

2025-2026

Brighten Academy



**BRIGHTEN
ACADEMY**

Parent/Student 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.

Dear Parents and Students,

We are excited to begin another school year together at Brighten Academy! As you know, Brighten’s mission is to prepare students for high academic achievement, beyond what they think possible, so that they grow into active contributors and leaders in building a better world. We want our students to leave here knowing that there is “more in them than they know.”

Brighten’s academic program is rooted in the EL Education model, which challenges students to take ownership of their learning and collaborate on authentic projects that connect classroom study to the real world. Through learning expeditions, students work together to investigate meaningful issues, find solutions to problems, and share their learning in ways that make an impact on our community. Our commitment to rigorous academics, strong character development, and meaningful service ensures that students are not only scholars, but also leaders and engaged citizens.

Our dedicated faculty and staff are eager to partner with you in helping your child reach their full potential. At the same time, student success depends on a strong partnership between school and home. That’s where YOU come in! Your input, collaboration, and involvement are key as we continue to grow Brighten’s impact and celebrate the next chapter in our story.

We invite every parent to:

- **Read this handbook** carefully and refer to it throughout the year, as it outlines important policies and procedures.
- **Learn more about our Expeditionary Learning model**, which makes Brighten unique.
- **Get involved**—whether through volunteering, Parent Crew, school-wide initiatives, or supporting your child’s learning at home.

We look forward to a school year filled with learning, leadership, and crew spirit—and to working alongside you to ensure every student thrives at Brighten Academy.

Together in Crew,
Mrs. Tonetta Pugh
Executive Director
tpugh@brightenacademy.com

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BRIGHTEN ACADEMY

**“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 procedures herein should be followed and will be strictly enforced.

The Brighten Academy Charter School Governing 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 nurture habits of scholarship and ethical character in a joyful, engaging, rigorous, and equitable learning environment. Inspired educators, in partnership with parents and the community, will ensure measured growth in every student every year and empower students to create a brighter future for our world.

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 the 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 the 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 crew culture.

The Seven C’s

Craftsmanship

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

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
 - ✓ PTO meetings
 - ✓ local newspapers
- 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
- Teachers model desired character traits
- Classroom meetings – class discussions, goal setting, and problem solving

Crew Culture

- Treating others with kindness and respect
- Developing empathy for others
- 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

EL Education

In EL Education 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.

EL Education 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.

EL Education 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

EL Education - Crew

An EL Education 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 Circles are a common structure in EL Education Schools that help to build a culture of pride, success and celebration in both academics and character. Community Circle for grade levels or grade bands will occur at various times throughout the school year. We will come together to celebrate our achieved goals and accomplishments. Parents are welcome at Community Circle meetings.

Administrative Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Director: Mrs. Tonetta Pugh

The primary function is to work closely with the Brighten Academy Board, as well as the Douglas County School System to ensure the school is compliant with policies, operational and business procedures, nutritional program, after school program, and educational law. The Executive Director will also participate in charter school advocacy on behalf of Brighten Academy. The Executive Director will work closely with parents, staff, and students to make sure that we successfully meet our school's mission. The Executive Director is a member of the administrative team.

Director of Finance and Human Resources: Ms. Katie Smith

The primary function is to oversee the front office, maintain accurate student and staff records, and oversee the school's fiscal operations, human resources, and payroll. Will support the Executive Director and the Principal in meeting the school's goals. The Director of Finance and Human Resources will act on behalf of the Executive Director if this person is not available. The Director of Finance and Human Resources is a member of the administrative team.

Principal: Mrs. Donna Davis

The primary function is to implement, monitor, and ensure that Brighten Academy is compliant with state standards and charter objectives as it relates to the curriculum, discipline, student, and staff needs. The Principal will support the Executive Director and the Director of Finance and Human Resource in meeting the school's goals. The Principal will act on behalf of the Executive Director if this person is not available. The Principal will work closely with parents, staff, and students to make sure that we successfully meet our school's mission. The Principal is a member of the administrative team.

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Kelly Bemus

The primary function is to support the Principal in meeting the school's goals. The Assistant Principal is a member of the administrative team. The Assistant Principal will act on behalf of the Principal if this person is not available. This position oversees the Kindergarten through 2nd grade curriculum, instruction, discipline, and parent communication; as well as Program Challenge (Gifted) and Special Education.

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Candice Sparks

The primary function is to support the Principal in meeting the school's goals. The Assistant Principal is a member of the administrative team. The Assistant Principal will act on behalf of the Principal if this person is not available. This position oversees the 3rd grade through 5th grade curriculum, instruction, discipline, and parent communication; as well as the Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS & SST) team, and the New Teacher Academy.

Assistant Principal: Dr. Steven Littles

The primary function is to support the Principal in meeting the school's goals. The Assistant Principal is a member of the administrative team. The Assistant Principal will act on behalf of the Principal if this person is not available. This position oversees the 6th grade through 8th grade curriculum, instruction, discipline, and parent communication; as well as Specials, Clubs, and Extracurriculars; and the After School Program.

Administrative Support Roles and Responsibilities

Finance & Human Resource Specialist: Mrs. Chandell Johnson

The primary function of the Finance & Human Resource Specialist is the onboarding of new employees, managing substitute teachers, maintaining employee records, and assisting the Director of Finance and Human Resources in all functions related business operations and human resources.

Executive Assistants: Mrs. Aubriel "Bree" Cameron and Ms. Gigi McGhee

The primary function of the Executive Assistants is assisting the Executive Director in all functions.

Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Angela Harris

The primary function of the Administrative Assistant is assisting the Principal in all functions.

Student Services Coordinator / Registrar: Mrs. Pam Scherer

The primary function of the Student Services Coordinator/Registrar is to create a warm and welcoming environment for all stakeholders, maintaining the enrollment list, registration, student records, and supporting the general business and communication needs of the school.

Office Clerk & Health Monitor: Mrs. Dena Wilkins

The primary function of the Health Monitor is to dispense medication and first aid to all students when needed and create a warm and welcoming environment for all stakeholders. The role

supports the general business and communication needs of the school. The role also supports the discipline process with the supervision of students who are completing restorative work.

Receptionist/School Information Support: Ms. Lucy Reyes

The primary function of the Receptionist is to create a warm and welcoming environment for all stakeholders, admit visitors to the building, answer parent/visitor questions, respond to needs about general school information including, but not limited to, arrival and dismissal, transportation, school wide events, the school website, and other needs.

Administrative Practices

Privacy Rights

We will protect your child’s right to privacy by following all guidelines set forth in 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 it to the school administrator within 10 days of enrollment.

