

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

2018-2019 Family & Student Handbook



Community schools. Outstanding results.

*Our mission is to provide students with the academic skills
and critical-thinking abilities they need to succeed in a
college-preparatory high school.*

655 Parkside Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11226

P: (718) 703-4484 F: (718) 703-8550

www.explorepto.com

www.explorenetwork.org/explore

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Phone 718.703.4484 • Fax 718.703.8550 • Address 655 Parkside Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11226
Web www.explorenetwork.org/explore

Welcome Letter

Greetings Explore Parents and Families,

We are excited to work with you in partnership as we launch the 2018-2019 school year. Our sole mission at Explore is to provide your scholar(s) with the necessary academic skills and critical-thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college-preparatory high school and beyond. In service of this mission, your feedback, teamwork, and support is imperative to our success.

We are staffed with talented, capable leaders and educators dedicated to and in support of our mission. We encourage you to reach out to us often with any questions or concerns that you may have throughout the school year.

As partners, we share the responsibility for the success of our scholars and want you to know that we will do our very best to carry out our responsibilities. We ask that you guide and support your scholar's learning by ensuring that he/she:

1. Attends school daily and arrives on time, ready for the day's learning experience
2. Completes all homework assignments given by teachers
3. Reads daily to develop a love for reading and to improve literacy skills

In addition, parents and families should be sure to:

1. Utilize our *Clever* platformed to stay informed about your scholar's academic and behavioral progress
2. Read our Weekly Blue Memo to stay update with school activities and events
3. Ensure that our Main Office has your most up to date contact information, including emergency contacts.
4. Attend all school meetings and respond to all school communication promptly

Finally, please consider joining our school volunteer program as our students can greatly benefit from your involvement and contributions to the school's program and its operations. We seek volunteers to help us with the following activities:

1. Reading with children who need extra help
2. School-wide events
3. Student recognition events

We are honored to have this opportunity to work with you and your scholars for 2018 – 2019 school year. We thank you in advance for your support and teamwork and look forward to an amazing school year.

In solidarity,

Latasha Williams
Principal, Explore Lower School [\(K-5\)](#)

Anwar Abdul-Rahman
Principal, Explore Upper School [\(6-8\)](#)

Family/School Communication - School Based

Parent-Teacher Organization: Explore’s Parent-Teacher Organization is an active part of Explore Charter School. The PTO has partnered with Explore to provide a safe and healthy environment for our children. Please look for PTO-related information in Explore’s weekly Blue Memo or visit their website, www.explorepto.com.

School Newsletter: Explore sends a Blue Memo to the parents and guardians of each scholar. This memo contains important information about school events and news. It will go home in your child’s book bag each Monday.

Questions & Concerns

The process for a parent or guardian to raise concerns is as follows:

Informal Complaint Procedures: An informal complaint is a complaint that does not concern the alleged violation of law or charter (e.g., a concern about an academic grade, the school’s uniform policy, the school’s cell phone policy, or the bus schedule). An individual who (or group that) has an informal complaint against a school policy or member of the school community is encouraged to contact the appropriate staff member at the school by telephone. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to informal complaints, either in person, by telephone, or in writing. If an informal complaint is not responded to and resolved promptly or satisfactorily, the group or individual should contact the Principal or Director of Operations to discuss the matter; the Principal or Director of Operations shall respond in person, by telephone, or in writing. If you are unsatisfied with the result of this process, please see the formal complaint policy in the Network Handbook.

Lower School Principal: Latasha Williams, williams@explorenetwork.org, 347-563-6576

Lower School Director of Operations: Demond Jones, djones@explorenetwork.org, 347-889-3592

Upper School Principal: Anwar Abdul-Rahman, aabulrahman@explorenetwork.org, 347-628-4249

Upper School Director of Operations: Jessica Baer, jbaer@explorenetwork.org, 917-586-4335

