

2014-2015 Brighten Academy



Parent Handbook

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

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

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

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

Vision

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

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

Mission

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

Core Beliefs

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

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

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

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

Connections Educational Framework

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

1. Employ proven methods and strategies based on scientific research
2. Integrate a comprehensive design with aligned components
3. Provide ongoing, high-quality professional development
4. Is supported within the school by teachers, administration, and staff
5. Provide meaningful parent and community involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities
6. Use high quality external support from an external partner

7. Identify resources to support and sustain the school's comprehensive reform effort
8. Demonstrate strong evidence that academic achievement improves
9. This model has been developed to not only meet the above criteria, but also to align with Brighten Academy's mission and core beliefs. In addition, it is also complementary to some of the approaches being implemented in the Douglas County School System, including the Learning Focused Schools model and the development of Learning Communities.

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

The Seven C's

Craftsmanship

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

Community

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

Commitment

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

Critical Thinking

- Cultivation of higher order thinking skills (application, analysis, evaluation, synthesis)
- Metacognition

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

Creativity

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

Curiosity

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

Community

- Develop awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- Teach children to become agents of change in the community
- Establish natural leadership through service learning projects
- Increase school – community interaction
- Professional learning community focus

- Clear lines of communication established within the community via:
 - ✓ website
 - ✓ school and classroom newsletters
 - ✓ parent/teacher conferences
 - ✓ Board meetings
 - ✓ PTA meetings
 - ✓ local newspapers

Culture

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

Expeditionary Learning

In Expeditionary Learning schools...

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

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

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

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

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

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

Expeditionary Learning Design Principles

1. The Primacy of Self-Discovery

2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas
3. The Responsibility for Learning
4. Empathy and Caring
5. Success and Failure
6. Collaboration and Competition
7. Diversity and Inclusion
8. The Natural World
9. Solitude and Reflection
10. Service and Compassion

Expeditionary Learning- Crew

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

Community Circle

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

Brighten Charter Highlights

Our first priorities are to fulfill the school’s mission and to uphold the school’s core beliefs. All staff members, regardless of position or function, have a duty to fulfill these priorities.

In order to fulfill the mission, the following objectives must be met and reported yearly:

Students will make measured growth each year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brighten Academy will increase the percent of students who exceed on the CRCT by 2.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A statistical representative group will maintain or exceed scores from prior year as measured by the CRCT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brighten Academy will exceed state and county scores by 7%
Brighten will develop students’ ethical character and self monitoring actions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brighten Academy will develop an ILP that monitors progress on academic and personal goals
Brighten Academy will increase student engagement in the community and parental engagement in the school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will participate in at least 2 service learning activities annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ninety eight percent of our families will meet the expectations set forth in the parent compact
Brighten Academy will cultivate an operationally effective and efficient learning community that promotes growth of students and staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brighten Academy will conduct an operational assessment called GAPSS. A score of 3 (operational) will be earned in 6/7 categories
Brighten Academy will operate using sound business and instructional practices that will ensure sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive cash Flow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment will be at or above 95% of capacity

For each year of operation:

- Brighten Academy’s overall student assessment results will be compared to schools in the Douglas County School System.
- Individual student results (cohort groups) will be used to compare each student’s progress from year to year, assist in planning instruction, develop and monitor progress on Individual Learning Plans, evaluate teaching practices, curriculum, and educational framework, and ensure that charter goals and responsibilities are met. The cohort group will mirror the current student demographic data (percent gifted, special ed, at risk, etc.). All members of the cohort groups will be selected by a random process to ensure statistical validity.
- Individual student results will be used to compare each student’s progress from year to year. This will assist in planning instruction, developing and monitoring progress on Individual Learning Plans, and evaluating teaching practices, curriculum.
- Brighten Academy will work collaboratively with the Douglas County School System to ensure that all state and federal academic mandates are met.

