

School Handbook and Code of Conduct 2007-2008

**Agora, the 21st Century Gathering Place for
Learning—Where Extraordinary Efforts Bring
Extraordinary Results**



AGORA
CYBER CHARTER SCHOOLSM

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Agora Cyber Charter School Code of Student Conduct

To meet the educational needs of our students, parents and teachers, Agora Cyber Charter School provides opportunities for students, parents, and teachers to identify and realize their potential as responsible individuals within our society. We are all a part of a larger community, and we are all accountable for providing a favorable environment for that growth. The characteristics of a healthy and sound educational environment are recognition of common concerns despite individual differences; open, effective communication; appreciation of personal worth and dignity; and the thought that extraordinary accomplishments require extraordinary efforts. The proper skills and knowledge will promote responsible attitudes that will prepare our students for continued learning and positive responses to our changing world.

Pursuant to the Public School Code and in accordance with the provisions of regulations of the State Board of Education, the Board of School Directors ("Board") of Agora Cyber Charter School has adopted this Student Handbook/Code of Student Conduct ("Code") in order to ensure a favorable and orderly educational environment for the students, educators and parents of Agora Cyber Charter School, and to promote the ideals of citizenship and orderly interaction in and among the Agora community.

Each student enrolled in Agora shall follow this Code or be subject to such disciplinary measures as set forth herein. These rules govern student conduct in school; Elluminate Live! and telephone conferencing; e-mailing with Agora staff and students; at school activities such as PSSA testing site or school gatherings. All policies set forth herein are subject to amendment by the Board at any time. It is the expectation of the Board that this policy will be interpreted consistently with applicable law. To the extent that any portion of this policy is determined by a court or administrative agency to conflict with any applicable law, the remainder of the policy shall remain in effect. In the application of this Code, Agora Cyber Charter School will not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, marital status, financial status, ancestry or any other legally protected classification.

WELCOME TO AGORA!

Dear Agora Cyber Charter School Family:

Welcome to the 2007-2008 school year at Agora Cyber Charter School. In ancient Greece, the agora was the heart of the community and the gathering place for its citizens. In addition to serving as a market place and public square, it was where the education giants of the day—Socrates, Euclid, Plato, and others—would gather to teach and inspire their students. At Agora Cyber Charter School, we create real connections for students, families, and teachers within our 21st century “gathering place.”

Agora is serving students in every county in the state, and the size of our school continues to grow. To best serve our families, our teachers and administrators have developed several exciting programs. These initiatives are briefly described in this handbook, but your family will enjoy the greatest success in our school if you discuss your interest and participation in these programs with your teacher.

Our goals for this school year are for students to realize the highest levels of academic achievement and build school community. The K¹² Inc. curriculum and our school programs were designed with these goals in mind. Our teachers are your partners and they are eager to support and assist your family.

Please keep this document handy. This handbook contains important calendars, phone numbers, and descriptions of programs. We have an exciting year ahead of us and are pleased that you have selected our school. We welcome vvyour comments, criticism, and vision for our community. We look forward to a rewarding year for all.

Best wishes for a great year,

Sharon Williams
Head of School

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

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Phone: 215- 673-2613
Fax: 215-673-2614
School Website: www.Agora.org

K¹² Customer Support:

1-866-626-6413

With this number you will be able to reach the two support departments at K¹²:

CUSTOMER CARE – Choose option one if you have issues with:

- Materials
- Navigation/Login
- PC/Printer receipt & delivery
- Username/passwords

TECHNICAL SUPPORT – Choose option two if you have issues with:

- Hardware
- Software
- Platform
- Illuminate Live!

Teacher e-mail contacts:

First initial of first name and full last name@agora.org
(example: John Smith = jsmith@agora.org)

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

September 4, 2007

First day of school

October 8, 2007

Columbus Day

November 22-23, 2007

Thanksgiving Holiday

December 24-January 1

Winter break

January 14, 2008

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

February 18, 2008

President's Day

March 17-21, 2008

Spring Holiday

May 26, 2008

Memorial Day

June 6, 2008

Last day of school

PSSA TESTING WINDOWS:

October 22-November 2, 2007

12th grade retest for math, reading and writing test

February 11-22, 2008

Writing: Grades 5, 8, and 11

March 31- April 11, 2008

Math/Reading: Grades 3-8, 11

April 28 – May 9, 2008

Science Grade 4, 8, and 11

OVERVIEW OF AGORA

Agora was founded by two of the nation's most successful public charter school leaders, Dr. June Brown and Mr. Brien Gardiner. Dr. Brown enjoys unique acclaim for managing the only charter school in Pennsylvania to achieve a "Proficient" ranking for an unprecedented 100% of its students, and to receive the No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Award. Mr. Gardiner has made his mark in Philadelphia as the founder and Chief Executive Officer of one of the most successful charter schools in Pennsylvania and, more specifically, one of the first charter schools in Northeast Philadelphia. Dr. Brown's and Brien Gardiner's commitment to meeting the needs of all students, regardless of social, economic, or academic concern, is apparent when you study the ongoing successes that the students they currently serve are experiencing.

As a public charter school, Agora is a school of choice operated under public supervision and direction at no cost to parents. The Board of Trustees governs all operations of the school—ensuring that the school operates in compliance with the charter application and all applicable laws—and ensures the school's sustained financial viability. Additionally, Agora will be run by a team of exceptional K¹² Inc. cyber charter school administrators in Pennsylvania. These are talented professionals experienced in the public school system and in cyber education using the K¹² curriculum.

Our Mission

The mission of the Agora Cyber Charter School is to provide an innovative, intensive academic preparation that inspires and educates students to achieve the highest levels of academic knowledge and skills. Agora embraces a collaborative partnership between teachers and parents in order to empower students to reach extraordinary heights. Extraordinary results require extraordinary efforts! Through commitment, hard work, consistency, and responsibility, every student will meet the challenge of mastering high expectations.

Our Vision

Through a combination of research-based, individualized, and specialized curriculum and instruction in the home; online conferencing with a certified teacher; and access to a community of experts in science and technology, our students will emerge as confident leaders of the digital age.

Award-Winning Curriculum

The K¹² curriculum is developed by cognitive scientists, noted leaders in the education field, math and reading specialists, Flash designers, and other subject matter experts. K¹² is widely regarded across the country for its passionate and rigorous approach to education focused on how students actually learn.

The K¹² curriculum works for all kinds of students to unlock their personal full academic potential and help them achieve mastery of the key concepts and skills they will need to succeed in life. From gifted children, to students whose lives require an individualized schooling schedule, to those who need a gentler pace than in a traditional classroom, K¹² provides an adaptable but focused learning environment.

Agora Faculty

We believe that a collaborative relationship between you and your assigned teachers is necessary. Your teacher has a wealth of knowledge and thus should be your first point of contact for all questions that are academic or technical in nature. As your teacher makes contact with you, know that this is a team effort to ensure that your student is making progress and demonstrating compliancy in all areas.

Expectations and Responsibilities of Teachers

In the Elementary program (K-6), your teacher is your first point of contact for any academics questions or concerns. Students in grades 7 and 8 have a mentor teacher, and in the high school program (9-12), the first point of contact is the Instructional Coordinator. Agora teachers are responsible for the following functions to ensure the highest level of success for students.

- Collaboratively develop Individual Learning Plans for your student
- Help you to use the Online School and Virtual High School platforms
- Guide and direct you through the K¹² curriculum
- Provide instruction using the K¹² curriculum and other educational resources
- Develop and explain accommodations or modifications to the curriculum

- Conduct conferences with you to discuss your student's academic progress
- Collect and review work assignments and provide constructive feedback (and grades in the secondary program) on a regular basis
- Maintain work day from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
- Respond within 24 hours to all e-mails and telephone calls
- Inform you of school updates/information from Agora and/or K¹²
- Attend school functions
- Administer state and other standardized tests
- Provide encouragement and support in all areas of student learning and achievement
- Complete semester progress reports
- Be the first point of contact for parents and students *

Expectations and Responsibilities of Students

A critical goal of Agora's educational program is to encourage maturation through the continuing development of each student's independence and responsibility. An orderly atmosphere promotes and enhances effective learning. This Code is developed to support the personal welfare of each student and to protect the common good of the entire school. The following are students' core responsibilities as members of Agora learning community:

- Each student is a representative of Agora, and as such is expected to observe this Code at all times when representing him or herself as a student of the school.
- Each student will demonstrate respect for all persons within the school community, including teachers, other students, staff, volunteers, visitors, guests, or others.
- Each student is expected to assume responsibility for the care of all school property and to exhibit a clear respect for personal and school property.
- Each student is expected to know and abide by school and individual class rules and regulations.
- Each student is responsible for daily attendance continuing through each day's course work and activities.

- Each student is responsible for meeting daily work expectations of preparation, class participation, and practice through extended-day work.
- Each student is called upon to develop and maintain a high sense of academic and personal integrity as a guide for daily and ongoing decision-making.

These responsibilities and expectations are to be an integral part of Agora student behavior during all extracurricular activities, PSSA testing, day and field excursions, as well as within the typical school day and setting.

Expectations and Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are recognized as critical members of their child's educational team. Parents have a need and a right to know students' responsibilities, violations of those responsibilities and resulting disciplinary measures. Their reinforcement of the school's efforts to establish a strong, positive, and safe learning environment for all students is an invaluable asset. Parents have an enormous positive impact upon their child's school experience by consciously assuming three key responsibilities: initiating and maintaining an active role, valuing and expecting responsible behavior of their child, and being an advocate for their child and his or her education.

Communication

Ongoing and consistent communication is required between the student, parent, and teacher(s) for school compliancy. School communication includes:

- Telephone (leaving voicemail when necessary)
- E-mail
- Secure website
- School Announcements
- Newsletters
- School Directory
- Community Chest
- Workshops (in person and online)
- Secure chat rooms (using Elluminate® Live!)
- Faxing
- First Class Mail

OVERALL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Instructional Time

Pennsylvania requires all public schools to offer a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days of instruction between July 1 and June 30. Additionally, statute requires a minimum number of instructional hours by grade level:

Grade Level	Yearly Hours Suggested	Weekly Hours Suggested	Daily Hours
K-6	900	25-30	5 - 6
7-12	990	33-35	6 - 7

Instructional time can occur at anytime during the day and on any day of the week between the first day of school, September 4, 2007, and the last day, June 6, 2008. Instructional time must directly relate to lesson objectives which are aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards.

