



Spark Charter School Family Handbook

2017-2018

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Sunnyvale CA 94085
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www.sparkcharter.org
info@sparkcharter.org

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Spark Charter School!

At Spark, we are committed to providing the highest quality education possible--one that engages their curiosity, promotes their independence as well as ability to work with others, and fosters deeper learning.

You have chosen to entrust the education of your child to us -- a mission we take very seriously. While your child attends Spark Charter School, (s)he will receive an education that attends to his/her academic, social, and emotional development. We recognize each child's potential and learning style.

Sincerely,

Chris Mahoney, M. Ed., M.B.A
Superintendent, Executive Director

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Mission and Philosophy

Vision

To flourish in the 21st century, students must not only learn, but they must learn how to learn. They must develop a capacity for creativity, critical thinking, skillful problem solving, and effective communication. They must be culturally and globally aware, technically literate, and learn to develop a sense of personal and collective responsibility.

Spark Charter School is a K-8 public school that integrates project-based learning, social-emotional learning, and family participation. These three foundational elements support a rich and academically rigorous educational program that fosters deeper learning, encourages creativity, and cultivates strong critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. In addition to the core subjects, Spark instruction in the arts, foreign language, and physical education. Spark is committed to creating a school that is racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse, reflecting the diverse community in Sunnyvale.

Mission Statement

Spark Charter School is a public, K-8 learning community whose mission is to develop self-directed and engaged learners who are independent thinkers as well as socially responsible citizens.

We are committed to:

- Fostering creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills via a student-centered, inquiry-based approach to learning
- Respecting the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of each child;
- A constructivist approach to developmentally-appropriate instruction
- Strong family involvement;
- Continuous improvement of teaching based on current research about how children learn best;
- A strong community of faculty, staff, students and parents working together to create a unique, challenging, engaging, and individualized learning environment.

Spark Charter School is committed to developing these student outcomes:

- Creating a community comprised of students, families, and staff that is collaborative, respectful, and inclusive. We recognize and affirm the unique interests and abilities of each child. We value racial, ethnic, economic, and

cultural diversity for their own worth and because every day the world grows more interdependent

- Fostering imagination, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity to actively engage students in the learning process, and develop not just the mind, but also the child’s emotional, moral and physical well-being. Students will cultivate the ability to recognize and express emotions constructively, to work collaboratively, to persevere, and to effectively navigate both social situations and academic challenges, and to build their emotional intelligence along with their intellectual capability.
- Emphasizing projects. “Doing” learning rather than merely reading about it. Studies have shown that learning occurs best when ideas are presented in context and through relevant activities. Parent-participation allows for simultaneous small-group activities where students can explore, apply and master subject matter. Families also bring a wealth of expertise and life experience to the classroom, which teachers can draw upon to enrich the curriculum and strengthen the community.
- Developing a sense of societal and environmental stewardship to help build a just and sustainable society living in harmony with the natural world.

Governance, Staff, and Parent Leadership

Santa Clara County Office of Education

Spark Charter School is authorized by the Santa Clara County Office of Education. The Santa Clara County Office of Education is located 1290 Ridder Park Drive San Jose, CA 95131. The website is at <http://www.sccoe.org>

Spark Governing Board

The Spark Board of Directors is responsible for legal operations as listed in the Spark Charter, including budget development and approval; school policies and procedures; student performance evaluation; parents, faculty and staff input solicitation and consideration. The Board shall carefully consider issues of significance before taking actions and shall be ultimately responsible for the operation and activities of Spark.

Spark’s Bylaws detail the Board’s election and voting procedures and conflict of interest policy.

The Board currently consists of the following members:

- Laura Stuchinsky laura@sparkcharter.org
- Niti Madan niti@sparkcharter.org
- Mayuri Vemuri mayuri@sparkcharter.org

- Shannon Heidemann shannon@sparkcharter.org
- Karen Gumaer karen@sparkcharter.org

Board Meetings

The Board holds its board meetings in the evenings at Spark’s campus. Meeting agendas are posted on Spark’s website and on the banner at the entrance to the school. Board meetings are “meetings in public” not “meetings of the public.” These are working sessions where the Board conducts the business of the school.

Communication with Board Members

Members of the community are encouraged to communicate directly with Board members, outside of meetings or collectively at Board meetings. Community members can address the board on any topic during the "Comments from the Public" portion of the agenda. However, the Board may only take action when an item is on the agenda and a quorum is present. The Board can elect to put an item raised during public comment on the agenda of a future meeting. No individual Board member may act or speak on behalf of the Board.

Staff

Superintendent/Executive Director

Chris Mahoney, M. Ed., M.B.A, is Spark’s Executive Director. As the school leader, he is responsible for the daily operations of the school, and implementing the policies of the Board. He is responsible for managing Spark in accordance with law and the Charter, which includes the mission and vision of the school.

Chief Business Officer

Martha Branch is Spark’s Chief Business Officer. She manages fiscal services, reporting, enrollment, nutrition services, school databases, and facilities.