Who Should I Contact

If you . . .	Then contact . . .
Want to know about your child’s homework, if your child is going to be absent for an extended period of time, want to know more about your child’s academic progress, or if you just want to have a conversation	Your child’s teacher by e-mail (first initial, last name @explorenetwork.org – or by phone (specific emails and numbers to be distributed in the beginning of the school year in the form of a school-wide directory
Want to discuss your child’s attendance records	Operations Associate, Call the Main Office at 718-703-4484
Want to discuss Dean-related behavior concerns	K-2 Dean: Ms. Kaylor at kaylor@explorenetwork.org or 917-586-6782 3-5 Dean: Mr. Jenkins III at ljenkins@explorenetwork.org or 929-355-6198 6-8 Dean: Ms. Augustin at laugustin@explorenetwork.org or 917-586-4415

Are not hearing back from your child's teacher, or if you are not satisfied with the responses you are receiving from your child's teacher	<p>K-2: Ms. Olabusayo Soetan, Academic Director, osoetan@explorenetwork.org or 347-889-8427</p> <p>3-5: Ms. Maynard, Academic Director, smaynard@explorenetwork.org or 347-232-5220</p> <p>6-8: Mr. Constantino, Academic Director aconstantino@explorenetwork.org or 347-564-2937</p>
Have questions about dismissal, transportation, nurse services, or food services	Main Office at 718-703-4484
Want to learn about the PTO or opportunities to volunteer	Ms. Deokie, President, nbusie123@aol.com or visit www.explorepto.com
Want to learn about uniform scholarships	<p>K-5 Director of Operations: Demond Jones, djones@explorenetwork.org, 347-889-3592</p> <p>6-8 Director of Operations: Jessica Baer, jbaer@explorenetwork.org, 917-586-4335</p>
Would like additional information about Board of Trustee meetings, or Explore's Charter	<p>K-5 Director of Operations: Demond Jones, djones@explorenetwork.org, 347-889-3592</p> <p>6-8 Director of Operations: Jessica Baer, jbaer@explorenetwork.org, 917-586-4335</p>

Behavior Expectations

School Uniform:

Rationale: At Explore Charter School, we believe in creating a safe and productive learning environment where the focus is on academics at all times. At Explore we are committed to building a strong sense of community. Uniforms symbolically unify our strengthening student body. We believe that when our scholars look and feel like they belong to the same learning community, they will be more successful.

Our Policy: Scholars must be in school uniform at all times. Guides for the uniform are below:

- Tan Khaki pants or skirts
 - Skirts must be an appropriate length and extend below arm's length
- Polo shirts (tucked in at all times) as follows:
 - Lower School (Grades K-2) – Light blue polo with Explore logo
 - Intermediate School (Grades 3-5) – Royal blue polo with Explore logo
 - Upper School (Grades 6-8) – Navy blue polo with Explore logo
- Sweatshirts
 - Only 'Explore logo' sweatshirts are allowed.
- Shoes:
 - Kindergarten students – Solid **black** shoes with **VELCRO**
 - 1st-5th Students - Solid **black** shoes with rubber-soles (No sandals, flip-flops or heels)
 - 6th-8th Students – Any closed shoe (No sandals, flip-flops or heels)
- Belts must be solid black, brown or navy blue and must have a small buckle
- Sweaters and cardigans must be a solid navy blue
 - Hoodies and sweatshirts without "Explore" logo are not permitted
- Solid black, white or navy blue undershirts may be worn underneath the uniform shirt
 - Long and short sleeved undershirts are allowed
- Socks and tights must be solid black, white, or navy blue
- Explore T-Shirts – Scholars may wear their Explore t-shirts on Fridays, or with permission on field trips

Explore's Uniform Looks Like:			
K-2	3-5	6-8	On Fridays - Explore T-Shirt
			

Apparel and Accessories to AVOID

 <p>No Hoodies or sweaters with logos</p>	 <p>No skirts (or shorts) that are too short</p>
 <p>Lower School: No shoes with colors other than black Upper School: Any closed shoe is permitted (no sandals or flip flops)</p>	<p>No belts that aren't all black</p> 

Kindergarten Only: All Kindergarten students must wear black VELCRO shoes. Here is an example:



Uniform Requirements: Scholars who come to school out of uniform will not be able to attend class until they are in uniform. Parents or guardians will be called to come and bring the appropriate uniform piece for their child. When necessary, an effort will be made to loan scholars uniform components if they are available so that scholars can attend class. Any loaned items must be washed and returned or paid for within a week.

