

Russell Byers Charter School

1911 Arch Street

Philadelphia, PA 19103

2020-21

PARENT/GUARDIAN & STUDENT HANDBOOK

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“Roots to Grow, Wings to Fly”

Introduction	4
HISTORY OF RUSSELL BYERS CHARTER SCHOOL and MISSION	5
ABOUT THE RUSSELL BYERS CHARTER SCHOOL	6
KEY CONTACT LIST	7
RBCS SCHOOL CALENDAR 2020-21	8-9
ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES	10
Arrival Procedure:	10
Late Arrival Procedure: Students arriving late will follow the following procedures:	10
Dismissal Procedure:	10
Picked-up by Parent/Guardian:	10
Bus Riders: Students will be called by the front desk and go directly to their assigned bus.	11
Students Riding Public Transportation:	11
Early Dismissal Procedure:	11
After School Programs:	111
When Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Pick Up Plans Change:	111
If Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Do Not Pick Up Child (ren) at Dismissal or at the End of an After-School Program:	11
ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	122
Our Expectations:	122
Excused/Unexcused Tardy:	122
Excused/Unexcused Early Dismissal:	122
Excused/Unexcused Absence:	122
Educational Leave of Absence Policy:	133
SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY	13-14
Expectation:	13
Gym Uniform:	14
UPPER SCHOOL DIVISION UNIFORM POLICY	14
GRADES 6 - 8	14
Expectation:	14
Gym Uniform:	14

HOMEWORK POLICY	14
LUNCH POLICY	144-15
RECESS POLICY	144
FLAG SALUTE AND THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE POLICY	144
CODE OF CONDUCT	155
CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES	155
STUDENT EXPRESSION POLICY	155
SEARCH POLICY	166-17
COOPERATION WITH LEGAL AUTHORITIES	17
CUSTODY ISSUES	17
ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS	17
MEDICATION PROCEDURES	18-19
IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS	19
SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY	19
Evacuation Drills:	19
Evacuation Procedure	19
Shelter-In-Place:	19
Fire Drills:	19
EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION	19
FIELDWORK AND FIELD TRIPS	200
LOST AND FOUND	200
Visitor Policy	200
PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) COMMUNICATION	200-21
HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION	21
PARENT (S)/GUARDIAN (S) VOLUNTEERING	21
VOLUNTEER PROCEDURE	21
ADMISSION AND RE-ENROLLMENT	21
Admission and Eligibility:	21
The Lottery:	21
PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) COMPLAINT/CONCERN POLICY AND PROCEDURE	224-25
STUDENT COMPLAINT/CONCERN POLICY AND PROCEDURE	232-23
FULL DISCLOSURE POLICIES	233
BOARD RIGHT TO AMEND	233
PARENT (S)/GUARDIAN (S) AND STUDENT (S) AGREEMENT	134

Introduction

Welcome to the Russell Byers Charter School community for the 2020-21 school year! The contents of this handbook are rooted in Expeditionary Learning Core Practices and reflect the school's 4R's - responsibility, respect, resilience and reflection. This handbook serves as a guidebook to the RBCS community.

The RBCS school community gives students roots to grow and wings to fly. The purpose of this handbook is to provide best practices that support families and maintain an atmosphere that exemplifies collaboration, high-quality work, and Habits of Scholarship. RBCS students are truly "Ours for Life."

Please review the contents of this handbook. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We look forward to our year together.

Mr. Corey Turkish, Principal (4k-3)

Ms. Abby Baker, Principal (4-8)

Mission

The Russell Byers Charter School provides students *roots*, a safe stimulating environment with a rigorous academic education grounded in Expeditionary Learning. Our students take responsibility for their learning to become powerful communicators, creative problem solvers and compassionate, engaged citizens. Russell Byers Charter School students develop *wings* to succeed in selective schools and embrace a love for learning.

HISTORY OF RUSSELL BYERS CHARTER SCHOOL



Philadelphia Daily News columnist Russell Byers believed that the greatest gifts you can give a child are roots and wings. In his columns for the paper, Russell wrote frequently and passionately about how to improve the city of Philadelphia and was most passionate when writing about public education. He thrived on the excitement of city life and believed that a solid education has the power to change the life of a child... thereby helping to change the world.

Russell died on December 4, 1999, when he was murdered during an attempted robbery. As a tribute to his life, the columnist's family – his widow, Laurada Byers; his daughter, Alison Byers; and his son, Russell Byers, Jr. – have founded a charter school that honors Russell's lifelong commitment to civic responsibility, community service and academic excellence.

With tremendous community support, the Russell Byers Charter School opened its doors on September 17, 2001 to 160 students, in grades 4K through second, in the diverse Spring Garden neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Because of the number of interested families and in an effort to continue to grow and expand, the Russell Byers Charter School relocated in September 2003 to 1911 Arch Street, located in the heart of Center City, Philadelphia. Currently, the Russell Byers Charter School serves over 700 students in grades 4K through eight.

ABOUT THE RUSSELL BYERS CHARTER SCHOOL

The Russell Byers Charter School (“RBCS”) is a public elementary school with 725 students in grades 4K through 8th. Russell Byers Charter School offers a full-day kindergarten for four and five-year-old students, one of the few kindergarten programs of this kind in Pennsylvania. Our students are from 37 neighborhoods across Philadelphia.