Teaching Staff

Spark employs credentialed teachers who submit to background checks and all standard legal requirements of California teachers. Spark teachers receiving professional development and training in educational programs aligned to Spark’s vision (e.g. Project-based learning, social/emotional learning). Staff are trained in mandated reporting procedures and first aid/CPR/Epipen.

Parent Leadership

There are many opportunities for parents to participate at Spark Charter School. In addition to volunteering in the classroom, parents participate in committees or may take a lead position on the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

Parent Teacher Organization

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a volunteer organization of elected parents with teacher representation. The PTO's main function is to support the various school programs implemented by the staff, to supplement classroom curriculum, enrich school life, and enhance the school community. The PTO raises and manages funds to support Spark's enrichment programs and activities. The PTO can make recommendations while the Superintendent has the final approval. The PTO holds monthly, public meetings as noted on the school calendar (available at https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=calendar@sparkcharter.org&ctz=America/Los_Angeles&pli=1)

There are five parent-held positions in the PTO: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Volunteer Coordinator. The PTO also includes a teacher representative and the Superintendent/Principal. The PTO parent leads serve as liaisons to Spark's committees, and sometimes lead the committees.

PTO committees are designed to support essential functions of the school, help enrich Spark's educational experience, and support the development of Spark's community. Committee Leads help the committee members set priorities, facilitate communication within the committee and with the rest of the PTO, and implement projects. Spark committees include: fundraising, technology, events, gardening & beautification,, communications, and classroom coordinators.

Most committees have regular meeting. Others are ad hoc. Some committees will set meeting dates at the beginning of the school year and/or add meeting times as needed. When meeting dates are set, they will be added to the school calendar.

Educational Program Overview

Inquiry Based Experiential Learning

At Spark, students learn by doing. They explore questions and formulate hypotheses. Students connect what they know with new information, distill concepts and theories from data, and generate meanings. Further, students learn communication, collaboration, and social emotional skills, which are essential ingredients for success in their future careers and in life.

Spark's curriculum is organized into long blocks of study to support project-based and interdisciplinary units of study. Specific subjects and content covered in the units of study correlate to the specific set of academic standards that must be achieved by each age group.

Foreign Language

The study of a foreign language is an integral aspect of Spark's curriculum. Spark K-1st grade students receive weekly Mandarin instruction in an interactive, communicative language learning approach. Students in grades 2-8 are offered the option to study a wide variety of languages through Rosetta Stone, an online language program.

Individual Learning Plans

At Spark, teachers will create Individual Learning Plans (ILP) that capture each student's strengths and challenges as well as establish goals for that academic year. The plans will be a collaborative undertaking of teachers, education specialists, and parents. In the higher grades, students will take greater ownership of their learning by participating in the creation of their ILPs and evaluating their progress relative to their goals.

Parent Partnership

Parent partnership models challenge parents to be more deeply involved in their child's education. A child's education does not start when they enter school, it begins at home. We believe parents are their children's first teachers. Research shows that involvement by parents and family members makes a big difference in a child's success at school. Children with involved parents are more likely to:

- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to secondary education

Family participation is critical to Spark's success. Families support the school by volunteering in the classroom, driving on field trips, organizing fund-raisers, participating in the governance of the school, and many other important roles. Additionally, family participation facilitates Spark's educational goals by providing teachers with more opportunities to differentiate their instruction. For example, parents volunteering in a classroom may work with small groups of students while the teacher works one-on-one with several students on specific skills or projects. Parents can, also, lead enrichment programs, under the supervision of Spark's teachers, that extend and enrich the core curriculum. Spark families help create a school culture that values the contributions of each of its members, where all help one another, and where the entire community is committed to the welfare of all of the children in their care.

Parents can also support their child(ren)'s learning at home by:

- Making sure their child gets a sufficient amount of rest and good nutrition.
- Creating a place and time at home that is conducive to doing homework.
- Reading/responding to notices from school.
- Reading with their child.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

The goal of the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program is to help students acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to, among other things, build positive relationships, constructively resolve conflicts, work collaboratively, and demonstrate compassionate and social responsibility. Spark will integrate sequenced, SEL skill-building lessons into its curriculum to help students develop the social skills to succeed in the classroom and in life, as well as create a caring, inclusive and positive learning community. Through training provided to teachers, and by extension to parents and staff, all members of the Spark community will acquire the skills necessary to assist students with their social-emotional learning.

Homework Policy

Students in Kindergarten through grade 8 will receive homework appropriate to their age/grade level development. Generally, there will be limited amounts of homework in the areas of math, reading, and writing. These are the subject areas that require routine maintenance and produce academic gains for most children. Maintenance and practice can help to instill perseverance. Research has shown that children who read more build a strong vocabulary for academic studies. Writing and reading are connected, so they strengthen each other when consistent practice is provided. Spelling may be counted as writing. Math requires daily tune-ups, but does not need to be lengthy. At Spark, we believe that homework assigned as busy work or punishment is not acceptable. Always communicate with the teacher regarding your child's homework needs. We wish to collaborate with you to meet your child's needs.

