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Motto: VARE EAGLE PRIDE

**“Taking Personal Responsibility In our Determined Excellence
2024-2025**

Student/Parent Handbook

Principal: Mrs. Karen Howell-Toomer



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in the Principals' Desk

Dear VARE Parents/Guardians & Students:

Thank you for your support, hard work, and participation in making this a successful sixth year as the principal of VARE STEM & ARTS Academy Middle Charter School. Even though the worst of Covid is behind us, we are asking scholars and staff to wear a mask if they are feeling ill.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our incoming fifth through eighth graders and families. At VARE Stem & Arts Academy Charter School, the administrators, teachers and staff are dedicated to nurturing the development of the *whole child*—academically, emotionally, and socially.

We will continue to provide a rigorous academic program for all scholars. I am deeply committed to maintaining a positive, safe, orderly school climate, and an innovative and rigorous learning environment in which adults and students will thrive and flourish.

VARE Scholars are front and center to our school's mission:

VARE Stem & Arts Academy Middle School will focus on personalized student achievement through rigorous high-quality instruction that will produce well-rounded scholars who will make significant contributions to society.

We ask that our students adhere to our common expectations: respect for school property, and mutual respect among staff, parents, and children that are core values of the VARE Philosophy for learning and achieving. We invite you to review and adhere to the VARE Stem & Arts Academy Charter Middle School policy and procedures as outlined in this school handbook.

IMPORTANT DATES:

September 2, 2024- Labor Day School Closed

September 3, 2024- First Day of School

September 12, 2024- Back to School Night

September 28, 2024-Religious Holiday-School Closed

Vare 5 V's- Be Vibrant, Be Virtuous, Be Vocal, Be Vital, Be Valorous,

Sincerely,

Karen Howell-Toomer,
Principal

Title I SWP is available in the main office.



Our Vision

At Universal Vare STEM and Arts Academy, vision is to promote a love for ART Appreciation, Cultural Awareness and STEM Innovation.

Our Mission

The mission of Universal Vare STEM and Arts Academy is to foster transferable skills through STEM and Arts programming that will prepare scholars for academic success now and in the future.

Our beliefs

- All scholars believe that knowledge is power.
- All scholars believe that education is the pathway to freedom.
- All scholars want to develop critical inquiry skills.
- All scholars should be educated to know their culture and history.
- All scholars should develop scholar identities.
- All scholars learn best when their curiosity is stimulated and they are encouraged to take intellectual risks.

Enrollment Policy

Universal Vare STEM and ARTS Academy Middle School is a public, neighborhood school with a capped enrollment. All students living in the catchment area for Universal Vare are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Confidentiality Statement

Universal Vare STEM and ARTS Academy Middle School maintains a firm policy regarding the confidentiality of its students and prohibits the discussion of any student or student matters in any public venue.

Universal Vare STEM and ARTS Academy Middle School

Staff 2024-2025

| Staff Name | Postion | Email |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Vare Leadership | | |
| Mrs. Karen Howell-Toomer | Principal | ktoomer@universalcompanies.org |
| Ms. Tamekia Curtis | Social Worker | tcurtis@universalcompanies.org |
| Ms. Winter Culmer | Administrative Assistant | wculmer@universalcompanies.org |
| Mrs. Juanita Earley | Admin Assistant | jeasley@universalcompanies.org |
| Vare Teachers | | |
| Ms. Gail Tucker | 5 th Grade ELA/SS | gtucker@universalcompanies.org |
| Mr. Khalif Foster | 5 th /6 th Grade Science/Math | msnyder@universalcompanies.org |
| Ms. Keyana Dunn | 7 th /8 th ELA | kdunn@universalcompanies.org |
| Mr. Mark Moxley | 7 th /8 th Grade MATH | mmoxley@universalcompanies.org |
| Ms. Fathiyyada Canada | 5 th Grade Learning Support Teacher | fcanada@universalcompanies.org/ |
| Ms. Dionne Mobley | ART Teacher | dmobley@universalcompanies.org |
| Related Arts and STEM Teachers | | |
| Ms. Tamekia Curtis | Social Worker | tcurtis@universalcompanies.org |
| | | |
| Health and Wellness | | |
| Ms. Sierra Pettaway | Medical Assistant | ahinton@universalcompanies.org |
| Climate Support Staff | | |
| Mr. Damon Hudgins | Climate Specialist | dhudgins@universalcompanies.org |
| Mr. Aerron McKnight | Climate Specialist | amcKnight@universalcompanies.org |

Attendance

School Hours

Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Students must be picked-up no later than 3:40 p.m. each day. Students who are not picked up by 4:00 p.m. will be referred to the Department of Human Services.

- Early dismissal hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Breakfast is served from 8:00 a.m. to 8:25 a.m.
- All scholars are eligible for a free breakfast and lunch every day in the student cafeteria.
- Universal Vare STEM and Arts Academy Middle School follows the same emergency closing procedure as the School District of Philadelphia. In the event of poor weather conditions such as severe weather or storms, please listen to your local television or radio stations for relevant information regarding school cancellation. The school will also notify parents of school closures via School Messenger.

Consistent attendance assures that our students will not miss valuable instructional time and opportunities that will enhance their success in school. Students are required to be in school everyday except for:

- Illness
- Approved holidays
- Family emergencies

We take seriously the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as it applies to student attendance. Three Unexcused absences will result in a referral for truancy where a mandatory attendance improvement conference must be attended with the school. If the scholar's attendance does not improve after the conference, the scholar and family will be referred to the City of Philadelphia's Truancy Court.

Tardiness

Being prompt to school is a habit that will remain throughout life and will benefit your child's efforts. Students are considered late to school if they arrive after 8:30 a.m. If your child is late for school, he or she must report to the front office to sign in and receive a pass to enter the classroom. Continuous tardiness will result in consequences including such as:

- Referral to school counselor
- Loss of assembly privileges
- Loss of school field trips
- Afterschool Detention
- Decrease in academic performance

Early Dismissal

Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled after school hours as they can interfere with your child's learning program. When children have an appointment that requires them to leave early, the following procedure must be followed:

- **Send a note stating the reason for early dismissal that morning by 10:00 a.m. or call the main office to ask that your child be excused early. No student will be released after 2:30 p.m. for an early dismissal.**

- Notify the office if someone other than yourself is picking up your child. The person must be listed on the approved pick-up person that you submitted, and ***must have photo ID*** for security reasons.
- You, or the designated pick-up person, must sign your child out at the office. No student is released from the school during regular hours without being accompanied by a responsible 18 years old or older adult who is also listed in the student's emergency contact form.