Non-Discrimination

Brighten Academy will not engage in unlawful discrimination. Brighten Academy does not and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

Statement of Authority of Executive Director

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive and instructional leader of Brighten Academy, entrusted by the Governing Board with the full authority and responsibility to ensure the effective operation, safety, and success of the school. This includes oversight of academic programs, personnel, finances, facilities, communications, and stakeholder engagement. The Executive Director has the authority to:

- Implement and enforce all school systems, policies, and procedures to safeguard students, staff, and the broader school community.
- Oversee curriculum, instruction, professional development, and student support services to maintain high standards of learning.
- Manage all school personnel, including hiring, assignment, evaluation, and termination, in alignment with board-approved policies.
- Direct the school’s finances, fundraising initiatives, and resources to ensure fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

- Act as the primary liaison between the school, the Governing Board, parents, community partners, and regulatory agencies.
- Enforce student discipline, promotion, and extracurricular participation in accordance with school policies and best interests of the student body.
- Make determinations regarding facilities, technology, and safety procedures, including emergency responses and inclement weather decisions.

In carrying out these responsibilities, the Executive Director is accountable to the Governing Board and acts in alignment with the school’s charter, mission, and strategic goals.

School Wide Procedures and Expectations

School Hours

School office hours are 7:10 am until 4:00 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 7:10 am until 1:00 pm on Wednesdays.

Student Arrival

Student safety and supervision is our priority. The car pool line will form along the side of the classroom building and in front of the media center. Students will exit the cars from the passenger side and proceed to the sidewalk to enter the building at the media center doors.

Students may arrive as early as 7:10 a.m. They will be monitored by staff members. Students who are participating in the school breakfast program should eat as soon as they arrive to ensure access for all students. Students will be dismissed to homerooms at 7:40. Students may not bring drinks (coffee, cups with straws, open containers) or food into the classrooms. Closed containers with water only will be allowed.

Instructional school hours for students:

Grades:	Beginning Time for all Days Monday-Friday:	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday Dismissal Time:	Wednesday Dismissal Time:
K-8 th	7:50 am	3:15 pm	11:45 am

Exceptions are noted on the school calendar.

All students (grades K-8) must **be seated in their homeroom** by 7:50 am.

Dismissal

We certainly appreciate your patience as we work to make sure each child is safely dismissed each day. Any adult picking up students must present a school issued pick up card to the staff member on duty at the doors and to the staff member on duty at the pick up location. Anyone without the card will be required to go to the office to present their identification to pick up the student. All parents should park in a designated parking space in the parking lot.

Parents, or other adult, with the pick up card will walk to the exit doors designated for your child's grade level. The dismissal locations are as follows:

- Kindergarten—media center back door (kids in media center)—15 minutes prior to 1st-8th dismissal times
- 1st grade—back door by picnic tables (kids in hallways by doors)
- 2nd grade—media center entrance doors (kids in hallways/classroom)
- 3rd grade—playground/gaga pit area exit doors (kids in Sped/PC classrooms)
- 4th grade—back door by picnic tables (kids in hallways)
- 5th grade—media center entrance doors (kids in media center and hallway as needed)
- 6th grade—front office / atrium double doors (kids in gym)
- 7th grade—front office / atrium double doors (kids in gym)
- 8th grade—parents come to back door by picnic tables; students assembled at upper breezeway/ 2nd floor hallway

Other notes for dismissal:

- Dismissal locations will be marked with a cone and grade level designation.
- Parents are expected to pick up their students at the dismissal location.
- The pick up card is **required** for pick up.
 - Please be prepared to show the card to the teacher for every pick up.
 - Anyone without a card will be asked to go to the front office reception area with a form of positive identification in order to pick up a student.
- Only persons listed on the emergency contact list will be allowed to pick up students from the front office reception area.
- Please park in a designated parking space for pick up. Parking along the curb or in no parking zones is prohibited and greatly impedes the traffic flow. Please be courteous!
- Students will not be released into a taxi or other personal transportation service.
- Siblings will be dismissed from one location. Here are details:
 - If you have a 6th or 7th grade student—dismiss/pick up from the front office double doors of the atrium with all siblings;
 - If you have a kindergarten student they will dismiss from media center with all their siblings;
 - Other grades (1st-5th and 8th) will go with youngest sibling to their dismissal location

Students who are still in the building at 3:45 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday or 12:15 pm on Wednesday will be considered a late pick-up. If more than 3 late pick-ups are accrued, a late pick up fee will apply (\$5.00 per day). Although we appreciate notification of a late pick up, it does not eliminate the fee.

Students may not stay in the After School Program unless pre-registered.

Elevator Use by Students

The following are guidelines for student elevator access and to ensure our elevator is used properly. In general, if your child does not have a medical note or specific permission, they cannot use the elevator. Staff will address issues with unauthorized use as needed.

- **Medical Needs:** If your student needs to use the elevator for medical reasons, please provide a doctor’s note to the school health monitor and/or main office. We will provide your student with a temporary pass to use the elevator.
- **Special Cases:** If there are other reasons students might need the elevator, please reach out to our Front Office. Certain situations may require changes or exceptions to the elevator rules, which will be reviewed at the discretion of school administration. We will review these requests individually.
- **Traveling with a Buddy:** If your student is granted elevator access, they will ride with a responsible friend to ensure everyone’s safety.

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 Health Monitor 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 campus, we will be evacuated to the First Baptist Church parking lot.

Security and Safety

Safety is a priority of Brighten Academy, and a school safety plan shall be developed, implemented, and annually updated working closely with the county, state, and federal emergency management agencies according to county and state procedures. Safety drills will be conducted according to state law.

Part of the safety plan at Brighten Academy is an armed security officer. This officer shall hold Peace Officer Standards and Training certification and adhere to any and all additional guidance associated with P.O.S.T. training. The security officer will also work to build relationships with students as a Success Coach, providing opportunities for students to learn from and about positive Crew role models.

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.

In the event school is closed due to inclement weather, students will participate in digital learning. Teachers will communicate assignments for the day(s) missed due to school closings.

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, apply/administer herbs/homeopathic substances in any form, 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 of 100.4 degrees or higher
- A rash or unknown skin problem
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe pain

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 school staff is not authorized to administer non-prescription medicine (Tylenol, cold capsules, cough drops, etc.) with a verbal consent. All medication(s) must:

- Be in the original container
- Include the student's name
- Include the dosage clearly marked
- Be in date (not expired)
- Have a corresponding Medicine Authorization form signed by parent/guardian

In order for students to carry medication on their person at school, the parents/guardian must submit a doctor's note authorizing the student to carry the medication on their person and complete an "Authorization to Carry Medication" form. Receipt of this form by the school indicates the student has been trained on how to use and administer the medication being carried, and the student has permission to do so in the event of a medical emergency requiring the carried medication.

Seizure Action Plan—please let the school know if your child has a Seizure Action Plan, as well as medication related to this.

Policies

A full copy of Brighten Academy’s policies can be found 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.

PTO vs. Parent Crew

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. All new Brighten Academy Governing Board members are voted in by the PTO membership. Contact the front office for more information.