School Overview

Contact information

Location: 739 Morse Avenue, Sunnyvale CA 94085
Phone: (408)752-2631
Fax: (408)752-2631
Extended Care: (408)752-2631 ext. 7011 or
Website: www.sparkcharter.org
Email: info@sparkcharter.org
School Secretary: Yuvika Singh: ysingh@sparkcharter.org
Office Hours 8:00am – 4:00pm

School Office

The school office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on school days. Our office telephone number is 408-752-2631. If you are reporting your child absent, you may call our 24-hour absence recorder at 408-752-2631 option 1.

School Schedule

School Start and End Times			
Grade	Day of the Week	Start Time	End Time
Kindergarten	Monday, Wednesday - Friday	8:30am	2:00 pm
Grades 1-8	Monday, Wednesday - Friday	8:30am	3:15pm
Kindergarten-8	Tuesday	8:30am	1:00pm
Recess and Lunch Schedule			
Grade	Day	Recess	Lunch
K-8	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday Friday	9:30-10:00	11:30-12:15
K-8	Wednesday	9:30-10	11:15-12:00

Attendance & Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures

Spark Charter believes that regular school attendance is vitally important to a learner's academic achievement and development of social skills. However, we understand that emergencies do arise.

Spark starts promptly at 8:30am. Students arriving after 8:40 need to obtain a tardy slip from the office. Students arriving late may miss important school information or classroom information pertaining to the start of the school day.

Arrival:

The school's standards of behavior apply to students coming to and going from school. Students are not to arrive at school before 8:15 a.m. without parent supervision. There is no supervision available. Once a student is on the school grounds, he/she may not leave without written permission.

The drop off area is located at the roundabout on the south side of the Columbia Middle School campus off of Morse Avenue, except if notified otherwise. Drivers are expected to follow greeter instructions for safety purposes.

Parents are welcome to use street parking around Columbia Middle School and walk their child(ren) to their classroom. Parking is extremely limited at the school and surrounding neighborhood streets. Please be considerate of our Columbia Middle School staff/parents and neighbors when parking. Parking is not permitted in the red zones during school hours.

Dismissal:

Students will be escorted by their teacher to the pickup area at the end of the school day. Meet your child at the roundabout to pick up. Students going to extended care or enrichment activities will be escorted to their designated locations by staff.

Absence:

If a student is going to be absent, a parent or guardian should call the school office (not the classroom teacher) on the morning of the first day of the absence. Parents may leave a message on voicemail when the office is closed. If this is not possible, the student must bring a note from the parent stating the reason for the absence upon returning to school.

Tardiness:

If a student is more than ten (10) minutes late, he/she must report to the office (with a parent/guardian when possible) for a tardy slip. All tardies are recorded and will be reported on progress reports. Consistent tardiness will result in students needing to make up missed time and work at the discretion of the educators and staff. A letter will be sent home to the parents of students who are tardy five or more times in a two-month period and the Superintendent /Executive Director will meet with the family and student. If there is a unique family situation that prohibits a child from attending school on time, please speak with the School Secretary or Superintendent/Executive Director.

Appointments:

To avoid missing valuable class time, we ask that you make medical, dental, and other appointments after school hours, on staff development days, or on Friday afternoons (Spark's shorter day) when possible.

Closed Campus:

Spark Charter School has a closed campus policy. Students may not leave campus without permission from the office from the time of their arrival on campus through the dismissal bell. Students who come to school after the start of school must report to the office before going to any class. All visitors must enter through the Spark gate, and sign in the office.

School Standards and Policies**Admissions Documentation:**

Each family must complete and submit all required admissions documents, emergency contact information, health forms, and home language survey, if applicable.

Health Forms:

Current health documentation for each student must be on file in our office. Immunization records, health and dental check-up verification forms, and

emergency contact forms are provided for each family and must be completed prior to class attendance. No child may attend classes until immunization records are complete, signed, and returned to our office.

Students Sign In and Sign Out Procedures

In the event a student must leave during class hours, a parent/guardian or authorized adult (as listed on the emergency card) must sign him/her out. Please go directly to the school office to pick up students. Office personnel will then call the class to have the student meet the parent in the office. There is a Sign-in/Sign-out binder in the office. Please sign the student out and state the reason. For safety reasons, a student must never leave the school premises unless an authorized adult has checked in with the office first.

Please make every attempt to schedule appointments for your child outside of regular school hours. If your child must leave school for an appointment, but will be returning, you must sign your child back in at the office upon his/her return to school.

Illness

If your child is sick, please keep your child at home. A child should not attend school if the child displays signs of infection, fever, or contagious illness. If a child shows signs of illness, fever, or infection during the course of the school day, the parents will be contacted to arrange pick up for the child within one hour. Students must be free of symptoms before returning to school.