Academics

Universal Vare STEM and Arts Academy Middle School is committed to identifying and meeting the diverse needs of all children through high-quality, educational programming. As part of the educational programming, the school offers supports and services ranging from supplemental aides and services in the general education classroom to supplemental programming in a special education setting.

Report Cards and Grade Distribution

The school year will be broken into quarters, resulting in four report card periods. At the midpoint of each grading period, students and parents will be encouraged to check their overall grade via the Parent Portal in PowerSchool. All report cards will be available digitally in Parent Portal at the end of each grading term.

| Grade | Percent | GPA Equivalent |
|-------|--------------|----------------|
| A+ | 98-100 | 4.5 |
| A | 94-97 | 4.0 |
| A- | 91-93 | 3.8 |
| B+ | 88-90 | 3.5 |
| B | 84-87 | 3.0 |
| B- | 81-83 | 2.8 |
| C+ | 78-80 | 2.5 |
| C | 74-77 | 2.0 |
| C- | 71-73 | 1.8 |
| D+ | 68-70 | 1.5 |
| D | 64-67 | 1.0 |
| D- | 60-63 | 0.8 |
| F | 59 and below | 0.0 |

Honor Roll (%based)

Honor roll designation will be reported on each quarterly report card.

- **Distinguished Honors-** is awarded to students achieving an average class percentage of 95%-100% in all courses
- **First High Honors-** is awarded to students achieving an average class percentage of 91%-94%% in all courses
- **Second Honors-** is awarded to students achieving an average class percentage of 85%-90% in all courses

National Junior Honor Society (To begin in January 2025)

In order to be considered for membership in the Universal Vare STEM and Arts Academy Middle School National Junior Honor Society, students must meet the following criteria:

- 95% attendance rate at Universal Vare for two marking periods
- 3.2 academic cumulative grade point average
- Participation in at least two activities; i.e., clubs, intramurals, school service positions, religious youth organizations or community groups.
- A written Essay to a prompt
- A teacher recommendation
- A letter of recommendations from someone outside their family or outside the school

Homework

Homework is an important component of our instructional program. It is intended to reinforce and review concepts learned at school. We ask that parents /guardians take an active role by providing each scholar with a quiet area in which to complete homework assignments and also by reviewing assignments with scholars. Please check with your child's teacher to see what supplies may be needed at home to complete homework assignments.

A scholar who has been absent from school will be permitted to make up homework, class work and tests. It is the scholar's responsibility to contact the teacher for information and scheduling regarding make-up work. This work should be made up as soon as possible after the scholar returns to school. Any scholar who has been absent more than two days or knows he/she is going to be absent longer may have his/her family call the school office to make arrangements for assignments to be made and the necessary books to be collected.

Assessments and Evaluation

Scholar Evaluation: Scholar progress will be evaluated through the use of formal and informal assessments.

- Teacher-created assessments
- Designated assessments/Benchmarks, administered to all scholars 3 times a school year
- Rubrics for special projects, writing assignments, daily class and homework, and weekly tests and quizzes in all subjects

*Universal VARE STEM and Arts Charter Middle School, as a Pennsylvania public school, must follow the laws set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education with regard to state mandated testing requirements.

Testing Requirements:

- All public-school students enrolled in grades 3 through 8 are required to participate in the ELA and Mathematics PSSA or PASA.
- All public-school students enrolled in grades 4 and 8 are required to participate in the Science PSSA or PASA.

Promotion Policies

Three factors are considered in promotion decisions: attendance, overall reading level, and grade level standard mastery, as cited on the report card. Students who accumulate more than 10 absences during the school year will be considered for retention in their current grade-level. Please refer to the attendance policy section of this handbook for more details on this policy. Please note that absences resulting from out-of- school suspensions are not excused.

Students who are not reading on grade level by the end of the academic year are eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) and will be referred to the Student Support team for placement.

Parents of scholars who are in jeopardy of being retained will receive notice of this possibility in writing at the end of the second quarter. Promotion recommendations are made by classroom teachers, and final promotion decisions will be made by the school's Administrative Team. The school reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy given special circumstances. The school will make every effort, with your support, to provide remediation in getting these scholars back on grade level in order to prevent retention.

Upon request, we will make every effort to provide assignments for a scholar who has an excused absence for three days or more. When absence is anticipated, please let your child's teacher know ahead of time so that you and the teacher can work together to provide the necessary work assignments during the period of absence.

Universal Special Education Services

According to special education regulations in Chapter 711 of the Pennsylvania School Code, "each charter school and cyber charter school shall establish written policies and procedures to ensure that all scholars with disabilities who are enrolled in the charter school or cyber charter school, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated."

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Universal Vare STEM & Arts Academy Middle School maintains records concerning all children enrolled, including students with disabilities. Records containing personally identifiable information about or related to children with disabilities could include, but are not limited to, cumulative grade reports, discipline records, enrollment and attendance records, health records, individualized education programs, notices of recommended assignment, notices of intent to evaluate and to reevaluate, comprehensive evaluation reports, other evaluation reports by public school staff and by outside evaluators, work samples, test data, data entered into PDE data collection systems, correspondence between school staff and home, instructional support team documents, referral data, memoranda and other education-related documents. Records can be maintained electronically, on paper, microfiche, audio and videotape. Records will be located in the main office, electronic storage systems and in the secure possession of teachers, school administrators, specialists, psychologists, counselors and other school staff with a legitimate educational interest in the information contained therein. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Records are maintained as long as they remain educationally relevant.

Non-Discrimination Equal Educational Opportunity Policy

Universal Vare STEM & Arts Charter Middle School shall not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or any other legally protected classification. This policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. Information relative to special accommodations and the designated responsible official for compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 may be obtained by contacting the school.

Child Find

Universal Vare STEM & Arts Charter Middle School provides special educational services to students with disabilities as provided in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004. The school has the duty to identify, refer, evaluate, and if the child is eligible, provide a free, appropriate public education to students who are disabled. If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the school learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Studentss having difficulty in the general education classroom should first be considered for tutorial, remedial, and other support services that are available to all students. At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the school must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the school receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent. If the school determines that the evaluation is not needed, the school will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the school. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities.

