



# Family Handbook

2023-2024 rev.7/23

Elysian Charter School  
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Website: [www.ecsnj.org](http://www.ecsnj.org)  
Susan Grierson, Director  
Facebook.com/ElysianCharterSchool  
Instagram: Elysian Charter School of Hoboken

## **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 sent home via email and communication from your child's teacher/s are the most important means of communication from school to home.

This handbook is designed to reflect the current status of school life which changes according to science, and NJDOE state recommendations/mandates.

## **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 generally held at 6:30 pm on the third Tuesday of every month, via Zoom. The zoom link is sent to the school community prior to the board meeting.

## **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 since 1997. We proudly celebrated our 26th year of excellence!

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.

The name Elysian comes from the Greek mythological place where mortals retired in the 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 of life in Manhattan. In fall 2016, the school moved to a new space on 15th and Garden Street in Hoboken.

## **Family Involvement**

### **About Friends of Elysian & PTSO**

In 1997, the Elysian Charter School of Hoboken, one of the earliest charter schools in New Jersey, was founded. Soon thereafter, the *Friends of Elysian Charter School*, a 501(c)(3) organization, was formed with the mission of raising funds that will support and benefit the school.

Since then, Friends has combined their fundraising and event efforts with Elysian’s Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) to streamline the ways in which parent volunteers can engage and contribute their time and resources.

Friends and PTSO’s collective mission is to live the adage “it takes a community to raise a child.” We want our children to be excited about school and feel connected to each other and the broader community as they grow up. We are dedicated to rallying strong support and joyful participation from all our families to foster that bond and ensure a strong foundation for the Elysian educational experience.

### **Why does Elysian need to raise money?**

Elysian receives 35% less funding per student than any public school in Hoboken. And while the cost of operating the school continues to rise, Elysian’s city and state funding has remained flat since 2014. Further, the State of New Jersey does not assist charter schools with building or maintaining school facilities (in Elysian’s case, two floors of a mixed-use building). By raising funds through Friends, Elysian can better meet the educational, social, and operational needs of its children, staff, and facilities.

### **When I give, where does the money go?**

Each year, in addition to covering basic facility costs, Friends' funding helps procure and implement vital school programs and services. And starting in 2023, a portion of donations will support PTSO initiatives such as the annual book fair, Halloween parties, graduation, and teacher appreciation. See below for a list of what you can help make possible when you support Friends and PTSO.

- K-8 Literacy and Science curricula
- Classroom library expansions
- Professional development programs for Elysian's teaching staff
- Additional Chromebooks
- Public address and security system
- Annual operating grants (facilities, maintenance)
- Tech, arts, and science resources
- Community events throughout the year, such as Picture Day, Field Day, Halloween Party, Lower School Dance, Book Fairs, and the Back-to-School Block Party
- Communication between the school, teachers, and parents through the class parents' program and school directory
- Teacher-led events and grade/classroom activities and fundraisers
- Major league sports outings
- Pizza Fridays
- Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week
- Community Meetings
- Graduation events
- High school placement support for our 8<sup>th</sup> graders
- Theater rentals for school productions
- DE&I cultural events such as our annual Kuumba Day Celebration

## How can I help?

We welcome and encourage you to support Friends and PTSO in the ways that are most meaningful to you and your family. It takes all of us to keep Elysian thriving – THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR HEART, TIME, AND RESOURCES!

Donate. [[LINK TO ONE DONATION SITE](#)]

Volunteer. [[LINK TO EMAIL](#)]

[Ideas, questions?](#) We'd love to hear from you. [PTSO EMAIL](#) | [FRIENDS EMAIL](#)

*Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law and are accepted from individuals, corporations, and foundations.*

2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1e0PW0\\_tqW8o6th17igK0PJNlqTFnWIEzgGeaNY3Kr9k/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1e0PW0_tqW8o6th17igK0PJNlqTFnWIEzgGeaNY3Kr9k/edit?usp=sharing)

**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 parents who volunteer to organize parent events for the classroom. They disseminate information about classroom events – publishing parties, and seasonal events– 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 select chaperones to accompany the class.

### **Back to School Night**

Every September the school schedules an evening presentation 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.

