

Elysian

Charter School of Hoboken



Family Handbook

Revised 8-28-19

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Mission

To build an active community of lifelong learners, provide a safe and nurturing environment, and educate each and every child to his or her fullest potential.

A Message From The Director

Welcome to Elysian! Whether you are a prospective or current Elysian parent, student, teacher, or community member, I hope this handbook answers most of your questions about the school. It is designed to be your guide to what happens at school. However, our programs and policies grow and change along with our children, so if you have questions or concerns that are not addressed here, I encourage you to ask. This handbook, like the school itself, is a collaboration between all of you and all of us and by no means an exhaustive list of everything a parent needs to know during the school year. The Monday newsletter and communication from your child's teacher/s are the most important means of communication from school to home.

Core Values

Our core values are:

- Community Engagement
- Diversity and Inclusions
- Child Centricity
- Experiential Learning
- Social, Emotional and Physical Learning
- Social Awareness and Responsibility
- Shared Leadership
- Learning as a Process

Our goal at Elysian Charter School is to educate and inspire children to become curious, lifelong learners who are academically prepared to be successful in all future endeavors. We hope that children develop an appreciation for the arts and culture, the diversity of people of the world, and will come to understand the importance of community. Every child possesses individual strengths. At Elysian, we seek to identify and focus on those strengths to maximize student growth and achievement.

Board of Trustees

A charter school operates under a charter granted by the Commissioner of Education and is independent of the local school district's board of education. The state's charter school law was passed to give parents choices for their children's education. Charter schools are governed by an independent board of trustees. The board meets monthly for the management of the business, property, and affairs of the school, as per NJ law. All meetings are open to the public. Public notice of meetings is posted on the school website and in local newspapers. Meetings are held at 6:30 on the third Tuesday of every month.

About Elysian Charter School

Elysian Charter School is one of the original thirteen charter schools of New Jersey. It has 288 students, which is about 16 children per class. The small class sizes help promote progressive, hands-on learning as well as critical thinking skills. This has enabled ECS to offer a great education, and made it an exemplary charter school for the past 22 years.

The School was founded in January of 1997 by a group called Mile Square Families. They wanted to provide an improved learning environment for their children as well as foster a sense of community among the families of the kids.

The name Elysian comes from the Greek mythological place where mortals retired to in afterlife. In other words, the word Elysian can be analogous to a kind of heaven; a place where one goes to relax. This ties back to the history of the “Elysian Fields of Hoboken”, which was a place where city dwellers could escape the havoc and fast pace life of Manhattan. In Fall 2016, the school moved to new space on 14th and Garden Street in Hoboken.

Family Involvement

Friends of Elysian

The **Friends of Elysian Charter School** is a parent-led, volunteer-run, 501(c)(3) organization, created in 1997 with the mission of raising funds to benefit the school. In addition to organizing events such as the Annual Party & Auction and running the Annual Appeal, Friends also offers a variety of smaller “socials” – opportunities for families or “parents-only” to gather in support of the school.

On average, Elysian Charter School receives 35% less funding per student than the local Hoboken district schools. The work Friends does is vital in helping to fill some of that gap and providing Elysian with the funds needed to continue delivering educational excellence to every one of its 288 students.

With a current annual fundraising goal of \$150K, Friends of Elysian is able to supplement the school’s facilities budget with an annual operating grant of at least \$80K and also funds a variety of school needs. Most recently, this additional support has included a \$25K grant towards literacy programming, the installation of a state-of-the-art emergency notification system, and support of the school’s robotics program. Contact Friends of Elysian at friendsofelysian@gmail.com

PTSO

The Elysian PTSO is committed to providing for and strengthening our school community through fun events. PTSO events include Halloween Party, Chili Cook-Off, Book Fair, Picture Day, Field Day, Spring Fling, staff appreciation events, Block Party, Year-End Picnic, Coin Challenge and many more. There are many ways you can get involved... volunteer your time for an event, make food or donate materials for an event, add your value and expertise while serving on the PTSO board. We rely on every parent for help, ideas and support! Contact the PTSO at elysianptso@gmail.com

Class Parents/ Chaperones/Volunteers

We welcome volunteers! There are many community or grade - wide events that we need assistance with. Please sign up to help as often as you can. The PTSO organizes many events for our students and we can’t have these community events without volunteers.

Class parents are a parent/s who volunteer to organize parent events for the classroom. They disseminate information about classroom events – publishing parties, seasonal events, snack, etc. – to parents in the class. They may also help communicate about an event that may affect the Elysian community.