Chapter 15/Section 504 Service Agreement

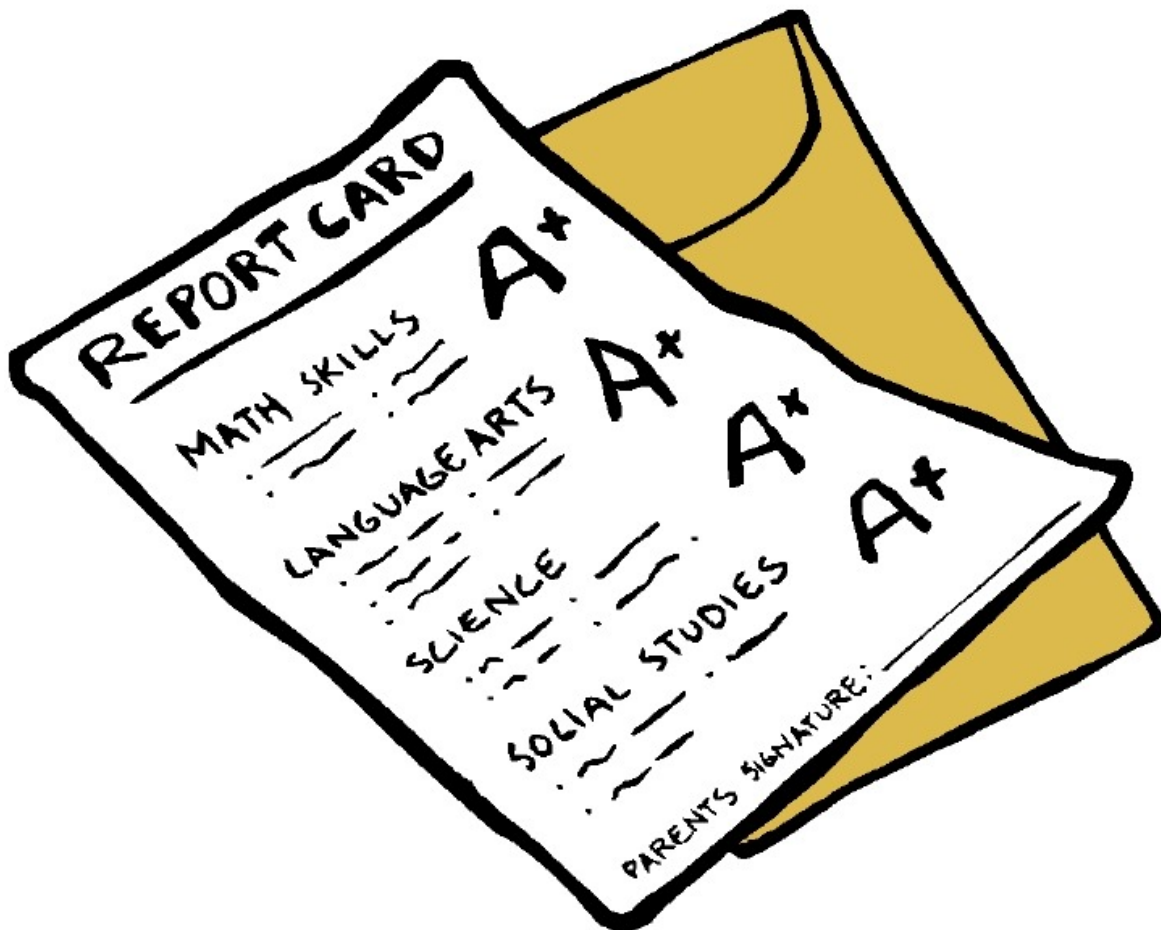
Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and under the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, some school-age children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a documented mental or physical disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities or bodily functions. A Section 504 Service Agreement will be developed if these limitations prohibit the student's participation in, or access to, an aspect of the school program. The need for a Service Agreement is determined upon thorough review of all student data related to the documented disability or limitation as outlined above.

As outlined in ADAAA the following major life activities include, but are not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

As outlined in ADAAA the following major bodily functions include, but are not limited to: functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Please contact your child's guidance counselor if you have questions concerning a 504 Service Agreement.

If you feel your child may be in need of special education services and/or related services, please contact your scholar's teacher, the Special Education Liaison or a school administrator to discuss your concerns and the evaluation process. For more information on eligibility for special education and/or related services, see the Child Find Brochure on the Universal Companies website.



School-Wide Policies

DRESS CODE-VARE Uniform Policy

Scholars are expected to follow the dress code and wear the school UNIFORM every day. The uniform provides the school with a cohesive look and satisfies the city mandate. The appearance of the student is primarily the responsibility of the parent/guardian as well as the student. Students who continually come to school out of uniform, and violate the dress code, will receive disciplinary actions. Students are required to wear the following uniform:

| Girls 5th Grade | Boys 5 th Grade |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burgundy Polo Top (until Oct. 7) • White buttoned-down shirt (after Oct. 7) • Burgundy plaid skirt (must be worn with white shirt and burgundy cardigan sweater) • Black Shoes • Gray or Burgundy socks or stockings • Burgundy Cardigan Sweater with school logo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gray Twill Pants • Burgundy Polo w/school logo (until Oct 7) • White buttoned-down shirt (after Oct. 7) • Black Belt • Tie • Black Shoes • Gray or Burgundy Socks • Burgundy Cardigan Sweater with school logo |
| Girls Grade 6 th , 7 th & 8 th | Boys 6 th , 7 th & 8 th |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plaid Skirt • Burgundy Polo top (until Oct. 7) • White shirt (after Oct 7, 2019) • Burgundy sweater with school logo • Burgundy criss-cross tie • Black or Navy shoes • Burgundy or Gray socks or stockings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burgundy sweater with school logo • Burgundy Oxford Shirt (until Oct. 7) • White shirt (after Oct 7, 2019) • Gray Twill Pants • Burgundy Tie • Black Belt • Black shoes • Black or gray socks |

***Exceptions to the uniform policy for religious purposes are made on an individual basis and require the approval of administration.**

- Physical education is a requirement of the academic curriculum. Scholars who are not properly prepared (appropriate footwear) for gym cannot participate and can fail the course due to lack of participation.
- Hats and **HOODIES** are **not** permitted to be worn in the school. Pants must be worn on the waistline. Girls cannot wear dangling or hooped earrings. (Earrings cannot be larger than the size of a quarter.)
- Denim jeans are not allowed under any uniforms. (unless it is a designated *N.U.T Day* -No Uniform Today) In the event of inclement weather gym sweat pants may be worn under dresses or skirts. This policy will be strictly enforced every day.

Fundraiser

Throughout the school year students will be allowed to participate in N.U.T. (No Uniform Today) Day. Students will be asked to donate \$2.00 on this day to be used to offset the costs of school field trips.

Technology and Internet Use

Universal Vare STEM and Arts Charter Middle School is committed to preparing students to be successful citizens in a globalized and technical world. By putting a computer in the hands of every scholar while at school, learning can become flexible and personalized through the connected integration of technology and the school's educational programming.