The Parent Crew exists to strengthen the partnership between families and Brighten Academy by fostering open communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student success. Its purpose is to give parents a voice in school initiatives, support positive school culture, and help build connections that enrich both the academic and social experiences of students. The Parent Crew meets regularly with the Executive Director and serves as the Executive Director’s advisory board. In this role, they provide input, share perspectives from the parent community, and collaborate on solutions that support the school’s mission and the success of all students.

Key Difference:

- The **PTO** is event and fundraising-driven.
 - **Example:** Hosting a fall festival, running a school store, or fundraising to buy new playground equipment.
- The **Parent Crew** is collaboration and advisory-driven, directly supporting school leadership and strengthening the school-home partnership.
 - **Example:** Advising on dismissal procedures, providing feedback on academic programs, or helping shape community-building initiatives.

See Parent Crew FAQ’s for more information.

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. Your child’s teacher will communicate the specific requirements for daily communication (signing agenda, behavior notes, etc.). The school also uses the Remind electronic communication tool to relay important information. Be sure to sign up for notifications from each of your child’s teacher and from the school. Directions will be available during open house and in the front office.

As a school, we primarily rely on Remind electronic communications so that we can conserve paper. We also post information on our website at www.brightenacademy.com and our Instagram social media account, [@brightenacademycharterschool](https://www.instagram.com/brightenacademycharterschool). 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 send this information home on **Mondays** in a special folder, and they will let you know when (if) signatures are needed on graded work or logs. You can also expect a classroom newsletter or communication outlining 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 between the hours of 8:00-4:00 each weekday during their planning time or other time without student supervision responsibilities.

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 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

Conferences should be scheduled based on individual needs and the schedules of parents and staff members. New in the 24-25 school year, students will participate in two digital learning days so that teachers can prioritize conference meetings with parents. Students are expected to complete the asynchronous work that was assigned by the teacher

1st semester - 10/29/25

2nd semester - 3/18/26

Conferences may be held via video conference or in person at the preference of the parties involved. Student-led conferences are a cornerstone of EL Education, and as such should occur at least one time per year. Student-led conferences are not intended to replace parent/teacher conferences. Students and families will participate in a Student-Led Conference (SLC) towards the end of the year, to present their volume of learning. This school-wide celebration is scheduled on May 13, 2026.

Forms of Payment

Throughout the year, Brighten will sponsor various activities, field studies, 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. We no longer accept cash or personal checks as we have transitioned to an online bill paying service. Information about setting up an account and payments will be sent home at the beginning of the year or contact the front office for details about how to set up an account and payment procedures. We also accept a signed money order or cashier's check made payable to Brighten Academy. See below for payment information related to the school meals program.

Our PTO will still accept cash and checks for various events, and our sports and extracurricular programs will accept cash for entrance to games and programs. The school also supports some local charities and may have various activities (dress down days, ice cream sales, etc.) where cash payments will be accepted.

Refunds will be issued through our online bill paying service via electronic check or US mail. Requests should be given to the Director of Finance and Human Resources from the receiving teacher or para.

Food Services/Lunch

Brighten Academy has contracted our meal services with The School Gourmet. All School Gourmet meals mirror the National School Breakfast & Lunch daily requirements for protein, vegetable, fruit, dairy, and grain; in addition to meeting requirements for limited calorie, fat, and sodium intake.

Payments and Deposits should be made via the online lunch payment portal. Cash payments for small balances (less than \$5) can be accepted at the front office, in an envelope with the student's name. Families can also make payment with a money order addressed to Brighten Academy Charter School and enclosed in an envelope with the student's name. We no longer accept personal check payments for lunch accounts. Students/parents are not allowed to make payments during lunch service.

Per board policy, a student cannot accumulate a negative balance on their lunch account over \$10.00. Adult guests and visitors may bring cash for meals on the day of their visit, exact change only please. Meal prices are approved by the Governing Board. For the 2025-2026 school year, reduced-price meals are \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch; full-price student meals are \$1.65 for breakfast and \$3.15 for lunch; adult-priced meals are \$1.75 for breakfast and \$6.00 for lunch.

One milk and/or juice is offered with each purchased meal; students may purchase an additional carton of milk/juice for 75 cents. Students may purchase additional servings of entrees or side items for a charge of \$1.00-1.50. All additional servings (extra milk/juice, extra pizza slice, etc.) are NOT covered under free/reduced meal benefits and must be paid for by the student/family.

Brighten Academy participates in the Free/Reduced School Meals program. If you need information related to this program, please contact an administrator. We accept online applications and have paper copies available in the front office.

You may opt to have your child bring his/her 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
- Microwaves are not available for student use
- Refrigeration is not available to students
- Be mindful that some little ones cannot assemble multi-part meals and/or open certain types of packaging. Please only pack what your student can independently enjoy during the time limits of lunch.

Vending machines with water and snack options, that meet the USDA guidelines, are available to students during the school day. To support the safety of all students, it may not be advised for your student to access the vending machine at certain times of day; please plan accordingly and provide a snack from home. Staff and adult visitors may have access to additional vending machines in a secured area.

Visitors and Volunteers

We welcome parents and visitors to our school, and we feel our families are key partners in educating our children. We actively seek to build relationships with our community including field experts, career talks, and volunteers. We look forward to meeting you and partnering with you.

All visits to the classroom should be scheduled with the teacher/staff member and 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. Teachers and staff are expected to be fully engaged with their students during the school day. In order to limit distractions, we do not allow drop-in visits/conferencing without an appointment. Parent classroom observations are welcomed, but all observations/visits should be pre-arranged with the teacher. Conferences will be scheduled by appointment only.

When you visit, please check in at the front office (located in the atrium) and obtain a visitor tag.

Visitors who are not properly background-checked 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 should use the adult restroom in the main building or on each floor of the classroom building.

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.

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

Visitor Parking

Visitors may choose to park in either parking lot on the campus in a marked parking spot. Please do not park in any fire lanes, red curbs, or the drop off lanes. The lot to the right as you enter by Prestley Mill Road is designated for staff only, as are the three rows of spaces adjacent to the playing field (in the main lot by the office). Please always park in a parking space and avoid blocking the reserved handicapped spaces.

Help us keep our parking lots safe for students, parents, and staff. Please adhere to parking lot etiquette, such as only parking in marked spaces, demonstrating patience and consideration for others, and driving a safe (slow) speed on our property. Warnings will be issued for first time offenders, such as parking in the handicapped spaces (without proper and visible tag) or inappropriately along curbs or other places not designated and marked as parking spots. Second violations will be met with a letter outlining expectations and consequences for subsequent offenses. Third offenses will incur police intervention in the form of a Temporary Restraining Order and restriction from our campus. Please help us to keep our parking lots safe and courteous for everyone.

Media Center

The Brighten Academy Charter School library media center is committed to the promotion of literacy and reading for all community members, fostering digital citizenship skills and habits, and reinforcing the importance of teaching ethical usage of all resources. The library media center supports the school curriculum and students' individual interests by providing quality print and electronic resources.