The Pennsylvania Common Core State Standards serve as the framework for our curriculum in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Music, Art, Spanish, and Physical Education are offered as cultural arts disciplines and also follow the Pennsylvania Common Core State Standards. There are computers in every classroom and a computer lab that provides student’s access to the Internet, publishing software and educational programs.

Located in the heart of Center City, in our spacious building at 1911 Arch Street, the School is within walking distance of many of the city’s cultural treasures, including the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Franklin Institute, and the Free Library and makes regular use of these facilities, as well as the entire city, in our studies.

The school reflects Russell's values of academic excellence, civic responsibility and community service. Our approach to teaching, school culture and teacher training are centered upon Expeditionary Learning Schools (ELS) school design—an innovative model founded on the guiding principles of the famed outdoor educational program, Outward Bound. ELS emphasize high achievement through hands-on learning, inquiry, character growth and teamwork.

KEY CONTACT LIST

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RBCS SCHOOL CALENDAR 2020-21

August 14th, 2020	First Day for New Staff
August 17th – August 28, 2020	First Day for returning staff, Prof. Dev/Room Prep.
August 31, 2020	First Day of School
September 7, 2020	Labor Day – School Closed
September 16th, 2020	Back to School Night
September 21-25, 2020	MAP Testing
September 25, 2020	Progress Reports Sent Home
September 28, 2020	Yom Kippur – School Closed
October 30, 2020	Quarter 1 Ends
November 2, 2020	Quarter 2 Begins
November 11, 2020	Veteran’s Day – School Closed
November 12, 2020	Report Cards Sent Home
November 18, 2020	Report Card Conferences
November 26 – 27, 2020	Thanksgiving Holiday
December 11, 2020	Progress Reports Sent Home
December 14th-18th, 2020	MAP Testing
December 23, 2020	Half Day
December 24 – January 1, 2021	Winter Recess
January 4, 2021	School Resumes
January 15, 2021	Quarter 2 Ends
January 18, 2021	MLK Day – School Closed
January 19, 2021	Quarter 3 Begins
January 20, 2021	Report Card Conferences
February 12, 2021	Progress Reports Sent Home
February 15, 2021	President’s Day – School Closed
March 12, 2021	Staff PD – School Closed

March 19, 2021	Quarter 3 Ends
March 24, 2021	Student Led Conferences
March 22, 2021	Quarter 4 Begins
March 29 – April 2, 2021	Spring Break – School Closed
April 5, 2021	School Resumes
April 19 – 23, 2021	ELA PSSA Testing
April 26 – 30, 2021	Math & Science PSSA Testing
April 30, 2021	Progress Reports Sent Home
May 13, 2021	Eid-al Fitr – School Closed
May 17th, 2021	MAP Testing
May 31, 2021	Memorial Day – School Closed
June 4, 2021	Quarter 4 Ends
June 11, 2021	Last Day of School

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES During COVID-19

Due to COVID-19 our arrival and dismissal procedures have changed for face to face learning. The new procedures will be in place for the 2020-2021 school year. Please note that we will be implementing a staggered arrival and dismissal process to maintain social distance. Below please find the Arrival and Dismissal procedures when we are operating in a complete Hybrid Model with all grades reporting to school.

Arrival to School:

Due to COVID-19 the arrival time is 7:30 AM for students in Grades 1 - Grade 8. Students riding a yellow school bus are to enter RBCS through the front door on Arch Street by 7:30 a.m. Students being transported by car will enter on Cherry Street through the schoolyard. Students riding SEPTA are to enter RBCS through the Cherry Street entrance by 7:30 am. ***Parent(s)/guardian(s) may not leave their children before 7:15 a.m.***

The arrival time for students in 4K and 5K is 8:30. Students are permitted to arrive by 7:30 if they are traveling with an older sibling. Upon arrival students will be greeted outside to eliminate parents entering the building.

Arrival upon entering the School:

- Upon entering the building, students will go directly to their assigned classroom. Breakfast will be available for students to pick up.
- If your child arrives after 7:30 a.m. (Grades 1 - 8) and after 8:30 a.m. (4K and 5K), he/she is considered tardy. Please see *Late Arrival Procedures*.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are not allowed to escort their child to a classroom. Due to Covid-19, we request that parents/guardians not enter the building during arrival and dismissal time.

Late Arrival Procedure: Students arriving late will follow the following procedures:

- Children who arrive late must be escorted to the front entrance of the school by their parent(s)/guardian(s) to sign in at the front desk.
- Students will receive a late slip, which the classroom teacher will collect as the student enters the room.
- No student will be admitted to the classroom without a late slip, except in the case of a late school bus.

Dismissal Procedure:

School ends at 3:00 p.m. for students in grades 1 - 8.