Criteria for Keeping a Child At Home

- * Vomiting
- * Diarrhea
- * Ear/Eye Infection
- * Strep Throat
- * Head Lice
- * Fever (101 orally, 100 under the arm)
- * Cough (wet, wheezy with mucous secretion)
- * Runny Nose (yellow or green drainage)

Medication Use

For health and safety reasons, all medications (prescription and non-prescription) must be delivered to and stored in the school office.

If your child requires medication to be administered during school hours, please comply with the following:

1. The office must have written authorization by a doctor detailing the method, amount, and time to administer the medication. The authorization may be in the form of a signed, original letter, signed fax letter, or signed standard form.
2. A signed, parental letter/form granting permission to Spark staff to administer medication must be provided to administration.
3. Medication must be in the original container
4. The prescription container must be current.

5. The designated staff has the right to refuse to administer medication, if, and when at any time the above conditions are not met.

Head Lice

Head lice are a concern in all schools, and has no bearing on demographics, socio-economics, or even personal cleanliness. Our emphasis is placed on parent and staff education regarding prevention, early detection, prompt treatment and ongoing management of head lice. Parents are encouraged to check their child periodically at home for the presence of lice and to notify the school, if lice are detected. A Parent's Guide to Head Lice is available in the school office as well as on our website. If a student is found to have head lice, copies of the Lice Exposure Notice will be sent home with all students in the affected classroom. If live lice are found office staff will contact the parent to pick up their child. All students with lice will be asked to complete the Lice Treatment form. In addition, before returning to the classroom, the parent/guardian must bring their child to the office for a readmission check by office staff. The student will be re-admitted when no live lice are present. If nits are still present the parent/guardian will be encouraged to continue daily nit removal and observation for the presence of live lice. Student may remain in school. Staff shall maintain the privacy of any student identified as having head lice. Some cases of lice are difficult to eliminate.

Assessments

We believe in assessment **for** learning. Assessment serves a dual purpose at Spark:

1. to understand the student's learning progress and needs;
2. to gauge our own teaching effectiveness.

Your child will be assessed by his/her teachers in various ways (observational, oral, written, formal, informal, etc.). Our students in grades 2-8 are required to participate in the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC). This is an annual, state exam that is connected to the Common Core Standards, and is administered through an online computer system.

Emergency/Disaster Plan

The school has an emergency/disaster plan. We will follow our protocol for emergencies and evacuations established by Columbia Middle School. In the event of an emergency, no child will be released to an adult who is NOT listed on the child's emergency contact as authorized by the parent. In case of an emergency, we will attempt to contact the individuals provided on the student record form. If they cannot be reached, we will leave a message and proceed to contact (in order listed) persons listed as emergency contacts for the child. All parents who have signed the admission agreement authorize Spark personnel to obtain emergency medical and/or dental care or emergency evacuation for their child at their expense. Parents are expected to provide all pertinent information regarding medical conditions and/or allergies that affect their child. Emergency medical personnel will be contacted first if the nature of the emergency warrants such action. All school staff

have received CPR and First Aid training. Emergency procedures and evacuation plans are posted in each classroom, and staff and students will practice regular drills with Columbia Middle School.

Attire

For safety reasons, we ask that students come to school dressed in appropriate and safe clothing and accessories for play and learning. Girls should avoid long earrings, necklaces, and strings that hang from the clothing. Boys may not wear baseball caps in the classroom. All children should wear safe, closed-toe shoes. Open-toe sandals with socks are considered safe.

Hot Lunch Program

The school provides an optional hot lunch program that is available for all its students through Choicelunch. Choicelunch delivers healthy and delicious school meals based on the USDA's nutrition guidelines so that students are engaged and ready to learn in school. All meals include an entree, fresh fruit/ vegetable choices, and a variety of chilled non-fat or low-fat milk/ organic juice. Lunch orders must be placed online, at least two days ahead of time. A small number of emergency lunches are also available. We make every effort to ensure all children have lunch.

Financial lunch aid program:

Financial lunch aid program applications are available and should be submitted to the office (1 application per family), with proof of income/ case number . Once the applications are reviewed, each qualified family receives a username and password to log in to Choicelunch to order lunches for their kids.

Snacks/Water Bottles

All students bring their own snacks and drinks/water bottles for recess and lunch. We encourage all students to bring healthy snacks, fruits, raw vegetables, and plenty of water. All children should have their own water bottle at school and may keep it at their desk.

Food Allergies

Due to the prevalence of allergies, a separate lunch table will be designated for those with food allergies. If your child has a food allergy, please indicate that on the student's information sheet and provide appropriate medication. Other allergies should, also, be promptly communicated to staff (e.g. bee sting, grass, pollens, etc.).

Sugar and Candy

In striving to have a healthy campus, parents are discouraged from sending candy and similar treats to school for lunches, snacks, birthdays or for holiday events.