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

- Rubrics
- Running Records
- Pre and post tests
- Universal Screenings in reading fluency, reading comprehension, and math computation
- Portfolios

- Will be structurally defined by grade level curriculum benchmarks
- Will demonstrate student performance on a broad range of tasks
- Will be shared with parents during conferences
- Will be used as an indicator for placement each year
- Yearly Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT)
- Other standardized test measures employed by the Douglas County School System (e.g., ITBS)
- Common Benchmark Assessments
- Projects
- Discussions, daily skill maintenance, daily learning activities

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

- Newsletters, parent letters, websites, etc.
- 9 week standards based report cards
- Graded papers with commentary
- Parent conferences
- Behavior logs

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

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

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

School Hours

School office hours are 7:10-4:00.

Instructional school hours are from 8:00-3:15.

All students (grades K-8) must **be in their homeroom** by 8:00am.

Privacy Rights

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

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

Administrative Roles and Responsibilities

Business/Student Services Manager: Angi Andrews

The primary function is to provide a safe, secure learning environment by maintaining the facility and campus, maintaining accurate student and staff records, and overseeing the school's fiscal operations. The Office Manager will oversee payroll.

Director Primary Functions: Lisa McDonald

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

Assistant Director Primary Functions: Connie Arnold

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

Leadership Intern Primary Functions: Katie Derringer

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

Instructional Aide Primary Functions: Toni Aybar

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

Receptionist Primary Functions: Darlene Wheeler

The receptionist's primary functions are creating a warm and welcoming environment for all stakeholders, dispensing medication and first aid to all students when needed, assisting in the maintenance of student data pertaining to absences, and supporting the general business and communication needs of the school.

Office Clerk Primary Functions: Degi Winstead

The primary function of the office clerk is to assist the Business/Student Services Manager in all functions related to finances, human resources, student enrollment, and facility.

School wide Procedures and Expectations

Student safety and supervision are our first priority.

Student Arrival

Brookmont Campus

Students may arrive as early as 7:10 a.m. They will be monitored by a staff member/s. Students who are participating in the school breakfast program should eat as soon as they arrive to ensure access for all students. Designated breakfast tables should be utilized for eating to facilitate a quick and easy clean-up. K-2 students will report directly to the hallway in Building One. 3-5 students will report directly to the cafeteria. The cafeteria/hall will be kept **silent** to help prepare students for a productive day. Students may read, study, draw, or do some other quiet activity. Book bags are to remain packed. All homeroom teachers will pick up their students at 7:45 to begin the school day.

Prestley Mill Campus

Students may arrive as early as 7:10 a.m. They will be monitored by a staff member/s. Students who are participating in the school breakfast program should eat as soon as they arrive to ensure access for all students. Designated breakfast tables should be utilized for eating to facilitate a quick and easy clean-up. All students, 6-8, will report to the cafeteria. The cafeteria will be kept **silent** to help prepare students for a productive day. Students may read, study, draw, or do some other quiet activity. Book bags are to remain packed. Students will be dismissed to homerooms at 7:45.

Dismissal

As you can imagine, dismissal is a very hectic time for all. We certainly appreciate your patience as we work to make sure each child is safely dismissed each day.

Dismissal will begin PROMPTLY at 3:15 pm. You may utilize the car rider line if you have your Brighten Academy car tag. We will issue this tag at the beginning of the year or upon student enrollment. This tag helps to expedite the dismissal process, and it helps us make sure that the person in the car has the authority to pick up the listed student(s). If your transportation plan requires several adults picking up your child you will need to request additional tags. It takes us about 25-30 minutes on a “typical” day to dismiss students. Students who are still in the building at 3:30 (if the car rider line is over) will be sent to the front office or our After School Program.

If you accumulate more than 3 late pick-ups, your child will be required to enroll in the ASP program and you will be charged the registration fee, as well as daily fees. Any child not picked up by 4:00 pm (on the first occurrence) will automatically be sent to ASP. This will require your child to be enrolled in the ASP program and you will be subject to the registration fee and daily fee. If sent to ASP you will be expected to pay the registration fee of \$25.00 and the daily fee of \$10.00 per child.