Attendance and Truancy

As an online public school, Agora Cyber Charter School is required to monitor student attendance in accordance with all applicable statutes and State Board of Education Rules. Agora teachers and administration monitor student attendance regularly.

Upon written request from a parent or guardian, the principal or designee may excuse a student's absence from school for the following reasons:

- Student illness
- Quarantine
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious holidays (24 hr. advance request only)
- Educational tour/trip (24 hr. advance request only)

Responsibility for compliance with state attendance statutes and regulations belongs to the parents, but the school is obligated to keep an accurate record of daily attendance. An Agora student is considered truant if he or she fails, without a legitimate excuse, to log attendance for three consecutive calendar days. After 10 consecutive school days without logging attendance, the student will

be removed from the school rolls per Pennsylvania School Code. Agora staff follows the procedures outlined below to notify parents of a truancy situation.

Process for Attendance Monitoring

- Students are required to follow the school calendar, which includes a minimum of 180 school days. Attendance only occurs on "school days" as listed on the school calendar. Instructional time can be entered on any day (e.g., weekends, holidays, etc.). Time logged on a non-school day will count toward hours and progress, but not toward the 180 days.
- Students are expected to log into the OLS (online school) each scheduled school calendar day. If attendance is not recorded on a school day as listed on the school calendar, the student is marked as absent. So, if the school calendar indicates Monday through Friday in a given week as "School Days," attendance must be entered on each day to not result in absences being recorded.
- Students who are unable to log onto the online school must notify the teacher or instructional coordinator as to the reason for the student's absence.
- A doctor's note will be required for three or more days of absence in a row due to illness. The parent should send the doctor's note to the teacher or coordinator.
- Hours and progress count on non-school calendar days.
- Swapping of holidays is not permitted, but families can request an educational leave of absence. (For a copy of the request form, please send an email request to your teacher.) Due to the nature of the school model, students have opportunities to learn and can work on curriculum 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- In the event a daily attendance is inadvertently not logged in, inform your teacher the next school day to correct the marked absence.
- TRUANCY: a student will be considered truant after three unexcused absences in a row. Failure to attend three days in a row without excuse will result in charges of truancy reported to the home school district.

Process for Withdrawal of Truant Students:

K-8 teachers and high school Instructional Coordinators monitor student attendance on a daily basis. Agora teachers/coordinators send an e-mail or conduct a phone conference informing parents that their child has been absent (unexcused) for three or more calendar days. Parents should respond within 24 hours. Immediate action should be taken to correct the truancy problem. If there is no response within 24 hours, Agora teachers/coordinators forward the student's name, contact information, and file documentation (number of missed days, etc.) to the Head of School. A letter is sent to the family via e-mail and ground postage that notifies the family and the student's home school district that the child is truant. After 10 consecutive unexcused absences, the student will be withdrawn from the rolls. The parent/guardian and the home school district will be notified of the student's withdrawal.

Types Of Absence

Excused Absences

Administrators register absences as excused only for those reasons cited in the Pennsylvania School Code. The reasons cited are personal illness or quarantine, health care, death in the immediate family, approved educational travel, and religious holidays or religious instruction.

Unexcused Absences

When students are absent for reasons other than those permitted under the Pennsylvania School Code (see "Excused Absences"), those absences will be recorded as unexcused absences.

Excuse Notes for Absence

For an absence to be registered as excused, a parent or guardian must furnish, within three days of the student's return to school, an e-mail explaining the absence. The e-mail must include student's name, the date of the absence, and the reason for the absence. When the teacher or coordinator does not receive an e-mail within three days of an absence, such an absence becomes an unexcused absence.

College Visits

School vacation periods and weekends offer the best opportunities for college and university visits. Absence from school for the purpose of visiting colleges is permitted on a limited basis (no more than three days) for juniors and seniors (grades 11 and 12). Written requests for college visits must be made to the instructional coordinator prior to the absence.

Travel—Educational/Family

To prevent unexcused absences, families who wish to take an educational leave must request permission to be excused via e-mail prior to departure. The Head of School or designee must approve absences in excess of five school days. The student is responsible for making arrangements with teachers to complete work missed during any absence.

Attendance FAQs

- 1. When can I log attendance?*
You are able to log attendance from your first day of school, September 4, 2007, until the last day of school, June 6, 2008.
- 2. Where do I need to log my child's attendance and how often?*
Student attendance hours are logged in the attendance screen on the parent's OLS and must be entered daily.
- 3. Why should I log attendance?*
In addition to meeting the legal attendance requirements for Agora and the Pennsylvania School Code, logging attendance provides you and your child with a log of the work accomplished.
- 4. What are supplemental hours?*
Provided you complete your K¹² coursework first, attendance time may be logged for activities your student engages in that relate to the course objectives. Please contact your teacher before entering supplemental attendance time to ensure the additional activity you wish to include satisfies course objectives.
- 5. What should I do if I forgot to log my child's supplemental hours?*
You can go back and add hours after initially entering attendance. If you have already entered hours for

the specified day and clicked the “submit” button, your teacher must add the hours for you. Contact your teacher and he or she may assist you in entering supplemental hours.

6. *How many hours should my child log if he or she enrolled after the start of school?*

Hours are prorated based on a student’s start date. Students who start after the first day of school should follow the daily or weekly attendance guidelines outlined in the Instructional Time section of this handbook.

7. *Do I log attendance for the actual time the lesson took or just the default time that comes up on the OLS?*

You must log the actual amount of time it took for the student to complete the lesson(s) each day. If you consistently observe your student completing lessons before he or she accumulates the required amount of time, you may benefit from setting a time limit to each subject, rather than just expecting one lesson per day.

Confidentiality

Every effort is made in maintaining the confidentiality of students attending Agora Cyber Charter School. Parents must give permission before a student’s name or picture can be displayed in a public manner. Before confidential student information is transferred over the Internet, it is encrypted and can only be decrypted by another party employed or assigned by Agora. Student files are accessible only to employees of Agora who have an interest in the education of its students. Responsible adults and students should be careful not to share their K¹² Online School (OLS) username and password with any unauthorized individuals. In any case where a parent or teacher believes the security of the OLS has been compromised, the parent should use the tools provided in the OLS to change usernames and passwords. Parents are advised to avoid using personal information in e-mails. Using your child’s first initial rather than full name is preferred.

Health Policy

All students must comply with the requirements of the State Immunization Code (28 PA Code Ch 23). The only exemptions to the school laws for immunizations are for

medical reasons or religious beliefs. Exemptions must be submitted in writing and signed by a parent/guardian. Immunization records must be delivered to the school prior to acceptance for enrollment. Parents should request their child’s health records from the previous school prior to starting school. Children in all grades need the following immunizations:

- At least four doses of diphtheria/tetanus vaccine (one dose must be on or after the fourth birthday)
- Three doses of polio vaccine
- Three doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- Two doses of measles, mumps, rubella vaccine, preferably as the combined MMR
- Varicella (chicken pox) or proof of having the disease

Please also note that in compliance with School Code, all students are required to follow the health and dental exam policies:

- Each child shall submit to the school nurse a comprehensive dental examination upon original entry into school, and while in the third and seventh grades.
- Each child shall submit to the school nurse a comprehensive health examination upon original entry into school, and while in the sixth and eleventh grades.
- These exams must follow the timelines established by the school for the respective year requested and should not carry over from year to year.
- All students must have yearly height/weight and far- and near-point vision screening.*
- All students in kindergarten, third, seventh, and eleventh grades must have documented hearing screening results on file.
- All students in sixth and seventh grades must have a scoliosis screening. The results are to be reported in writing.

Please contact the Agora office with any questions regarding health requirements.

*Agora students will have the opportunity for free screenings by the school personnel or contracted nurses.

Academic Pacing

Within the Agora program, every child can progress through the curriculum at his or her own pace. Decisions to advance in a course level are made jointly by the parent and teacher at any time of the year. Advancement of a student from one course level to the next requires the approval of the Agora administration. Every lesson is presented independently to each child at his or her own ability level. Students are required to master the course objectives before advancing to the next course level. This approach results in a solid foundation of core knowledge essential for success in the next subject level. Although the program is self-paced and individualized, students are required to progress and achieve one or more grade levels per school year as specified by state law.

Standardized Testing

Every Pennsylvania student in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 is required to be assessed in Math and Reading, and students in grades 5, 8, and 11 must participate in writing PSSA. Also, students in grades 4, 8, and 11 must participate in the PSSA science assessments. Testing will be conducted at a variety of sites around the state. Efforts will be made to locate a testing site within an hour of your home, but in certain cases it may be necessary to travel longer than an hour. These tests are given over a one- to three-day period depending on the student's grade level.

- AIMS Web testing (Grades K-6)
- PSSA Reading, Writing, and Math—October 22-November 2, 2007 (make up for 12th graders)
- PSSA Writing—February 11-22, 2008 (Grades 5, 8, and 11)
- PSSA Reading and Math—March 31-April 11, 2008 (Grades 3 through 8, and 11)
- PSSA Science—April 28-May 9, 2008 (Grade 4, 8, and 11)

Specific testing dates and locations will be published no later than two weeks prior to the testing window. The school cannot guarantee that the student's assigned teacher will be the test proctor; however, the school does attempt to assign teachers to testing sites where many of their students will be participating.

Non-Discrimination Policy

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

Withdrawing From Agora

Parents with students in need of withdrawing from the Agora Cyber Charter School must contact the Agora office and notify school officials of their desire to withdraw. The Director of Operations or designee will confirm withdrawal date and arrange for the return of all school equipment and materials. Failure to return all school equipment and materials in satisfactory condition may result in a collections action. Agora Cyber Charter School will inform the student's home school district of the withdrawal within 10 days according to PA School Code.

Supplemental Activities

Parents seek to provide the best possible education for their child and often enrich the child's curriculum with extra activities and family trips. These activities may be logged into the student's daily schedule and counted toward his or her mandatory hours of instruction if the activity directly relates to lesson objectives. However, it is important that parents/responsible adults initially discuss their supplemental activities with their students' assigned Agora teachers and then notify the teachers of the hours that will be logged to ensure that the supplemental activities are recorded in the appropriate area(s) of the curriculum.

Extracurricular Activities and Sports Team Eligibility

Pennsylvania Public School Code (24 P.S. § 17-1719-A-14) requires that students be permitted to participate

in extracurricular activities offered by their home school district, provided that they are not offered by Agora. Students must comply with policies and meet the specific eligibility criteria set forth by their home school district. Student athletes must also satisfy eligibility requirements established by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association. Students who are members of a sports team with their home school district must continue to meet grade requirements to be part of the team. Coaches needing academic information from Agora must make a request in writing to the Head of School. Whenever possible, Agora will assist students and parents to secure the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities.