- Students riding a yellow school bus are expected to remain in their classroom until their bus number is called.
- Students being picked up by car are expected to remain in their classroom until their parent/guardian has arrived. Students being picked up by car will be dismissed at 2:45. Parent pick up should take place on Cherry Street. A staff member will greet the parent outside and notify the classroom to dismiss the student.
- Students in 4K and 5K will dismiss at 2:30. Parent pick up will follow the same procedures using Cherry Street.
- Students riding SEPTA will be dismissed by the Cherry Street exit. Students riding SEPTA will begin dismissing at 2:30 pm. Students that will be traveling with a sibling will wait for the sibling to arrive before leaving the classroom.
- Students participating in after care (Carpe Diem) will wait in their classroom for the Carpe Diem teacher to pick them up. No student should be in the hall without an adult.
- To ensure their personal safety, children are not permitted to wait outside or in any other non-designated area.

Early Dismissal Procedure:

We recognize that from time to time it is essential for students to be dismissed early. However, during COVID-19 we are asking that this be for emergencies only. Please follow the process below:

- **The parent/guardian will send a note or send an email to earlydismissal@byerschool.org. Early dismissals will not be permitted after 2:30.**
- On the day of early dismissal, the parent/guardian must go to the front desk to request the student be dismissed.
- A member of the front desk staff will call the classroom and ask the teacher to send the child to the front lobby to meet the parent/guardian.
- Children will not be dismissed from the school classroom without a call from the front desk. Parents/guardians are not permitted to go up to the classroom to pick up their child.
- The child will be responsible for completing any work that is missed.

After School Programs:

RBCS will not be implementing face to face clubs at the start of school. The ability to have students participate in face to face after school activities will depend on the number of students in the building and our ability to follow the CDC guidelines.

Carpe Diem (After Care) will begin for students that are engaging in face to face learning each day. If a student is attending school face to face they may sign up for After Care. After Care will begin at the start of school - August 31st for students that are attending school. There will be no Morning Care this year.

When Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Pick Up Plans Change:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit a signed note or email to earlydismissal@byerschool.org in advance when an individual other than the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be conducting the afternoon pick-up.
- This note may be submitted to the front desk or homeroom teacher. The note must designate the following: 1) name of the person authorized to pick up the student, 2) relationship of the person authorized by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and 3) the date(s) on which this authorization is permitted.
- If the student normally rides the bus or attends RBCS After School Program, but will have alternate plans for a particular day, the parent/guardian is expected to send a signed note in advance detailing the arrangements.
- If anyone other than a parent(s)/guardian(s) or relative will be picking up your child that person needs to come to the front desk and present identification that he/she is the person authorized by the parent(s)/guardian(s) before the child will be released.
- The child must recognize the person. We will not release a student to a stranger.

If Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Do Not Pick Up Child/Children at Dismissal or at the End of an After-School Program:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to pick up their child/Children each day at the specified time or at the end of Carpe Diem.
- **Parents/Students will be allowed (2) late pick-ups that require attending Aftercare at no cost providing the student is picked up by 4:00PM. After the (2) late pick-ups have been exhausted then that student/parent/family will be invoiced for the Per Diem day rate of \$20.**

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please reference the Student Code of Conduct and the Truancy Policy in the appendix section.

Our Expectations:

Regular attendance is expected of all students. It is impossible to completely make up everything that is missed. Excellent attendance and punctuality are essential for reaching higher standards of achievement and progress. Punctuality and attendance are important skills for employment later in life. Responsibility for student attendance and punctuality lies primarily with students' parents/guardians. Absenteeism and tardiness by students are disruptive in the classroom, inconsistent with RBCS expectations of students and parents/guardians, and most importantly, hinders the learning opportunity for your child and the other children in the classroom and increases students' risks for academic difficulty or failure.

Excused/Unexcused Tardy:

Arrival after 7:30 a.m. for grades 1 - 8 is defined as tardy except in the case of a late school bus. Students in 4K and 5K will not be marked late until 8:30 a.m. A Tardy can be "Excused" or "Unexcused". An Excused Tardy includes:

- A medical appointment or a family emergency (death, hospitalization) supported by acceptable documentation provided to the School within 48 hours of the Tardy
- **Reasons such as car trouble, personal/family reasons, heavy traffic, and the like while understandable, are not acceptable excuses and will be listed as unexcused lateness**

Acceptable documentation of an Excused Tardy includes: 1) a note signed by a medical professional in the case of a medical appointment or medical emergency to be turned in to the teacher. Without acceptable documentation, a Tardy will be classified as Unexcused. Excessive Tardy will be handled as described under *Consequences for Excessive Unexcused Tardiness and/or Early Dismissals*.

Excused/Unexcused Early Dismissal:

Leaving school before 2:15 p.m. is defined as an "Early Dismissal". An Early Dismissal can be "Excused" or "Unexcused". Excused early dismissal includes: 1) A medical appointment or a family emergency (death, hospitalization) supported by acceptable documentation provided within 48 hours of the Early Dismissal or 2) Exceptional circumstances approved by the Principal. Early dismissal will not be permitted after 2:30 pm.