## **The School Day**

### **Morning Arrival**

Our school front door is on Garden Street. The school door on Garden Street is open daily at 8:20 am. Instruction begins at 8:30 am.

Early morning drop-off is available for all students from 7:30 am to 8:20 am for a fee.

### **Lateness**

The school day begins promptly at 8:30 am. Any child not in his or her classroom by 8:30 am 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 nurse's office. There is a buzzer at the Elysian door to gain access if your child arrives late.

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.

### **Getting to School**

#### **Walking**

If you walk your child to or from school, it is highly recommended that you only use the crosswalks. There are no crossing guards this school year.

#### **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. **DO NOT PARK ON GARDEN STREET.** If an ambulance or firefighters need to

come to the school or building for any reason, cars cannot be parked there. Parking regulations will be strictly enforced by the Hoboken Police Department.

### Visitors

If you need to bring a forgotten item such as lunch, sneakers, or homework, please ring the bell and a staff member will come down to pick up the item or ring to provide access to come upstairs to the office.

### Attendance

Attendance in school is mandatory and is of the utmost importance to learning. Elysian requires that students attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State. When a student is frequently late or absent, this interrupts the student's education and disrupts the classroom for teachers and fellow students alike.

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. 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. Truancy is defined as 10 or more days out of school that is considered unexcused by the school. Chronic absenteeism is defined by the State of NJ as when a student misses 10% or more of school days (ie.-18 days out of the 180 school year).

***A copy of our school calendar can be found on our website: [ecsnj.org](https://www.ecsnj.org)  
<https://www.ecsnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-school-yearly-calendar-042623-USE-THIS-ONE.pdf>***

## Communication

### K-8 Points of Contact

Most questions should be directed first to your child's teacher. They are the first point of contact in most situations.

Academic Questions	First - Classroom teacher Then - Director	Firstname.Lastname@ecsnj.org <a href="mailto:Susan.Grierson@ecsnj.org">Susan.Grierson@ecsnj.org</a>
Attendance - notification of absence or lateness	Teacher Kim Scillia Deb Rosner	Firstname.Lastname@ecsnj.org <a href="mailto:Kim.Scillia@ecsnj.org">Kim.Scillia@ecsnj.org</a> <a href="mailto:Deb.Rosner@ecsnj.org">Deb.Rosner@ecsnj.org</a>
Before and Aftercare	Susan Gilbertson	<a href="mailto:Susan.Gilbertson@ecsnj.org">Susan.Gilbertson@ecsnj.org</a>
Changes in dismissal or pick up	Classroom teacher and	Firstname.Lastname@ecsnj.org

	Office	<a href="mailto:office@ecsnj.org">office@ecsnj.org</a>
Concerns with a teacher, classroom conflict, grades, homework	First - Classroom teacher Second – Director	Firstname.Lastname@ecsnj.org <a href="mailto:Susan.Grierson@ecsnj.org">Susan.Grierson@ecsnj.org</a>
Counseling and Mental Health	Batia Krinsky	<a href="mailto:Batia.Krinsky@ecsnj.org">Batia.Krinsky@ecsnj.org</a>
Enrichment Clubs	Emily Killea Colleen Herlihy	<a href="mailto:clubs@ecsnj.org">clubs@ecsnj.org</a>
Harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB)	Batia Krinsky	<a href="mailto:Batia.Krinsky@ecsnj.org">Batia.Krinsky@ecsnj.org</a>
Information Change (change of address, phone, email, student messages)	Office	<a href="mailto:office@ecsnj.org">office@ecsnj.org</a>
Lottery, Enrollment and Transfer	Susan Gilbertson	<a href="mailto:Susan.Gilbertson@ecsnj.org">Susan.Gilbertson@ecsnj.org</a>
Meal program - Lunch Order	Susan Gilbertson	<a href="mailto:Susan.Gilbertson@ecsnj.org">Susan.Gilbertson@ecsnj.org</a>
Medical forms and student health	Kim Scillia	<a href="mailto:Kim.Scillia@ecsnj.org">Kim.Scillia@ecsnj.org</a>
Technology	Rob Rosa	<a href="mailto:Roberto.Rosa@ecsnj.org">Roberto.Rosa@ecsnj.org</a>

### Monday Newsletter

Every Monday there is a weekly newsletter sent by email to all families and staff. It includes a message from the director and important information about school and community-related activities. *It is crucial that you read the weekly message from start to finish so that you know when to sign up for sports teams when there are half days, 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

You will receive an email notifying you, as early as possible, if the 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 10 am. Families will receive an email regarding any change in schedule or emergencies.