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. Universal Vare has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information. We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of our school.

While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. The school makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding information found over the Internet. Users of the school's Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet.

Scholars are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with the Universal Vare policy, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law. Specifically, the following uses are prohibited:

1. Facilitation of illegal activity.
2. Commercial or for-profit uses.
3. Non-work or non-school related work.
4. Product advertisement, political and/or religious lobbying.
5. Bullying/cyberbullying.
6. Hate mail, discriminatory remarks, and offensive or inflammatory communication.
7. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials.
8. Access to obscene or pornographic material or child pornography.
9. Access by students or minors to material that is harmful to minors or is determined inappropriate for minors in accordance with Board policy.
10. Inappropriate language or profanity.
11. Transmission of material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients.
12. Act of intentionally obtaining or modifying files, passwords, and data belonging to other Users.
13. Intentional assumption of false or unknown identity including the impersonation of another User, anonymity, or pseudonym.
14. Fraudulent copying, communications, or modification of materials in violation of copyright laws.
15. Loading or using of unauthorized games, programs, files or other electronic media.
16. Disruption of the work of other Users.
17. Destruction, modification, abuse or unauthorized access to network hardware, software and files.

18. Vandalism- defined as: any malicious attempt to harm or destroy network equipment, data of another user, Internet, or other networks, including but not limited to uploading or creating malicious code and computer viruses; physical destruction of computer equipment; destruction of cabling and network infrastructure; attempts to gain unauthorized access by defeating network security (commonly known as "hacking"); and attempts to gain access by using a different account or password and destruction or alteration of files.
19. Use of the system for defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, offensive, and illegal material.

Universal Vare and Universal reserve the right to log and monitor network use, computer network activity, e-mail, electronic communications and files server space utilization by Users. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in any Internet use, computer network activity, email and electronic communications and files stored on or accessed through our servers, computers, network appliances or other technology devices. We further reserve the right to reasonably monitor and regulate the accounts of students and staff in order to ensure compliance with this Policy. This includes, but may not be limited to, physical surveillance of Users as they access the network, interception of electronic messages, and investigation of network logs and activity.

Personal Cell Phones

Cell Phones are not permitted for use within the school. A phone is available in the main office if a student needs to make a phone call. Scholars are to request permission to use the office phone. If parents need to get messages to their child they should call the main office.

- Scholars who bring cell electronic devices to school do so at their own risk. The school cannot be held liable for the loss of these devices, and will not investigate the circumstances associated with their disappearance.
- Personal phones should be silenced before entering the school building and remain in a scholar's locker or bookbag throughout the day.
- The school nurse will notify parents/guardians if they need to be pick up a scholar due to illness. We ask that students first be evaluated by the School Nurse. If a student needs to call a parent/guardian they should do so from the main office.

All cell phones will be collected during morning admission and returned to the scholars during dismissal. If seen all other electronic device will be confiscated immediately. On the first offense of improper use, the item confiscated will be held by an administrator (School Principal, Assistant Principal, or Dean) and returned to the scholar at the end of the day. On a second offense of improper use, the device will be confiscated and returned **ONLY** to a parent/guardian.

Scholars who argue with a teacher or refuse to follow their instruction regarding a device will be given consequences consistent with the Universal Student Code of Conduct. Subsequently, the use of text messages or social media to harass other students or videoing incidents on or off school property are deemed inappropriate and will merit consequences in line with the Universal Student Code of conduct.

Emergency Drills Policy

All Universal Vare scholars will and are expected to participate in two evacuation drills per month which include fire drills and shelter-in-place. These unannounced drills are to prepare the scholars and staff for any potential real emergencies that may arise which would require the building to be evacuated or locked

down. We ask that you reinforce the importance of following directions during an evacuation drill at home.

Lockers (this may be different during the COVID-19 Pandemic)

All scholars will be assigned a locker in the school building and will need to sign a contract outlining their responsibilities regarding their school locker and lock. Scholar lockers are the property of the school and may be subject to search by an administrator at any time with or without reasonable suspicion to protect the health, safety, and welfare of others. It is encouraged to never share keep money or valuable property in lockers and never share locker combinations with others. The school will not be responsible for or investigate missing personal property.

School Field Trips

The mission of the Universal Vare STEM and ARTS Charter Middle School is to connect what scholars learn in the classroom to the real world. Field trips are planned to enrich and enhance the programs in the classroom. All students are encouraged to participate and must have a signed permission slip prior to each trip. Parents will be notified in advance and may be asked to contribute towards admission. Scholars with behavioral issues or concerns will be required to have a parent/guardian accompany them on a given trip. **When participation is denied, pre-payment or deposit, if any, for the trip is non-refundable.** No scholar will be excluded from a field trip due to financial hardship. ***All parent chaperones must have current child abuse and background clearances on file with the school.***

Visitors and Guests (this will be different during the COVID-19 Pandemic)

We love visitors and guests to enter our buildings. We have an open-door policy and welcome any and all parents/ guardians and/or family members to our school. To ensure the safety of our students, we ask that all visitors and guests report to the front office to sign in. Visitors and guests will be escorted to their location by a climate staff. No one is permitted in the halls, lunchroom, classrooms, Auditorium or in the yard without authorization from the office. Parents/Visitors of Universal Vare STEM and Arts Charter Middle School are expected to abide by the rules and regulations that govern a safe and secure environment. **Anyone found to be in violation of this policy can be refused admission to the school and/or can be escorted from the building by the appropriate legal authorities. In addition, they may receive a LETTER of EXCLUSION from the school building.**

Parents participating as volunteers in the classroom or who have made arrangements with the teacher to work in the classroom must first have the approval of the principal and must have all of their **current clearances turned in and approved by Central office.** A child abuse and criminal background check is needed for anyone who volunteers on a consistent basis. Afterwards, parents will sign the Parents/Visitors Log in the main office each time they visit, prior to going to the classroom. A visitor's pass must be obtained from the office and be visibly displayed before a parent or visitor enters a classroom.

Parental Concerns or Contacting Teachers

Parents/guardians and teachers can address problems, issues, and/or concerns by following the process listed below:

- Schedule an appointment with one of your scholar's teacher(s) or Deans to discuss and resolve problems, issues, or concerns.
- If the result of conversation is deemed unsatisfactory, parents may request an appointment with the Assistant Principal to express and rectify their concerns.
- If the discussion requires further conversation, parent/guardian can then request a meeting with the Principal to resolve the issue.