Selection Procedures for Library Media Resources

Purpose

The goal of the Brighten Academy Charter School library media center is to support the school community by providing access to information and ideas that support the mission and the instructional program of the Brighten Academy Charter School. 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 materials to build the collection through selecting and discarding of library media resources based on established best practices.

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 and media clerk who knows the needs and depth of curriculum, methods of instruction, and the needs, interests, & abilities of students. The media specialist will work cooperatively with administrators and teachers to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making selections. Please see the Brighten Academy Policy Manual for the complete policy on the selection process, procurement, and reconsideration of library resources.

Position on Intellectual Freedom

The Governing Board of Brighten Academy subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights* of the American Library Association, see below. The principles of intellectual freedom expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights* are inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. In the event library materials are questioned, the principles of intellectual freedom shall be defended.

The Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Material should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibilities to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting the abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
7. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Technology

Internet access is available to students and teachers at Brighten Academy. We are very pleased to offer 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 and students should read the **Acceptable Use Policy** in the Brighten Academy Policy Manual. By signing off on receipt of the Parent Handbook, parents and students acknowledge and agree to school technology Acceptable Use Policies.

Brighten Academy is fortunate to have accumulated enough electronic devices to have a 1:1 technology device to student ratio. In order to clean, reformat, and gradually replace devices, all students will be charged a \$25 technology fee. This fee allows students to have access to Brighten's electronic devices (computers). The technology fee will be assessed and collected via the online payment system used by the school, MySchoolBucks.

Brighten Academy does not provide nor coordinate with insurance programs for technology devices. When damages occur, the student/family will be billed for the cost of the repair, which sometimes means a total replacement cost. The student will be without access to a computer in the time it takes to repair/replace the device.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

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

The focus of this dress code is on modesty, neatness, and cleanliness, 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.

Shirts

1. Shirts must be solid red, white, or navy blue in color. Shirts may have a Brighten logo or another logo that is no more than two inches high and three inches wide.
2. Shirts sanctioned and/or sold by Brighten Academy ("Spirit Wear") such as, but not limited to: PTO, drama, school sponsored clubs, class shirts, Relay for Life, sports jerseys, etc.) may be worn any day of the week. Spirit shirts must bear the Brighten name, logo, or mascot to be deemed "Spirit" wear. The exception to this is spirit wear that are hooded sweatshirts (without a zipper) may only be worn on Wednesdays. Hoods may not be worn on the head while on campus.

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.
10. Pajamas are not acceptable for school unless part of a special dress event.
11. 7 Cs Green Shirts and Green Hoodies may be worn any day of the week.

Bottoms

1. The following styles are acceptable
 - a. Slacks
 - b. Shorts
 - c. Capri pants
 - d. Skirts
 - e. Skorts
 - f. Jumpers
 - g. Dresses (solid navy, red, or white are acceptable colors; no more than 2 inches from the knee)
 - h. Jeans (blue only, no holes, no rips, no tears, no frays, no graphics, etc.)
2. Acceptable colors for styles 1a-1g are solid navy blue or khaki.
3. Logos that are no more than two inches high and three inches wide are permitted.
4. 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 BACK of the knee cap.
5. Additional adornments (lace, rhinestones, etc.) are not permitted.
6. Slacks may not be rolled up.
7. Excessively baggy pants and shorts are not permitted.
8. Pajamas are not acceptable for school unless part of a special dress event.
9. Leggings are not acceptable bottoms.

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 for shirts.
3. Logos that are no more than two inches high and three inches wide are permitted.

Coats/Jackets

1. All coats and jackets worn during the school day must be solid black, brown, gray, 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 or all day as an accessory.
4. Hooded sweatshirts with a full zipper are considered a jacket and allowable.
 - a. Hoods may not be worn on the head while on campus.
5. Hooded sweatshirts with no zipper (with or without front pocket) are considered hoodies and are not part of dress code, therefore not allowed.
 - a. Exception: 7Cs Green Hoodies earned by middle schoolers for completing the 7Cs Deck may be worn any day of the week.
 - b. School-sold spirit wear that is a sweatshirt/hoodie may only be worn on Wednesdays.
 - i. Hoods may not be worn on the head while on campus.

Shoes

Students should wear shoes that will enable them to safely walk up and down stairs, in wood mulch, on grass, on sidewalks, hallways, and on uneven surfaces.

1. The following shoe styles are acceptable:
 - a. Tennis Shoes
 - b. Athletic Footwear
 - c. Boots
 - d. Loafers
 - e. Closed toe shoes with less than or equal to a one inch heel
2. Bedroom shoes and slippers may NOT be worn unless permission is given to wear them on a special-dress day. When permission is given, students should wear approved footwear to the school. They should be brought to school and worn in the classroom only (not in halls or outside of the classroom).
3. Students are required to wear athletic shoes during Physical Education or other classes requiring physical activity.
4. Flip flops and sandals are not permitted.
5. Shoes must have a back strap for safety.
6. Crocs or croc-like shoes are not allowed.

Hair

1. Hair must be reasonably neat and clean.
2. Hairstyles and adornments (bows, barrettes, etc.) must not be distracting to the individual student or those around him or her.

Accessories

1. Tights and leggings (acceptable when worn with shorts or skirts no more than 2 inches above the BACK of the knee) are to be solid black, brown, gray, red, white, or navy blue in color.
2. Logos can be no larger than 2x3 inches.

3. Hats, sunglasses, or distracting decorative headbands, subject to staff discretion, may not be worn indoors unless specifically authorized by administration or staff for special-dress days.

Jewelry

1. Students may not wear chains protruding from pants pockets or any other area.
2. Students may not wear jewelry that makes excessive noise or that is distracting to others. Jewelry is to remain modest. Earrings of any style may not extend more than 1 inch below the earlobe.
3. Neither Brighten Academy nor its staff is responsible for jewelry that is lost or stolen.

Physical Education

1. Students should come ready to actively participate in class to learn about personal fitness, develop and improve different sport skills, and learn more about a variety of different sports.
2. All students should dress in clothing that will allow full participation in Physical Education (PE) classes.
3. All students should wear shoes appropriate for full participation in Physical Education (PE).
4. Students will not be required to change clothes, but they may bring extra clothes to change if desired. (The Physical Education teacher will communicate any other requirements.)

Special Days and Events

On certain days, students may (but are not required) 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.

Wednesday Dress Down Day

Students may “dress down” on Wednesdays; 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.

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). Shorts must not be more than two inches above the knee. Clothing must not display inappropriate phrasing, words, graphics, etc.

Hoodies are allowed for Wednesdays only. Hoods may not be worn on the head while on campus.

Clothing may NOT be excessively baggy, dirty, sloppy, or tight (form-fitting). Leggings are not allowed unless they are under shorts, a dress, or skirt no shorter than 2 inches from the knee.