Prohibited Uniform Items:

Hats, Jewelry and Makeup Scholars are not permitted to wear hats or baseball caps in the building. In the summer months scholars may wear a visor or hat (including baseball caps) to recess with permission from their teacher. In the school building, staff are instructed to confiscate baseball caps, label the hat with the child's name, and give the hat to the scholar's dean. Parents and guardians must set up a time with the dean if they wish to retrieve the cap.

We ask that scholars do not wear jewelry that may get lost or broken or that may be a distraction. Examples include earrings larger than a quarter, long necklaces, rings or bracelets. Scholars who arrive at school wearing this jewelry will be asked to remove it or place it inside their shirt, where it is not visible. If scholars do not comply with this policy, the items will be confiscated for parent pick up and further consequences may be given.

Scholars may not wear or apply makeup at Explore. Scholars will be required to remove makeup and any makeup items will be confiscated, including lip gloss or lip balm. Explore is not responsible for items that have been confiscated.

Cell Phones, Electronics & Other Distracting Objects Scholars are not permitted to bring objects to Explore, or to any Explore-related activities (field trips, field day, etc.), that will distract them from learning. Distracting objects include games, yo-yos, toys or any other items that staff reasonably conclude may distract students from learning. Cell phones and electronics (smart watches, speakers, headphones, etc.) are not permitted in pockets or on a scholar's person throughout the day. If a member of the staff sees one of these items, they will confiscate the item and return it to the scholar's dean. Families may pick up confiscated devices after school.

Members of Explore's staff are not responsible for these objects after they have been confiscated. If a scholar repeatedly has items taken from him or her, the items will be held until the end of term.

Scholars who must call home throughout the day should come to the main office or ask permission to use a teacher's cell phone.



Explore's Character Values: SOAR Values

Scholarship Ownership Ambition Respect

SOAR: to rise and aspire to a higher level

We expect all of our students to **LEARN and EMBODY** our SOAR Values.

We expect all of our staff to **MODEL and TEACH** our SOAR Values.

We expect all of our parents and guardians to **BE AWARE of and SUPPORT** our SOAR Values

SOAR Values	Behavioral Expectations associated with SOAR Values
<p>Scholarship Working hard to learn together</p>	<p><i>This means that students</i> Show intellectual curiosity Are prepared to learn Offer positive help Make choices that benefit themselves and others Wear school uniforms every day based on our dress code</p>
<p>Ownership Taking responsibility for our work, our actions and our community</p>	<p><i>This means that students</i> Actively participate Show investment in learning Work to do better on assignments and in classes that are challenging Are not afraid to stand up against bullying by speaking up Ask questions if they don't understand something or need help Take responsibility for a mistake and then move on Take pride in their actions Are in control of their bodies and their decisions</p>
<p>Ambition Determined to try my best and not give up</p>	<p><i>This means that students</i> Set lofty goals Plan to attend a competitive high school and college Complete every assignment to the best of their ability Do more than what is expected Thoughtfully assert their views when appropriate</p>
<p>Respect Understanding ourselves and the connections with each other; our words and actions matter</p>	<p><i>This means that students</i> Make eye contact Follow adults' directions Talk only when others are not talking Actively listen Show empathy Disagree without demeaning Embrace differences Keep our school and our building safe, clean, and orderly</p>