To request a meeting, please send a note with your child or leave a message for the teacher at 215-952-8611. Please include your telephone number and the time of day when you can be reached and the teacher will contact you as soon as possible.

Parent/teacher communication is vital to the educational success and experience of your child. Together we form a team that focuses on your scholar's needs, concerns, and growth. We invite you to participate in the process by your inquiries. We will also communicate with the parents through the following:

- Back to School Night
- Scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Interim Progress Reports for Students
- Report Cards Conferences
- Newsletters
- Monthly School Calendars
- Open House for incoming scholars
- Emails from Principal via School Messenger
- School Web Site: Universalfamilyofschools.org
- Notes or Telephone Calls to Parents
- Monthly Principal Chat 'N' Chew Meetings

Please do not hesitate to contact the school or classroom teacher with questions you may have. Parents/Guardians are welcome to observe in their child's classrooms. Arrangements for visits must be made in advance with the classroom teacher.



Student Code of Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct establishes a policy for conduct that ensures the safety and the educational experience for all scholars. Every scholar is expected to follow all of the rules of the Code of Student Conduct before, during, and after school. The Code applies to scholars while in they are in the school building, on school grounds, at school-related activities, and on the way to or from school. Students must follow these rules on their assigned school buses or public transit systems that bring them to and from school each day. The Code also applies to scholars involving any incident(s), outside of school hours, that may reasonably be expected to undermine or disrupt the educational experience or endanger the safety of another member of the school community.

It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to maintain the school climate while on or off campus.

| School-Wide Norms | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Location | Student Rights | Student Responsibilities | Possible Consequences |
| Classrooms | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To have a certain amount of privacy To learn or speak without interruption To be free from physical and verbal abuse To have the right to your own opinion To make mistakes To get help and to ask questions To be treated with respect | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To respect others and their property To be a good listener To be honest To be sensitive to others To raise your hand when you need to speak To listen and respect the decisions of adults To keep your classroom and personal area neat and clean To have good manners | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Warning Apology to students, class, and teacher Notify parent via phone call, conference, or letter. Detention/Accommodation Room Send to an administrator/Placed on Principal's Daily Report Parent conference with an administrator Suspension |
| Hallways and Locker | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To be safe when walking in the hallways To be treated with respect To have clean, litter-free hallways To have student projects and bulletin boards displayed without fear of tampering or damage Keep lockers clean, organized, and locked | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To not touch the student projects and bulletin board displays To keep your hands to yourself when traveling from classroom to classroom To maintain "silent passing" when walking from classroom to classroom To walk slowly and orderly without pushing or running from classroom to classroom | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Warning Apology to students, class, and teacher Notify parent via phone call, conference, or letter. Detention/Accommodation Room/With Teacher Send to an administrator/Placed on Principal's Daily Report Parent conference with an administrator Suspension |

| | | | |
|------------|--|--|---|
| | | 5. To allow space for others walking in the hallway by staying to the right side | |
| Bathrooms | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To use clean bathrooms 2. To use bathrooms at designated times 3. To have privacy | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To keep the school bathrooms clean and usable 2. To respect the bathroom property 3. To respect others' privacy when using the bathroom 4. To report any problems right away to a teacher or an administrator | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loitering or using more time than is needed (Two warnings, notify parent) 2. Climbing stalls (Notify parent, detention) 3. Destroying bathroom property: writing on walls or stalls, stuffing toilets, breaking doors, etc. (Send to principal, notify parent, school service, detention) 4. Not Respecting Others' Privacy (Warning, notify parent, detention, Principal's Daily Report) |
| Cafeteria | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To eat in a safe, orderly, clean cafeteria 2. To eat at a clean table 3. To have a reasonably quiet place to eat 4. To be able to talk to your friends maintaining an "inside, lowered" voice volume 5. To have enough time to eat your lunch 6. To not be bothered by others for money, food, etc. 7. To be treated with respect | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To listen to noontime aides and parent volunteers (if applicable) 2. To talk to others in a quiet manner 3. To treat others with respect 4. To not bother others for money, food, etc. 5. To not throw food or pour juice/milk on the table or floor 6. To clean up after yourself and throw away your garbage 7. To not remove food or drinks from the lunchroom 8. To not leave the lunchroom without the permission of a noontime aide or administrator | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warning 2. Apology to students, class, and teacher 3. Notify parent via phone call, conference, or letter. 4. Detention/Accommodation Room 5. Send to an administrator/Placed on Principal's Daily Report 6. Parent conference with an administrator 7. Suspension |
| Auditorium | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To have a certain amount of space 2. To learn or speak without interruption 3. To be free from physical and verbal abuse | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To respect others and the auditorium property 2. To be a good listener 3. To be honest 4. To be sensitive to others 5. To raise your hand when you need to speak | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warning 2. Apology to students, class, and teacher 3. Notify parent via phone call, conference, or letter. 4. Detention/Accommodation Room 5. Send to an administrator/Placed on Principal's Daily Report |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To have the right to your own opinion 5. To get help and to ask questions 6. To be treated with respect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. To listen and respect the decisions of adults 7. To keep the auditorium neat and clean 8. To have good manners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Parent conference with an administrator 7. Suspension <p style="text-align: center;">?</p> |
|--|--|---|--|

The safety and security of all school children are our highest priorities, and we are committed to providing a safe learning environment. Parents who have questions or concerns should contact the school principal. Please be sure to review the **Universal Student Code of Conduct** with your scholar.



STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

The school's Nurse handles a variety of scholar concerns each day and maintains medical records on each scholar. Please inform the nurse of any special health problems. When the nurse is not in school, the principal (or designee), who has received training by the nurse, may administer medication under the guidelines established by the Pennsylvania Health Services Commission.

If a child becomes ill during the school day, he/she will be given immediate attention. You will be called if your child is too ill to return to class. Please advise your scholar that they **should not personally call home** if they feel ill, but should go directly to the nurse's office or the principal.

If a child is absent, the parent should notify the school. All absent students are expected to submit a parental note with the reason for the absence upon their return. If a student is absent for **three days** or more for illness, a **physician's note is required**. Please notify the school's nurse if your child is ill with a communicable disease, i.e. chicken pox, meningitis, strep throat, etc.

Mandated Reporting

It is the policy of the Universal and Universal Vare that all of its employees are to be aware of, and comply with, the Child Protective Services law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This law makes it mandatory for all Universal Vare employees to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Human Services. Compliance with the laws of Pennsylvania and the policies of Universal Vare will serve to protect everyone concerned.