Emergency Procedures

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

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

Inclement Weather

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

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

Clinic and Accident Reports

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Medication

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

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

Policies

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

PTO

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

Communication

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

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

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

Graded papers, student work, and other classroom information will be distributed by each classroom teacher. Your child's teacher will communicate what day to expect this information, and they will let you know when (if) signatures are needed on graded work or logs. You can also expect a classroom newsletter that will outline special needs, classroom news, and update you on the curricular focus for the month. Staff members will also be available to parents via phone, email, or in person by appointment from the hours of 8:00-4:00 each weekday.

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

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

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

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

Extracurricular Activities

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

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

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

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

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

Students Not in Good Standing

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

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

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

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

Forms of Payment

Throughout the year, Brighten will sponsor various activities, field trips, and fundraisers that may require a fee or donation. We also have some fee based programs such as ASP and some of our clubs that require fees for participation. In order to help us correctly credit our students for payment and keep accurate accounting records we ask that you observe the following procedures.

*When sending money to school please make sure it is properly labeled with your child's name, homeroom teacher, amount enclosed, and what the money is for.

*When paying by cash, please send the exact amount. The office (and teachers) do not have cash on hand to make change.

*When paying by check please be sure to note student, homeroom teacher, and purpose in the memo line of the check.

*When paying by check for field trips, we ask that the check be written two weeks before the event. This will allow time to process the check before the event occurs.

*Some forms of payment need to go to PTO or Brighten Academy. We ask that these payments not be combined on one check. You will need to write a check for each entity.

*Combining payments for siblings (for example paying for school pictures for 3 kids on one check) is acceptable and preferable. Just be sure to mark everything in the memo line.

*If the parent and student have different last names, please be sure to include student name on check.

*Please do not combine payments for different purposes (for example, do not write one check for pictures and a lost media center book).

*Only cash payments will be accepted after May 1st for any purpose (lost library books, ASP, field trips, etc.).

Returned Check Fees

We will do our best to efficiently process checks so that you can properly budget. In the event a check is returned for insufficient funds, we will add a charge of \$20.00. After the second NSF we will only accept cash or money orders as a form of payment. Please note that fees for returned checks can impact your child's ability to participate in extracurricular activities and/or jeopardize your student's good standing status. No checks will be accepted for payment of any kind after May 1st.

Student Attendance, Tardies, Check Outs

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

If a student is absent from school, the student may not participate in extracurricular activities after school that day.

How are absences calculated?

Absences are counted when an entire day is missed or when a child attends school for less than 3 hours and fifteen minutes (11:30 a.m.) on any given student day. To be counted present for the day, students must check in before 11:30 a.m. and stay for the remainder of the day or arrive by 8:15 a.m. and stay until 11:30 a.m.

Excused Absences

The following shall be considered excused absences:

- Absence for a temporary or extended period for illness, injury, or for a physical, mental, or emotional disability.
- Absence for a scheduled or emergency appointment or service that cannot be accommodated outside of school hours.
- Absence due to a family emergency
- Absence for observance of religious holidays or restriction in a child's participation in a school activity for religious reasons or strongly held personal beliefs.
- Absence of an educational nature with advance approval for the administration
- Absence due to a serious illness or death in the family.

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

Unexcused Absences

- An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the reasons or circumstances noted as an excused absence. Some examples include oversleeping, vacation, weddings, etc.
- Unexcused absences may subject the student to appropriate penalties as outlined in Brighten's Code of Conduct.
- Out-of-school suspension days are unexcused absences.

School Administration Excused Absences:

Regular attendance is an indicator of success. We also believe that learning extends beyond the classroom. Administration discourages planned trips/excursions during instructional time, but will review requests for excused absences pertaining to trips with an educational focus.

Requests for an excused educational trip must be made in writing at least 5 days prior to leaving. Be sure to state your child's name, teacher's name, educational focus of the trip, and how you plan to present what was learned to the class.