Removal From Agora

Students may be removed from Agora due to disciplinary action, lack of attendance/progress, failure to participate in state-mandated assessments, or attendance in another public school. Students are provided all necessary due process rights before removal. Agora administrators and teachers may recommend expulsion to the Board of Trustee's Expulsion Hearing Committee for student violation of school policies. Students and parents are made aware of the date and time for an expulsion hearing before the Expulsion Hearing Committee. Public schools in the state may refuse admission to a student who has been expelled from Agora.

Expectations

Supporting and monitoring instruction at home is a full-time job. Agora's program is challenging. The Online School and its curriculum have the flexibility that allows for students to be challenged according to their mastery of skills. The responsible adult for most elementary students spends between 15 and 25% of the day actually online and the remainder of their time working offline with their children in workbooks, printed lessons, or other related activities. Middle school students and parents may spend between 20 and 30 percent of their time on their computers. At the high school level, students will spend about 40-50percent of their time on their computers.

Agora has chosen the K¹² curriculum because it is designed to help children exceed state and national standards. For an overview of the educational approach, please visit the "Educational Approach" section of the K¹² website at <http://k12.com/curriculum/approach.html>. Lesson planning, materials preparation, progress planning, teaching, and the administration of a student's day-to-day

education are both exciting and challenging, and require parental commitment, discipline, and organization. It is a useful practice to cite basic expectations and understandings with which all parents of Agora should be acquainted. Please read the "I Understand and Agree" statements found on page 37 very carefully, as these expectations should be a part of each parent's calculation of commitment as an Agora parent.

School Property

Agora provides materials, computer, printer, books and other curricular supplies. These materials are school property and must be kept in good condition. Parents are responsible for the repair or replacement of all lost, stolen or damaged school property. A list of property that must be returned is provided to parents. All property and equipment must be returned in good, working condition upon withdrawal from the program. All printed materials are copyrighted, and unauthorized copying of those materials is a copyright infringement. Materials cannot be sold or transferred and are to be used solely by the student in his or her studies while enrolled in the school. Parents are to comply with this policy and all the terms and conditions of the Use of Instructional Property Agreement submitted with the enrollment materials.

Objectionable Content Policy

K¹² provides you with access to a learning environment; a curriculum based on time-tested and research-based methods of instruction; and community tools, including lessons, assessments, various communication tools, directories, clubs, event offerings and opportunities to communicate with others. We understand there may be times when a parent finds certain lessons, books, or materials objectionable for various reasons. If a parent finds objectionable material, he or she should contact his or her Agora teacher via e-mail or phone. At that time the teachers will work with the parents to find alternative lessons to meet the lesson objectives while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum and the design of its delivery as it was intended.

Student Records

Student records are maintained at the Agora office. Parents/legal guardians may contact the office to obtain a copy of student records. A copying fee may be assessed. If parents/responsible adults change their address, telephone, e-mail address, or place of employment,

they are asked to notify their teacher immediately. Parents are responsible for keeping contact information current within the account setup section of the OLS.

Internet Service Provider (ISP) Reimbursement Program

Families at Agora receive ISP reimbursement checks three times per year at the rate of \$33.00 per month (per family) for the school year. The final 2007-2008 ISP reimbursement payment is made on June 30, 2008.

Families must participate in the Online School as well as have compliant attendance as described in the 2007-2008 Agora Handbook in order to qualify for ISP reimbursement. Also, there must be a Charter School Student Notification form for each student enrolled. Families are eligible for ISP reimbursement for the month in which they enroll.

Please be aware that if an ISP check is lost, Agora does not automatically reissue a check to that family. If a check is lost, parents need to notify the Director of Finance and Operations within 60 days, or a replacement may not be issued.

School Supplies

Agora provides most curriculum items needed to participate in school. However, there are times when household and consumable items are needed to complete a lesson. Be sure to use the Advanced Planning feature through the Online School to assist with upcoming lessons requiring certain materials. A suggested school supply list is provided by the teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Printer Ink Usage Guidelines

Printer ink is expected to be used sparingly and only for school needs. In order to conserve ink, it is recommended that your printer is set to always print in fast draft mode. To set for fast draft mode:

- Go to your Start menu
- Go to Printers and Faxes
- Right click on your printer name
- Scroll down to Properties

- Click on the Advanced tab
- Click on Printing Defaults
- In the drop-down menu under Print quality, choose Fast Draft
- Click Apply, then click OK.

Ink refill kits are not recommended for use as they commonly are non-compatible and messy to administer. Agora will provide additional ink cartridges on an as needed basis, but not to exceed one black cartridge per school year. To request a new ink cartridge, send an e-mail to ink@agora.org. In the subject line, put the student's last name, first initial (e.g., Smith, J.). In the body of the e-mail include your name, address, and make/model number of your printer.

Complaint Response Procedure

The Agora Cyber Charter School is interested in achieving and fostering student/family satisfaction. The following procedure ensures that student/family grievances are addressed fairly by the appropriate people in a timely manner. Agora prohibits discrimination against students/families on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, or religion.

The student and parent(s), custodian(s), or legal guardian(s) should address in writing any concern or grievance to the Head of School. The Head of School will respond within ten (10) working days.

If the concern or grievance is not resolved by the Head of School, the parent(s), custodian(s), or legal guardian(s) may, within ten (10) working days of the Head of School's response, request in writing a meeting (via phone or in person) with the Head of School to discuss the concern or grievance. He or she investigates and responds within ten (10) working days.

If the family's concern is not resolved at the meeting with the Head of School, the family may file a complaint with the Agora Board of Trustees. The Agora governing body may address the complaint directly, or the family may file a complaint with the PA Secretary of Education (information can be found on the PDE website). Agora has 30 days to respond in writing to a formal complaint filed with the State Board for Charter Schools.

Questions or Concerns?

Agora staff recognizes that life at school does not always run smoothly. As problems arise, school personnel and parents must collaborate to solve them. Agora staff also realizes that parents and students do not always know what to do or where to seek out answers and often give up and become frustrated when problems remain unsolved. Please follow these procedures for general information or for assistance in resolving a problem:

- Step 1.** All concerns and issues should first be directed to the student's teacher. If an Agora teacher cannot resolve the issue (e.g., materials and computer issues) he or she directs the parent/responsible adult to the appropriate contact for assistance. The Agora teacher will monitor the concern to ensure resolution.
- Step 2.** If the issue or concern is about the Agora teacher, parents are advised to contact the Lead Teacher for that particular teacher (see School Directory).
- Step 3.** If the concern is not resolved at the teacher or lead teacher levels, parents/responsible adults are advised to contact the Head of School (see School Directory).

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Agora maintains records concerning all children enrolled, including students with disabilities. Records containing personally identifiable information about or related to children with disabilities could include, but are not limited to, cumulative grade reports, discipline records, enrollment and attendance records, health records, individualized education programs, notices of recommended assignment, notices of intent to evaluate and reevaluate, comprehensive evaluation reports, other evaluation reports by public school staff and by outside evaluators, work samples, test data, data entered into the Penn Data system, correspondence between school staff and home, instructional support team documents, referral data, memoranda, and other education-related documents. Records can be maintained on paper, on microfiche, on audio or videotape, and electronically. Records can be located in the central administrative offices of the Agora, electronic storage systems, and in the secure possession of teachers, school administrators, specialists, psychologists, counselors, and other school staff with a legitimate

educational interest in the information contained therein. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality.

Records are maintained as long as they remain educationally relevant. The purposes of collecting and maintaining records are (1) to ensure that the child receives programs and services consistent with his or her IEP; (2) to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of programming for the child; (3) to document for the public school and the parents that the student is making meaningful progress; (4) to satisfy the requirements of state and federal agencies who have an interest in inspecting or reviewing documents concerning particular students or groups of students for purposes of compliance monitoring, complaint investigation, and fiscal and program audits; and (5) to inform future programming for and evaluations of the child. When educational records, other than those which must be maintained, are no longer educationally relevant, the public school must notify the parents in writing and may destroy the records or, at the request of the parents, must destroy them. Public schools are not required to destroy records that are no longer educationally relevant unless the parents request so in writing.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible student") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. They are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the date Agora receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school administrator (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The administrator or designee will arrange a records inspection for the parent or eligible student.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believe are inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students (age 18 and above) may ask Agora to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school administrator, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

Should Agora decide not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, we will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures is available to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by Agora Cyber Charter School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom Agora has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, Agora discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (Note: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Agora to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

(Note: Directory information includes the following information relating to a student: the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information.)

It is the policy of Agora Cyber Charter School to provide employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or handicap as required by Title VI, Title IX, and ADA

Gaskin Notice

NOTICE OF PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT

This notice describes a proposed Settlement Agreement between students with disabilities and the Pennsylvania Department of Education and all other defendants. This Notice tells you what the parties have agreed to do, how to get more information, and how to object to the proposed Settlement Agreement if you think it is not fair. Parents of all students who are eligible for special education and who have been denied the opportunity to receive a free appropriate education in regular classrooms with individualized supportive services OR have been placed in regular education classrooms without the supportive services, individualized instruction, and accommodations they need to succeed in the regular classroom should go to the www.pde.state.us to learn more about this recent settlement.

STUDENT SERVICES

Advanced Learners Program

The Advanced Learners Program (ALP) is a supplemental enrichment program for K-8 students who are two or more grade levels ahead of their age appropriate grade level, have been identified as gifted through a previous program, and/or are recommended to the program by their teacher or parents. Students in the ALP are supported with accelerated course planning and other activities that incorporate academics, multiple intelligences, and social interaction. Participants in the ALP are expected to maintain good progress and achievement. If you feel that your student would benefit from the program, contact your teacher for more information.

At-Risk Program

Agora supports the academic achievement of all students, particularly those most at risk. The school has a strong commitment to the federally mandated goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). It is a priority to build strong parent/teacher/student relationships and address the specific needs of individual students. The At-Risk Program at Agora uses an early intervention process to identify and serve struggling students. This process includes parents, teachers, and administrators. It uses a multi-tier model of service delivery, problem-solving methods to make decisions, and research-based, scientifically validated interventions/instruction.