Immunizations for Students

All students must be completely immunized or exempted before admission to any public, parochial or private school in Pennsylvania. This is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Philadelphia County Board of Health and Universal Vare. The purpose of requiring immunization is to protect students from preventable communicable diseases and their medical and educational complications. All incoming **5th grade** scholars must have a **physical examination** upon entered for the current school year. All **7th grade** scholars must have a current **dental examination** upon entering for the current school year.

Immunization: Required for Admission

| Immunization | Number of Doses |
|--------------|-----------------|
| DTD | Five |
| OPV | Five |
| Hep.B | Three |
| MMR | Two |
| Varicella | One to Two |

There are two exemptions:

Religious Exemption – Scholars need not be immunized if the parent or guardian objects in writing to the immunization on religious/ethical grounds.

Medical Exemption – Scholars need not be immunized if a physician or his designee provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child. When the physician determines

that immunization is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the medical exemption ceases to be valid and the child must be immunized.

In the event of an outbreak of a disease for which the child is exempt from the requirement to be immunized, that child **will be excluded** from school until a competent medical authority determines that the child may return, or until the child is appropriately immunized.

When transferring from one school to another, parents should request the Certificate of Immunization from the current school and take it to the new school. No scholar will be admitted to a new school without the certificate. The Certificate of Immunization shall follow the student when he/she transfers, graduates, withdraws or otherwise leaves Universal VARE.

Medication Policy

For the safety of all scholars, **NO** medication (this includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines), may be given OR taken in school unless we have **ALL** of the following in the health office:

1. Written orders from the student's health care provider,
2. Written permission from the parent/guardian
3. Properly labeled medicine (in a container from the pharmacy or the health care provider, including the date the prescription was filled).
4. Student Health form completely filled out.

This **medication process must be restarted each school year**, beginning with the first day of school and ending on the last day of school.

Please complete the Emergency Contact Form and the Student Medical History Form for the school nurse by the first day of the school. These forms provide important information, which can help to keep your child safe and healthy during school hours. Please note that it is still the parent/guardian's responsibility to directly inform the nurse of any special medical conditions or needs by phone or in person.





Universal Vare Eagle P.R.I.D.E

What is student culture?

As defined by Universal Vare administration and staff, student culture is....

- A means to providing equal access to all scholars and families.
- A set of common language and systems that keep scholars, teachers, staff, and parents closely bound together as a support network and community.
- A way for people to relate to each other; a common set of interests.
- A set of values and beliefs systems to set a tone for growth.

What is PBIS?

Universal Vare STEM & Arts Academy use PBIS is a systems approach for establishing the social culture and individualized behavioral supports needed for schools to achieve both social and academic success for all scholars. School-wide PBIS requires total staff commitment to building strong teacher to scholars, scholar to scholar, and home to school relationships. Schools that have been successful in building school-wide systems develop procedures to accomplish the following:

What is a “Vare PRIDE Dollar?”

At Universal Vare STEM & Arts Charter Middle School we have created an acknowledgment program to recognize appropriate behavior. Each day, students will have many opportunities to receive “Vare EAGLE Bucks” for following all school-wides PBIS norms. Scholars can save up their dollars to redeem for school-wide and classroom related items/activities.

How do students get “Vare PRIDE dollars?”

1. Earn Vare PRIDE Dollars in these places:
 - a. cafeteria
 - b. hallways
 - c. stairways
 - d. office
 - e. auditorium
 - f. bathroom
 - g. schoolyard
 - h. crowded spaces (assemblies, etc.)
2. Vare EAGLE Bucks can be earned anytime from scholar arrival to dismissal for these behaviors:
 - a. following a school norm
 - b. modeling positive character traits behavior, being courteous, showing respect or kindness, positive social skills
 - c. safe behaviors (walking, hands to self, etc.)
 - d. making a good effort, improved behavior

What does it look like when I receive a Vare Eagle Bucks?

An administrator, climate, teacher, cafeteria staff, secretary can give a Vare Eagle Buck when a scholar is seen exhibiting positive behavior in any area of the school.

Additionally, an entire class can receive Vare Eagle Buck when they go above and beyond a teacher’s expectation.

Vare P.R.I.D.E Incentives

Teachers will be provided with the following incentive menu that will inform scholars of uses for their earned Vare P.R.I.D.E dollars. Incentive menus will show scholars how many tickets incentives are worth.

**Universal Vare STEM & Arts Academy
PBIS School-wide
Incentive Menu**

| |
|---|
| LUNCH WITH A STAFF MEMBER OR FRIEND (IN CAFÉ) |
| POSITIVE PHONE CALL HOME |
| POSITIVE NOTE HOME |
| PREFERRED WEEKLY JOB |
| COMPUTER TIME |
| HOMEWORK PASS |
| TEACHER ASSISTANT |
| CLIMATE SPECIALIST ASSISTANT (HALL SAFETY) ACADEMY LEADER ASSISTANT (HALL SAFETY) OFFICE ASSISTANT |
| CHOICE TIME |
| EXTRA CREDIT (ON AN ASSIGNMENT OR ASSESSMENT) PREFERRED SEATING IN THE CLASSROOM OR CAFETERIA LIBRARY HELPER |
| 15 MINUTE GAME DAY |
| N.U.T. DAY (NO UNIFORM TODAY – DRESS DOWN) IN CLASS PURCHASE FROM TEACHER GRAB BAG |
| FREE PRETZEL CARD |
| PRINCIPAL’S GRAB BAG |
| <i>*OTHER ITEMS/SCHOOL-WIDE EVENTS WILL BE ADDED MONTHLY AND ANNOUNCED VIA MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS.</i> |

Home and School Association

Universal Vare looks forward to creating an active home-school association. In the fall, the membership drive is launched and all families are encouraged to join. Parents are invited to participate in all activities and events sponsored by the Vare Home and School Association. Through various fundraising efforts, the association will provide school equipment, educational resources, and other supplementary services.

Helpful Procedures for Parents

- Provide children with a place of their own in which to study. There should be proper lighting, a table or a desk, and a comfortable chair.
 - Setting a time for homework to be done; be available to help keep your child on task
 - Encouraging your child to use reference books, computers and the library
 - Set high standards for neatness, form and accuracy.
 - Give your child praise for his/her work.
 - Ensure that your child reads for at least twenty minutes every night. Parents should read or share reading with kindergarten and first grade students.
 - Helping your child avoid distractions such as television, video games and loud radio music.
 - Assignments as well as projects are directly associated to the core curriculum. Weekly Home links provide skills in reading & math on grade level. Your child/children upon returning the completed assignments will have small group instruction by the teacher to support those skills for mastery. Parents and guardians will receive notification about their child's individual homework routine at the beginning of the school year.
 - Notify the classroom teacher if your child is having problems completing assignments.
-

Universal VARE STEM and Arts Charter Middle School

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: 1901 South 23rd
St.
Philadelphia, PA 19145

Phone: 215-952- 8611

Website:



UNIVERSAL VARE STEM AND ARTS CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE

As the parent of _____ a student at UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, I understand the Scholar/Parent Handbook, including the consequences of unacceptable behavior by scholars. I have reviewed the Scholar/Parent Handbook with my child/children and I also understand that the teacher and my child/children share in the responsibility for ensuring a safe, secure school for learning.