7 C'S GREEN SHIRT

Seven C's Green Shirts 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. Craftsmanship;
2. Commitment;
3. Critical thinking;
4. Creativity;
5. Curiosity;
6. Community;
7. Crew.

This is a special honor. As a result, Seven C's t-shirts (2nd-5th) and hoodies (6th-8th) may be worn at any time by the students who have earned them.

School Dances

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

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. All masks should be removed to ensure safe transitions and otherwise as directed by staff. Students who are not obviously dressed according to the costume theme must wear clothing that otherwise meets the Dress Code requirements.

Field Studies and Other Special Events

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

Clothes Closet

Brighten Academy offers gently used uniform clothing in a variety of sizes and appropriate colors in our Clothes Closet. The clothing is free of charge, and families can “shop” for items anytime of the school year. The clothing is also used in case of an emergency. Students may use items for as long as needed. Donations are accepted, and volunteer credit (1/2 credit per 10 items—clean and in good repair) is given for donations. Clothes Closet is open for parents to browse/shop. Contact the front office for more information.

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, or the student can opt to select something from the Clothes Closet.

Upon the third (3rd) documented Dress Code violation the student will receive a classroom disciplinary referral. Thereafter, violations will follow the Brighten discipline code.

For additional information, please refer to the Brighten Academy Handbook policy on student discipline.

Verify Dress Code Compliance

Students or parents who are unsure whether a specific outfit or article of clothing complies with this policy should ask an administrator or staff member 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, and overall acceptable appearance.

For additional information, please refer to the Brighten Academy Handbook policy on student discipline.

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, and 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 or checks out early due to illness, 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 ten minutes (11:00 a.m.) on any given student day. To be counted present for the day, students must check in before 11:00 a.m. and stay the remainder of the day, or arrive by 7:50 a.m. and stay until 11:00 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 due to a serious illness or death in the family.
- Any condition rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- Out-of-school suspension days.

The parent/guardian must send in written notification (handwritten, typed, or email is acceptable) of absence prior to (if appropriate) and/or on the day the child returns to school or within 3 days of return. 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.
- Any absence for which a written note (handwritten, typed, or email is acceptable) is not received.
- Any absence beyond 10 excused absences that are not excused by a doctor's note.

Please consult the Brighten Academy policy manual for the full policy on attendance.

Administration of Absences

Please see the Brighten Academy Policy Manual for the complete details on the administration of absences.

After 4 unexcused absences, the school will initiate the process for excessive absences with parent contact. Upon subsequent unexcused absences, school contact may include referral to the school counselor or a school social worker, notification of county representatives or the authorities, or referral to DFACS in accordance with Georgia compulsory school attendance laws.

Excuse notes in writing must be received within 3 days of a student's return to school after an absence. After 10 excused absences, all absences must have a doctor's note to be excused.

Tardiness

It is expected that students will arrive to school on time to begin the instructional day. A student who is tardy misses important morning announcements and the initial directions and instruction for the day.

- The school day officially begins at 7:50 a.m. All children who **arrive at** or after 7:50 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 ten minutes to be counted present. Checking in after 11:00 results in an absence.

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. for 1st-8th grades and 3:00 pm for kindergarten. Any student leaving before this time will be counted as having an early check-out.
- 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.
- 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 the pickup card is not available.
- To prepare for a safe dismissal of the school, no check-outs between 2:45 and 3:15 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday will be allowed and no check-outs between 11:15 and 11:45 am on Wednesday will be allowed.

Student Make Up Work/ Late Assignments

Students who are absent from school/class are expected to make up work and will be given the opportunity to make up assignments. The general rule is that work needs to be completed and submitted for evaluation within three days of returning to school. We understand that students who are out for extended periods of time may need more time to complete work. The teacher will be happy to discuss timelines if needed.

Students are assessed on their Habits of Scholarship as an effective learner. In order to master this standard, students must regularly complete and turn in quality work. In addition to mastering the Habits of Scholarship standard, students must mount multiple forms of evidence proving they have mastered the content. If work is not submitted or is inconsistently submitted, we cannot properly assess the student's level of understanding. This can result in a lower performance grade or a score of incomplete on the report card.

Student Withdrawal

The office requires 72-hour notice to prepare all withdrawal forms. 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.

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 infractions
- To provide uniform administrative and disciplinary procedures
- To treat students equitably and inclusively

Statement of Student Conduct

Our goal is to teach students the value and importance of following norms for treating others well and procedures in order to maintain a safe, equitable, inclusive, and respectful environment both in the educational setting and in our communities. Students at Brighten Academy will engage in lessons to help them learn to disagree with respect, resolve conflicts in a positive way, and participate in restorative practices to mend relationships. Learning experiences developing norms and the classroom community will be used to build a culture of crew where students treat their peers and teachers with respect, feel supported in their feelings, and help one another succeed.

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 (pending a Due Process Hearing) 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 with unresolved discipline consequences from a prior school or system.

These rules are designed to notify students and parents about the types and range of behaviors that violate the school norms and community agreements of Brighten Academy. Every specific variation of conduct may not have been included. Consequently, students should expect to be held accountable for conduct that is inappropriate and contrary to the mission and core beliefs established in the Brighten Academy Charter.

Beliefs about Children, Learning, and Discipline

The following beliefs about children, learning, and discipline inform all Code policies and practices. All children and young people must be assured that they can learn in a non-disruptive atmosphere and will be treated in a fair, consistent, and nondiscriminatory manner.

1. All children and young people are capable of achieving their personal best, and when necessary, improving their behavior with guidance, instruction, support, and coaching. These practices fall along a continuum that responds to children of all abilities.
2. Students need different kinds and amounts of time, attention, tasks, and supports to behave responsibly, succeed academically, and achieve at high levels.
3. The use of out-of-school suspension as a response to challenging behavior does not improve school climate or outcomes for students. Students are more likely to do the right thing when...
 - a. they understand the positive behaviors that are expected of them
 - b. they feel that staff members care about them and will help them learn and grow
 - c. all school staff consistently use shared language and practices
 - d. all staff provide recognition and feedback for behaving appropriately, making their best effort, and completing high-quality work
4. The root of the word discipline is “to teach.” Effective discipline helps students become more self-disciplined and teaches students to become more skillful. Restorative practices provide strategies and interventions to enable students to self-correct, problem solve, make amends and repair harm, learn new behaviors, and restore their good standing.

Examples of Level I or II and Zero Tolerance Offenses are outlined in our Discipline policies located in the Policy Manual <http://www.brightenacademy.com/policies.html>

Certain offenses are considered “Zero Tolerance” and will be immediate grounds for Level III designation and a Due Process Hearing process to begin. Any battery powered vaporizer which is used to simulate smoking is determined a Level I-III offense, dependent on the product it contains. 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

Criminal or Illegal Acts Committed by Students

Police and parents will be notified in the event of acts that violate the law and fall under the “zero tolerance” section of the school’s discipline code. Administrators will follow school policy and procedures concerning interrogations and searches. A school official must always be present to protect the rights of minors (under 17) when police conduct interrogations.