Counseling Opportunities

Agora will prepare students academically to develop an understanding of careers and learning opportunities that can guide them along their path as they make their way through the educational landscape. Agora will integrate counseling opportunities into the curriculum by using a combination of materials and strategies that have demonstrated success.

Agora will offer the following components to support our integrated counseling program:

- Career Study and Exploration
- Comprehensive individual evaluation and appropriate, intensive instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, and problem solving
- A school day that will allow prolonged, intensive individual and group contact in virtual and physical environments

- A science and technology program implemented through technology and hands-on participation in science laboratory experiments
- A solid, coherent value system centered on character building, academic accomplishment, life skills, and social skills, integrated throughout the education and support programs
- A solid, coherent behavioral system, emphasizing good conduct and personal responsibility, both in virtual and physical environments
- Strong personal assistance through individual and group development of effective strategies for dealing with academic issues
- A school program that will emphasize the need to empower youth to participate in the educational process through their inclusion in current and future plans

Special Education Services

Agora's Special Education program meets the individual needs of students by using specially-designed instruction with a standards-based curriculum in the home setting. Frequent assessment of student progress occurs. We deliver special education programming and related services to Agora students at no cost to the parent or guardian. This means that students with disabilities who need special education must receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). These services conform to the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

No Child Left Behind and IDEA Statement

The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandate that every school district in the country develop a system to identify children with disabilities, from birth through age 21, who live in the district. Agora will make a concerted effort to identify, locate, and evaluate children through 21 years of age who enroll in Agora and have a confirmed or suspected disability, in accordance with all federal regulations and state standards.

In addition, it shall be the policy of Agora that the child with a disability and his or her parent/guardian shall be provided with safeguards, as required by law, throughout the identification, evaluation, and placement process, and with a free, appropriate, public education.

Screening

Agora screens and evaluates children to determine eligibility for special education and related services. We undertake screening activities before referring most children for a multidisciplinary team evaluation. Screening activities consist of the following:

- Ongoing analysis of the child's response to instruction and performance on statewide and district-wide assessments.
- Periodic vision and hearing assessments by the school nurse and review of the results of physical examinations by school or private physicians as mandated by the Pennsylvania Public School Code.
- Team-based baseline assessment and analysis of the child's response to individualized academic or behavioral intervention over an extended period. Such intervention-based screening occurs when requested by the child's teacher, parents, or other concerned school personnel.

For information about the dates of various screening activities by Agora, please contact the school directly. Parents of preschool-age children (three through five) may obtain information about screening activities, or may request a screening of their children, by calling or writing their local Intermediate Unit, Early Intervention Services.

Team-Based Child Study Teams

A referral to the Response to Intervention (RTI) team occurs for students who need added support. This team usually comprises a mixture of teachers, administrators, and special education staff. The RTI team operates to identify, in a systematic way, interventions for students who are having academic, behavioral, or emotional difficulties. The goal is to help students achieve a satisfactory rate of progress in the regular educational setting, therefore preventing the need for more intensive services. There are times when the team recommends a student to proceed with a Child Study Team to discuss the need for an individualized multidisciplinary evaluation.

Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation

Parents are members of the multidisciplinary team. The instructional support team or child study team for a multidisciplinary evaluation refers students who

may require special education services. This evaluation gathers pertinent information on the child's performance from teachers, counselors, therapists, psychologists, and parents. The Evaluation Report (ER) is a compilation of information that includes recommendations on the child's eligibility for Special Education Services. All information collected is confidential and protected in accordance with State and Federal law and by the school policy on confidentiality of student records. In order to request a multidisciplinary team evaluation for a school-age child, a parent should contact the child's teacher, school counselor, principal, or Director of Special Education (please refer to the School Directory for contact information). Public schools must re-evaluate school age students receiving special education services every three years. Students identified with mental retardation receiving special education services are to be re-evaluated every two years. Before the public school can proceed with an evaluation, it must notify the parents in writing of the specific types of testing and assessment it proposes to conduct, of the date and time of the evaluation, and of the parents' rights. The evaluation cannot begin until the parent has signed the written notice indicating that he or she consents to the proposed testing and assessments and has returned the notice to the public school.

Services by Disability

Special Education services are collaborative teamwork between the parent, teachers, and therapists to provide a systematic problem-solving approach for a quality education to each student. All members of the Agora school community believe that varied instructional practices and learning environments benefit all children.

Services by disability area are as follows:

- Autism, including Pervasive Developmental Disorder
- Blindness or Visual Impairment
- Deafness or Hearing Impairment
- Mental Retardation
- Multiple Disabilities
- Neurological Impairment
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Serious Emotional Disturbance

- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Other Health Impairments

Commitment to Serve Students

Agora is committed to the full implementation of NCLB and IDEA. When special education students are given the support necessary for success as outlined by their IEP, we believe they can achieve at the same high standards that are required for all students enrolled in our school. Therefore, we will ensure that our enrolled special education students will have full access to those curricular offerings aligned to Pennsylvania state academic achievement standards for their age appropriate grade level.

Chapter 15/504 Service Plan

Under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and under the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act, some school-age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria may nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a documented mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Agora encourages students to complete all lessons in a course, if possible, since courses in the subsequent grade levels assume completion of lessons in the prior grade. A lesson is completed when the student has mastered the objectives as measured by the lesson assessment. It may not be necessary to teach every lesson if the student can demonstrate mastery of the objectives on the assessments.

The Online School (OLS) and Virtual High School (VHS) are designed to collect and record data that substantiates the academic progress of our students. Therefore, it is mandatory that the OLS or VHS be used to enter attendance and assessment data that reflects the standing of the student. The OLS and VHS data serves as the primary tool for determining advancement into subsequent course levels. It is essential that parents/responsible adults understand that by signing on with Agora Cyber Charter School, they agree to participate in the program as designed, including documenting regular and appropriate academic progress in the OLS and VHS; participate in required interactions with the assigned teacher; and participate in the state-mandated academic assessments.

Agora requires that parents/students submit work assignments to assist teachers with the decision to advance a student to the next course/grade level. Agora requires student work to be original, with appropriate citations for references to published works. Parents/students are provided work assignment guidelines at parent orientation sessions or with their welcome packets. Work assignment submission is a topic of discussion during teacher interactions.

Many work assignments in middle school and high school are required for grading purposes. (Please refer to the specific program model descriptions as outlined in this handbook.)

Work assignments must be mailed to the address specified by the teacher or submitted electronically, as the teacher requests. Parents should not drop off work samples to teachers' homes.

At the Agora Cyber Charter School we understand that our school is academically rigorous. Meeting the challenge of completing one year of course work in this model can be demanding. Our certified teachers are here

to assist parents/responsible adults to meet the associated challenges. Parents/responsible adults may use their expertise as they progress through our program.

Academic Advancement (Grades K-8)

It is important to understand that the decision to advance a student to the next course or grade level is made jointly by the parent and teacher and focuses on what is in the best interest of the child. Academic achievement through content mastery is the cornerstone of the Agora Cyber Charter School and the K¹² curriculum. Agora understands that children do not learn at the same rate or in the same manner. The program offers families flexibility in scheduling and instructional strategies. Agora focuses on mastery of lesson objectives, encouraging families and students to spend the time needed daily and throughout the year to reach mastery of most lesson objectives.

It is the goal of Agora to allow students to advance to the next course level at any time of the year up to April 30, 2008. Parents and teachers evaluate every student's course level and grade level prior to the conclusion of the current school year. This evaluation does not affect course level changes, which can be made at any time up to April 30, 2008. Together, the Agora teacher and parent arrive at a decision on the advancement of the student. Advancement of a student from one course level to the next requires the approval of Agora administration. Sufficient progress in all courses is expected before course level advancement in one area may be considered.

The Elementary Program (Grades K-6)

The elementary teachers at Agora are assigned either to the primary grades (K-3) or the intermediate grades (4-6). Agora teachers will maintain contact with students via phone conferences, class-wide Elluminate Live! online lessons, face-to-face conferences, Agora gatherings, and during standardized testing participation. Through this contact the teacher will develop clear instructional learning goals for each student, monitoring these goals throughout the school year.

Types of contact:

- Phone calls
- Face-to-face meetings (these can occur during testing, Agora gatherings, etc.)

- Individual or scheduled class Elluminate Live! online sessions, with frequency determined by teachers (optional but highly recommended).

Teachers will have two* established contacts with the students (as listed above) per month that are meaningful and beneficial for the student, parent, and the teacher. Teachers will work with parents to establish a consistent monthly conference call.

*A student identified as “at-risk” would hold a higher priority of contact as determined by the teacher and the parent, and increased contact may be warranted. Students with IEP’s will also require more interaction. The regular and special education teachers will work in cooperation to ensure the increased interaction.

Team Teaching

Early in the first semester, Agora elementary teachers may begin incorporating the concept of team or partner teaching. This will, in most cases, happen via synchronous online time (using Elluminate Live!). This allows students to benefit from the expertise of more than one teacher. Your teacher will provide a list of session times as they are organized.

The Middle School Program (Grades 7-8)

In an effort to help students prepare for the transition from elementary school to high school, middle school students will receive grades. These grades will be determined based upon three equal parts: Online School Progress, Teacher Verified Assignments, and Teacher Graded Assignments. These three areas all intertwine in order to support the partnership between the teacher, responsible adult, and curriculum in order for students to reach extraordinary heights. All graded work comes directly from the Online School and the grades are based on the rubrics found on the Online School, where applicable.

1. Online School Progress

The K¹² curriculum is outstanding and helps students master state standards. Therefore, it is always recommended that students master all core lessons on the Online School. Verified progress based on the

student’s progress goal will count towards one-third of the grade for a course. The goal will be 100% progress unless otherwise determined by the teacher. The percentage of progress attained towards their goal will determine this part of the grade. If a student starts a course late, the goal will be prorated.

2. Teacher Verified Assignments

The responsible adult is an integral part of student success in the middle school. While middle school students are encouraged to become more responsible and independent, the parental role does not end. The responsible adult continues to review and score daily lessons. With the partnership of the teacher, certain assignments scored by the responsible adult will be submitted by the student to the course-specific teacher. The teacher will review the work and verify mastery and related progress, and will offer feedback. A list of the teacher-verified assignments will be made available at the beginning of the school year. Submission of these assignments and verified mastery will count towards one-third of the student’s grade for that course. All assignments must be submitted within 30 days of completion on the Online School. Assignments received after this timeframe will not be accepted.