The following criteria will be used to determine if the trip/activity will be excused.

- 1) Attendance record
- 2) Does the trip relate to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards or provide a unique and enriching life experience?
- 3) Academic standing...is the student up to speed on their work and maintaining their grades?
- 4) Student Discipline record

Administration will not excuse trips/events that extend beyond 5 school days (total). Trips to Disney World, beach trips, ski trips, and family reunions do not meet the criteria for an excused absence.

Make-up Work for Absences

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

Administration of Absences

Unexcused- Middle School

After 3 - 4 unexcused absences:

The School will attempt to contact the parents by phone and/or email.

After five unexcused absences:

The School will make attempts to contact the parent by phone and/or email. In addition, the Excessive Unexcused Absences letter #1 will be sent via Certified Mail (return receipt requested). A copy of the current Douglas County Attendance Policy will be sent with the letter as well.

After six unexcused absences:

The School will ensure that the unexcused absences are verified from actions taken after the fifth absence. The School will send Excessive Unexcused Absences letter #2 to inform the parents of the student's unexcused absences and the referral to Law Enforcement. A copy of the Current Douglas County Attendance Policy will be sent with the letter as well. The Student/Parent will be referred to the administration who may contact county representatives for consult with a School Resource Officer and School Social Worker.

Law Enforcement will investigate the student, parent(s)/guardian(s) and others in the home for a record of family violence, crimes against children, substance abuse, a substantiated or open DFACS case, and prior involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice, truancy panel or truancy interim order. If the student is currently on probation, the school will submit a Form 90 for truancy. If prior involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice, truancy panel or truancy interim order is found, a warrant will be issued by law enforcement. The bond for the warrant will have pre-set conditions requiring that the student attend school. Upon the next unexcused absence, the Director shall direct law enforcement to request revocation of the bond. If evidence is found on any other of the above list, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred to the School Attendance Panel and the school will make a report to DFACS.

If no evidence is found, the School Attendance Committee will develop an intervention plan that requires a parent/guardian agreement to interventions which specifically address the attendance problem. If the parent refuses to sign the agreement or the intervention plan is not successful, or the attendance contract is violated, the school will refer the student/parent to the School Attendance Panel. Students found to be off roll for more than five consecutive days will be referred to Juvenile Court by filing a Form 90.

Unexcused- Elementary

After three and four unexcused absences:

The School will attempt to contact the parents by phone and/or email.

After five unexcused absences:

The School will make two attempts to contact the parent by phone. In addition, the Excessive Unexcused Absences letter #1 will be sent via Certified Mail (return receipt requested) to inform the parents of the student's unexcused absences. A copy of the current Douglas County Attendance Policy will be sent with the letter as well.

After six unexcused absences:

The School will ensure that the unexcused absences are verified from actions taken after the fifth absence. The School will send Excessive Unexcused Absences letter #2 to inform the parents of the student's unexcused absences and the referral to Law Enforcement. A copy of the Current Douglas County Attendance Policy will be sent with the letter as well. The Student/Parent will be referred to Law Enforcement. Copies of the completed checklist [JBD-E(1)] and all letters shall be submitted with the referral. Truancy Protocol Checklists will be submitted to Law Enforcement [JBD-E(7)], Juvenile Court [JBD-E(8)], and DFACS [JBD-E(9)].

Law Enforcement will investigate the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and others in the home for a record of family violence, crimes against children, substance abuse, a substantiated or open DFACS case, and prior involvement with the truancy panel or truancy interim order.

If evidence is found on any of the above list, law enforcement will issue a warrant to the parent(s)/guardian(s) requiring their appearance in court. The bond for the warrant will have pre-set conditions requiring that the student attend school. Upon the next unexcused absence, the Principal shall direct law enforcement to request revocation of the bond. The school will make a report to DFACS.