Communication

Spark Superintendent/teachers will communicate often through email newsletters. If you do not have email access at home, please contact us. The Superintendent's

weekly newsletter will summarize current school activities, important information and updates, and upcoming events. Our website www.sparkcharter.org will also provide updates and other important news.

Back-to-School Night

At the beginning of every school year, Spark holds a whole school orientation meeting. This is also a time for families to get information about their child's classroom program from the teacher. Teachers share their philosophy, academic expectations, curriculum, routines, preferred communication methods, and parental involvement opportunities. This is an appropriate time for general questions but not for individual conferencing about concerns for your child.

Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences and Progress Report Cards

Teachers will provide Progress Report Cards at the end of each trimester.

Parent/Student/Teacher conferences are held before the end of the first trimester prior to issuing the first trimester Progress Report Cards. This is an opportunity to learn about students' academic, social, emotional, and physical progress. Older students may be given the opportunity to participate in student-led (ILP) conferences to reinforce their participation in their learning. If you would like to meet with the teacher at other times, please schedule it with the teacher.

Communications Guidelines

Open Communications

Spark recognizes the importance of open communication to promote a healthy school community. The Spark community values and encourages discussion about issues that are related to Spark school.

We would like to suggest some effective ways to use online communication to facilitate a respectful and professional exchange of ideas. Staff, students, and parents will be asked to sign a Technology Use Agreement regarding student use of computers.

E-mail:

Please be mindful of email etiquette, confidentiality, and other good practice protocols.

Family Participation

What Does Family Participation Mean?

Volunteerism is an integral component of Spark's vision and essential to the success of its educational program. The school was created by the dedicated volunteer efforts of parents and community members. Family participation gives the opportunity to all families to contribute to Spark's success in and out of the classroom by helping reinforce student educational outcomes and deepening the

home-school connection. Active family participation builds and strengthens our community.

There are many ways to volunteer at Spark. However, it is important to make the distinction that Spark is not a parent run school. Operational, personnel, discipline, and educational decisions are the responsibility of the Governing Board, the Superintendent, and the staff.

Parent Participation Guidelines

Spark asks that families volunteer two hours per week per child in their child(ren)'s classrooms, serve on a committee, and help drive or chaperone students on two field trips per year, as described in more detail below.

1. Classroom Shift (2hrs/week/child)

Family participation in your child's classroom is essential to providing students with small-group, hands-on instruction. Spark believes that all parents have valuable skills to contribute to their child's classroom, regardless of education level, native language spoken, or skill set. Spark recommends and encourages parents to commit to aiding in each of their children's classrooms for two hours per week. These hours may be fulfilled by one family member, or shared between two. Spark recommends that all persons fulfilling classroom participation hours attend Parent Training classes. Volunteers must obtain a TB test and fingerprint check. Please talk to Spark staff if getting these tests done would pose a financial hardship.

2. Committees

There are many committees that help with the functioning of the school and make it possible for Spark to provide an enriched educational experience to your child and all Spark students. We recommend and encourage that families serve on one committee in addition to the regularly scheduled classroom shift. Committee jobs may require your presence at the school site or may be home based. Some jobs are year-long commitments and require a few hours of help monthly, whereas other jobs such as events and fundraising require help on a project basis. Most committees will meet at the beginning of the school year to set priorities and a work plans.

3. Field Trips

Experiential learning is a key component of our curriculum and field trips are an integral part of this. Teachers and parents strive to identify field trips that complement the unit studies and provide experiences that can only be gained off-campus. Parent support is essential for these trips, for logistical planning transportation to and from the site in private vehicles, and as chaperones. We strongly encourage parents that drive and have a vehicle to make every effort to drive on at least two (2) field trips per year for each enrolled child.

Please note that your Spark volunteer hours can be done by a variety of people in your child's support system:

- Parents/Guardians
- Other family members (grandparents, siblings)
- Child care providers, co-workers
- Sponsors - a volunteer, related or unrelated to the learner, who is working on behalf of the family

Safety Requirements

Spark requires verification of the following items prior to participation in the classroom, on field trips, or volunteering on campus during school hours:

- TB Verification
To help maintain a safe and healthy school environment, parents will submit TB verification prior to participating. Any fees incurred for this test are the responsibility of the parent. Clear TB skin/blood test results are valid for four (4) years. Clear x-ray results are valid for eight (8) years.
- Fingerprinting/Background
All parent/guardians will submit to be fingerprinted and/or have a background check made by an agency authorized by Spark. Results of such background checks may, at the discretion of Spark's Superintendent, serve as a basis for determining the scope and terms of participation. Any fees incurred for this test are the responsibility of the parent. However, assistance is available if paying for these tests would provide a financial hardship. Fingerprinting is required every three years.