School Communication/Intervention for Behavior Referrals:

When a child receives an office referral an administrator or his/her designee will investigate the incident. Parents will be notified of the findings and determined consequence(s).

To ensure Due Process and an opportunity to determine root causes of behaviors if a student accrues three discipline referrals, a parent/teacher conference is held. The intent of the conference is to create an action plan to proactively determine the responsibility of the parents, students, and school to help the student be more successful in the classroom and school community. An administrative observation will also be conducted to provide further insight on the behaviors, and the student will be referred to Tier 2 of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). In Tier 2, a behavior goal is established and monitored for effectiveness to help the student.

Students who receive subsequent administrative referrals will be referred to the Tier 3 Student Support Team. Previous behavior goals will be reviewed, revised as needed, and a behavior contract will be developed. If the student fails to make progress on the goals and behavior contract developed in the SST Committee, the student will be referred to a Due Process Hearing with a consequence rendered up to, and possibly including expulsion. The Due Process Hearing policy is outlined in detail in the policy manual. All federal and state law Due Process procedures will be followed for all Due Process Hearings.

A Waiver may be offered in place of a Due Process Hearing at the discretion of administration. 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 follow a discipline plan that supports the developmental and emotional needs of the student and reflects the community agreements of the school. This plan should be multi-leveled and should consist of reasonable, age-appropriate expectations for children, as well as structures to give students an opportunity to take accountability for ways they contribute to and detract from the crew culture. 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: smart watches, cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, handheld video games, cameras, laser pointers, tape recorders, AirPods or other Bluetooth ear buds, etc.) and toys are not permitted at school.

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 will be required to pick up the item from the front office.

See the technology section for more information.

Assessment and Grading

Assessment and grading 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 state standardized tests (Georgia Milestones, etc.)
- Other standardized test measures employed by the Douglas County School System and Brighten Academy (e.g., ITBS, MAP)
- 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 in graded work folder for K-5 and electronic grade access for 6th-8th graders
- Parent conferences
- Behavior logs
- Student Led Conferences

Where appropriate, thematic and project-based instruction of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) 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.

Grading Policy

Brighten Academy will utilize standards based assessment. The following definitions will be used when assessing a student.

Standard – What a student is to know, understand, and be able to do (multi-dimensional)

Element – What a student is to know, understand, and be able to do (uni-dimensional)

Formative Assessment – Formal and informal assessment that takes place WHILE a student is learning (Ex: quiz, observation, ticket out the door, journal prompt, center work, oral reading, discussion protocols, quick checks)

Summative Assessment – Formal assessment conducted at the end of an instructional lesson, unit, or set of lessons or units (Ex: benchmark tests, standardized tests, tests, projects)

Mastery – student **consistently** demonstrates **independent** competency free from major errors and omissions regarding any of the information or process (simple or complex) that were **explicitly** taught

Independent – Student completes task without teacher assistance. Students who are being served with an **IEP** are entitled to the assistance outlined per content area. For example, a student who requires certain teacher assistance according to goals outlined in the IEP, would be deemed independent. Modifications through **SST** that do not alter the content (extra time, preferential seating, reduced work, etc.) will be deemed independent. The Executive Director or other authorized school leader will support the classroom teachers' development of assessment based on students who are being served through MTSS, IEP, or a 504 Plan.

Assessment should be a tool that provides positive feedback and accurate representation of what a child has learned compared to the standard. The following Grading Scale will be employed throughout Brighten Academy to provide consistency among grade levels. Grades will be given on all report cards and posted on all permanent records in grades K-8, using this scale.

3D Exceeding

In addition to score a 3.0 performance, **INDEPENDENTLY** goes beyond what is taught; transfers to real world contexts

3.0 Meeting

INDEPENDENTLY understands and applies grade level simple and complex concepts

2.5 Approaching

WITH GUIDANCE understands and applies most grade level simple and complex concepts

2.0 Progressing

WITH MUCH SUPPORT inconsistently understands and applies some grade level simple and complex concepts

1.5/1.0 Not Progressing

WITH MUCH SUPPORT understands few simple grade level concepts; performs below grade level

* Not Evaluated

Standards in the domain were not assessed or there is not adequate data to provide a grade

Please note that a child who is not working independently will not be able to obtain a score higher than a 2.0.

Habits of Scholarship & Character / 7 Cs Grades

Brighten Academy strives to educate the whole child, and to that end students will also receive grades and be assessed on our 7 Cs. Each grade level team will use learning targets specifically tailored for their students. The 7 Cs can be categorized as Effective Learner traits and Ethical People traits, and this follows along with EL Education’s philosophy that character education is equally as important as mastery of knowledge and skills and producing high quality work. The chart below outlines how the 7 Cs will be assessed. More information will come from your child’s teacher on how this will be implemented.

Brighten Academy School Workplan Character Multi-Year Impact Goal:

BACS will graduate students who leave Brighten better than they came and ready to do more than they think possible, equipped with a crew mindset of equity and inclusion and equipped with the Habits of Scholarship to become effective learners.

7 Cs of Character, Grades K-8	
Commitment	Effective Learner LTs
Creativity	Within EL Projects
Critical Thinking	Standards Based Report Card
Curiosity	Within EL Projects
Crew	Ethical People (checklist? Rating?)
Community	Contribute to a Better World Reflection each Semester (or, 2x/year)
Craftsmanship	Within EL Projects; Effective Learner LTs

Kindergarten

Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
I can identify the needs and feelings of others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can identify different feelings. ● I can identify my feelings. ● I can identify the feelings of others. 	I can be responsible for my words and actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe what being responsible for my behavior looks and sounds like. 	I can understand it’s okay for people to have different ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can play well with others by accepting other’s ideas. ● I can take turns with my peers. ● I can speak kindly with my peers even when we disagree.
Responsibility		Perseverance
I can try my best to complete high quality work.		I can use feedback from teachers and/or peers to improve the quality of my work.
I can begin to maintain focus in class.		I can tell my story as a learner using evidence from my portfolio.
I can ask questions to help me understand and support myself as a learner.		I can identify when I need help to complete my work.

1st Grade

Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
I can identify the needs and feelings of others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can identify my needs. ● I can identify the needs of others. ● I can identify my feelings. ● I can identify the feelings of others. 	I can be responsible for my words and actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can define responsibility ● I can describe what being responsible for my behavior looks and sounds like. 	I can understand it's okay for people to have different opinions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can define the meaning of opinion. ● I can speak kindly with my peers, even when we disagree. ● I can demonstrate acceptance by the way I treat people
Responsibility		Perseverance
I can sustain focus and complete classwork on time.		I can use feedback from teachers and/or peers to improve the quality of my work.
I can begin to complete high quality work through multiple drafts.		I can tell my story as a learner using evidence from my portfolio.
I can track my progress to support myself as a learner.		I can identify when I need help to complete my work.