Any child who meets any of the following criteria may be referred to the School Attendance Panel:

- Suspected substance abuse in the home.
- Student is off roll more than five consecutive days.
- There exists a substantiated DFACS case, early intervention or diversion.
- Excessive total absences and/or tardies.

If no evidence is found, the School Attendance Committee will develop an intervention plan that requires a parent/guardian agreement to interventions which specifically address the attendance problem. If the parent refuses to sign the agreement or the intervention plan is not successful, or the attendance contract is violated, the school will refer the student/parent to law enforcement for a warrant and DFACS for investigation. The bond for the warrant will have pre-set conditions requiring that the student attend school. Upon the next unexcused absence, the Principal shall direct law enforcement to request revocation of the bond.

Students found to be off roll for more than five consecutive days will be referred to Juvenile Court by filing a Form 90.

School days missed as a result of an out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

Excused and Unexcused

At eight excused or a combination of excused/unexcused absences:

The school will make two attempts to contact the parent by phone or email. Parents will also be notified of absences via US mail.

At ten excused or a combination of excused/unexcused absences:

- The school will make two attempts to contact the parent by phone or email. After 10 absences (excused or unexcused) a doctor's note must be supplied for each additional absence. Failure to provide a doctor's excuse will result in the absence being coded unexcused.
- Once 10 absences are accumulated, a meeting with the parents and the attendance committee will be scheduled.

Tardiness

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

- Tardiness is the failure of the student to get to class on time and is considered a form of absence. The school day officially begins at 8:00 a.m. All children who **arrive at** or after 8:00 am must be walked into the building and signed in by the parent/guardian at the front office.
- Tardies are recorded as part of a student's attendance record.
- Tardies can be excused or unexcused following the same criteria used for absences.
- Students must be present for three hours and fifteen minutes to be counted present. Checking in after 11:15 results in an absence.
- If your child arrives after 10:00 am, please make sure that he/she has a prepared lunch. It will be too late to order a hot lunch for the day.

Early Check-Outs

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

- The school day ends at 3:15 p.m. Any student leaving before this time will be counted as having an early check-out.
- Early check-outs may be either excused or unexcused, following the same criteria as the attendance policy.
- In order for a doctor's appointment check-out to be excused, a note from the doctor must be returned to school the next day. Without this note, the check-out will be marked as unexcused.
- Students leaving before 3:15 p.m. must be signed out through the office.
- Students will be called to the office for release to a parent/guardian. Parents are asked to wait in the office until the child arrives. This procedure is necessary for the protection of our children.
- Only persons listed on the student's card will be allowed to sign out a student unless we have written permission from the parent. We will ask for identification if we do not know the person who is picking up the child.

What action is taken on Tardiness / Early Checkouts?

The Brighten Academy Board policy allows 15 unexcused tardies and/or early checkouts for the year.

- More than 15 unexcused tardies and/or early check-outs will be considered excessive. This will result in a parent/administrator conference and a possible student discipline referral.
- Excessive tardies are also a violation of the compulsory attendance laws. Violation of these laws could result in notification to the school's social worker or court system.
- Parents will be notified via mail and/or phone once a student reaches ten or more unexcused tardies or early checkouts.

Student Make Up Work/ Late Assignments

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

Outstanding or late assignments will be able to be turned in so that understanding can be assessed. Teachers may apply appropriate consequences for this academic infraction (e.g., work during recess, complete a discipline referral, detention, etc.). Students will be marked down on their 7 Cs report card under Commitment for missing/late assignments. Failure to complete assignments could result in the issuance of a grade of incomplete. This may mean the student does not receive enough credits to advance to the next grade level.

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

Parking

Visitors may choose to park anywhere on the campus except in any fire lane, red curbs, and the pickup and drop off lanes. Please note that some parking places in the parking lot are reserved parking spaces.

The drive in front of the two main buildings at the Brookmont Campus is considered a fire lane. We are required to keep this area clear so that emergency vehicles have easy access to all buildings. We ask that when you park along the curb that you do not park beyond the flag pole.