Siblings on Campus

Younger siblings are not allowed to be on campus when parents are working. This applies to classroom work shifts, recess supervision, and while working in any common areas. You are encouraged to work out arrangements with other parents for childcare

Parent Training

We feel it is important to provide training for our parent volunteers who work in the classrooms and at recess; this helps to make their experience positive and successful. We expect parents to attend classroom volunteer and social emotional training sessions.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of your child's educational experience at Spark. Because of this, there will be several field trips per school year. Field trips are always aligned to the curriculum. Spark strongly encourages families to participate on a minimum of two (2) field trips per year per child as a driver. A shortage of drivers or chaperones will cancel a trip.

Whenever possible, please volunteer to support this valuable component of our program!

Drivers are required to submit documentation for:

- Carry the required level of insurance
- Have a valid driver's license.
- Provide a copy of their driver's record from the DMV
- A clear TB test
- Fingerprinting

Drivers must also:

- Ensure that their vehicle is in safe operating condition.
- Provide a seat belt for every passenger in the vehicle.
- Use car seats or boosters as required by the law (applies to children who are both less than 8 years of age and under 4'9" tall).

Spark Charter School Students are expected to:

- Arrive to school on time.
- Come prepared to class with appropriate materials, homework completed and attend school on a regular basis.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Engage in appropriate behavior
- Work cooperatively
- Report potentially dangerous situation to teachers or administrators

- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for students, teachers, administrators, volunteers, visitors, and other parents.
- Show respect for their classrooms, the campus and all school equipment that the students might use.
- Follow the directions of teachers and administrators

Spark Charter School Students should expect that:

- Teachers, administrators, and parent volunteers will treat them with courtesy and respect.
- They will have a supportive and encouraging learning environment
- They will not be harassed by other students or adults on the school campus or when using social media and/or email .
- School policies and rules will be consistently implemented in a manner that respects the rights of all others.
- Their individuality will be honored and appreciated.

Spark Charter School Student Behavior Expectations

Appropriate behavior is essential for effective learning. When participating in activities around the campus, when on field trips, on the playground or attending the after school program, each student is expected to behave as in the classroom. Students are to be responsible for his/her own actions and behaviors. They are to be respectful to teachers, administrators, parent volunteers, and other students. Constant disruption or any disruption that interferes with other students' opportunities to learn, disregard for school policies, or rude behavior may result in removal from a school activity. Behavior that is disruptive to other students' learning and/or behavior that may be seen as dangerous to self or others may result in exclusion from field trips.

In situations where disruptive behavior causes a student to be removed from an activity or a classroom, the student shall be removed to the Main office to talk with the Executive Director or his/her designee. Additional intervention measures may be tried to help a student return to class without additional disruptive behavior. If a student chooses to continue with disruptive behavior, then the Executive Director or his/her designee will place a call to the student's parent/guardian/caregiver to set up a parent meeting. If after additional attempts at behavioral interventions fail to change the behavior, then there will be a parent meeting with the Executive Director to discuss child's behavior and talk about additional strategies to try to support the child. At any point, should behavior be deemed so disruptive to the learning environment or considered dangerous to self or others, there may be additional consequences that may include suspension and/or expulsion.

Courtesy, Respect, Kindness

At Spark Charter School, we believe that each child is intrinsically good. Demonstrating good character, kindness, and inclusivity is fundamental to bringing our school's mission and philosophy statement to life. These traits are modeled by adults, taught to students, and expected from everyone in our community. We believe that through teaching and modeling self-awareness, social awareness, emotional intelligence, and respect for and valuing the differences in others, the school promotes inclusivity, ethical behavior, empathy, and good character in practical, day-to-day ways.

Spark Charter School believes that all students have the ability to learn kindness, empathy, self-advocacy and the courage to translate this learning into action. We believe that we learn what we practice. Our community strives to support students through social justice and equity. When a student exhibits disrespect or inappropriate behavior, the school responds with appropriate consequences that often include a learning experience designed to help the student progress toward character development and inclusive behavior. Repeated, intentional, negative action on the part of one person or a group (e.g., bullying) undermines the community's values of good character, kindness and inclusivity. As with all aspects of ongoing social and emotional development, it will be addressed with appropriate remediation until the issue can be resolved in a manner that preserves the integrity of both the community and every individual involved.

We ask students to be respectful of others and to model this kind of respect with school teachers, administrators, parent volunteers and other students. Students are asked to listen while the teachers are talking and when parent volunteers are engaged with a student activity. Students are to respect other's personal property on the school campus including but not limited to clothing, playground equipment, school materials, and backpacks. Students should never go through another person's backpack or touch items or materials that do not belong to them.

Students show respect by keeping their hands to themselves. Respectful behavior includes providing personal space to others and by using words to express feelings/concerns. Students are taught to be 'upstanders' to speak up for someone who could use a friend.

Classroom Learning Expectations

As part of a growth mindset philosophy, students understand that it is their responsibility to always try their best. The concept that mistakes are just another way of growing is repeatedly reinforced in the classroom. (Example: "It's ok to try and fail, but not to not try" and "There is no mistake in art, the only mistake is to quit.") Students are also expected to take initiative in obtaining

knowledge. If they have a question about a classroom lesson or task which the teacher has explained, they are required to ask their peers for help before asking the teachers. Classroom rules encourage mindful participation in small group learning. (Ex: No one is done until everyone is done. Let people do things for themselves. Explain by telling how.