3. Teacher Graded Assignments

Teachers will provide a list of assignments from the Online School that should be submitted directly to the course-specific teacher. This work will allow the teacher to give detailed feedback as well as a grade based on the OLS rubric, where applicable. This will help with the transition of students to high school where most work will be teacher graded. Students may resubmit assignments to increase their score within 10 days of receiving their grade. These combined assignments will be averaged for one-third of the student’s grade in the course. All assignments must be submitted within 30 days of completion on the Online School. Assignments received after this timeframe will not be accepted.

It is important that students master and retain their work and not just work through assignments. If at any time it becomes clear that a student has not mastered work that is marked complete, the lessons may need to be completed again. In addition, students should have

their own student accounts and should not have access to teacher guides or answer keys. If a student's work ever shows evidence of intentional or unintentional academic dishonesty, the student lessons will be marked incomplete and the student must complete the work again. In addition, the student will need to meet with his or her teacher(s) for required online meetings via Elluminate Live!. These required meetings will be used by the teacher to assess student mastery. They will be scheduled by the teacher(s) and will continue on an "as needed" basis.

Middle school students are also involved in student mentor groups. These groups meet twice a month to provide study skills, student interaction, and skill preparation for the PSSA testing. Students need to attend and interact during these sessions. In our experience, we have noticed that students who are more actively engaged with their teachers and other students achieve at a higher level.

Communication with the student's course-specific teachers is another key to our unique partnership. Teacher Connect and Classroom Connect sessions are offered on a weekly basis. Students who ask for assistance from their teachers have shown greater success in this type of virtual model. To ensure that students are meeting this goal, each student will be required to attend the bimonthly meetings with his or her mentor teacher. Teachers will follow up with students who have not participated in this required communication. This is yet another way to help prepare students for our virtual high school model. Parents are welcome to contact their teacher to set up a parent/teacher conference as needed.

The High School Program (Grades 9-12)

This section of the handbook is designed to help you begin and continue your relationship with the Agora Virtual Charter School's High School program. While Agora is a public charter school, it is unique in that it is virtual. Thus, for a good part of the time, we will work together remotely. One of the key components of this relationship is trust, which comes from the sharing of critical information, good and regular communications, the setting of clear expectations, and then living up to our mutual commitments.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, please contact the Agora Virtual Charter School office and we will direct your call to the appropriate member of our administrative team. Please see the School Directory page of this handbook.

Summary of High School Model

K¹² uses their Learning Management System (LMS) to provide the Online School campus and courses. The school campus site features school announcements, messages from the administration, access to important documents, club and organization information, guidance counseling resources, and courses, all combined into one interactive and easy-to-use interface. A student calendar which shows assignments and due dates from all courses in one easy-to-use tool helps students to stay on track in every course. Courses provide dedicated tools such as a teacher syllabus and announcements, a Class Buzz area that lets students hold discussions with each other asynchronously, a Teacher's Office where students can post questions to and receive answers from their teacher at any time of the day, online assessments, and assignment submission tools. All of these work together to provide a rich course experience for students.

All of our courses are a semester long, consisting of multiple units, lessons, and activities. Teachers do not deliver lectures live online; the power of our lessons is that they can be completed according to each student's individual schedule to instruct, provide practice and exploration, and assess learning daily at a pace and schedule that fits each student.

The K¹² community consists of dedicated students with families who are motivated to help their children learn. Our schools will continue to emphasize academic achievement and provide a clear path for college-bound students to achieve their goals.

Student learning will continue to benefit from close relationships between parents, students, Instructional Coordinators, teachers, and other support personnel. However, for students to achieve mastery of high school level courses, the instructional component will rely heavily upon skilled subject-specific teachers who will serve as coaches and guides through a clearly defined, high-quality curriculum. Parents will still be crucial as motivators and coaches, and are referred to as Mentors. However, students' academic success in Virtual High

School will depend upon their engagement with the curriculum and their interactions with their teachers.

Student: At the center of the Virtual High School (VHS) is the Agora student. We are currently providing the K¹² curriculum and services to students from ninth through twelfth grade. While eleventh- and twelfth-grade students are welcome to enroll, Agora may have limited course offerings for these grades. Our students come from traditional public and private schools, other virtual charter schools, and from homeschooling backgrounds. Students join the Agora VHS for a number of reasons. The most common reasons are that they were unhappy with the curriculum or instruction at the previous school; they felt unsafe at the school they were going to; their homeschooling parents did not feel confident in teaching high school-level courses; or they simply wanted to try something different.

Students are required to:

- Log in to school every school day
- Complete the assignments for each course assigned for that day before the end of the day
- Submit assignments on or before the due date directly to their teacher via the “dropbox” in each course
- Read teacher feedback and use it in improving their work on future assignments
- Communicate directly with the teacher when they have any questions or problems related to the curriculum, or if they need a due date extension

Parent/Mentor: The role of the parent or another responsible adult acting as a Mentor in the home is crucial to the success of most students. Mentors, as mentioned, can be a parent or guardian, but can also be any adult that the parent/guardian establishes as a Mentor. Mentors are responsible for:

- Ensuring Internet connectivity
- Confirming and entering attendance daily
- Reporting/resolution of any technical issues or missing materials
- Ensuring that students are completing required assignments daily and handing in assignments on time
- Assisting student with assignments, to the extent that they are comfortable doing so

- Ensuring that students take advantage of all of the resources available to them to succeed in school
- Communicating with Agora teachers when a concern or need presents itself

Teachers: Every student has one teacher for each of their courses who is an expert in that subject area. Teachers are state-certified in the subject area they teach, and may be assisted by partner teachers who are experts in a particular curriculum area. Teachers set due dates for assignments, and then grade, provide feedback on, and return assignments to students. Teachers answer student questions via e-mail and phone, and hold weekly live content sessions during which students and parents can attend for more clarity on difficult topics. Teachers may occasionally provide one-on-one and small-group instruction to students having difficulty with certain topics. Teachers communicate directly with students and parents/mentors regarding progress and missing/late assignments. Special Education teachers ensure that students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) receive the accommodations and adaptations required to ensure their success and compliance with their IEP.

Instructional Coordinator (IC): ICs serve as “academic advisors” for students. They monitor student progress across all subject areas, and serve as the point of contact for attendance issues for your student. ICs provide support to students who have difficulty setting up an effective learning environment in the home or scheduling their time. They also serve to support teachers through the completion of administrative tasks, and create/revise student Individual Learning Plans. ICs will communicate with students and parents directly when students are struggling or failing a class if teacher efforts have not been effective. ICs also create and provide guidance for online student groups and clubs, as well as in-person regional student gatherings.

Grading Policies

Graded activities in the Agora high school-level courses will be assigned points and your final grade will reflect the actual points earned compared with the total points possible. A percent grade can be calculated using these points and your teachers will then assign letter grades according to their grading policies. Students and mentors can access the current grades for all courses by viewing their accounts in the LMS at any time during the semester.

Students are responsible for their own work on unit tests and final exams. Students are not allowed to use notes, quizzes, or textbooks on unit tests and final exams unless indicated in an IEP. Students are not allowed to share work with other students on unit tests or final exams. If a student does not complete his own work or shares his work with others on unit tests and/or final exams, he will not receive credit for the work and he is at risk of suspension or expulsion from Agora.

Students must cite sources in all assignments, tests, and exams. Students will not receive credit for work that does not appropriately cite sources. If a student plagiarizes information from a source and does not cite the source, the student will receive a zero for that assignment and may be suspended or expelled from Agora.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic integrity is highly valued at Agora Cyber Charter School. Incidents involving plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses that warrant immediate administrative attention. Students are required to submit work that is entirely their own, citing references when needed and used.

Non-citation infraction

- First incident = grade of zero on assignment
- Second incident = grade of zero on assignment and administrative review

Citation infraction

- First incident = counseling on correct use of citations
- Second incident = grade of zero on assignment
- Third incident = grade of zero on assignment and administrative review

Turnitin.com is used to verify plagiarism within assignments.

Evidence of Mastery

Your grades will be determined based on how you perform on teacher graded activities within each course. Teacher graded activities include:

- Practice Lessons
- Web Explorations

- Labs
- Journal Entries
- Class Discussions
- Quizzes
- Tests

Assignments will be teacher-graded or computer-graded, depending on the assignment. During the semester you can view your grades in the Student Progress Report. Your teachers, administrators, and parents also have access to your grade information.

Individual Learning Plans and Student Goals

In order to better satisfy each student's individual learning needs, Agora teachers collaborate with parents and students to establish individual student goals. These goals are designed to both clarify and guide the student's learning experience while motivating the student and increasing the likelihood of high academic achievement. Student attendance and progress are factored into goals. Teachers, students, and responsible adults may modify these goals as the school year progresses. Dedicated Agora teachers work closely with students and responsible adults to formulate realistic expectations as well as provide feedback toward the goals during scheduled parent/ teacher conferences.

Grading Scale

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = below 60%

Grade Promotion and Awarding of Credit

Grade-level requirements are:

0 – 3 credits = 9th grade

4 – 8 credits = 10th grade

9 – 13 credits = 11th grade

14 and more = 12th grade

Graduation requirements are:

- 4 credits of Math
- 4 credits of English
- 3 credits of Science
- 3 credits of History/Social Studies
- 2 credits of Arts or Humanities or both
- 2 credits of Health and Physical Education
- 2 credits of Electives
- 2 credits of Foreign Language
- Graduation Project
- Passing the 11th grade PSSA in Math, Language Arts, and Writing

Awarding of Extra Credit

Extra credit may be awarded at the discretion of the individual teacher. Teachers will post their extra credit policies and opportunities within their individual courses. Extra credit will not be awarded for completion of assigned work. Extra credit may be awarded for work above and beyond regularly assigned work.

Report Cards

Progress reports will be issued twice per year, after each semester.

Mid-semester Progress Updates

Progress updates will be sent twice within the course of the semester. All students will receive the update via email. Students with a failing grade in a course at the time of issuing the update will receive their information through both e-mail and US Mail. The mailing date of these items will be posted within the LMS.

Determining Class Rank and Honor Roll

Class rank will be determined by rank ordering the cumulative grade point average of all students within a grade level. The following values will be assigned to semester grades in each course:

A = 4

B = 3

C = 2

D = 1

F = 0

Students earning a semester grade point average of 3.25 or higher will be eligible for the Honor Roll.