Parent Responsibilities: We, as parents, will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- Monitoring attendance.
- Ensuring that homework is completed.
- Monitoring amount of television children watch.
- Volunteering in child's classroom.
- Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my child's education.
- Promoting positive use of my child's extracurricular time.
- Staying informed about my child's education and communicating with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school or the school district either received by my child or by mail and responding, as appropriate.
- Serving, to the extent possible, on policy advisory groups, such as being the Title I, Part A parent representative on the school's School Improvement Team, the Title I Policy Advisory Committee, the District-wide Policy Advisory Council, the State's Committee of Practitioners, the School Support Team or other school advisory or policy groups.

I have received the Child Find letter providing notification of Special Education Services and I would like to receive more information regarding Child Find procedures and special education programs.

Parent's Signature

Date

**UNIVERSAL VARE STEM AND ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SIGNATURE PAGE**

Student Responsibilities

I am _____ a student
at

UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL and I understand the Scholar/Parent Handbook, including the consequences of unacceptable behavior by students. I have reviewed the Scholar/Parent Handbook with my parents and my teacher and I also share in the responsibility for ensuring a safe, secure school for learning.

We, as scholars, will share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement and achieve the state’s high standards. Specifically, I/we will:

- Do my homework every day and ask for help when I need it.
- Read at least 30 minutes every day outside of school time.
- Complete all class assignments and projects.
- Give my parents or the adult who is responsible for my welfare all notices and information received by me from my school every day. Important communications will be set home in the BURGUNDY VARE Communications Folders.

I also, received a copy of the **Scholar/Family Handbook, Parent Compact** and the **Parent Family Engagement Policy**.

Student’s Signature

Date

Teacher’s name

Grade

UNIVERSAL VARE STEM
and ARTS ACADEMY
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Parent Family Engagement
Policy
2024-2025

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Universal VARE STEM and Arts Charter Middle School will:

- 1. *Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the State's student academic achievement standards as follows:***
 - Use of research-based instruction in the content areas: Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.
 - Follow a systematic plan for infusing writing in the content areas as well as in the Arts and Humanities
Using data to drive instructional practices
 - Providing extended learning time for scholars
 - Provide parents with frequent reports on their scholar's academic and behavioral progress. Classroom instructors will provide progress reports through regular parent/teacher conferences, samples of scholar work, and updates on reading and mathematics assessments. We will initiate a parent contact at the first signs of a pattern of behavior that interferes with scholar learning.
 - K-8: ***PowerSchool*** for parents is an on-line system that parents can access in real-time to review their child(ren)'s attendance, assignments, scores, and grades.
 - K-8: Report Cards will be provided at parent conferences.

- 2. *Provide parents reasonable access to staff. Staff is available for consultation with parents as follows:***
 - Parents can contact staff members via email service.
 - Parents can leave messages for staff requesting conferences from 7:45-8:25 am or 3:00-4:00 pm.

- 3. *Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and to observe classroom activities, as follows:***
 - Parents can volunteer during designated classroom activities, events and assemblies.
 - Parents can observe their child(ren) during the school day, upon the school administrator's approval.

Parent Responsibilities

1. We, as parents, will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- *Monitoring attendance.*
- *Making sure that homework is completed.*
- *Monitoring amount of television our children watch.*
- *Volunteering in our child's classroom.*
- *Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to our children's education.*
- *Promoting positive use of our child's extracurricular time.*
- *Staying informed about our child's education and communicating with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school or the school district either received by my child or by mail and responding, as appropriate.*
- *Serving, to the extent possible, on policy advisory groups, such as being the Title I, Part A parent representative on the school's School Improvement Team, the Title I Policy Advisory Committee, the District wide Policy Advisory Council, the State's Committee of Practitioners, the School Support Team or other school advisory or policy groups.*

Scholar Responsibilities

1. We, as students, will share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement and achieve the State's high standards. Specifically, I/we will:

- *Do my homework every day and ask for help when I need to.*
- *Read at least 30 minutes every day outside of school time.*
- *Participate in academic programs as outlined by UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL*
- *Give to my parents or the adult who is responsible for my welfare all notices and information received by me from my school every day. All communications will be sent home via the Burgundy Vare Communications Folder.*
- *Complete all class assignments and projects.*

PART II. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents/caregivers, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I, Part A programs. Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents/caregivers of participating children.
- Consistent with section 1118, UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent engagement policies meet the requirements of section 1118(b) of the ESEA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1118(d) of the ESEA.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/caregivers with limited English proficiency, parents/caregivers with disabilities, and parents/caregivers of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents/caregivers understand.
- UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will involve the parents/caregivers of children served in Title I. Part A schools in decisions about how the I percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent engagement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the school for parent-related activities or other school-related activity as agreed upon between the parents and the school administration.
- The UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will be governed by the following statutory definition of parent engagement, and expects that

it's Title I schools will carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parent and Family Engagement means the participation of parents/caregivers in regular two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including ensuring-

(A) that parent's/caregivers play an integral role in assisting their child's learning:

(B) that parents/caregivers are encouraged to actively be involved in their child's education at school.

(C) that parents/caregivers are full partners in their child's education and are included as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child:

(D) the carrying of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA.

PART II. DESCRIPTION OF HOW UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

I. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will take the following actions to involve parents/caregivers in the joint development of its parent engagement plan under section 1112 of the ESEA:

- Involve the Title I school-wide Parent Advisory Committee in discussions of the School's parent engagement plan.
- Invite all parents to participate in discussions of the UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL parent engagement plan.

2. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will take the following actions to involve parents/caregivers in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA:

- Title I representatives will be available to work collaboratively with parent leaders and the

Parent Liaison to provide school level trainings on various aspects of Title 1.

- Schools will develop means to obtain parent input and signatures by UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL personnel on the School Action (Improvement) Plan.
- Provide adequate advance notice to parents of meetings and cancellation of meetings through newsletters, through Home and School Association, on bulletin boards (includes electronic), phone calls, and in notices sent home.