Excused/Unexcused Absence:

Students attending school for less than two hours will be defined as an "Absence". An Absence can be "Excused" or "Unexcused". The following situations supported by acceptable documentation provided to the School within 3 days of the absence qualify as an Excused Absence. Absences, regardless of cause, that are not supported by acceptable documentation are considered Unexcused. Acceptable documentation should be given to the homeroom teacher. Parents will be allowed (9) parent notes/emails for the year (for student absences that are less than 3 consecutive days) to be used as an acceptable form of documentation. Once a parent has reached the limit (9) for the school year parent notes or emails a doctor's note will be required. Family vacations scheduled on school days are considered Unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences will be handled as described under Actions for Excessive Tardiness, Early Dismissals, and/or Unexcused Absenteeism. Excused absences include:

- **Serious Injury or Death of a Family Member** - Up to five (5) school days due to a serious injury or death in the immediate family and one school day due to a serious injury or death of a non-immediate family member. The immediate family of a student includes parents/guardians, grandparents, brothers and sisters. A dated and signed note or email to the homeroom teacher from a parent/guardian stating the serious injury or death and the relationship with the student will serve as acceptable documentation.
- **Student Illness or Injury** - A dated and signed note from the medical professional is required for any student illness or injury lasting three (3) consecutive school days or more or for a recurring personal illness or injury that results in three (3) or more days of absence.
- **Quarantine** - An absence that is ordered by the local health office or State Board of Health. A copy of the official order by the local health office or State Board of Health will serve as acceptable documentation.
- **Court or Administrative Proceedings** - A copy of the official order by the court or administrative organization will serve as acceptable documentation.
- **Observance of a Religious Holiday** - If the religious tenets to which the student and/or his/her family adhere require observance of the holiday. A dated and signed note or email to the homeroom teacher from a parent/guardian stating the religious holiday will serve as acceptable documentation.
- **Out of School Suspensions** - No documentation is required from the parent/guardian.

Educational Leave of Absence Policy:

A planned absence, which extends beyond three consecutive scheduled school days, requires a formal application process in advance. The formal request must be made to the Chief Executive Officer 30 days prior to leaving, and include the dates, destination, and purpose of the trip, a description of the educational value, specific plans for enrichment, and arrangements that have been made for making up missed classroom work. Failure to follow Educational Leave of Absence Policy procedures without just cause may result in removal from the rolls. Planned absences that shorten the school year by coinciding with either the beginning or the end of the extended school year will not be permitted without prior approval from the school administrator.

If a student is absent for three consecutive days, a doctor's note is required. Attendance reports will be monitored monthly. If a student has numerous absences within the month, the following protocols will be followed:

- Phone call home
- Written notification mailed home
- Parent/Guardian meeting and referral for a Student Attendance Improvement Plan.

Consecutive Unexcused Absences: Pursuant to Chapter 11.24 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, students who are absent from school for 10 consecutive school days, will be removed from the active membership roll unless one of the following occurs: (1) RBCS has been provided with evidence that absence may be legally excused or (2) Compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued.

Expectations for Students During Virtual Learning

During these unprecedented times, RBCS staff will continue to ensure high-quality instruction for all students. Therefore, it is important that students adhere to the following expectations:

- *We strongly encourage students to wear* their RBCS uniform shirt while participating in virtual learning.
- Students should have a designated work area where they can sit and focus for the duration of the class period.

- Students are expected to have necessary materials (i.e. notebooks, workbooks, headphones, etc.) ready for each class.
- Computers/Chromebooks should be charged prior to class sessions.
- Students are expected to follow their virtual schedule and log into class sessions at the start time. This is very important, as attendance will be taken each class period for all grades.
- Students are expected to submit all assignments through their teacher's Google Classroom.
- Students and parents should continue to communicate with each other via Class Dojo, email, phone calls, etc.
- Students should exhibit the 4R's during all class sessions.
- Follow all instructional and classroom norms set forth by the teacher(s).

HOMEWORK POLICY

Regular Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers may assign and check a reasonable amount of nightly homework to all students.

- Parents may be asked to sign-off on homework to ensure that it is complete and the directions are followed.
- Parents are asked to communicate with teachers through notes, emails, and phone calls if your student is struggling with any part of the homework. This will be taken into consideration when homework is being checked.
- Students are responsible for completing their homework to the best of their ability.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH POLICY

We provide a free breakfast and lunch program for all students daily. If students decide to bring lunch we require that the lunch is a nutritious lunch. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should **NOT** send **sodas, candy, gum or glass bottles** with children to school. We do not have the capability to refrigerate or heat up lunches, nor will students be excused to leave the building to buy lunch. If a student forgets his/her lunch, we will provide the student a school lunch. Parents should not order food for students using food apps. (Uber Eats, GrubHub, etc.)

RECESS POLICY

Recess is a time for students to socialize with their classmates. Due to Covid-19 outdoor recess may not occur every day at Russell Byers Charter School. It may be necessary for students to remain in their classroom and take a 15 minute break while following the social distancing guidelines as identified by the CDC.

FLAG SALUTE AND THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE POLICY

In accordance with Chapter 12.10 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, it is the responsibility of every citizen to show proper respect for his country and its flag. Students may decline to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and may refrain from saluting the Flag on the basis of personal belief or religious convictions. Students who choose to refrain from such participation shall respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate.