Food Services/Lunch

Breakfast/Lunch Program

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

The school will communicate the cost of lunch and breakfast at the beginning of each school year. All payments must be received via the online pay portal or through a check addressed to Brighten Academy Charter School.

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

One milk is provided with each purchased lunch, and students may purchase an additional carton of milk for 50 cents.

When entering the cafeteria please line students up in the following order (Students K-5):

- 1) Brought lunch from home, nothing additional to purchase
- 2) Brought lunch from home, purchase milk, ice cream, water
- 3) Lunch choice 1
- 4) Lunch choice 2

Brighten Academy also participates in the Free/Reduced Lunch program. If you need information related to this program, please see the Leadership Intern.

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

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

Visitors and Volunteers

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

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

Visitors are discouraged from using student restrooms. They are encouraged to use the staff restroom in the main building or in the workroom.

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

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

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

Awards

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

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

Student Withdrawal

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

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

Media Center

Selection Procedures for Library Media Resources

Purpose

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

Selection Responsibility

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

Selection Process

Resources for library media centers are selected by the professional media staff with due regard to suggestions from the faculty, parents, and students. Library media specialists seek to examine resources before they are ordered whenever possible. Faculty members are responsible for fulfilling teaching objectives and standards of learning; therefore, they provide a valuable

resource for library media specialists and are encouraged to request resources. Every effort will be made to honor their requests. Students and parents may also submit requests for resources that they would like to see in the library. The process of selecting resources continues throughout the school year. The discarding of out-dated resources and the replacement of lost and worn resources still of educational value is part of the selection and collection development process. Gift resources, free and inexpensive resources, and sponsored resources are evaluated by the same criteria as purchased resources. Professionally recognized collection development lists and reviews are used to aid in the selection process.

Please see our media specialist for further information on our selection policies and procedures.

Technology

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

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

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

STUDENT DRESS CODE

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

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

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

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

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Shirts

1. Shirts must be solid red, white, or navy blue in color.
2. Shirts may have a Brighten logo or another logo that is no more than two inches high and three inches wide.
3. The following styles may be worn:
 - a. Oxford button down
 - b. Golf or polo (long or short sleeved)
 - c. Turtlenecks
 - d. Crew neck t-shirt with Brighten logo purchased through school approved vendor
4. Additional adornments (lace, rhinestones, etc.) are not permitted.
5. Oxfords, golf, and polo shirts must be buttoned all the way up except for the top button.
6. Exterior shirts must be long enough to cover the waist (midriff).
7. Shirts must be the proper size for the student wearing them. Shirts may not be form-fitting nor loose enough to show cleavage, chest, or shoulders.
8. Undershirts worn under an exterior shirt must not be visible from the bottom or arms of the shirt and must be tucked in as necessary so they will not be visible. Long sleeve crew neck style shirts may be worn under a collared shirt (which meets dress code requirements).
9. Exterior shirts must not be pinned, rolled, knotted, or otherwise worn to expose garments worn underneath the exterior shirt, with the exception of having collars (in the specified solid colors) visible under a sweater.

Pants and Skirts

1. The following styles are acceptable for boys or girls:
 - a. Slacks
 - b. Shorts
2. The following styles are acceptable for girls:
 - a. Capri pants
 - b. Skirts

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

Sweaters

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

Coats / Jackets

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

Shoes

1. Shoes must be predominantly white, navy blue, black, gray, or brown in color.
2. The following shoe styles are acceptable:
 - a. Tennis Shoes

- b. Athletic Footwear
 - c. Boots
 - d. Loafers
 - e. Closed toe shoes with less than a one inch heel
3. Shoes may have a manufacturer's logo and name
4. Shoes may have a second color for accents or trim, provided one of the colors listed above is the predominant color.
5. Bedroom shoes and slippers may NOT be worn unless permission is given to wear them on a special-dress day.
6. Students are required to wear athletic shoes during Physical Education or Dance and Movement classes.
7. Students in grades 6-8 may wear sandals with back straps.
8. Flip flops are not permitted.