- Provide language access services for parents/caregivers whose first language is other than English, including summaries of major School Action (Improvement)

3. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I. Part A in planning and implementing effective parental engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:

- In collaboration the Parent Liaison and other parent groups, will provide workshops to UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL on parent engagement.
- Train new and existing staff with parental engagement duties (e.g., Parent Ombudsmen, School-Community Liaisons, School Community Coordinators. and Bilingual Assistants) to assist school in implementing parental engagement.
- Title I funds will be used to provide technical assistance to UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL and the parent organization.
- Provide coordination of professional development efforts through Instructional Development.
- Provide workshops to parents on supporting student achievement and parent engagement.
- Provide workshops to parent volunteers on school safety, cultural diversity, conflict resolution, customer service, and other topics, as requested.

4. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will coordinate and integrate parental engagement strategies in Title I, Part A with parental engagement strategies.

5. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will take the following actions to conduct, with the engagement of parents/caregivers, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent engagement policy in order to assess its impact on family engagement in Title 1, Part A. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents/caregivers in parental engagement activities (with particular attention to parents/caregivers who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will use the findings of the evaluation about its parental engagement policy and activities to design strategies far more effective parental engagement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents/caregivers) its parental engagement policies.

The primary goal of the Parent Engagement Policy is to increase parental engagement within UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL. Within this primary goal, three sub goals have been identified:

- a) inviting parents' input into UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL policies and procedures;
- b) making the school and its educational and physical resources more accessible for parents and;
- c) providing opportunities for parents to gain as much information as possible about their children's academic achievement and how to access resources to support their children's education. Depending upon available resources UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will employ the following methods to evaluate the status of the goal and sub goal attainment: surveys (including the Survey of administrators, teachers, parents, and students), parent focus groups, record analysis, as well as observation of meetings and training workshops.

6. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will build the schools' and parent's capacity for strong parent engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents/caregivers and to support a partnership among the school, parents/caregivers, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

A. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL with its Title I, Part A , and Parents, Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships, provide assistance to parents/caregivers of children served by the school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph,

- Ø -the State's academic content standards;
 - Ø -the State's student academic achievement standards;
 - Ø -the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments;
 - Ø -the requirements of Tide I, Part A;
 - Ø -how to monitor their child's progress, and
 - Ø -how to work with educators.
- UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL to collaborate and coordinate with the parent liaison to provide presentations and workshops about Title I under the No Child Left Behind Act.
 - Invite parents/caregivers on staff development days when above topics are discussed.
 - Add a parent component to staff development.
 - Support parent attendance at conferences and workshops such as the PA State Parent Advisory Council, Regional Family Involvement Conferences, Annual Family Involvement Conference (PA Coalition for Parent and Family Engagement), National Network of Partnership Schools, Good Schools Pennsylvania Conference, Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators' Parent Awareness Training Conference, PA Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and PA Governor's Institutes.

- Utilize parents/caregivers who attend conferences and workshops to do turn around training or write a report as a condition of sponsorship.
- Provide information to parents/caregivers in clear and simple language.
- To the extent practicable, provide workshops in the target language to families whose first language is not English.
- Disseminate materials to the extent feasible, translations to parents/caregivers that will be useful references at home.

B. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will provide materials and training to help parents/caregivers work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parent engagement by:

- Implementing Parent Workshops which will include a range of parent education offerings by UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL personnel among other providers, including how to support one's child in school and computer literacy.
- Working with various agencies including, but not limited to: Office of Attendance and Truancy, PA Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) and PA State Parent Advisory Council (SPAC), to establish Parent Resource Centers.
- UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will encourage *at least* two parents, one representative and one alternate, to voluntarily participate in professional development opportunities about Title I related.
- Supporting the involvement of parents Title I Parent representatives will be required to conduct turnaround trainings at their schools.
- Supporting UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL in planning and implementing school based activities such as family literacy and family math nights and other workshops to help parents/caregivers understand how to support their child's academic.
- Providing the above workshops and materials, where possible, in languages other than English.
- Providing the above workshops at community locations besides schools such as libraries, community organizations, and faith-based organizations, where families may feel more comfortable.

C. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will, with the assistance and parents/caregivers, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to communicate with, and work with

parents/caregivers as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents/caregivers, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents/caregivers and schools, by:

- Designing and implementing a series of professional development sessions around the above themes.
- Involving parents/caregivers as trainers in sessions with administrators, teachers, and other staff Instructional Development and the Parent Liaison , Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships.
- Planning regular meetings between the Instructional Development, Parent-Liaison, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships, and Title I Parent Advisory Committee parent representatives.

D. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parental engagement programs and activities with Prek counts and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents/caregivers in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Conducting inter-office meetings on a quarterly basis as mentioned in Item 4 above.
- Including the parents/caregivers and staff of the above programs in the activities of the Parent Advisory Council.
- Provide language assistance for English language learner (ELL) pre-school children and their families.

E. UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents/caregivers of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents/caregivers can understand:

- To the extent practicable, provide communications in clear and simple language.
- Provide glossaries to explain acronyms or jargon.
- To the extent practicable, provide materials for people with vision disabilities, e.g., large print materials, upon request.
- Provide summaries and introductions to official documents.
- Provide audio or video tape versions of selected documents.
- Provide oral explanations of written documents when requested.

- Provide language access services to families whose first language is other than English through on-site or telephonic interpretation services, as appropriate.
- Post above mentioned communications on the UNIVERSAL VARE STEM and ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL website.
- Provide communications using the auto-dialer, parent link, and websites.
- Develop a systematic way to gather announcements and relevant information.
- Ask community partners, including libraries, recreation centers, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations, to assist in disseminating information.

PART III. DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL WIDE PARENTENG AGREEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

- Involving parents/caregivers in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training;
- Providing necessary literacy training for parents/caregivers;
- Paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents/caregivers to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions, as budgets allow;
- Training parents/caregivers to enhance the involvement of other parents/caregivers;
- Arranging school meetings at a variety of times, or conducting in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents/caregivers who are unable to attend those conferences at school; in order to maximize parent engagement and participation in their children's education;
- Researching, adopting and implementing model approaches to improving parent engagement;
- Establishing a representative and inclusive district-wide parent advisory council to provide input on all matters related to parent engagement in Title I, Part A programs;
- Developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parent engagement activities; and
- Providing other reasonable support for parent engagement activities under section 1118 as parents/caregivers may request.

For more legislation information on Title I go to the following website listed below:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html>