Half-day dismissal is at 1 pm for all students. Lunch is served on half days so students should bring or order lunch. For middle school students only – there is no out-to-lunch privilege on half days.

### Dismissal

Students are dismissed in a staggered manner for safety purposes. Please wait below the outside 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 pm. 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](mailto:office@ecsnj.org) and the classroom teacher via email.

### **Early Pick Up**

If you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, it's best to notify the teacher and office in writing/email that morning to let us know how your child will get home. Please note that your child may only be picked up by people on your emergency dismissal list.

Before care will begin at 7:30 am and aftercare will be available from dismissal through 6:00 pm for students, five days a week. We will update our website with pricing and registration information before the start of school.

### **Enrichment Programming**

Elysian Charter offers an After School Enrichment Program which provides a wide variety of club options. Each club usually runs an 8-week session on a specific week day for 1 hour after school. Throughout the year, there are three sessions of 8-week clubs in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Each session offers a varied assortment of engaging and educational clubs to interest students in all grade levels.

Just prior to the start of each session, a Google Form will be sent out that asks for your child's preferences for clubs. Placement in all of their desired clubs is not guaranteed, but every effort will be made to accommodate as many students as possible.

You will be emailed your child's finalized club selection with information about payment. Payment can be in the form of a check made payable to Elysian Charter School or cash. Payment should be made after confirmation of club admittance is provided. All questions should be sent directly to [clubs@ecsnj.org](mailto:clubs@ecsnj.org) not the school office.

### **Sports**

Teams are a great way for children to engage in extracurricular activities at Elysian. In the past we have offered basketball, track, and flag football programs. Most of our sports teams are co-ed, with the recent addition of a middle school girls' basketball and volleyball option.

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 the first tryout.

Elysian must obtain a signed acknowledgment 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 sports 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. Students may bring their home lunch to school in lunch boxes or paper bags. We do not provide refrigeration or heat lunches. Please include everything your child will need to eat lunch. Trading 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 an 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 often as possible and monitor the weather conditions daily. Since extreme weather conditions occur from time to time (smoke, rain, cold, heat) - we always monitor the conditions and use precautionary measures when necessary.

### **Field Trips and Overnights**

Field trips are an important part of integrating the curriculum. Each class may take a few trips during the year including a trip to New Victory Theater to see a performance. Field trips are designed to stimulate students' 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. No child will be denied participation due to a financial hardship.

### **Birthday Acknowledgements**

Birthdays are a very special time. If you wish to celebrate in school, please send in a small item to share. It's best to speak to your child's teacher about celebrating birthdays.

Any party 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 dressed 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. Chickenpox has 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@ecsni.org](mailto:nurse@ecsni.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:**

- Covid-19
- Chicken Pox
- Acute Diarrhea
- German Measles
- Giardia Lamblia
- Haemophilus
- 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 affect 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](http://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](http://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 8:30 am until 2:30 pm 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 that each of us is different with different needs-and sometimes that includes food allergies. Our students are very supportive of each other and generally 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 literacy approach in which the goal of which is to teach children the habits and strategies of effective reading and writing. Teachers spend time each day for independent reading, small group reading, phonics, and word study instruction, reading aloud and writing. Students in grades 3-8 have 1 to 1 laptops and K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade students have iPads.

## **Mathematics**

Our mathematics program blends problem solving and skill building in a program that moves through each grade level with common models, teaching strategies, and objectives. A 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. We offer Algebra 1 to qualifying students in grade 8.

## **Science**

Elysian follows the Next Generation Science Standards and we use a science curriculum, FOSS, for all grades. 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 unit of study.

## **Social Studies**

The Social Studies curriculum is thematic and content is organized 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 6-8 twice weekly.