Consequences: Lower School Behavior Intervention

	Strategies	Behaviors
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warnings - Conversation to redirect the behavior - Move student seat - Buddy Classroom - *No write up necessary (optional) - Support from Dean Associate - Logical Consequences - Restoration (after every consequence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - *Brand new behaviors - Minor Academic infractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Off Task o Not following directions the first time given o Lack of Urgency o Incomplete homework o (Grade Team determined) - Minor Culture Infractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Uniforms o Disrespect (Adult or Peer) o Walking/Running away from an adult o Play fighting
Level 2	<p>*Documentation Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone Call Home - Mandatory parent meeting between parent and teacher - Detention - Buddy Classroom - Support from Dean Associate - Individualized student behavior management plan (behavior interventionist support) - Reflection Exercise - Logical Consequences - Loss of recess in incremental minutes - Restoration (after every consequence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeat Behaviors from Level 0 - Cell phone usage (5th grade only)
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mandatory parent meeting between parent, teacher, and dean. - Mandatory Dean Detention - Possible In School Suspension - Possible Out of School Suspension - Restoration (after every consequence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeat Behaviors from Levels 0 and 1 - Major Infractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Fighting or inciting violence o Walking out of building/classroom without permission o Use of profanity o Throwing food o Teacher disrespect (yelling, cursing, etc.) o Theft - Consistent Culture Infractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Uniform o Class Materials (grades 3-5)** o Homework Completion (grades 3-5)**
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mandatory meeting between Principal, Dean, Teacher, and Parent - Possible In School Suspension - Possible Out of School Suspension - Restoration (after every consequence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeat Behaviors from Levels 0, 1 and 2. - Repeat Major Infractions (see above) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Possession of a weapon o Possession of drugs or alcohol (or suspected usage) o Arson o Emotional Crisis (screaming, tantrums) o Physical fighting o Throwing objects o Physical Aggression (throwing chairs, desks, objects, slamming) o Threatening a peer or an adult o Verbal abuse or taunting (consistent name calling and or use of profanity)

Upper School Extrinsic Motivation System – SOAR Points

SOAR Points

Explore Upper's Extrinsic Motivation System, SOAR Points, supports the implementation of rigorous instruction at Explore Upper School, creates a strong and positive relationship-based community, and keeps students engaged in a safe, distraction free environment. Age appropriate, consistent and transparent, SOAR Points celebrates and recognizes scholars when they meet and exceed success through additions, positive incentives and awards. Moreover, SOAR Points quickly and clearly corrects negative behaviors with logical consequences.

A Quick Overview

Our SOAR Points system is tied to both rewards and consequences. We use SOAR Points to:

- Determine what privileges students earn.
- Determine which students earn participation in celebrations each term.
- Determine eligibility in surprise rewards and raffles.
- Determine which students need additional interventions to support improving behavior.

Overview of the SOAR Points system:

- Students receive 100 points each Wednesday. This is equivalent to students earning 20 points each day. Cumulative points are banked on the following Tuesday and reset.
- Students earn +1 point (addition) for SOAR choices tied to the SOAR Character Strengths.
- There are three ways that students can earn deductions:
 - Level 1 – these are age-appropriate behaviors that are primarily addressed by the classroom teacher using proactive management strategies. Students will receive two formal warnings, followed by a deduction of 1 point if the behaviors continues. ****Warning are not tied to specific behaviors.***
 - Level 2 – these are more serious behaviors that warrant immediate consequence. Students will receive a deduction of 3 points immediately when demonstrating these behaviors.
 - Level 3 – these are behaviors that require dean intervention and can range in consequence from a deduction of 5 to 20 points depending on the severity of the behavior. Behaviors that result in suspension will warrant a 20 point deduction. Any classroom removal will result in a deduction of at least 5 points.
- There is -5 point daily threshold that triggers an automatic afterschool reflection.
- After issuing 3 level 1 deductions, a teacher may choose to escalate to a classroom removal. This will result in a deduction of 5 points. The teacher will then cross out the prior 3 deductions, in order not to “double jeopardy” the student.
- After issuing a level 2 deduction, the teacher may choose to escalate to a classroom removal if the behavior is not appropriately corrected. This will result in a deduction of 5 points, with the previous -3 points being crossed out.
- Similarly, if the dean issues a larger consequence, such as a suspension, the student will receive a 20 point deduction, and the prior 5 point deduction will be deleted.
- Students can use a “respectfully disagree” signal when issued a warning to give further context around the behavior that earned the warning.