2nd Grade

ETHICAL PEOPLE		
Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
I can identify and describe the needs and feelings of others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe what my feelings look, feel, and sound like. ● I can describe what others' feelings look, feel, and sound like. 	I can be responsible for my words and actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can define responsibility ● I can describe what being responsible for my behavior looks and sounds like. 	I can respectfully acknowledge other's point of view, even when I do not agree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can accept other's points of view, even when we don't agree. ● I can speak kindly with my peers, even when we disagree. ● I can demonstrate acceptance by the way I treat people.

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS	
Responsibility	Perseverance
I can do my best to complete high quality work.	I can use feedback from teachers and/or peers to improve the quality of my work.
I can stay on task to focus on my work.	I can tell my story as a learner using evidence from my portfolio.
With support, I can begin to utilize rubrics, revisions, feedback, and reflections to complete high quality work on time.	I can appropriately seek help from peers and others to complete my work.

3rd Grade

ETHICAL PEOPLE		
Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
<p>I can identify and care about the needs and feelings of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe and explain the needs and feelings of others. ● I can identify the difference between telling and tattling. ● I can identify appropriate facial expressions for a situation. ● I can identify ways I can meet someone's needs. 	<p>I can show responsibility for my words and actions by following Crew norms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can identify and explain my Crew norms and how they positively create an equitable and inclusive environment. <p>I can explain and describe my Crew norms and how they contribute to a more equitable and inclusive environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can say what an equitable classroom looks, feels, and sounds like. ● I can tell when things aren't equitable and inclusive. <p>I can take the initiative to treat my environment with respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can leave no trace. 	<p>I can respectfully acknowledge other's point of view, even when I do not agree.</p>

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS	
Responsibility	Perseverance
I can begin to use goals to support myself as a learner.	I can use feedback from teachers and/or peers to improve the quality of my work.
I can begin to use action plans to support myself as a learner.	I can reflect on myself as a learner to tell my academic story.
I can track my progress to support myself as a learner.	I can appropriately seek help from peers and others to complete my work.
With support, I can begin to utilize rubrics, revisions, feedback, and reflections to complete high quality work on time.	
I can begin to apply academic strategies to fully engage my learning	

4th Grade

ETHICAL PEOPLE		
Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
<p>I can identify and care about the needs and feelings of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe and explain the needs and feelings of others. ● I can identify ways I can meet someone's needs. ● I can identify appropriate facial expressions for a situation. ● I can identify ways I help/hurt others. 	<p>I can show responsibility for my actions by treating others with kindness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can show others I am listening because I keep my hands, feet, and body still, and I look at the person who is speaking. ● I return borrowed items in the same condition I receive them. <p>I can explain and describe my Crew norms and how they contribute to a more equitable and inclusive environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can say what an equitable classroom looks, feels, and sounds like. ● I can tell when things aren't equitable and inclusive. <p>I can take the initiative to treat my environment with respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can leave no trace by cleaning up after myself and throwing trash in the trash can. 	<p>I can respectfully acknowledge other's point of view, even when I do not agree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can speak kindly with my peers, even when we disagree. ● I can demonstrate acceptance by the way I treat people.

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS	
Responsibility	Perseverance
With support, I can develop goals and action plans and track my progress to support myself as a learner.	I can use feedback from teachers and/or peers to improve the quality of my work.
With support, I can utilize rubrics, revisions, feedback, and reflections to complete high quality work on time.	I can reflect on myself as a learner to tell my academic story with evidence.
I can begin to apply organizational strategies to fully engage my learning.	I can appropriately seek help from peers and others to complete my work.
I can apply academic strategies to fully engage in my learning.	

5th Grade

ETHICAL PEOPLE		
Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
<p>I can identify and care about the needs and feelings of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe and explain the needs and feelings of others. ● I can identify ways I can meet someone's needs. ● I can identify appropriate facial expressions and body language for a situation. ● I can identify ways I help/hurt others. 	<p>I can show responsibility for my actions by treating others with kindness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can show others I am listening because I keep my hands, feet, and body still, and I look at the person who is speaking. ● I return borrowed items in the same condition I receive them. <p>I can explain and describe my Crew norms and how they contribute to a more equitable and inclusive environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can say what an equitable classroom looks, feels, and sounds like. ● I can tell when things aren't equitable and inclusive. <p>I can take the initiative to treat my environment with respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can leave no trace by cleaning up after myself and throwing trash in the trash can. 	<p>I can respectfully understand and accept others' viewpoints that are different from my own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can listen to others' point of view when we disagree without interrupting or arguing.

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS	
Responsibility	Perseverance
With support, I can develop goals and action plans and track progress to support myself as a learner	I can use feedback from teachers and/or peers to improve the quality of my work.
I can apply academic strategies to fully engage in my learning.	I can reflect on myself as a learner to tell my academic story with evidence.
I can apply organizational strategies to fully engage in my learning.	I can appropriately seek help from peers and others to complete my work.
With support, I can utilize rubrics, revision, feedback, and reflections to complete high quality work on time.	

6th Grade

ETHICAL PEOPLE		
Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
<p>I can explain how to show concern for the needs and feelings of others and to take action to ensure that their needs are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe the steps of effective listening. ● I know how to use accountable talk to show others they have been heard in an academic setting. ● I know how to use accountable talk to show others they have been heard in a non-academic setting. 	<p>I can explain how to show responsibility for my actions and how to treat others around me in a respectful manner (friends, family, and community members).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I know the principles of restorative practices. ● I know how to use restorative practices to right a wrong. 	<p>I know how to have a respectful conversation on a disagreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I know how to have a respectful conversation on a disagreement.

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS	
Responsibility	Perseverance
I can develop goals and action plans and track progress to support myself as a learner.	I can provide kind, specific, and helpful feedback to my peers and incorporate feedback to improve the quality of my work.
I can utilize rubrics, revisions, feedback, and reflections to complete high quality work on time	I can prove that I am a quality learner with evidence from my portfolio.
I can stay on task and problem solve through sharing ideas and resources while being respectful of others.	I can offer appropriate help to others and seek help from peers and others to complete my work.

7th Grade

ETHICAL PEOPLE		
Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
<p>I can explain how to show concern for the needs and feelings of others and to take action to ensure that their needs are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe the steps of effective listening. ● I know how to use accountable talk to show others they have been heard in an academic setting. ● I know how to use accountable talk to show others they have been heard in a non-academic setting. 	<p>I can explain how to show responsibility for my actions and how to treat others around me in a respectful manner (friends, family, and community members).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I know the principles of restorative practices. ● I know how to use restorative practices to right a wrong. 	<p>I know how to use accountable talk stems to express disagreement or confusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can explain how to use accountable talk. ● I know how to use accountable talk stems to express disagreement or confusion.