## **Grades 7 and 8 - Middle School**

At a time when early adolescents need the reassurance of strong, consistent teachers, positive peer relationships and a 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 extracurricular 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 with and correspond with families often. 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. All reports are emailed 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 grades 5 and 8. Assessments help us plan for instruction and monitor student progress.

Assessments we use are:

- Raz Kids
  - Used as a screener to help identify reading level and skill/strategy/phonemic awareness
  - Administered annually in the fall
- Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment/Teachers College Reading Assessment
  - Used as a universal screening tool to assess student's reading abilities and identify areas for targeted reading instruction
  - Administered in the fall, winter and spring
  - DIEBELS/Acadience Reading – Grades K-8, screening for dyslexia
- Mathematics beginning of year and unit summative assessments
  - Administered in September for targeted math instruction
  - At the end of each unit of study
  - Identify students who need additional support
- NJSLA (New Jersey Student Learning Assessments) - Grades 3-8
  - Mandatory standardized statewide assessments in ELA, Math, and Science administered in the spring.

### **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 given to their homeroom teacher in the morning and will be returned at the end of the school day. 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 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.

## **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.

### **Response to Misbehavior:**

Elysian has high behavioral expectations for its students. Teachers make these expectations clear to students at the beginning of the year and review them continuously. Parents will be notified when a student's behavior falls outside of these expectations so that parents can help reinforce the school's guidelines in conversations with their child. If a student does not follow instructions or classroom rules or behaves in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's core values, the teacher or adult in charge is responsible for correcting the student and/or administering a consequence.

Teachers always start with the least invasive intervention (such as a visual cue or a positively framed group reminder of what to do); interventions will escalate incrementally, accordingly, if the behavior continues, and a logical consequence may be implemented.

Teachers, when deemed appropriate, will notify the parent of the child by phone or email to advise of the situation and request that parents reinforce our classroom expectations at home.

Examples of infractions:

- Deliberately not following classroom rules and procedures
- Disrespectful or argumentative talk or behavior
- Socializing during academic instruction
- Distracting classmates intentionally during instruction
- Intentionally not completing academic work
- Conflicts with classmates, or unkind/disparaging words or actions
- Roughhousing or play fighting

Examples of consequences:

- Seated apart from other classmates (if the student is distracting others)
- Makeup missed work at some point in the day, including during recess or after school
- Write a reflection/apology letter
- Take a break inside the classroom, or in another classroom, supervised by an adult
- Fix or replace something that has been damaged or broken
- Recess detention, particularly for unkind or rough behavior
- Sitting apart from peers at lunch, or sitting out for a short break during recess, if not behaving in an appropriate and safe manner
- Certain infractions are more serious and may result in detention.

### **In-school suspension**

In cases where in-school suspensions are warranted, the student will report to school but be separated from the class for the duration of the suspension. The student will be placed in another supervised location where they will complete assignments.

### **Suspension**

When deemed necessary, in instances of extreme misbehavior, a student may be suspended from school for one to five days, depending on the severity of the infraction. Parents are notified in advance.

### **Harassment, Intimidation of Bullying:**

“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 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying can be found on the Elysian Charter School website homepage.

### **1. What is the ABR / Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act?**

New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR) is commonly referred to as the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) law. The purpose of the law is to strengthen the standards by which school districts prevent, report, investigate and respond to incidents of bullying.

### **2. What is Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) per the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act?**

The HIB policy can be found on the ECS website. Here is a direct link: <https://www.ecsnj.org/forms/information/anti-bullying-policy/>

HIB is defined as:

The ABR defines harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) 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 an actual or perceived characteristic, such as:

- Race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that
  - Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or
  - off school grounds, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that
  - A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
  - Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
  - Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.
- (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14)

### **3. How do I break down the HIB definition?**



## Breakdown of HIB Definition

### Types of Behavior Includes:

ANY gesture OR  
ANY written, verbal or physical act OR  
ANY electronic communication  
Can be a single incident or series of incidents  
AND

### Motivation for Behavior:

ANY actual characteristics OR  
PERCEIVED characteristic  
Examples: race, color, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation,  
gender identity, and expression, or mental/physical/sensory disability OR  
ANY OTHER DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC  
AND

### Location of Incident:

On school property;  
At a school-sponsored function;  
On a school bus;  
Off school grounds (subject to limitations)  
AND

### Substantial Disruption:

Must cause a substantial disruption or interference with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students

### Must Meet One of the Following Conditions:

A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the actions will physically or emotionally harm the student or damage the student's property, that the actions would place a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or property; OR  
Has the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students; OR  
Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

## **4. What are the requirements for addressing HIB that occurs off school grounds?**

School districts are responsible for addressing HIB that occurs off school grounds when a school employee is made aware of the HIB, and the HIB substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students. The responses to HIB that occurs off school grounds shall be consistent with the code of conduct, and with other provisions of the HIB policy.