Parent chaperones are sometimes needed for class field trips. The teacher will ask for volunteers and from them select chaperones to accompany the class.

Back to School Night

Every fall the school schedules an evening presentation in your child's classroom so that you can learn about each grade's curriculum and classroom routines. The teacher meets with families to share expectations and discuss methods and materials that will be used during the year. If you have any questions about what your child is learning, please contact your child's teacher.

About The School Day

Morning Arrival

School doors open at 8:20 a.m. and instruction begins at 8:30. For security reasons, we ask that you always stop at the reception desk before entering the school. Early morning drop-off is available for all students from 7:30 to 8:20 a.m. for a fee. Parents or guardians will be allowed to enter the building at 8:20 a.m.

Getting to School

Walking

There are crossing guards on duty on 14th and 15th Street and Garden Street. If you walk your child to or from school, it is highly recommended that you only use the crosswalks with crossing guards.

Driving

Garden Street is for drop offs only. A lane is created for you to pull up and drop your child off if you drive. If you want to come into the school, you must find a legal spot to park. **DO NOT PARK ON GARDEN STREET.** If an ambulance or firefighters need to come to the school for any reason, cars cannot be parked there. Parking regulations will be strictly enforced by the Hoboken Police Department.

Lateness

The school day begins at 8:30 a.m. Any child not in his or her classroom by 8:30 a.m. is considered late. Parents and guardians should help their children develop the habit of arriving at school on time so they will not miss important work or announcements. Children arriving late need to obtain a late-pass before proceeding to class. Late-passes are given out at the reception desk. There is a buzzer at the Elysian door to gain access.

Teachers mark tardiness on each child's attendance record and progress report. Habitual tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment for your child and the rest of the class. If your child is in Middle School grades 6-8, excessive absences negatively impact their applications to high school.

Visitors

All parents are welcome in the school and we have many events that parents are invited to during the school year. However, for the safety of all, we ask that all visitors to the school, including parents and guardians, after 8:30 a.m., sign in and wear a visitor badge. An announcement is made at 8:30 for all parents to leave the school so that learning and teaching can begin. If you need to bring a forgotten item such as lunch, sneakers or homework, it can be dropped off in the main office.

Attendance

Attendance in school is mandatory and is of the utmost importance to learning. Absences are reported on the progress report, which becomes a part of a student's permanent record. You must provide a note if your child is absent. All children are expected to be in school at least 95% of the time. If your child is too sick to benefit from school or is running a fever, please keep him or her home. Vacations should be scheduled during school breaks.

Please note that grade 6, 7 and 8th grade attendance records are considered in the high school application process and tardiness and absences may adversely affect a student's high school prospects.

Please go to our website for current school calendar.

Communication

Monday Newsletter

Every Monday there is a weekly newsletter sent by email to all families and staff. It includes a message from the director, information on school and community related activities. It is crucial that you read the weekly message so that you know when to sign up for sports teams, what events are coming up and what is going on in the community that may affect the Elysian school community.

All staff at Elysian have an email address. Addresses are: first name. last name@ecsnj.org

School Closings

Elysian generally follows the Hoboken School District for emergency/snow day closure. You will receive an email and a phone call notifying you, as early as possible, if school will be closed or delayed opening for any unforeseen circumstances.

Delayed Openings/Half Days

Delayed openings may occur during the school year. Typically, a delayed opening is a 90 minute delay, with school starting at 10am. Families will receive an email and phone notification regarding any change in schedule or emergencies.

Half day dismissal is at 12:30 for all students. Lunch is served on half days so students should bring or order lunch.

Dismissal

All classes are dismissed in front of the school – rain or shine. Please wait below the steps for your child's class to come out. This allows space for students to be dismissed safely. Classes are dismissed starting with the youngest students at 2:45. We are all coming out one door so we ask that you allow your child's teacher to go to their dismissal spot first, then you can pick up your child. Students are instructed to say goodbye to their teacher before they walk away.

Students are only dismissed to parents or guardians who are listed on their dismissal form. At the beginning of the school year, parents are asked to provide contact information and at least two emergency contact numbers. Be sure to update the information during the year if anything changes. It is the primary way the school can notify you, a designated relative or a friend when necessary.

If you have any special pick up arrangements or if the person picking up might change, notify the office -office@ecsnj.org and classroom teacher.