Honor Roll

The Agora Honor Roll is an opportunity to recognize students for their hard work, and provides them with the incentive to continue working diligently. Honor roll status will be determined at the end of each semester and students will receive recognition after honor roll eligibility is determined. Honor roll status will be included with the progress report. The honor roll applies to all Agora students in grades 7-12. Students in grades K-6 will be eligible for attendance and academic achievement awards.

Late Work Policy

The work listed on the course calendar for each week is due by midnight of the day indicated in the teacher's Daily Plan. All assignments should be turned in on the due date. Late work will be accepted until the next Sunday after the due date for full credit. After that Sunday, ten percent will be taken off of the earned grade each day for up to seven days. At that point, the grade will be a zero. Example: Assignment is due on Thursday. Student can submit it till Sunday (three days later) at midnight for full credit. After that day (Sunday), the grade will drop ten percent for each day the work is late. By the following Sunday, the assignment will be too late to be turned in and will receive a zero.

PSSA Testing

Students in 11th grade are required to attend all PSSA testing sessions. Taking and passing the PSSAs is a required for graduation. Students not passing the PSSAs in 11th grade are required to retake them in 12th grade during the make-up testing window. Failure to participate in state-mandated assessments may result in the students' removal from Agora.

Foreign Language at Agora

Agora provides foreign language opportunities for all students based on academic criteria. Research has shown that children who learn a second language do better in school, get higher test scores, go on to better colleges, and have the added job opportunities that only come with knowing a second language. Furthermore, a considerable amount of research has shown that learning a second language in childhood helps children learn to read and write their native language.

Key Features:

- Studying a foreign language is an optional choice for students in grades K-8.
- High school students are required to complete 2 years of a foreign language during their tenure in high school (grades 9-12).
- Agora offers a choice of Spanish, French, German, Chinese or Latin.
- Agora contracts with PowerGlide Foreign Language Company to provide an excellent experience in learning a language.

Progress and Grading Guidelines

- Requests for adding a foreign language course will begin during the first contacts with teachers at the start of school.
- Parents may make a request for their student to take a foreign language. Requests should be submitted to the elementary or mentor teacher. A discussion between the parent and teacher will determine if a language is recommended.
- Why wouldn't a language be recommended? The teacher may make a determination based on the academic needs of the student that it is not an appropriate time for an additional subject.
- Foreign Language will not be added to a student's academic schedule if course work in core subjects is not completed at an adequate pace or the student is working below grade level in language arts and math.
- Once a foreign language is added to the student's curriculum it is expected that the student will make progress in the subject and the homeroom teacher

will begin to monitor progress.

- Ideally, we suggest spending 20-30 minutes every day on the course. Daily consistency is the key to successful new language acquisition.
- Only one course per school year is allowed. Exceptions may be made for advanced learners.
- Courses may overlap into the summer or the following school year, but the homeroom teacher will determine an appropriate pace for success.
- Grading: Foreign language is recognized on the progress report, but is a non-graded subject for grades K-6. For grades 7 and 8 the foreign language grade given will be Pass or Fail. In High School the foreign language grade will align with the grading specifications for all subjects (see VHS section of the handbook).

Standards

While the Pennsylvania Standards for Foreign Languages and World Languages are still pending, our program is aligned with the National Standards: <http://www.actfl.org>.

You can find the World Languages Standards on the PDE website at <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/languages>.

Visit the PowerGlide website at <http://www.power-glide.com>.

Health, Safety, and Physical Education

Physical education and learning about safety and health habits are an important part of the learning experience for all students. We require that students complete at least 60 hours of physical activity for the school year. We encourage our students to participate in programs that relate to physical activity as long as they are structured, organized, and supervised. At your request, your teacher can provide suggested activities that will meet these standards. You may log up to 75 hours of PE. Certainly, PE time can go beyond 75 hours; however, only 75 will count in the total amount of hours required (see Instructional Time).

An important part of health and safety education is instruction in fire safety. The Pennsylvania public school code requires all students to receive fire safety instruction and participate in monthly fire drills; this regulation applies to Agora students as well. If you need help with fire safety instruction or how to run a home fire drill, your teacher can provide lesson suggestions and general guidance. Time spent on safety and fire drills may count as instructional time.

A maximum of 30 health and safety education hours may be counted towards your child's total hours of instruction for the year (see Instructional Time).

CONNECTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Parent Forums, Workshops, and Chats

Agora Parent Forum

Being part of the Agora community means that you are part of a student and family-focused cyber school. We are committed to open communication, gathering parent feedback, and building the foundation of Agora together.

As part of the above pledge, we are pleased to introduce a new series of forums that are focused on just one thing—you! Our panel of school administration, teachers, and K¹² experts eagerly await your feedback on ways to continually improve upon the learning environment and school community that both you and your child are so very much a part of. Administered both virtually and face-to-face, these regularly scheduled forums empower you, as an Agora parent, with the resources to truly make a difference in your child's education. In fact, these forums will serve an integral role in shaping the future of Agora.

Parent Forums are the best way to have the most significant impact on the future of YOUR SCHOOL!

Forums are available in two formats:

Online Elluminate Live! Forums

These sessions are designed to give you an opportunity to talk directly to our administrators, teachers, and K¹² staff from the convenience of your own home through Elluminate Live!, a web-based meeting program.

Paste the following information into your browser to attend one of these online forums:
<https://sas.illuminate.com/m.jnlp?sid=559&password=M.B33CB90ACA48D20894E494159CF142>

Face-to-Face Forums

These sessions are designed to give parents an opportunity to come together face-to-face with other Agora parents, teachers, school leadership, and special guests from K¹². These sessions will be held in locations across the state. As we move forward we will review the frequency of face-to-face sessions based on feedback.

Parents will be sent invitations to the forums as they are scheduled.

Parent Workshop Program

Agora teachers will be leading parent workshops, a schedule of which will be released throughout the year. These sessions will take place through Elluminate Live!, a web-based meeting tool. We encourage all parents to attend and ask questions. We will also record these sessions for parents to listen to at a later date.

We have a library of topics we can share with you. Below is a list of the workshop topics we know have been useful across the entire K¹² community. We will also be gathering feedback about the topics parents would like us to cover that you don't see here.

We look forward to presenting you with the following workshops*:

- Introduction to Elluminate Live!
- Back to School
- Checking on Kindergarten Skills
- Special Education
- Health and Safety Ideas
- Help with Preschoolers
- Including PE Activities in Your Schedule
- What are state standards?
- AIMSweb
- Math Journaling
- Multiple Intelligences
- PSSA Math and Reading
- Tech – Keeping Your Computer Running Effortlessly
- The ABCs of Phonics
- Understanding Test Scores
- Parental Involvement
- Study Island
- Writing 1 and 2
- Self Esteem
- Writing Tips – Avoiding Common Mistakes
- The Writing Process

Test Taking Strategies for MS
MS Progress Reports
Managing Multiple Children
High School
Importance of Arts Integration
Technology and You (Outlook, Flash, Disk defrag)

*List is subject to change. Check the Agora school calendar often for updates on parent workshops.

Disclaimer:
Yahoo! Groups are public venues and are not school sponsored and are not moderated by school staff or administration. Although some school staff and administration may be members and participate in the yahoo groups, Agora does not take responsibility for misinformation given out by parents. Agora will make every attempt to correct any misinformation that appears on the Yahoo! boards.

Parent Coffee and Chat

Agora teachers and administrators will lead informal conference calls for parents and teaching adults. These Phone Chats are an ideal way for you to hear from teachers and fellow parents and to chime in with your own ideas and questions. Join Agora parents across the state for casual sessions filled with advice, camaraderie, stories, and support. There will be no presentation or formal notes for these sessions—just a lot of coffee and chatter! The conference call number is. Invitations for Parent Coffee Chats will be sent via e-mail, Total View, or found in Online School announcement section.

Informal (Yahoo!) Discussion Boards

Agora parents may find the discussion boards through the Yahoo! groups to be fun and informative. These groups require membership (free) and are often moderated by an Agora parent. To join any group, just paste the link (see below) into your browser and you will be prompted to join. If you already have a Yahoo! account, you may use the same log-in to join these groups.

The K¹²-Agora Group discusses many topics pertaining to schooling at home with Agora and the K¹² curriculum:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/K12-Agora/>

The Virtual Charter Special Education Group discusses relevant information about Special Education in the state of PA and in cyber education:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VirtualCharterSpecialEducation/>

The PA Cyberschoolers Group contains information about legislative initiatives pertaining to cyber schools:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PACyberschoolers/>

FAMILY DIRECTORY, EVENTS, CLUBS, AND GATHERINGS

Family Directory

This fall, the new parent directory will become available for parents! Accessed through the OLS, this secure directory allows parents to find other parents by location, student grade levels, special interests, and more. Parents may search by name and other information in a parent profile. The new directory is automatically updated as a parent's status changes, such as moving across town or changing an e-mail address. There is an online opt-in/out capability on the OLS so parents can easily include or exclude themselves from the directory. We are looking forward to a mid-fall release of this exciting new tool!

School Events

Various school events will be announced regularly through teachers, school leadership, and on our website at www.agora.org.

Agora Special Interest Student Clubs

Student Clubs will be offered to all students in order to enhance their complete educational experience at Agora. These clubs will facilitate student socialization, community, and in some cases, service. Clubs will be sponsored by Agora teachers who will welcome parent participation as well. There are a few clubs that will be implemented at the onset of school, such as the Math Club and Book Club. Teachers will provide a more detailed list along with contact information as the school year progresses. More clubs may be added as interests arise. Suggestions are always welcome.

Agora recommends that students participate in no more than 1-2 clubs at a time to ensure that students are able to participate fully in the club. Enrollment in clubs will occur during the first week of each semester, with open enrollment periods for students who are new to the school. Any materials or supplies (outside of supplied curriculum) needed for the club are the responsibility of the family and will not be provided by K¹² or Agora.

Agora Gatherings

Agora teachers arrange a variety of special gatherings for students and families on a monthly basis. While attendance is not required, these special gatherings provide wonderful opportunities to meet teachers, make new friends, and talk with fellow parents about school. Parents are responsible for the cost of transportation

and any other fees. The fees are often negotiated and reduced for our school. Time spent on a field trip counts as attendance in the related subject. For example, a trip to a science museum can count as attendance time in science. All gatherings/notices are posted on the School Community Board and/or the online calendar of events. Any student may attend any outing he or she wishes by submitting an RSVP, if required, to the teacher listed in the outing information. Parents, or adults whom they specify, are responsible for supervising children at all times during an outing. Siblings and friends are welcome to attend as well. All attending children must bring a signed and completed Liability Release Agreement.

ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

This document describes the policies and guidelines for the use of the Agora Cyber Charter School program and exists to ensure that all Agora students are aware of and understand their responsibilities when accessing and using Agora resources.

Agora reserves the right to update or alter this agreement at any time. Such revisions may substantially alter access to Agora instructional computing resources. Agora instructional computing resources include any computer, software, or transmission system that is owned, operated, or leased by Agora.

As a parent of a student enrolled in Agora, you should be aware of the following guidelines and expectations. Any activity that is not listed here, which violates local, state, or federal laws, is considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Guidelines. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in:

- Removal of your access to Agora instructional computing resources, which could result in your inability to complete learning activities
- Suspension or expulsion from Agora
- Involvement with law enforcement agencies and possible legal action

Accountability

Posting anonymous messages is not permitted unless authorized by the course's online teacher. Impersonating another person is also strictly prohibited.

- Use only your own user name and password, and do not share these with anyone.
- Do not interfere with other users' ability to access Agora's Online School or Virtual High School or disclose anyone's password to others or allow them to use another user's account. You are responsible for all activity that is associated with your username and password.
- Change your password(s) frequently, at least once per semester or course.
- Do not publicly post your personal contact information (address and phone number) or anyone else's.
- Do not publicly post any messages that were sent to you privately.

- Do not download, transmit, or post material that is intended for personal gain or profit, non-Agora commercial activities, non-Agora product advertising, or political lobbying on an Agora-owned instructional computing resource.
- Do not use Agora instructional computing resources to sell or purchase any illegal items or substances.
- Do not upload or post any software on Agora instructional computing resources that are not specifically required and approved for your assignments.
- Do not post any MP3 files, compressed video, or other non-instructional files to any Agora server.

Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior includes:

- Insults or attacks of any kind against another person.
- Use of obscene, degrading, or profane language.
- Harassment (continually posting unwelcome messages to another person) or use of threats.
- Posting material that is obscene or defamatory or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person. This includes distributing "spam" mail, chain e-mail, viruses, or other intentionally destructive content.

Student Internet Safety

- Do not reveal on the Internet personal information about yourself or other persons. For example, you should not reveal your name, home address, telephone number, or display photographs of yourself or others to persons outside of Agora.
- Do not agree to meet in person anyone you have met only on the Internet and who is not affiliated with Agora.

Network Etiquette

At Agora, parents and students are expected to follow the rules of network etiquette, or “netiquette.” The word netiquette refers to common-sense guidelines for conversing with others online. Please abide by these standards:

- Avoid sarcasm, jargon, and slang. Swear words are unacceptable.
- Never use derogatory comments, including those regarding race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, political persuasion, body type, physical or mental health, or access issues.
- Focus your responses on the questions or issues being discussed, not on the individuals involved.
- Be constructive with your criticism, not hurtful.
- Review your messages before sending them. Remove easily misinterpreted language and proofread for typos.
- Respect other people’s privacy. Don’t broadcast online discussions, and never reveal other people’s e-mail addresses.

Use of Copyrighted Materials

All materials in the courses are copyrighted and provided for use exclusively by enrolled students. Enrolled students may print or photocopy material from the website for their own use. Use by or distribution to others is prohibited unless expressly noted. Unauthorized copying or distribution may result in revoked access to course(s).

Users shall not upload, download, transmit, or post copyrighted software or copyrighted materials, materials protected by trade secrets, or other protections using Agora computer resources. This includes copyrighted graphics of cartoon characters or other materials that may appear to be non-copyright protected.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted is assumed to have been completed on your own. Students are responsible for observing the standards on plagiarism and properly crediting all sources relied on in the composition of their work. Failure to abide by these standards will be reported to the appropriate administrative authorities and may result in loss of credit, revoked access to course(s) and suspension or expulsion from Agora.

Plagiarism

The definition of plagiarism is copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another writer and passing them off as your own original work. Specific examples of plagiarism that will not be tolerated are:

- Copying or rephrasing another student’s work
- Having someone else write an assignment or rephrase any part of an assignment (not just proofread it)
- Directly copying student aids (for example, Cliff’s Notes), critical sources, or reference materials in part or in whole without acknowledgment
- Indirect reproduction of student aids, such as Cliff’s Notes, Cole Notes, critical sources, or reference materials by rephrasing ideas borrowed from them without acknowledgment

Source Citation

Many courses require written work in which you will need to cite sources. Any direct quotations from your textbook can simply be cited as (Author, page number). Any quotations from outside sources require full citations, including author, title, publisher, date of publication, and page number. If you’re citing information found on a website, provide the complete web page or site title, URL, author (if known), page number (if applicable), and publication date of the site (if available).

Monitoring

Agora reserves the right to review any material transmitted using Agora instructional computing resources or posted to an Agora instructional computing resource to determine the appropriateness of such material. Agora may review this material at any time, with or without notice. E-mail transmitted via Agora instructional computing resources is not private and may be monitored.

Agora Indemnification Provision

Agora assumes no responsibility for information obtained via the Internet which may be illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive. Agora assumes no responsibility for any claims, losses, damages, costs, or other obligations arising from the use of instructional computing resources. Agora also denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through user access. Any statement accessible on the computer network or the Internet is understood to be the author’s individual

point of view and not that of Agora, its affiliates, or its employees. Agora assumes no responsibility for damages to the user's computer system.

Nothing in this policy negates any obligation the student and parent have to use the instructional computing resources as required in the Use of Instructional Property Agreement ("Agreement") the parent or guardian signed as part of the student's enrollment packet. In the event that this Code conflicts with the Agreement, the terms of the Agreement shall prevail.

Using Elluminate Live!

Elluminate Live! offers technical support at the following web address: www.illuminate.com/support/. Using the Help Desk and the Technical Support features will provide answers to the more common computer setup issues. If you have searched the site and did not find the answer to your computer issue, please call Elluminate Live! tech support at 866-388-8674 and choose option 2. K¹² also offers Elluminate Live! tech support (see School Directory).

Elluminate Live! Conduct for Parents and Students

Please always sign in using your first name and last initial.

Students:

- Arrive promptly at the scheduled time for the Elluminate session.
- Whiteboard and microphone privileges will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher.
- Direct messaging conversations should be limited to the content of the lesson.
- Respectful and courteous behavior towards others is expected at all times.
- Non-participation or stepping away without the teacher's approval will count as an absence.
- If there are multiple students in your home in Title 1, each student needs to log in to a session individually.

Please bear in mind that individual teachers may have expectations that are specific to their classrooms.

Parents:

Acceptable reasons to remove your child from a session include:

- Offensive behavior
- Illness

If you must remove your student from an Elluminate Live! session, please e-mail or call the teacher to discuss the situation.

- Keep comments and questions specific to the lesson. Contact your teacher about other concerns by phone, e-mail, or in person during office hours.
- Because the lessons are student-centered, only students should be using the microphones during the sessions.
- Refrain from coaching your child during Elluminate Live! sessions. The goal of this instructional time is for your child to become an independent learner and critical thinker.

Search and Seizure Policy

To maintain order and discipline at school functions and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student's backpack or student automobiles in certain circumstances and may seize any illegal or unauthorized materials discovered during the search.

Flag Salute, Pledge of Allegiance and Opening Exercises

A student may refuse to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or salute the flag based on the student's religious conviction or personal belief. A student who declines to participate in this exercise shall stand quietly and respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate.

Confidential Communications of Students

Some oral or written communications between students and school personnel are confidential. Information that is expressed as confidential or received in confidence by a staff member from a student may be revealed to or by the principal or other appropriate authority, including law enforcement personnel, when the health, welfare or safety of the student or other persons is clearly in jeopardy. school.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Behavior Guidelines	School Action
Truancy: A student will be considered truant after three unexcused absences in a row, seven in a month, or 15 school days in the school year of no contact between the parent/guardian and the school.	Disciplinary Meeting. Failure to attend three days in a row without excuse will result in charges of truancy reported to the home school district.
Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism and Cheating)	Disciplinary meeting with consequences ranging from retaking the course, to failing to course, to expulsion from the school
Assault, Verbal/Threats/Intimidation: Students are prohibited from communicating terroristic threats or committing terroristic acts directed at any student, employee, or visitor of our school.	Disciplinary Meeting.
Inappropriate behavior or actions during Elluminate Sessions	Disciplinary Meeting. May include removal of privileges during Elluminate sessions
Inappropriate Conduct at Outings or During Standardized Testing	Disciplinary Meeting. May include having a parent accompany child and/or banned from outings.
Class Attendance, Class Cuts from Elluminate: Regular attendance is essential to academic excellence. Absences from class interfere with the continuity of learning for the student. Excused absences from class may be unavoidable. Students are responsible for requesting and promptly completing any work missed during the absence. Unexcused absences from classes (class cuts) interrupt the continuity of learning and can have a direct negative effect on a student's grade. A class cut is defined as an unexcused absence from all or part of a scheduled class or class activity.	Disciplinary Meeting. Academic Action Plan will be enforced
Inappropriate Use of the Computer: A specific set of procedures, conditions, and legal restrictions guide the use of school-owned computers. Parents should review appropriate use of computers with their students before using school computers. Parents are the responsible adult for logging into the computer. Parents should maintain your user password confidential and not tell others.	Disciplinary Meeting. Depending upon the misuse of the school computer, the Chief Administrative Officer will determine the disciplinary consequences, including loss of privileges, or expulsion.
Disrespectful Behavior: Students must comply with the reasonable directives of school personnel in a timely and cooperative manner.	Disciplinary Meeting.
Insubordination: Students who refuse to comply with a reasonable directive, or who use a profane means of expression toward school personnel, will be assigned a range of consequences.	Disciplinary Meeting.

Behavior Guidelines

Dress and Hats: Agora students are to dress tastefully and appropriately for weather conditions during outings or other school events. Parent support is important in the effort to maintain a productive academic atmosphere. Shirts and blouses must cover the midriff, chest and back, and substantially cover the shoulders. Pants, skirts and tops should be high enough and long enough so that no portion of the posterior or undergarment is revealed. Footwear is required at all times during school events. Clothing bearing imprinted messages or images must not promote a life-style that is inconsistent with good taste, educational values and wellness

Weapons: Weapons are not permitted in any facility used by Agora, during school events or on school buses. This includes during the PSSA testing. Pennsylvania law includes as weapons firearms, knives, cutting tools or any instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury. This means a small pocket knife in a school setting is considered a weapon and can result in a serious disciplinary action. Backpacks/satchels/purses may be subject to search by a school official when in attendance at any in-person Agora event.