## **5. How do I report an allegation of HIB?**

A student, parent, or staff member can submit a confidential report either electronically using the following link or requesting a form from the school social worker to be emailed to them.

<https://forms.gle/drKfBjiaeutqWBX6>

#### **6. Can I report an allegation of HIB anonymously?**

Yes, the Anonymous Report forms are on the wall directly across from the social worker's office. You can put the report in the locked box next to the social worker's door. You can also find a copy at the ECS website under forms and information. Here is a direct link.

<https://www.ecsnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Anonymous-Bullying-Report-Form.pdf>

Please make sure that you state the victim's full name, grade, and any witnesses to ensure that an investigation can be initiated.

#### **7. How does the District respond when it receives a HIB complaint after school has closed for the summer?**

If a HIB complaint is filed after school has concluded for the year and the conduct occurred during the course of the school year, the District will attempt to investigate the incident using the same procedures employed during the school year. However, interviewing students during the summer may not be possible. The District is required to complete its report within the ten (10) day time frame. Therefore, the District may not be able to obtain sufficient information from students to substantiate the report. Accordingly, parents are strongly encouraged to promptly report any matters they believe may be HIB. If the conduct occurs during the summer and is not related to a school-sponsored or related event, parents should report the conduct to law enforcement, if appropriate, and provide emotional counseling and supports for their student. Additionally, parents should notify the Director or social worker at the beginning of the school year so that appropriate services and interventions may be implemented.

#### **8. What actions does the school take when they receive a HIB complaint?**

- Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS) receives HIB report.
- ABS forwards the HIB report to the Director.
- ABS and/ or Director contact all involved parents by the end of the school day.
- Director designates the ABS to initiate an investigation within 1 day.
- ABS completes an investigation within 10 days
- ABS sends a written report to the Director within 2 days
- Director reports investigation results to the Board of Trustees at the next regularly scheduled board meeting
- Director provides parent notification of the same within 5 days.
- If parents request a hearing before the Board, the hearing must be held within 10 school days following the parents' request. Parents will have 60 calendar days from the date they receive the Director's written notification to file a hearing request with the Board Secretary.

#### **9. How do I report an allegation of HIB?**

A student, parent, or staff member can submit a confidential report either electronically using the following link or requesting a form from the school social worker to be emailed to them.

School Anti-Bullying Specialist:  
Marisa Bianchi  
Marisa.bianchi@ecsnj.org

<https://forms.gle/drKfBjiqaeutqWBX6>

**10. Do parents have the right to deny school staff permission to interview their child as a part of an HIB investigation?**

No. The ABR does not address the issue of parent presence during interviews. Therefore, the school district determines the procedures for conducting investigations, including interviews. Since the ABR does not establish new or amended requirements regarding parent involvement in student interviews, pre-existing requirements apply, meaning that schools have the right to interview students without parents being present.

**11. What is the difference between a Code of Conduct infraction and HIB?**

To confirm an allegation of **HIB**, it must meet the definition. Identifiable motivation for the behavior is KEY. Examples: • Race, Color, or Religion • Ancestry or National Origin • Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Gender Expression • Mental, Physical, or Sensory Disability • Any other distinguishing characteristic with intent to be mean or disrespectful.

If an allegation does not meet the HIB definition, it can be a **Code of Conduct** infraction which requires correction action. Harmful or demeaning conduct motivated only by another reason, for example, a dispute about relationships or personal belongings, or aggressive conduct without identifiable motivation, does not come within the statutory definition of bullying.