Early Pick Up

If you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, you must sign them out in the main office. It's best to notify the teacher and main office in writing that morning to let us know how your child will get home. When you arrive at school, come to the main office and we will have your child sent to meet you. Please note that your child may only be picked up by people on your Emergency Dismissal list.

Snack

Each teacher decides their snack policy and provide guidance on healthy snack options in their classrooms. There is a list of healthy snacks available on the school website. Please do not bring in overly salty or sweet (ie cookies) snacks and make sure you adhere to the allergy guidelines for your classroom.

Extended Day Programs

Elysian has an extended day programming, for a fee. There is an early morning drop off and an after - care program. Early morning drop off begins at 7:30am and after - care runs from dismissal until 6pm, including half days. There is a fee for extended day programming. Parents can sign up on orgsonline.com. You can take advantage of extended day programming – including half days - on a daily basis.

Enrichment Programming

Elysian Charter offers an After School Enrichment Program which is an 8 week session that runs three times during the school year (Fall, Winter and Spring). Each session offers a varied assortment of engaging and educational clubs to interest all ages of students. Just prior to the start of each session, your child will be sent home with an Enrichment Club sign up form that asks for their top 3 preferences. Placement in all of their desired clubs is not guaranteed, but every effort will be made to give them at least one of their top 3 preferences. The form and payment MUST be turned in by the deadline date to ensure placement in a club(s). Payment can be in the form of a check made payable to Elysian Charter School or cash.

Sports

Sports are one way for children to engage in extracurricular activities at Elysian. We have basketball, track and flag rugby programs. Most of our sports teams are co-ed, with the recent addition of a middle school girls' basketball option.

- Students in 5th through 8th grades are invited to try-out for Elysian's Junior Varsity and

Varsity basketball teams.

- Students in 3rd and 4th grades can participate on the "Little Eagles" basketball team.
- Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade are encouraged to participate in Elysian's track program. All level runners are welcome. Elysian's rugby for students in grades 4th through 8th.

No child may try out for a sport without a completed physical form on file with the nurse. Physical forms must be completed within 365 days of first tryout.

Elysian must obtain a signed acknowledgement of receipt of the Educational Fact Sheet on the Use and Misuse of Opioid Drugs, Concussion Identification Management and Return to Play Policy and Sudden Cardiac Death in Young Athletes. No student can participate in any interscholastic sport program without it.

Please check with the main office and/or read the weekly Monday Newsletter to find out how to involve your child(ren) in our extracurricular sports activities, either as a participant or come to cheer them on!

Lunch and Recess

We participate in the National lunch program and offer a hot lunch for a fee. Students may bring their lunches to school in lunch boxes or paper bags. We do not provide refrigeration or heating of lunches. Please include everything your child will need to eat her lunch. Trading of lunch items is prohibited since many students have food allergies. Elysian is a NUT FREE school. Do not send any lunch items with nuts.

Part of our daily routine includes outdoor recess. Students should have weather appropriate clothing. Dressing in layers helps to keep children comfortable during fluctuations in the temperature both outdoors and indoors. We do not make it a practice of keeping children away from recess without a written medical reason from a physician or for a behavioral consequence. Students are supervised by recess aides and school personnel and are expected to follow their directions. We try to go out as much as possible and monitor the weather conditions.

Field Trips and Overnights

Field trips are an important part of the curriculum and each class will take a few trips during the year. Field trips are designed to stimulate student's interests and promote inquiry. All parents should sign a release for neighborhood walking trips in Hoboken – this will be sent home in September. A permission slip must be signed for each trip involving transportation or your child will not be permitted to participate. Notices and permission slips will be sent home prior to each trip. The method of transportation will be specified on the permission slip. When needed, parents/guardians will be asked to act as chaperones.

Birthday Acknowledgements

Birthdays are a very special time for many of our students. If you wish to send in a special snack to share, speak to the classroom teacher ahead of time. Please be considerate of children with food allergies in your child's class.

Any invitations distributed in your child's class must include ALL of the students. This ensures that the feelings of all students are respected and protected.

Health and Safety

The general rule of thumb is that students should not attend school when at risk. If your child becomes ill in school or comes to school ill, he or she will be sent home. When we approach the cold weather season, children should be dressed appropriately for outdoor recess, including hats and gloves.

Children are not permitted to remain inside during recess unless they have a physician's note. Please make sure that your child is appropriately clothed for outside play.