Hair

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

Accessories

2. Socks, tights, and leggings must be red, white, navy blue, black, or gray in color.
3. Socks, tights, and leggings must be solid in color.
4. Hats may not be worn indoors unless specifically authorized by the administration for special-dress days.

Jewelry

1. Students (male or female) are permitted to wear earrings in one or both ears. Earrings (studs, bars, chains) may not be visible in any other part of the body other than the ear. Students are not permitted to wear more than 2 earrings in each ear.
2. Students may not wear chains protruding from pants pockets or any other area.
3. Students may not wear jewelry that makes excessive noise or that is distracting to others. Jewelry is to remain modest.

4. Neither Brighten Academy nor its staff is responsible for jewelry that is lost or stolen.

Middle School Physical Education Dress Out

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

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

SPECIAL DAYS AND EVENTS

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

Spirit Day (every Monday)

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

Middle School Jersey Day

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

Fashionable Friday (every Friday unless otherwise notified in advance)

Students may “dress down” on Fridays; meaning that they may wear clothing that is not solid in color and/or that incorporates colors other than those specified in the Basic Requirements.

Student also may wear jeans on Fridays, provided they are free from holes, tears, or fraying and otherwise comply with the Dress Code requirements for pants.

Middle school students (grades 6-8) must earn the “privilege” of Fashionable Friday by having no demerits for the week and all assignments must be current. If the privilege is not earned, the student will be required to adhere to the school’s uniform dress code.

Seven C’s Shirts (Anytime)

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

School Dances (by written announcement)

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

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

Costume-Theme Days (by written announcement)

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

Field Trips and Other Special Events (by written announcement)

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

Clothes Closet

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

Dress Code Violations

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

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

UNSURE?

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

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

Parent Involvement Compact

Family School Connection

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

Brighten Academy's Pledge to Parents:

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

Parents' Pledge to the School:

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

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

Ways to Obtain Volunteer Credits (10 credits must be earned by January 1st)

Volunteer Activity	Credit	Per	Notes
Participate in a committee or subcommittee	1	Hour	
Serve as a Board Member or PTO Officer	20	Year	
Serve as a mentor or tutor	2	Hour	
Classroom room parent	5	Year	
Volunteer in the classroom	1	Hour	
Volunteer in the media center (admin, storytelling)	1	Hour	At home work = ½ credit per hour (Requires signature of media specialist on log).
Volunteer in the office	1	Hour	
Volunteer at Car Riders	½	Hour	
Volunteer as a Lunch Buddy (per ½ hour)	½	½ Hour	
Volunteer at extracurricular activity (Spring Fling, chaperone dances, Birdies for Brighten, etc.)	1	Hour	
Volunteer at the Book Fair	1	Hour	
Volunteer as a proctor during testing (per hour)	1	Hour	
Sponsor a club or sport (per hour)	1	Hour	
Attend extracurricular activities or school events, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Classroom performances ❖ School performances ❖ Competitions ❖ Curriculum, Community and Conversation ❖ Board Meetings ❖ Board Work Sessions ❖ Award Celebrations ❖ Classroom Parties ❖ Learning Celebrations ❖ Open House ❖ Brighten Basics 	1	Event	
Complete at home projects for teachers, staff, clubs, PTA, etc.	½	Hour	Requires staff member signature
Lawn maintenance	1	Hour	
Chaperone on field trips	3	Day	Overnight trips = 8 credits per day
Saturday Volunteer Days	1	Hour	
Participate in school-wide programs including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Career Day 	1	Event	

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

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

Discipline

Purpose

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

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

Statement of Student Conduct

Our goal is to teach students the value and importance of following established rules and procedures in order to maintain a safe, orderly, and respectful environment both in the

educational setting and in our communities. To that end, we will positively reinforce honorable conduct and good behavior as often as possible, and will balance this with appropriate consequences for misconduct. We will continually provide encouragement and support to students in self-management of behavior and control of actions.