School Arrival and Dismissal

Scholar Arrival, Dismissal, and Attendance Policies:

Breakfast: K-5 scholars are able to receive breakfast bags from 7:35am-7:55am. School breakfast is optional for all scholars but we encourage our scholars to eat a healthy breakfast daily. 6th-8th grade scholars are able to receive breakfast bags from 7:35-7:45.

Student Arrival K-5: K-5 scholars who are not in their classroom by 8:01 will be marked tardy. K-5 scholars may enter school at 7:35 a.m. Scholars or guardians will not be permitted inside the school building prior to 7:35 a.m. Exceptions may be made for extreme weather. All K-5 scholars will go directly to their classrooms. Breakfast will be available from 7:35 until 7:55 a.m. in their classrooms.

Student Arrival 6-8: 6-8 scholars who are not in their classroom by 7:51 will be marked tardy. Scholars who want breakfast will be allowed to eat in the cafeteria from 7:35-7:45 a.m. Scholars may bring breakfast purchased outside of school until 7:40 a.m. If a student arrives after 7:40 a.m. with a breakfast from outside, we will ask the scholar to put in their bags.

Explore strongly discourages scholars from arriving prior to 7:35am. No scholars may wait in the school yard in the morning. The school yard **is not supervised by Explore staff. Any inappropriate incidents that occur in the school yard prior to and after school will be subject to disciplinary action.**

Leaving the Premises: Scholars will not be allowed to leave the area once they arrive in front of the school. If you would like for your upper school child to purchase breakfast or give permission for them to go to the store, they should do this before arriving in front of the school. Once an Explore staff member has seen your child, your child will not be allowed to leave. Please also keep in mind that no candy or unhealthy snacks are allowed in the school.

Late arrival is excused for medical, legal, or family emergencies. Appropriate documentation, given to the main office, is required to excuse a tardy. No exceptions are made for oversleeping, missing public or yellow bus transportation, or late private van arrival. Excessive and unexcused tardies will result in a conference with school administration.

Student Dismissal: On M, T, Th and F, K-5 scholars are dismissed at 3:35pm and 6-8 scholars are dismissed at 3:45pm. All scholars are dismissed at 2:00pm on Wednesday. Parents and guardians who wish to pick up their K-5th grade student will wait outside the entrance to the Nostrand Avenue school yard until dismissal time. At that point, parents and guardians will be permitted to pick up their child from the school yard. Scholars will be released only to those adults who are listed with the school as having permission to leave with a particular scholar (on the Blue Card). Adults should be prepared to show identification at scholar pick up in order to take responsibility of the child. Students in K-5th are not permitted to self-dismiss. All 5th-8th grade scholars who do not ride the bus will be self-dismissed. Parents and guardians should plan to meet their 5th-8th grade scholars in front of the school.

Please refer to Explore Schools Inc. Network’s policy for self-dismissal and scholar pick-up below:

Category	Rule
In order to self-dismiss...	Scholars must be in 4 th grade or older with permission from their parent
In order to self-dismiss and bring their younger siblings home...	Scholars must be in 5 th grade or older with permission from their parent
Scholars are automatically allowed to self-dismiss unless their parent/guardian specifically requests that they not be allowed to...	Beginning in 5 th grade
In order to pick up a scholar...	A person must be 18 years old or older and must be listed on the emergency contact list.

Dismissal Mode Changes: All changes to a scholar’s regular mode of dismissal should be communicated to the school **at least one day in advance** of the requested change. Whenever possible, parents should send a note to the school to explain the change in writing or call the main office. Without written permission from a parent/guardian, scholars cannot be released to adults that are not listed on their gold emergency contact lists. If it is an emergency, day-of change, parents must call the office by 1:00pm and school staff will do their best to accommodate the change.

Early/Late Pick-Up of Scholars: Scholars who leave prior to dismissal time will be excused only for medical or legal reasons, or for family emergencies. Parents and guardians who need to pick their scholar up early from school must first report to the main office and sign their scholar out. Scholars cannot be sent downstairs to family members without being signed out in the main office. All early pick-ups should be arranged with the main office in advance whenever possible. Early pick-ups **after 3:05** will not be able to be accommodated (School Safety will not permit visitors upstairs after 3:05pm).