If we take a few simple precautions, we can minimize the spread of infection and keep students and staff healthy. Here are a few simple guidelines to follow:

1. Students with a fever of 100.2 degrees and above should not be sent to school. They must be fever free for at least 24 hours before returning to class.
2. Children with productive or discolored nasal discharge or cough should remain home. One of the most common ways for viruses and colds to be spread is from droplet infection. If a cough is persistent, your child should be seen by your family physician to rule out bronchitis, pneumonia or other respiratory illnesses that may require antibiotics
3. Any child with a rash of unknown origin should be kept at home until the diagnosis is clear. Children who have received the Chickenpox vaccine have been known to come down with mild cases. Chicken Pox have an incubation period of 14 to 21 days. They are also contagious 24 hours before a child begins to show signs of a rash. Even though most rashes are benign, some can be contagious and spread to others in our school community.
4. Those suffering from diarrhea or vomiting need to be kept home from school. They should be symptom free for 24 hours before returning.

If your child comes to school ill, he or she will be sent home. We know the difficulty of being a working parent; however, if a student is sick, to ensure a good recovery and prevent the spread of the illness to other children and staff, it is important that they remain home until they are fully recuperated. Please make sure we have up to date emergency information to reach you in the case of a medical emergency.

Please remember, if a child is absent for three or more days, a physician's note is required to return to school. You can email the nurse at nurse@ecsnj.org.

Communicable Illness

If your child is sick with a communicable illness, please let the school nurse know of his or her diagnosis. Parents of other children in your child's class will be notified when appropriate. Due to HIPPA rules, specific classrooms or children cannot be identified.

Communicable illness includes:

- **Chicken Pox**
- **Acute Diarrhea**
- **German Measles**
- **Giardia Lamblia**
- **Hemophilus**

- **Hepatitis A**
- **Influenza**
- **Salmonella**
- **Measles**
- **Shigella**
- **Meningococcus**
- **Impetigo**
- **Mumps**
- **Scabies**
- **Strep Throat**
- **Lice (see below)**
- **Tuberculosis**
- **Whooping Cough**

Head Lice

Head lice are very common and affects 8-12 million people a year. Lice is an easily treated condition that is not associated with any serious medical complications. However, control of head lice depends on prompt diagnosis and effective treatment. Your help in inspecting your child at least weekly throughout the school year for the presence of head lice is helpful in controlling their spread. Please contact the school nurse if you suspect your child has lice.

Medications

Please contact the school nurse directly if your child has special medical needs. If medication needs to be administered in school, whether it is over the counter or a prescription, it cannot be administered by the school nurse or other school personnel without a physician's consent form. These forms are available on Elysian's website, ecsnj.org, under Forms and Information, dropdown to Required Medical Form then click on Medication Administration Letter and Form.

Student medication (including homeopathic medicine) may not be kept in the classroom or in student lunch boxes or backpacks. These regulations are set by statewide school protocols. The school is not permitted to distribute or administer any medication without written permission. Even over the counter medication cannot be given without a doctor's consent form. This includes Tylenol, Advil, Benadryl, cough and cold remedies or allergy medications. If prescription medication needs to be administered in school, neither the nurse nor any school staff may administer it without a physician's consent form. These forms are available on our website, ecsnj.org, under Forms and Information, dropdown to Required Medical Form then click on Medication Administration Letter and Form

Should you have any questions or concerns, please call the school nurse at 201-876-0102 between 8:30am until 2:30pm daily.

Food Allergies

Elysian works very hard to keep all of our students safe, including those with food allergies. **Elysian is a nut-free school.** All snacks and home lunches brought in must be nut free. We teach every day that each of us is different with different needs-sometimes that includes food allergies. Our students are very supportive of each other and take it in stride. Please be sure the school nurse is informed of your child's allergies.

Curriculum

Reading and Writing

Elysian subscribes to a balanced literacy approach, the goal of which is to teach children the habits and strategies of effective reading and writing. Teachers allot time each day for independent reading, small group reading, phonics and word study instruction, reading aloud and writing. Students in grades 4-8 have 1 to 1 laptops.

Mathematics

Elysian uses the Bridges in Mathematics math curriculum. Bridges blends problem solving and skill building in a program that moves through each grade level with common models, teaching strategies and objectives. A Bridges classroom features a combination of whole-group, small group and independent practice. Lessons incorporate increasingly complex visual models to help students invent, understand and remember mathematical ideas. By encouraging students to explore, test and justify their reasoning, the curriculum facilitates the development of mathematical thinking for students of all learning styles. Students who qualify may take Algebra 1 in grade 8.

