High School (“MESA”), alleging a violation of the provisions of Article 56 of the New York Education Law, the MESA Charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of MESA. Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Board. If the complaint directly involves the Secretary, the complaint may be submitted to any Board member. In accordance with Section 2855(4) of the New York Education Law, the Board may also delegate the power to review complaints to the Executive Director or an ad hoc committee of the Board, created to investigate the complaint and report to the Board. If the complaint does not allege a violation of the provisions of Article 56 of the New York Education Law, the MESA Charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of MESA, the Board will refer the matter to the Executive Director for resolution.

If the complaint is submitted to the Board five business days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at that Board meeting. If the complaint is submitted fewer than five business days before a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board shall render a determination in writing if appropriate or required. If the complaint is referred to the Executive Director for resolution, the Executive Director will report back to the Board.

If, after the presentation of any complaint to the Board, the individual or group that has filed such complaint determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, such individual or group may present the complaint to MESA’s charter entity, the New York State Board of Regents via the Charter Schools Office at the New York State Education Department. The Board of Regents has the power and duty to issue appropriate remedial orders to charter schools under their jurisdiction to effectuate the provisions applicable under New York Education Law.

The Board may be contacted by sending or personally delivering a written complaint to this address:

MESA Charter High School Board of Trustees  
231 Palmetto Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11221



## Student Internet Usage Policy

### ***Web Use***

From time to time, students may be asked to use the internet for school assignments and will be provided access to laptop or desktop computers at school. During class, students are only permitted to be on specific websites authorized by the school for academic use. Students may not be on any web sites not specifically permitted by their instructor, including but not limited to, YouTube, Facebook, Google Images, Instagram, Snapchat or any social networking site. Students are expressly prohibited from using MESA computers to access inappropriate or adult content, gambling or gaming websites, or any website that promotes hate, violence, or gang activity. MESA reserves the right to determine if a website is inappropriate.

### ***Computer Use***

MESA laptop and desktop computers are expensive learning tools and are property of the school. They are complex and fragile machines and need to be handled delicately, in keeping with MESA's Core Value of Respect. MESA will not tolerate any intentional mistreatment of computers, including rough handling, touching another student's computer, or slamming of keyboards or laptop covers. Any student causing damage to a laptop will be billed for the damage caused and will receive disciplinary consequences.

### ***MESA Email***

MESA students will receive MESA email addresses that they will use for school-based projects. Students should have no expectation of privacy in these accounts. MESA reserves the right to inspect all MESA email addresses at any time.

### ***Cyberbullying***

It is the number one priority of MESA to ensure a safe environment for all students. Cyberbullying, which violates MESA's core value of respect, will not be tolerated. Students should understand that posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media are not private and, if they violate MESA's disciplinary code, can lead to disciplinary action.