Scholars must be picked up no later than **3:55pm on M, T, Th, F or 2:15pm on W**. Scholars will be brought upstairs at these times, and must be picked up from the 5th floor after 3:55/2:20pm. Scholars who are not picked up by 5:00pm may be brought to the local police precinct.

After-Care Program: Explore does not provide on-site after-care throughout the entire school year. Parents and guardians may choose to enroll their scholar in an off-site, fee-based after-care program. Parents and guardians who enroll their scholar in an off-site after-care program are required to list that after-care program on their scholar’s emergency contact list, or Explore will not release scholars to their after-care. For more information, please contact the main office.

At certain points during the year, Explore staff may offer after-school activities to small groups of scholars, such as tutoring or clubs. Permission slips will be sent home with scholars prior to the start of these activities, and scholars must have permission slips signed by their parents/guardians in order to participate in these activities.

Additional Policies - School Specific

Campus Collaboration: Explore shares our school campus with P.S. 141 and M.S. 2. We share many of our spaces, including the cafeteria and gym. As campus partners, we strive to work with and respect all members of our community.

Food & Snack Policy: Scholars are not permitted to eat candy or drink soda, or other caffeinated drinks, or bring hot beverages into the school. Scholars may not bring glass bottles in the building. Food is only to be eaten in the cafeteria, or in the classroom with teacher permission. Candy will be confiscated and not returned to the parent or guardian. Snacks will be provided for all scholars in grades K-8th through a Pilot Program with the cafeteria. If all goes well, snacks will be provided for the duration of the year. Families may be requested to provide additional snacks throughout the year as needed.

K-5 Birthday Policy: Parents or guardians may schedule a birthday celebration by contacting the classroom teacher. These must take place during the existing lunch/recess block from 10:20-11:20. Birthday or any other types of candles are not permitted on school premises at any time. No candy should be distributed during birthday celebrations. Easy to distribute snacks, cupcakes, or cake are permitted for birthday celebrations – Explore is not responsible for refrigerated items. Goody bags should not be provided.

Holiday Policy: Explore does not recognize or endorse the celebration of any religious holidays during the school year.

Recess Procedures: At Explore, our scholars will receive recess. There will be indoor recess on days when there is inclement weather, such as rain or snow. Scholars may stay inside during recess only if the school's administration is provided with a Doctor's note stating that they may not go outside.

Attending School Events Outside School Hours: Scholars in grades K - 6 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all school events outside of normal school hours. Scholars in grades 7 - 8 do not need a parent or guardian present; however scholars will be required to provide a signed permission slip if they choose to attend on their own. If a 7th or 8th grade scholar has a sibling in a younger grade at Explore, they cannot act as the guardian of the younger scholar. A parent or guardian must be in attendance. Alumni are welcome to attend Explore events but should not bring non-relatives or friends with them. In addition, alumni are not able to monitor younger siblings without a parent unless they are 18 or older.

Visitor Information

Campus Visitor Policy

- 1) Check in at the School Safety Desk.
- 2) Wear your visitor's pass visibly throughout your stay.
- 3) Check out at the School Safety Desk on your way out. Drop visitor's pass back at the School Safety Desk.

Explore Visitor Policy

We know that a strong and consistent culture is what is going to put our scholars ahead. That's why we have a few rules for all visitors to observe:

- Upon arrival, all guests must sign in at the front desk lobby with building security, as well as in our visitor clipboard in the **main office, room A418**. We like to know who we are welcoming!
- All visitors must be escorted to their destination by an Explore staff members.
- We welcome visitors, although all visits must be coordinated in advance. If your visit is not coordinated in advance, you may be asked to come back after scheduling an appointment with the staff member.

Explore is located in Flatbush, Brooklyn at 655 Parkside Avenue at the corner of Parkside and Nostrand. The main entrance is on Parkside between Rogers Avenue and Nostrand Avenue. We are accessible by public transportation:

Buses: B12, B44; **Subways:** 2/5 to Winthrop Street