Science

Elysian follows the Next Generation Science Standards. Most grades engage in three or four units of study per year, depending on the grade level. Each year the curriculum includes one life science and one physical science.

Social Studies

The Social Studies curriculum is thematic and organizes content by grade level around key concepts such as identity, culture, change and civic structure. In the early grades a sense of awareness about self, family, neighborhoods and communities large and small is taught. Students are introduced to the diversity and history of the world.

Arts – Music, Art, Dance and Physical Education

Elysian values the arts as a strong complement to what is taught in the classroom. Children are taught by specialist teachers.

World Language

All students receive classes in Spanish. Students in K-4 receive class weekly and in grades 5-8 twice weekly.

Grades 7 and 8

At a time when early adolescents need the reassurance of strong, consistent teachers, positive

peer relationships and motivating, rigorous curriculum, Elysian provides the opportunity for its middle school students to grow and flourish in an academic and creative environment. Elysian's middle school program leads to self – discipline, academic, social and emotional growth, and the ability to make good choices as our students move on to high school and beyond. Our students learn to utilize technology in the completion of classroom assignments, independent projects and extra-curricular activities. We also offer integrated studies in the humanities and sciences, as well as reading and writing units of study. Seminar classes, similar to electives are offered, as well as extra-curricular activities.

Conferences and Appointments

Parents and teachers meet and speak often at Elysian. Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice yearly. At these individual conferences, parents discuss their child's academic progress with the teacher. If there are issues of immediate concern, please don't wait until conferences are scheduled. Contact your child's teacher to make an appointment. Classroom teachers write newsletters to inform parents of upcoming events, units of study and learning.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued twice yearly to all students. They are given to parents at dismissal at scheduled times during the year and mailed home if a parent is not present at dismissal. For Middle School students, all reports are mailed home.

Standardized Tests

Elysian students in grades 3-8 take the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) in the spring. Tests are administered in language arts, math and science for students grade 5 and 8.

Conduct, Discipline and HIB **(Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying)**

To promote the intellectual, social and emotional and physical growth of all students, Elysian is committed to providing a safe, secure and well managed learning environment.

All students are expected to treat each other with kindness, civility and respect. Students are not to engage in behavior that is disruptive to their learning or others. Disruptive behavior interferes with a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Our emphasis is to prevent problems by helping students to understand each other, work well together, and develop responsibility for their own actions.

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” referred to as “HIB” is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or off school grounds in accordance with law that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students that:

A) A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or mentally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or mental harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or

B) Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or

C) Creates a hostile educational environment by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

"Electronic communication" means a communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus.

The link to the full school policy on Harrassment, Intimidation and Bullying can be found on the Elysian Charter School website homepage.

How do I report a HIB to the school?

Parents are encouraged to report any incidents that they deem to fall under harrassment, intimidation and bullying to the school. Parents may call, email or visit the school with their concerns. There is also an "Anonymous Bullying Report Form" found on the Elysian Charter School website. It can be found under "Forms and Information". Both parents and students can fill out this form if they wish to do so and drop it in the lockbox outside the School Social Worker office.

Who do I contact at school?

School Anti-Bullying Specialist:

Tara Dublanica

201-876-0102

tara.dublanica@ecsnj.org

Cell Phones and Electronics

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school so that they may communicate with their parents before and after school hours. **They may not have cell phones out at any point during the school day.** Phones must be turned off and placed in lockers or backpacks during school hours. Any student with a cell phone out during the school day will have it confiscated and held in the school office until a parent can come to the school to retrieve it. If you need to communicate with your child during school hours, please contact the main office. The school cannot be held responsible for any lost belongings.

Dress Code

We support individuality at Elysian. We also engage in a wide variety of activities daily - recess, gym, movement, and dance. On a daily basis students may work with many different materials

and may get messy. Our goal is to have everyone wear comfortable, easily washable clothing so that each student can participate in all of these activities. We also think it's important to wear simple and functional clothing so "how one is dressed" does not distract from anyone's learning. Outdoor recess is an important part of the curriculum. During cold weather seasons, students should be dressed appropriately for outdoor recess. We recommend layers as the temperature can vary greatly indoors to outdoors.

Sturdy shoes should be worn for playing outdoors and walking up and down the stairs. No flip-flops, high-heels, or backless shoes are permitted since they can be dangerous. Sneakers are required on PE day. Valuables should not be worn in school.