While harassment, intimidation, and bullying exist, not all incidents warrant a HIB investigation. It may be a rule infraction that falls under our Code of Conduct, which can also warrant disciplinary action. The majority of school discipline referrals will involve Code of Conduct violations, while a smaller percentage may also need to be investigated as a potential HIB.

**12. What is the difference between a student conflict and HIB?**

**Conflict** is a mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement, including a disagreement, an argument or a fight which is a normal part of human development.

**HIB** is one-sided, where one or more students are victims of one or more person's aggression, which is intended to physically or emotionally hurt the victim(s).

<b>Conflict</b>	<b>HIB</b>
Involves similar or equal degrees of power	Involves an imbalance of power
Can be accidental	Intentional

Mutual disagreement or difference in interests or goals, includes arguments and fights/both parties participate in conflict	Is one-sided, unwanted or uninvited aggression
Equal emotional reaction	Unequal emotional reaction – physical or emotional harm inflicted
Can be fairly resolved by compromise or negotiation	A fair resolution involves a change in the behavior of the aggressor; the victim has no concession to make

**13. Where does this information go? What's next?**

- The HIB report is not included in a student's cumulative folder
- The outcome of the HIB report is given to the Board with all names and identifying information removed.
- Confirmed cases of HIB and interventions are reported to the state two times a year.
- This will not prevent a student from getting into high school or participating in school programs
- Regardless of the outcome, the same considerations apply (code of conduct, restorative justice, etc.)

**14. What should I do if my child is accused of harassment, intimidation or bullying?**

Stay calm. Students, particularly young students, may pick up on a parent's anxiety over the situation. Conflict resolution, coping skills, and learning about differences among peers are part of the educational process that the ABR seeks to strengthen in school districts. The ABR is not a criminal statute and students are treated with respect and care by administrators, teachers, and the ABS throughout the process. Encourage your student to be truthful and reassure them that staff members are present to help them and all students feel safe and secure when attending school.

**15. What if the investigation determines that the student's actions constitute HIB?**

The student will receive consequences at the school level, and/or counseling and support, as applicable. The Director will impose the response deemed most appropriate to address the infraction based on the severity of the infraction, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors.

Examples of consequences and/or services include, but are not limited to, individual or small group counseling, social skills instruction, peer support groups, written or verbal apology, classroom instruction aligned to the goals of the ABR, detention, and community service, or suspension.

**16. What can I do to support my child if they are talking about peer conflicts at school?**

When your child comes home and tells you about an incident that happened at school you must look at the situation dispassionately. It is important to remember that there are always two sides to every story, even with your own child. Children may intentionally or deliberately omit certain information or downplay their role in the conflict.

## **STEP 2 - GATHER FACTS**

Before approaching the school, I suggest that you ask your child the following questions.

- *Tell me what happened?*
  - *What did you do when this happened?*
  - *Did you tell the teacher?*
  - *Who else was there? Did they see what happened?*
  - *Did you say anything to them before this happened?*
  - *Did you say anything to them after this happened?*
  - *Did anything happen the day before?*
  - *Is this the first time it's happened or has there been other times?*
- Is there anything about this that you're not telling me?*

## **STEP 3 - EXPLORE STRATEGIES WITH YOUR CHILD TO RESOLVE EVERYDAY CONFLICT**

A lot of conflict at school can be resolved by exploring problem-solving strategies with your child. Articles related are listed at the end of this FAQ.

## **STEP 4 - SHARE WITH THE TEACHER**

Your child may have shared this with you many times but it's possible they have not brought it to the attention of their teacher. Teachers must ensure that they closely supervise the children under their care; however, it is impossible for a teacher to see everything that happens at school. When teachers are aware of a problem, all staff can actively monitor and look out for students both in the classroom and at recess.

When you email the teacher, please give as much information as possible. Here are some suggestions:

- *State the problem clearly and concisely*
- *Describe how this problem has affected your child*

- *Inform the teacher of what you have done to resolve the problem e.g. coaching Johnny through the conflict.*
- *State your preferred resolution to the problem and ask how the school can help*

#### **STEP 5 - REACH OUT TO THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER**

If the problem persists after the student has tried a suitable strategy to resolve the conflict and the teacher has been informed, it's perfectly acceptable to reach out to the school social worker for more support. The school social worker is here to help all students and families.