CODE OF CONDUCT

RBCS is a learning community, built on the structures and principles of its educational model: EL Education or otherwise known as Expeditionary Learning. In the Russell Byers community, students learn by doing. Academic goals are linked to adventure, service work, teamwork, and character development. Education becomes a partnership between student and teacher, as supported by enlightened school leadership and committed parents. To support the creation of a positive learning environment for all members of our school community we have developed the following Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct establishes policies, rules, and expectations for all school community members to learn, teach, and work together. *Please reference Code of Conduct in the appendix section.*

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of cell phones and electronic devices are not permitted at RBCS. Upon entering the school building students must turn off all electronic devices and keep them stored in their backpack or locker. If the electronic device is seen or heard by a RBCS Staff member, the device will be confiscated. Confiscated phones will be turned in to the Dean of Climate and Culture and will be returned to the student at the end of the day. RBCS will not assume responsibility for the loss or theft of any electronic device. **Smart Watches are prohibited from being worn in the building.** RBCS reserves the right to reasonably search and/or confiscate any and all electronic devices to the extent allowed by applicable state and/or federal laws and regulations.

Students should keep cell phones turned off and in their locker or cubby. If a student is found with a cell phone on their person, the adult should confiscate the phone and give it to the respective Dean. *For details regarding the use of electronic devices please refer to the Acceptable Use Policy located at byersschool.org.*

STUDENT EXPRESSION POLICY

In accordance with Chapter 12.9 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code the right of public school students to freedom of speech is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

Students shall have the right to express themselves unless the expression materially and substantially interferes with the educational process, threatens serious harm to the school or community, encourages unlawful activity or interferes with another individual's rights.

Students may use publications, handbills, announcements, assemblies, group meetings, buttons, armbands and any other means of common communication, provided that the use of public school communications facilities shall be in accordance with the regulations of the authority in charge of those facilities.

- Students have the responsibility to obey laws governing libel and obscenity and to be aware of the full meaning of their expression.
- Students have the responsibility to be aware of the feelings and opinions of others and to give others a fair opportunity to express their views.

Identification of the individual student or at least one responsible person in a student group may be required on posted or distributed materials. School officials may require students to submit for prior approval a copy of materials to be displayed, posted or distributed on school property.

Bulletin boards must conform to the following:

- School authorities may restrict the use of certain bulletin boards.
- Bulletin board space should be provided for the use of students and student organizations.

- School officials may require that notices or other communications be officially dated before posting, and that the materials be removed after a prescribed reasonable time to assure full access to the bulletin boards.

The wearing of buttons, badges or armbands shall be permitted as another form of expression within the restrictions listed in subsection (c).

School officials may set forth the time and place of distribution of materials so that distribution would not materially or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

- A proper time and place set for distribution is one that would give the students the opportunity to reach fellow students.
- The place of the activity may be restricted to permit the normal flow of traffic within the school and at exterior doors.

To the extent that anything in this policy could be construed to conflict with the RBCS Charter or applicable state and/or federal laws, the applicable state and/or federal laws and/or RBCS Charter control.

SEARCH POLICY

The Board of Trustees acknowledges the need for safe in-school storage of books, clothing, school materials and other personal property. Lockers, shelves or cabinets may be provided. Prior to a search, students shall be notified and given an opportunity to be present. However, when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that materials that pose a threat to the health, welfare or safety of students in the school, searches may be conducted without prior warning and in accordance with Administrative procedures.

The Board of Trustees specifically reserves the right to authorize the Head of School or his/her designee to inspect a student's storage space when such has a reasonable suspicion to believe that the storage space is improperly used for the storage of contraband, a substance or object the possession of which is illegal or any material which poses a hazard to the safety, sanitation and good order of the school.

A student's person and possessions may be searched by the Head of School and/or his representative, provided that the individual has reasonable grounds to suspect that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school.

Any illegal or prohibited materials seized during a student search may be used as evidence against the student in a school disciplinary hearing or proceeding and may be turned over to law enforcement authorities.

To the extent that anything in this policy could be construed to conflict with the RBCS Charter or applicable state and/or federal laws, the applicable state and/or federal laws and/or RBCS Charter control.

COOPERATION WITH LEGAL AUTHORITIES

RBCS will cooperate as required with any local, state, or federal investigators or law enforcement officers who may contact the school in the course of any criminal investigation. All investigators and law enforcement officers must present proper identification prior to obtaining any information from the school. All investigators or law enforcement officials must identify themselves to the Head of School or Head of School's designee upon contact with the school. Whenever an investigator or law enforcement officer comes on school property with the appropriate legal authority to request records and information, that person will be provided with access to these records to the extent consistent with FERPA.

Except in cases involving abuse at home, the Head of School will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child with whom the law enforcement person wishes to speak. In the former case, the Head of School will request

permission to call the parent(s)/guardian(s), but will follow the decision of the investigative officer. The Head of School or designee shall select a Charter School administrator or appropriate staff person to be present at any meeting between a student and an investigator or law enforcement officer that occurs on school grounds. In cases involving abuse at home, the Head of School will request permission for a school representative to be present at the meeting or within the line of sight of such a meeting, but will follow the decision of the investigative officer.

CUSTODY ISSUES

RBCS abides by the provisions of the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment) with respect to the rights of non-custodial RBCS school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and other school-related information regarding the child. A current address must be provided by the non-custodial parent.