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

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

Student Misconduct

Students may be referred to the office for any of the offenses listed below. Students generally travel through three levels of the Discipline Cycle before reaching Discipline Hearing. Students with a singular offense will begin on Level I. Students with a referral for the same offense will then move to Level II. Students may be referred to the office and stay on Level I for up to 3 singular non-related offenses before moving to Level II. Students on Level II who incur an additional offense of any nature will be moved to Level III and will begin the Discipline Hearing process.

Examples of Level I or II Offenses

- Accumulated Demerits—Continuous Disruptive Behavior
- Assignments Incomplete/Academic Issue
- Bullying (aggressive or passive aggressive)
- Damaging or Misusing School Property/Materials
- Defiance
- Dishonesty (lying, cheating, omission, stealing)
- Disrespect
- Disruption
- Dress Code
- Electronic Devices
- Gambling
- Insubordination
- Language/Gestures
- Physical Contact (hitting, kicking/roughing, horseplay, fighting, inappropriate touching, public display of affection etc.)

- Not reporting to class
- Punctuality
- Refusal to Identify Self
- School Representation Inappropriate (on or off campus)
- Teasing/Minor Intimidation
- Unauthorized Area
- OTHER:

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

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

- Drugs (possession or use)
- Assault & Battery
- Causing Danger
- Intimidation/Threats
- Leaving Premises (on or off campus)
- Weapons (possession or use)
- Bullying
- Theft

School Communication/Intervention for Behavior Referrals:

When a child is written up for a level one offense, an administrator or his/her designee will notify the parent. The teacher completing the referral should also speak with the parent.

Once a child reaches Level II, an administrative conference is held. This conference will consist of an administrator, the teacher, and the child’s parent(s). The conference will focus on the responsibility of the parents, students, and school to help reduce behaviors.

If behaviors persist, the child will be sent to a Discipline Committee to develop a behavior contract. The Discipline Committee will be composed of an administrator, a lead teacher, the child’s teacher, the parent(s), and any other school personnel as requested (counselor, psychologist, etc.)

If the behavior contract developed in Discipline Committee is not fulfilled, the student will be sent to Discipline Hearing. The Discipline Hearing policy is outlined in detail in the charter.

A Discipline Hearing Waiver may be signed in place of a Discipline Hearing. The waiver will include stipulations that must be met and takes the place of the hearing.

Classroom Discipline Expectations

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

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

Electronic Devices and Toys

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

Students in grades 4-8 are allowed to participate in a voluntary Bring Your Own Technology Plan. Students must have parent and teacher permission to participate in this program. Failure to comply with this policy for use of the BYOT will result in a loss of BYOT privileges and/or disciplinary action. Further incidents will result in an office discipline referral. The homeroom teacher reserves the right to revoke a student's privilege regarding BYOT at any time and will inform the parent if such an instance occurs. If you are interested, please contact your child's teacher for the appropriate forms.

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

Homework

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

The following guidelines have been established to ensure that appropriate amounts of homework are provided to allow for a balance of work and home time. These guidelines are based on

nightly averages and may change periodically to be either less or more as particular needs arise throughout the school year. Projects are expected to be provided regularly and homework assignments adjusted accordingly to allow for work on the projects. However, parents are expected to guide students in time management for completion of projects.

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

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

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

Recess and Playground

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

As long as the temperature is 40 degrees or higher, the children are allowed to go outside when conditions are dry and as the teacher permits. We will use thermometers/computers to gauge the temperature before heading outside. Recess is considered a privilege earned and may be revoked in whole or part for classroom or school rule infraction or incomplete/missing work or homework. No child may play on the playground or grounds without direct adult supervision.

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

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

Field Trip Student Guidelines

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

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

Field Trip early check outs:

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

Field trip check outs from field trip site:

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

Chaperone Lottery:

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

General Fieldtrip Policies:

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

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

Class Parties and Celebrations

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

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

After School Program (ASP)

Mission

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

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

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

Lost and Found

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