Everybody helps.)

Students also agree on additional rules to help create a safe place where everyone can learn. For example: Inside voices are for inside, outside voices for outside. Students are to walk, not run in the classroom. Fidgets are not toys, they are tools. Keep toys at home.

Lunch and Recess Expectations

During lunch time and recess, students are expected to eat their food and clean up after themselves. Students are expected to play safely and kindly with their peers, where yard monitors are able to see them. When the whistle blows, students come back to class. In addition to our three basic rules of safety, kindness, and responsibility, a few additional guidelines are necessary to ensure that students enjoy a safe, fun playground experience:

- Students may only walk in the Spark designated areas.
- Students may only play in areas designated as play areas.
- Spark relies on parent volunteers to help supervise students during lunch and recess.

Conflict Resolution

As part of its core philosophy incorporating Social-Emotional Learning, Spark empowers students in conflict resolution. Spark recognizes that it is difficult for a student to learn if they are struggling with a conflict.

Students are encouraged to communicate with their peers and advocate for themselves directly with the other student when the conflict arises. (Ex: “Stop. I do not like it when you do ____”) When that attempt for resolution is unsuccessful, they can come to a teacher or staff for guidance.

Cellular Telephones/Technology Use

Student cell phone use is prohibited during the school day. All cellular devices are to be turned off and kept out of sight in the student's backpack. If a family desires that their child carry a cell phone for after-school safety or communication, then the phone must be turned off and in the child's backpack during the school day. Any student who uses or takes out their phone during the school day may have to turn the phone over to their teacher or school administrator. When a phone has been confiscated for inappropriate use, a parent will have to come and collect the phone at the Main Office. Reference the Technology agreement to follow the guidelines on internet access as well as to how to appropriately utilize the school's electronic devices within the classroom. A copy of the form is included in the back of this handbook.

Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures

Spark has adopted a discipline policy to promote learning and protect the safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. When the policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. School staff will enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. Discipline includes, but is not limited to;

- advising and counseling students
- conferring with parent/guardian
- use of alternative educational environments
- detention
- suspension*
- expulsion*

*Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school related activities during the period of suspension or expulsion unless otherwise authorized by the Executive Director.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. Corporal punishment does not include use of physical restraint that is reasonable and necessary to protect students, staff, or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

For complete pupil suspension and expulsion policy, see Appendix A.

After School Care

Spark provides after school extended care. Parents must enroll and pay the appropriate fees. Financial aid is available and should be submitted to the office.

Appendix A

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well being of all students at Spark Charter Schools. In creating this policy, the Charter School has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* which describes the non-charter schools' list of offenses and procedures to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspensions and expulsions. The language that follows closely mirrors the language of Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* The Charter School is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions and expulsions and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

When the Policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This policy shall serve as the Charter School's policy and procedures for student suspension and expulsion and it may be amended from time to time without the need to amend the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements.

School staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its Procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations.

Discipline includes but is not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, use of alternative educational environments, suspension and expulsion.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

The Charter School administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures. The notice shall state that these Policy and Administrative Procedures are available on request at the school office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act ("IDEA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds

for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. The School will follow Section 504, the IDEA, and all applicable federal and state laws including but not limited to the California Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students. The Charter School shall notify the District of the suspension of any student identified under the IDEA (or for whom there may be a basis of knowledge of the same) or as a student with a disability under Section 504 and work with the District to ensure that all applicable laws related to discipline for students with be provided with the procedural protections as outlined below in this policy.

A. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at the Spark or at any other school or a Spark sponsored event at any time, including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

B. Enumerated Offenses

1. Discretionary Suspension Offenses. Students may be suspended for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
 - a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
 - b) Willfully used force of violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
 - c) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
 - d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
 - e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
 - f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
 - g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.

- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
- l) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- m) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- n) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.
- o) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- p) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- q) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, "hazing" means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- r) Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property. For purposes of this section, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an

immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.

- s) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- t) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- u) Intentionally harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- v) Engaged in an act of bullying, including but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act (defined as the transmission of a communication, including but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image, or a post on a social network Internet Web site, by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager) directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel. "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 1. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
 2. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.

3. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
 4. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
- w) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).
- x) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee's concurrence.
2. Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses: Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
 - a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee's concurrence.
 3. Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students may be expelled for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
 - a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
 - b) Willfully used force of violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
 - c) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
 - d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
 - e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.

- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
- l) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- m) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- n) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.
- o) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- p) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- q) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, "hazing" means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- r) Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property. For purposes of this section, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying

it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.