- If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide RBCS with an official copy of the court order.
- It is also the parent(s)/guardian(s)' responsibility to inform RBCS of the addresses where the students' records should be sent.
- Divorced parents must provide RBCS with a court certified copy of the custody section of the divorce decree. If no such copy is on file, RBCS will assume that both parents have custodial rights.
- RBCS will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that children are released only to the appropriate parent(s)/guardian(s) at the appropriate time according to the court-mandated custody arrangements. However, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must accept primary responsibility for such arrangements and should instruct their children as to which parent should have physical custody of them on any given day.

ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified immediately in case of sudden illness or accidents of a serious nature. Please be certain that the office has the correct information for emergency contact, and be sure that your contact knows that they are your emergency contact. Emergency information sheets are sent home the first week of school. These are to be filled out completely and returned to the teacher. Please notify the office of any changes during the year. **It is imperative that the office has emergency numbers to contact parents during the day.** *Cellular phone numbers and email addresses should be included with your information.*

RBCS is not permitted to send a child to a doctor for medical treatment without the expressed written permission of a parent or guardian. In the event of an emergency, all reasonable efforts will be taken to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s). RBCS is not permitted to dispense over the counter medicine (including Tylenol) or prescription medicine without the **written permission of a Doctor**. These notes are kept on record in the nurse's office and must be **renewed annually**.

HEALTH OFFICE

Keeping your child healthy is essential to their educational success. Our school nurse handles a variety of student medical concerns each day as well as maintaining medical records for each student. Please inform the nurse of any special health problems or concerns. If a child becomes ill during the school day, s/he will be given immediate attention. You will be called if your child is too ill to return to class. Please advise your child that s/he cannot personally call home if they feel ill but must go to the nurse's office.

Physicals/Immunizations/Dental Records

State law requires that, beginning in kindergarten, students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must: 1) have a physical examination by their physician; 2) be immunized; and 3) have a dental checkup. The appropriate forms can be found in the Student Enrollment Packet.

State law requires that all 6th grade students receive a new physical examination in their 6th grade year. Medical forms are distributed at the end of the 5th grade year and will be accepted prior to the start of the school year but are required within 5 days of the start of the 6th grade school year.

The PA Public School Code's requirements around immunizations are different from the health services listed above. RBCS is required to ascertain that children have been immunized in accordance with state requirements and therefore, this is reflected in our enrollment procedure. Please note there are additional immunization requirements for 7th grade students. The school is not responsible for providing immunizations to students directly.

We encourage families to have children privately examined outside of school so as to provide for continuity in the medical care of the child; however, if the student does not receive medical and dental examinations by a private family physician and a dentist, RBCS will make arrangements to provide these services to the child (kindergarten- physical and dental; 6th grade- physical). Please be aware that your child will receive the following screenings throughout their tenure as a RBCS student:

- Growth Screening (height and weight) – All grades 5K – 8
- Vision Screening – All grades 5K – 8
- Hearing Screening – Grades 5K, 1, 2, 3, 7
- Scoliosis Screening (curvature of the back) – grade 6, 7

In addition to the screenings provided by the school nurse, Russell Byers Charter School partners with various health care providers to provide services for children who may have a difficult time obtaining the services they need to reach their optimal health. These health care providers may offer services to your child during the school year. Parents will be required to complete a written consent form prior to their child receiving services from any health care provider working with our school.

RBCS will provide complete information to parents/guardians regarding the services being offered, schedule for services and a follow up report of the services. Please contact our school nurse for any questions or concerns regarding our partner health care services.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

The administering of medicine to a child outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to school personnel except under unusual circumstances. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should ask their physicians if it is possible to prescribe medication so that it can be administered at home. Only when absolutely necessary is the school willing to accept responsibility for administering medications and then under the following guidelines:

- If your child has a specific medical problem, it must be known to the nurse and should be made known to the Head of School each year. If your child has been prescribed medication to be taken during the school day, your child's doctor must complete a form that specifies the medicine to be taken and the dosage. This form has to be on file at RBCS before any medication can be administered to a student. The form is available at RBCS. All medication must be delivered in the pharmacy's original container to the school nurse. All medications will remain in a secure location. By exception, students who are asthmatic may carry a prescribed inhaler with them during the school day. A written log will be kept of the dispensed medication.

- RBCS will not administer/dispense non-prescription medicines including “over the counter” drugs to students without specific authorization by both a licensed physician and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student. An “Authorization for Medication” form must be completed and submitted by a parent(s)/guardian(s). The name of the medication, reason for use, proper dosage and time to be taken must be indicated on the form.

Note: No child may carry prescription or over-the-counter medications on his/her person unless it is a medical emergency and the medication is in the form of a prescribed inhaler for which a doctor’s note is on file, parental permission to allow self- administration and a Medical Management Plan and Emergency Care Plan have been developed and are in the Student’s Health file. For more information, please access the medical policies available at RBCS.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

A child may not be admitted or permitted to attend RBCS unless the immunization, exemption or provisional admission requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Health have been met or the child has received from the Head of School a medical or religious exemption from immunization.

Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus: Four (4) or more properly spaced doses of DTP, DTaP, Td or DT, with one (1) dose administered on or after the fourth birthday.

Polio: Three (3) or more properly spaced doses of polio vaccine (IPV or OPV).

MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella):

- **Measles:** Two (2) doses of vaccine with the first dose administered after the first birthday
- **Mumps:** One (1) dose after the first birthday
- **Rubella (German Measles):** One (1) dose after the first birthday

Hepatitis B: Three (3) properly spaced doses of Hepatitis B vaccine, or a history of Hepatitis B immunity proved by laboratory testing.