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS	
Responsibility	Perseverance
I can develop goals and action plans and track progress to support myself as a learner.	I can provide kind, specific, and helpful feedback to my peers and incorporate feedback to improve the quality of my work.
I can utilize rubrics, revisions, feedback, and reflections to complete high quality work on time.	I can prove that I am a quality learner with evidence from my portfolio.
I can stay on task and problem solve through sharing ideas and resources while being respectful of others.	I can offer appropriate help to others and seek help from peers and others to complete my work.

8th Grade

ETHICAL PEOPLE		
Care	Leadership	Respectful Disagreement
<p>I can explain how to show concern for the needs and feelings of others and to take action to ensure that their needs are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can describe the steps of effective listening. ● I know how to use accountable talk to show others they have been heard in an academic setting. ● I know how to use accountable talk to show others they have been heard in a non-academic setting. 	<p>I can explain how to show responsibility for my actions and how to treat others around me in a respectful manner (friends, family, and community members).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I know the principles of restorative practices. ● I know how to use restorative practices to right a wrong. 	<p>I know how to use accountable talk to express myself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can explain how to use accountable talk. ● I know how to use accountable talk to express myself.

EFFECTIVE LEARNERS	
Responsibility	Perseverance
I can develop goals and action plans and track progress to support myself as a learner.	I can provide kind, specific, and helpful feedback to my peers and incorporate feedback to improve the quality of my work.
I can demonstrate consistent use of academic and organizational strategies to fully engage in my learning.	I can prove that I am a quality learner with evidence from my portfolio.
I can utilize rubrics, revisions, feedback, and reflections to complete high quality work on time.	I can offer appropriate help to others and seek help from peers and others to complete my work.
I can use effective research strategies to investigate a topic of study.	

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 free time, complete a discipline referral, detention, etc.). Students are assessed on their Habits of Scholarship as an effective learner. One way students prove they are an effective learner is by completing and turning in assigned work. Students will be marked down on their Habits of Scholarship under Commitment for missing/late assignments. Chronic late work and

missing assignments is a violation of our student code of conduct. Chronic missing assignments could also result in the teacher not being able to assign a grade for a particular standard or course, which could lead to the student being retained.

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 an area where our students can play in a safe, age appropriate environment. The faculty and staff feel that physical activity is very important to students. There may be times when recess is used to resolve a conflict, participate in restorative practices, or complete unfinished learning.

As long as the temperature is 40 degrees or higher, the students are allowed to go outside when conditions are dry and as the teacher permits. On days where air quality is poor or heat advisories are issued, outdoor play will be suspended.

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

Movies in the Classroom

There may be times when a teacher chooses to show a movie in the classroom to enhance the curriculum. The guidelines for movies are as follows:

- For students in Kindergarten-3rd grade, only “G” rated movies will be shown. Prior parent written approval must be obtained for a K-3 child to view a PG movie.

- For students in 4th-8th grade, teachers may show rated “G” or “PG” movies with proper vetting for content and appropriateness. In the beginning of the school year, parents of 4th-8th graders will sign off on the beginning of the year forms acknowledging that “G” and “PG” rated movies may be shown. Parents may notify the school in writing if they do not wish for their child to view “PG” or “PG-13” rated movies.
- Special permission should be gained from parents of students in grades 4-8 to watch a “PG-13” rated movie.
- Under no circumstances will a movie rated “R” be shown.

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 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 stay involved and earn a minimum of 20 credits (see website for ways to earn credits)
- To maintain an updated Involvement log of activities via an electronic portal

Upon enrollment, parents must sign the Parent-School Covenant, acknowledging they are in support of these requirements and ensures 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 credits per month enrolled.

If a circumstance exists that may impede a family from earning their involvement credits, please notify the school administration.

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 credits
- *No grades of “incomplete” due to not turning in assignments
- *No outstanding fees related to meal charges, ASP, book returns, clubs/athletics, late pick-ups, 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.

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 credits
- *No grades of “incomplete” due to not turning in assignments
- *No outstanding fees related to meal charges, ASP, book returns, clubs/athletics, late pick-up fees, etc.
- *Meeting expectations of student contract/discipline code

Field Study Student Guidelines

Field studies are carefully planned outings designed with a clear purpose to support and enrich the curriculum. Unlike field trips where students are passive participants, field studies require students to engage in research, inquiry techniques, and active investigations. Field studies enhance the curriculum while deepening learning for students. Students are expected to engage fully in the experience, maximize their understanding, and display the norms of our crew culture during field studies outside of the school campus.

Field study dress: Students must always dress for a field study 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 study 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 study with an excused check-out after 2:15pm. Checking out early (excused or unexcused) may compromise your child earning a perfect attendance award. Checking out another child in a class that is not a part of the field study would not be considered an excused check out.

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

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

General Field Study Policies:

1. Any adult chaperoning a field study will be subject to a criminal background check conducted through Brighten Academy. A criminal background check must be completed every year for those wishing to chaperone field studies. Anyone chaperoning an overnight field trip must complete a full fingerprinting and criminal background check. 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 studies. 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 study, an adult chaperone must remain with the students at all times. This includes evening times.
4. During overnight field studies, 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 study. Consumption of alcohol, use of drugs, and use of tobacco is prohibited for the duration of the field study in its entirety.
8. Chaperones may not bring additional siblings or other children.
9. Chaperones must sign the chaperone policy before each field study.

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

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.

- **Attendance** shall be recognized annually.
 - **Annual attendance** awards will be presented as follows:
 - **Perfect Attendance** – 0 absences, 0 tardies
 - **Excellent Attendance** – 0 absences, 0 unexcused and up to 2 excused tardies
 - **Exceptional Attendance**—0 official absences
- **Academic subject area awards for excellence and most improved.**
- **Recognition of perseverance and outstanding performance in Specials.**
- **Grade 8 Rotary Club Awards for subject areas for excellence.**
- **Yearly 7 Cs Awards** – Students 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 t-shirt / hoodie / cord. Students who accrue an administrative discipline referral during the school year will not be eligible for the green 7 Cs award and have the option to appeal to administration for consideration. More information about the 7Cs Deck and award will be available on our website in September.

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. We do not have the proper materials to cut and serve whole cakes and cookies, so please adhere to individual servings.

After School Program (ASP)

Mission

The mission of Brighten Academy's After School Program (ASP) is to provide a safe, nurturing and engaging environment for its elementary and middle school students. We desire to engage with the whole child physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually through developmentally and age appropriate activities.

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. The ASP is a prepaid and pre-registered program. For more information, please contact the ASP Director, Dana Weeks, at dweeks@brightenacademy.com.

Lost and Found

Parents and students 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 in the atrium. We will donate all items to charity after each monthly Saturday work day.