- s) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- t) Caused, attempted to cause, threaten to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- u) Intentionally harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- v) Engaged in an act of bullying, including but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act (defined as the transmission of a communication, including but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image, or a post on a social network Internet Web site, by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager) directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel. "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - 1. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.

2. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
 3. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
 4. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
- w) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).
- x) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee's concurrence.
4. Non-Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students must be expelled for any of the following acts when it is determined pursuant to the procedures below that the pupil:
- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director or designee's concurrence.

If it is determined by the Board of Directors that a student has brought a firearm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, onto campus or to have possessed a firearm or dangerous device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994.

The term "firearm" means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such term does not include an antique firearm.

The term "destructive device" means (A) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to:

- (i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than

one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses.

C. Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

1. Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Superintendent or designee with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Superintendent. The conference may be omitted if the Superintendent or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the students shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense.

This conference shall be held within two school days, unless the student waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization.

No penalties may be imposed on a student for failure of the student's parent or guardian to attend a conference with school officials. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the student's parent or guardian at the conference.

2. Notice to Parents/Guardians

At the time of the suspension, the Superintendent or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the student may return to school. If school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Placement/Expulsion

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension.

Upon a recommendation of Placement/Expulsion by the Superintendent or designee, the student and the student's guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. This determination will be made by the Superintendent or designee upon either of the following determinations: 1) the student's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the student poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the student's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

D. Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled either by the Board following a hearing before it or by the Board upon the recommendation of an Administrative Panel to be assigned by the Board as needed. The Administrative Panel should consist of at least three members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the pupil or a Board member of the School's governing board. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense.

E. Expulsion Procedures

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Superintendent or designee determines that the student has committed an expellable offense.

In the event an administrative panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session unless the student makes a written request for a public hearing three (3) days prior to the hearing.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the student. The notice shall include:

1. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of the School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;

4. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the school to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

F. Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

The School may, upon a finding of good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which shall be examined only by the Spark or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the student.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to (a) receive five days notice of his/her scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. Spark must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the person or panel conducting the hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
4. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the person presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom

- the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The person conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, Spark must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.
 8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
 9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed-circuit television.
 10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the person conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstance can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

G. Record of Hearing

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

H. Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which

reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Board, Panel or designee determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a written recommendation to the Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the Board shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The Decision of the Board is final.

If the expulsion hearing panel decides not to recommend expulsion, the student shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program.

I. Written Notice to Expel

The Superintendent or designee following a decision of the Board to expel shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Board's adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following:

1. Notice of the specific offense committed by the student;
2. Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the School.

The Superintendent or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the District.

This notice shall include the following:

- a) The student's name
- b) The specific expellable offense committed by the student

Additionally, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(3), upon expulsion of any student, Spark shall notify the Superintendent of the school

district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card and health information.

J. Disciplinary Records

Spark shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the School. Such records shall be made available to the District upon request.

K. No Right to Appeal

The student shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Spark Charter School as the Charter School Board's decision to expel shall be final.

L. Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

Students who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence.

M. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the Spark shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the School for readmission.

N. Readmission

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board following a meeting with the Superintendent and the student and guardian or representative to determine whether the student has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the student poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Superintendent shall make a recommendation to the Board following the meeting regarding his/her determination. The student's readmission is also contingent upon the Spark's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission.

O. Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

1. Notification of District

Spark Charter School shall immediately notify the District and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the District for the discipline of any

student with a disability or student who the Charter School or SELPA would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability who is suspended for more than ten (10) school days during a school year.

2. Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504 Plan; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment or functional analysis, and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

3. Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, Spark Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b) If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If Spark Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP/504 Team shall:

- a) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment or a functional analysis assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that Spark had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;

- b) If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- c) Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and Spark Charter agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If Spark Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a result of the failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan, then Spark Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

4. Due Process Appeals

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or Spark Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings or by utilizing the dispute provisions of the 504 Policy and Procedures.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent or Spark Charter school, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and Spark Charter School agree otherwise.

5. Special Circumstances

Spark Charter School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

The Superintendent or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- a) Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 USC 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- b) Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- c) Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 USC 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

6. Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP/504 Team.

7. Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEIA and who has violated the School's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if Spark Charter School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

Spark Charter School shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- a) The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to Spark Charter School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
- b) The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
- c) The child's teacher, or other Spark Charter School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other Spark Charter School supervisory personnel.

If Spark Charter School knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEIA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If Spark Charter School had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. Spark Charter School shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however the student shall remain in the education placement determined by Spark Charter School pending the results of the evaluation.

Spark Charter School shall not be deemed to have knowledge of that the student had a disability if the parent has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

Appendix B

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) has put together several resources for parents based on the experience of its members over the first couple of years of Spark's operation.

Spark Classroom Volunteer Handbook (LINK)

School documents and forms:

<http://documents.sparkcharter.org/>

Planning community events at Spark

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/190axZo6vqnHzzjSarbMcF0oz20TvVhUh0OrZa4-cXDI/edit?usp=sharing>