Varicella (Chicken Pox): One (1) dose of varicella vaccine administered at 12 months of age or older, or a written statement from the parent, guardian or doctor stating the date when the child had Chickenpox disease.

Tuberculosis Screening: All children need to be tested upon their entry to RBCS. If your child has been screened for TB upon entry to another school, RBCS will need the date of the TB screening, and the results of the screening. Your child will not be enrolled in the RBCS unless documentation and results of the screening and proof of proper immunization are on file or unless valid excusal/objection in accordance with the Public-School Code is obtained.

EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

If the School District of Philadelphia is closed for inclement weather, RBCS will also be closed. There are also instances when RBCS is closed and the School District of Philadelphia is open and when RBCS is open and the School District of Philadelphia is closed. We will make every effort to provide advance notice when possible and use multiple means of communicating any changes.

- Please check the RBCS schedule for pre-arranged early closings.
- In case of a snow or emergency closing, our **KYW broadcast number is 196** in Philadelphia County.
- We also post school closings on FOX 29 and Channel Six Action News. We will also update the school website and send an email message to the parent listserv to indicate closings.
- Buses will run as normal if there is an early school closing.

- If your child does not take the bus, please arrange an emergency plan for early dismissal prior to the start of the school year. If you are a parent who is unable to pick your student up for early dismissals, please indicate additional transportation means on your student's RBCS transportation form – **please note that no student(s) will be sent home with any person(s) who is not identified on that student's transportation form except as described under the "Arrival and Dismissal Procedure"**.

FIELDWORK AND FIELD TRIPS

Permission slips to be signed by a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to be received by the school before the date of each trip in order for the child to attend. The Code of Conduct applies to student behavior while on a field trip or traveling on school or public transportation.

LOST AND FOUND

All articles belonging to a student **must** be properly identified with the child's name. Many items are brought to the front desk or the teacher daily, but they cannot be sent back to the student because they are not marked. Please encourage your child to take good care of all of his/her school clothes and supplies.

Visitor Policy

Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit schools and meet with teachers and administrators about their child's progress. To ensure that our school is providing a safe and orderly learning environment, visitors must first report to the main office to sign in, state the reason for their visit and receive authorization from a school administrator to proceed with the visit. Visits to your child's school should be scheduled in advance whenever possible. *For detailed information please reference our Visitation Policy located in the appendix section.*

***DUE TO COVID 19 THIS PROCESS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE BEFORE SCHEDULING ANY APPOINTMENTS.**

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) COMMUNICATION

Communication between home and school is a vital part of the educational process. Teachers share with parents the privilege and obligation of educating their children. Therefore, every effort should be made by the parent(s)/guardian(s) to keep informed of the programs of the school.

Faculty members are always eager to discuss pupil progress with parent(s)/guardian(s). Dismissal or arrival time is not an appropriate time for parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss their child with teachers since teachers must be attentive to other students in their class. **Parent(s)/guardian(s) are not permitted to interrupt a teacher during class time. If a problem should arise concerning your child and a classroom situation, please contact the individual teacher first, either by email, voicemail or a written note, before referring it to the Principal. An appointment with a teacher or principal can be arranged by following the same procedure.**

All visitors or parent(s)/guardian(s) upon entering the school are asked to sign in at the School Check-In computer located at the front desk. They will be issued a Visitor's badge, which should be worn while on school grounds.

Communication from the school to the home will be sent out periodically and will include among other notices a monthly calendar that will be sent at the beginning of each month and a weekly update sent at the beginning of each week.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Each family is encouraged to be a member in the Home and School Association. This association gives parent(s)/guardian(s) many opportunities for involvement in the education of their children. It also provides social and educational opportunities for members. To promote a strong sense of community and to provide important information for parents and students, the Home and School Association runs a Facebook Group page. This moderated Facebook page is to share good news and learn more about the students and families at Russell Byers Charter School.

All parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to actively support all functions sponsored by the Home and School Association.

PARENT (S)/GUARDIAN (S) VOLUNTEERING

ALL volunteers are required to sign in and secure a name tag at the school check-in computer, located at the front desk, upon arrival and sign out when leaving the school. Volunteers are required to have criminal history, child abuse and FBI clearances to the extent required by the Public-School Code. Due to Covid-19, volunteering opportunities are extremely limited. Please contact an administrator for more information.

VOLUNTEER PROCEDURE

Volunteers, parent(s)/guardian(s), and other visitors must first sign in at the front desk and receive a visitor's pass. This is for the safety of all our children and staff. All volunteers must pass the background checks and other conditions required by the State of Pennsylvania. Requirements, forms and instructions are available at the front desk or can obtain the forms from the Department of Child Welfare at the following site:

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/PartnersProviders/ChildWelfare/003671038.htm>.