Vulgar/Obscene Language, Gestures, Displays: To establish and maintain an atmosphere of propriety and decorum, students are to refrain from inappropriate, vulgar and obscene language use, gestures, and displays.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or display of materials that evoke responses not in keeping with the atmosphere intended for the classroom or the work place.

Harassment/Non-Discrimination: Agora Cyber School maintains that a positive learning and working environment is free from any form of harassment. Everyone should be free from interference, intimidation or disparagement. Respect for the rights, dignity and integrity of others is essential for the well being of our school. Any action that does not reflect such respect for others is damaging to each member of the school community. Harassment, besides being intrinsically harmful and illegal, also corrupts the integrity of the educational process.

School Action

Disciplinary Meeting. A student wearing an objectionable article of clothing during a school class or event may be requested to change the clothing. Repeat offenders will be asked not to attend outings

Disciplinary Meeting. Pennsylvania law calls for student expulsion from school at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer for any student who possesses a weapon on school property. This action is serious because of the serious nature a weapon poses.

Disciplinary Meeting. Depending on the severity and/or degree of exposure to others, vulgar/obscene language, gestures, or displays will result, at a minimum, in a conference with a school leader. Directed or public vulgar and obscene language, gestures, or displays will result in the assignment.

Disciplinary Meeting.

Disciplinary Meeting.

Behavior Guidelines

School Action

Forgery/Misrepresentation/Counterfeit: The forgery, alteration, or counterfeit of an excuse note, school form or other document and/or record is prohibited. Forgery includes, but is not limited to, the alteration of time, date or other information bearing the signature or initials of a parent or faculty member, or attempting to use a forged note. Signing or typing a parent's/guardian's name on a note or e-mail upon their oral consent constitutes forgery. Impersonating a parent or any other person is impermissible and cause for discipline.

Disciplinary Meeting.

Damaged School Property and Graffiti: The Agora community provides excellent equipment and materials for learning. Everyone is responsible for using the equipment and instructional materials in ways that will preserve their appearance and function. Actions that diminish the quality of school district property detract from teaching and learning.

Disciplinary Meeting. Students will be required to pay full restitution for acts of deliberate damage or graffiti. Costs for damage to school district property will include labor, materials, consulting fees and other costs associated with replacing or restoring the damaged property. Acts of destructive damage and graffiti will be reported to police authorities. Disciplinary consequences, including loss of privileges, or expulsion, will be considered in addition to the satisfaction of financial obligations.

Tobacco Possession is prohibited by school policy and state law for students during school related activities.

Disciplinary Meeting. According to district policy and state law, students may not possess or use tobacco products (including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, or cigars) while on school grounds or during school related activities or functions. Disciplinary consequences, including loss of privileges will be determined by administration.

Illegal Drug and Alcohol usage is prohibited by school policy and state law.

Disciplinary Meeting. Acts suspected possession or intoxication will be reported to police authorities. Disciplinary consequences, including loss of privileges, or expulsion, will be considered by administration.

Disciplinary Meetings and Action

Discipline referrals to the administration are reviewed individually, consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. Discipline problems are best resolved expediently and closest to their source by the parties most directly involved. Most discipline issues are resolved with minimal administrative intervention. In the best interests of the student and the school, several disciplinary options are available:

- Implementation of a Student Disciplinary Action Plan
- External/Out of School Suspension (OSS)
- Expulsion

Expulsion procedures will be implemented with students whose behavior constitutes a serious and/or chronic disruption to maintaining “a school climate that encourages learning.”

Students have the right to due process in all disciplinary situations. This includes written notices of the hearing, information concerning the evidence against them, the opportunity to present evidence on their own behalf, and written notice of the decision.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

Asynchronous

Instruction that does not require students and teachers to be in a common place at the same time. Discussion boards are an example of asynchronous instruction.

Synchronous

Instruction that requires students and teachers to be in a common location at the same time. Chat rooms are examples of synchronous instruction.

Learning Coach

The parent or guardian supervising the child's instruction while at home.

Threaded Discussion

A set of statements, questions, or comments posted in response to a discussion board topic.

AIMSweb®

A scientifically based, assessment system that 'informs' the teaching and learning process by providing continuous student performance data and reporting improvement to parents, teachers, and administrators.

Advanced Learners Program (ALP)

Program for learners working above grade level and in need of extra academic challenge and support.

At-Risk Program (ARP)

Program for learners working below grade level and in need of extra academic intervention and support.

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)

Term used in NCLB for test reporting purposes.

Brick-and-mortar (B&M)

How we refer to traditional schools (non-virtual).

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

Screening method administered by Agora teachers twice per year for grades K-2.

Head of School (HOS)

Leader overseeing all academic programs at the school.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

The education program that has been designed to meet that child's unique needs. Each child who receives special education and related services must have an IEP.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

Document that teachers use to track student progress and goals.

Instant messenger (IM)

A means of communication used through the computer.

Internet Service Provider (ISP)

A company or service used to provide an Internet connection (such as Comcast, AOL, or EarthLink).

K¹²

Provider of our award-winning curriculum and school management services. For complete information, visit www.K12.com

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Visit <http://www.nclb.gov>.

Online school (OLS)

The online platform designed by K¹² to deliver curriculum.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

Visit <http://www.pde.state.us>.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

A standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment used to measure a student's attainment of the academic standards while also determining the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards.

Virtual High School (VHS)

Term used to designate grades 9-12 and online platform used in high school.

By signing the Signature Page found at the end of this handbook, parents confirm that they understand and agree to the contents of this page:

I Understand and Agree

The purpose of this section is to set expectations for Agora parents. Students' success is a primary goal of Agora and that can only be achieved if you, the parent, are successful. To that end it is important that parents of Agora children understand and agree with the following curricular and attendance requirements:

I understand that my student is enrolled in a public school with attendance requirements that I am expected to meet. The state requirement is between 5-6 hours per day depending on my child's grade level. (Please see the Instructional Time section of the Parent/Student Handbook for more information.) Students who have poor attendance (insufficient hours and progress recorded over time in the system) are considered excessively absent and may be withdrawn and expelled from Agora.

I accept the responsibility to supervise my student in using the K¹² curriculum, and I understand that I am expected to become knowledgeable about it. Any other work accomplished by the student is supplemental to, and not in place of, the K¹² curriculum lessons. Agora does not consider it acceptable to leave a student home alone or unsupervised all day to complete coursework.

I understand and agree that student progress is an expected part of the Agora program, in addition to the hours logged. Teachers review progress and consider other factors, including parental input, when making student advancement decisions. Promotion is based on progress, not simply attendance.

I understand and agree that I am expected to follow the guidance and support of a certified teacher in implementing the Agora program with my student.

I understand and agree that I am expected to participate in scheduled interactions with my student's teacher, and that I must submit work assignments as stated in program requirements.

I understand and agree that, as a public school, Agora students are required to participate in state standardized testing. My child is expected to fully participate in the testing at his or her grade level.

I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to secure an Internet Service Provider, and that I am reimbursed according to the school policy as described in this handbook.

I understand and agree that Agora is a full-time public school program, and that my student may not be enrolled in any other full-time or part-time public school.

I read and understand Agora policy for all addressed topics found in the Agora Handbook/Student Code of Conduct.

LIABILITY RELEASE AGREEMENT

(Print Minor's Legal Name) _____
(Please indicate if there is more than one child per family participating and if so provide their legal name(s)):

_____, _____, _____, _____

(collectively referred to as "Minor") wishes to participate in _____ "Activity"
sponsored by Agora Cyber Charter School and/or K12 Inc.

The Sponsors and the undersigned parent or legal guardian of Minor agree that the Activity may pose risks, including possible illness, injury, as well as similar and dissimilar risks ("Risks"). The undersigned is fully aware of the Risks and other hazards inherent in the Activity and is participating in the Activity voluntarily and assumes the Risks and all other risks of loss, damage, or injury that may be sustained while participating in the activity. Agora Cyber Charter School and K12 Inc. make no representations or claims as to the condition or safety of the land, structures, transportation, or surroundings that may be involved in the Activity, whether or not owned, leased, operated or maintained by the Sponsors. It is understood that the Sponsors do NOT provide any insurance coverage for the Minor's person or property, and Minor's parent(s) or guardian(s) acknowledge that they are responsible for the Minor's safety and the Minor's own health care needs, and for the protection of the Minor's property.

In exchange for allowing the Minor to participate in these Activities offered by the Sponsors, the Minor, by and through the undersigned, the undersigned, and their respective heirs, personal representatives and estates agree(s) to release from liability and hold harmless the Sponsors and any agent, officer, or employee of the Sponsors acting within the scope of their duties for any injury to the Minor's person or damage to the Minor's property. I authorize the Sponsors to take any action, including seeking medical care, necessary in its judgment if I am not present or reachable in the event of an emergency. The undersigned acknowledges that as a part of this Release he or she shall be 100% liable to pay for all medical expenses resulting or to result from any injury incurred during, or as a result of, participation in the Activity. If any term of this agreement or the application to any person or circumstance shall, to any extent, be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder shall not be affected thereby, and each and every remaining term of this agreement shall be valid and enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law. In the event of any need to enforce this agreement, the Sponsors shall be entitled to its attorney fees and costs. This agreement will be governed by Pennsylvania law.

I, the undersigned, state that I am the parent or legal guardian of the Minor. I have fully read and understand the above terms and conditions and that they apply to said Minor and to myself, and that no oral representations, statements, or inducements apart from the foregoing written agreement have been made to the undersigned. This document is binding on myself, the said Minor, and any person suing on behalf of said Minor.

Minor's Address:

Date:

Parent/guardian name (print)

Parent/guardian name (sign)

REQUIRED SIGNATURE PAGE

Dear Parents and Students:

You have just reviewed the Agora Cyber Charter School Handbook. We have attempted to cover all the important rules, regulations, and procedures for which you are responsible during this school year. Your success at the School is equal to your effort and desire. Please sign and return the bottom section of this page to your homeroom teacher or coordinator within 30 days of your enrollment in the school.

(This bottom section must be returned to Agora.)

We have read and reviewed the Agora Cyber Charter School's Handbook including the "I understand" statements and FERPA guidelines. In signing, we indicate an awareness and understanding of the school practices and procedures set forth herein.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sign and return to your homeroom teacher or coordinator.