ADMISSION

Admission and Eligibility:

Admission to RBCS is open to all appropriately aged children living in Philadelphia. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must complete an application of intent to enroll, a parent/guardian statement, and provide all required documentation for each of their eligible children in order to be qualified for enrollment or included in the lottery process. The following documentation is required:

1. A copy of the child's Birth Certificate (or record of birth)
2. A copy of one of the following documents to use for residency verification:
 - Utility bill (electric or gas), or
 - PA Department of Transportation identification or driver's license, or
 - PA Department of Transportation vehicle registration, or
 - Copy of State/Federal program enrollment
 - Copy of paycheck stub with name and address of the employee and employer, or
 - Residency affidavit, or
 - Government agency identification card, or
 - Deed, or
 - Agreement of Sale.

The Lottery:

If the number of children applying for enrollment at RBCS exceeds the number of available spaces, students will be selected for admission by lottery. Spaces will be offered in the order of the names drawn with the names

creating the waiting list. If the number of applicants for a given grade does not exceed the number of available spaces, all applicants will be offered admission to the school in that grade. Specific dates and deadlines will be set each year for the admissions process. Please check at the beginning of each school year for that specific school year's enrollment and lottery dates.

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) COMPLAINT/CONCERN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

It is the intent of the Board of Trustees and the school staff that complaints/concerns should be resolved as quickly and amicably as possible with the best interests of the students held firmly in mind. These procedures shall be made known to staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) so that communications about the complaint/concern may be carried out in an open and convenient way. If the complaint/concern relates to something that has occurred in the classroom, the steps outlined below should be followed:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) should contact the child's teacher and discuss the complaint/concern on the telephone or in person within five (5) school days of the occurrence of the issue. Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint/concern at the teacher level. Since parent(s)/guardian(s) are considered to be essential partners in the educational process, teachers are expected to interact with parent(s)/guardian(s) both regularly and on an as needed basis.
- If the complaint/concern remains unresolved, then the parent(s)/guardian(s) should meet with the Principal or designee within five (5) school days of the meeting/discussion with the teacher to seek a mutual resolution to the complaint/concern.
- If the complaint/concern has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the parent(s)/guardian(s) within five (5) school days of the meeting with the Principal or designee, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may write to the Head of School to seek a mutual resolution to the complaint/concern.
- If the complaint/concern has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the parent(s)/guardian(s) within five (5) school days of the meeting with the Head of School, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees ("Chair") about the complaint/concern and ask that a Committee of the Board ("Committee") hear the complaint/concern and make a recommendation to the Head of School.
- The Chair shall submit the parent(s)/guardian(s) complaint/concern to a Committee chosen by the Chair. In considering the complaint/concern, the Committee may meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the Head of School and/or such other persons as determined by the Committee.

If the complaint/concerns are an issue not directly related to a particular child, but reflects a concern about a classroom practice, school rule, procedure or practice, the following steps should be taken:

- The parent(s)/guardian should request an informal discussion regarding the complaint/concern with the classroom teacher, school nurse, special education coordinator, Head of School or other individual depending on the type of issue. A classroom issue is best addressed to the teacher, while a school-wide concern should be addressed to the Principal.
- If the informal discussion does not resolve the concern within five (5) school days, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should file a formal written complaint/concern with the Head of School who will commence an investigation into the matter within five (5) school days of the receipt of the written complaint/concern.
- If the findings of the Head of School do not result in a satisfactory conclusion of the matter for the parent(s)/guardian(s), the parent(s)/guardian(s) should address the matter in writing to the Chair.

The Chair will assign the matter to a Committee appointed by the Chair to investigate and prepare a recommendation for the full Board's consideration.

STUDENT COMPLAINT/CONCERN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Student complaints/concerns are handled in a developmentally appropriate way. Students are encouraged to talk with their teachers and/or the Head of School. They, too, may make a formal request for resolution to the Head of school or the Chair if the teacher and/or Head of School are unable to resolve the matter. If a student wishes to contact the Board for such a resolution, he or she may do so by having a parent contact the Chair. The Board either resolves the issue or refers it back to the school Head of School.

FULL DISCLOSURE POLICIES

Several Russell Byers Charter School Policies adopted by the Board of Trustees are located in this document to include Code of Conduct, Truancy, and Visitation Policies. However, all policies are located on the school website at www.byerschool.org and at the school in the student records office. Please see Debbie Sperbeck for additional information.

BOARD RIGHT TO AMEND

The Board retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified in writing if changes are made through the bi-monthly communication folder.

PARENT (S)/GUARDIAN (S) AND STUDENT (S) AGREEMENT

Parents/guardians are required to read this Handbook carefully and to discuss its contents with their child(ren). Having read it, you are required to sign this agreement where indicated and return it to your child's teacher by Monday, **September 7, 2020**.

AGREEMENT

We/I have read and understand the 2020-21 Russell Byers Charter School Parent/Guardian and Student Handbook. My family promises to make every effort to follow the policies and procedures in the Handbook. We/I also understand that failure to do so will result in the Russell Byers Charter School taking action as described in the Handbook.

Parent/Guardian #1 Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian #1 Signature Date

Parent/Guardian #2 Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian #2 Signature Date

Student #1 Name and Grade (Please Print)

Student #1 Signature Date

Student #2 Name and Grade (Please Print)

Student #2 Signature Date

Student #3 Name and Grade (Please Print)

Student #3 Signature Date

Student #4 Name and Grade (Please Print)

Student #4 Signature

Appendix Section

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- www.byerschool.org
- [Visitation To School](#)