

MISSION, VISION, PHILOSOPHY and CORE VALUES

Mission:

The Compass Public Charter School's mission is to prepare each child with a personal compass that will guide them in life's directions. We do so by developing students who are competent, confident, productive and responsible young adults who possess the habits, skills and attitudes to succeed in life and be offered the invitation of a post-secondary education and satisfying employment.

Vision:

Compass Public Charter School seeks to provide a well-rounded education in a safe environment, with high academic and behavioral expectations; where students, educators, and parents work in partnership to encourage the development of self-motivated lifelong learners and productive citizens who make positive contributions to society.

Philosophy:

The philosophy of the Compass Public Charter School is grounded in the belief that when there is low threat and content is highly challenging, accelerated learning takes place.

Core Values:

As our children chart their course through these tumultuous years, we hope to direct them to a safe harbor. Each child has the right to come to school without fear of taunting, teasing or violence. Each parent has the right to expect a school to provide a safe, kind environment for his/her child. Each staff member has the right to teach without fear of violence. Students, parents and teachers will experience peace of mind in the Compass Public Charter School setting. We believe that a kind environment should be extended through the potentially difficult middle school and high school years

Students and parents respect Compass Public Charter School teachers, as role models and instructors, for their commitment to education and their genuine concern for children. Intelligence, creativity, responsibility and loyalty are characteristics of the faculty.

Parents expect and appreciate direct and regular communication from faculty regarding their children.

Reciprocally, parents are responsive to suggestions from teachers and administrators for helping students.

Compass Public Charter School recognizes each child as an individual who, by virtue of his/her humanity, is in community with all the other children in the school, regardless of age. By providing moral and ethical standards, the school prepares its students to accept the privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship. Every child is capable of achieving his/her potential to the fullest extent when afforded respect, fairness, kindness, discipline and appropriate instruction.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Each student is a unique individual with unique personal, social, and educational needs. As a result, every disciplinary situation becomes unique in nature. Consequences for misbehavior provide the best learning value when matched to the unique student and the unique situation. The odds for students learning from their mistakes increase dramatically when students see a reasonable connection between their behavior and the resulting consequences.

Our school staff dedicates itself to following a set of core beliefs that provide a guide for dealing with student discipline. These core beliefs guide our attempts to individualize disciplinary procedures and to help students see reasonable connections between their behavior and the resulting consequences.

Since these core beliefs provide the guiding light for our professional decisions, the staff encourages parents to bring concerns and questions to us in the event we operate in ways that appear to be inconsistent with these core beliefs.

The following list of core beliefs outlines the professional actions and attitudes of all staff members in this school:

1. Every attempt will be made to maintain the dignity and self-respect of both the student and the teacher.
2. Students will be guided and expected to solve their problems, or the ones they create, without creating problems for anyone else.
3. Students will be given opportunities to make decisions and live with the consequences, be they good or bad.
4. Misbehavior will be handled with natural and logical consequences instead of punishment, whenever possible.
5. Misbehavior will be viewed as an opportunity for individual problem solving and preparation for the real world as opposed to a personal attack on school or staff.
6. Students are encouraged to request a “due process” hearing whenever consequences appear to be unfair.
7. School problems will be handled by school personnel. Criminal activity will be referred to the proper authorities.

ATTENDANCE

Students, parents, and educators recognize the importance of attendance and punctuality at all grade levels. Key reasons for regular and punctual attendance are employability, educational benefits and success in school.

- **Employability** – Punctuality and attendance are important skills for employment identified by employers. Developing these skills is critical whether students plan to work during the school year, after graduation, or after college.
- **Educational Benefits** - Regular attendance helps to assure that students are getting the benefits of a program that is 90% direct instruction at the K – 8 levels, 75% interdisciplinary study at the 9 - 12 levels along with 25% cooperative problem solving.
- **Success** – Students must be present in order to experience success. Further, each student’s presence enhances the success of the entire class.
- **Financial Solvency of our School** – The school’s funding is based on obtaining an average of 96% attendance. Average daily attendance is determined on a weekly basis. It is critical to the financial viability of the school that parents/guardians adhere to their commitment of at least 96% attendance. Students who are not in attendance 96% of the time and whom are not on a 504 Accommodation Plan or have an IEP that accommodates for attendance will be referred to the Board of Directors for discussion of appropriate action that may include denying promotion to the next grade. Additionally, it is the policy of Compass Public Charter School to administratively call for withdrawal of any student who accumulates five (5) consecutive unexcused absences (see Withdrawal Policy below).

POLICIES SPECIFIC TO COMPASS K-8 PROGRAM

Elementary (K-8) Attendance Policy

Excused Absences – Absences due to illness and death in the family are the only absences that Compass Public Charter School will consider excused absences. All other absences will be considered unexcused. Compass Public Charter School recognizes that attendance decisions ultimately rest with the parent or guardian. In order for absences due to illness or bereavement to be excused, oral or written communication from the student’s parent or guardian must be received within 48 hours of the last day of the absence. A physician’s letter documenting the need for absence from school is required for excessive absences due to illness. All absences, excused or unexcused, count toward the 96% attendance criteria.

Student grades will be impacted by attendance as well:

At the 6th, 7th & 8th grade level, 3 unexcused absences in a quarter will result in the dropping of one letter grade in each subject area during that same quarter.

At the K – 8th level, students who recognize the importance of attendance and punctuality will qualify for participation in the Citizen of the Week and Student of the Month programs.

Make-up Work – Make-up work and make-up tests are allowed for students who have excused absences only. It is not the burden of the classroom teacher to create alternative assignments or put together homework “packets” for students who miss school due to family choice.

Tardies – Students are expected to be in their assigned classroom when school starts, if they are not, the student will be considered tardy. The only “excused” tardies are for illness or scheduled medical appointments. 3 unexcused tardies is equivalent to one unexcused absence and furthermore subject to the policy/consequences related to unexcused absences.

Grade Promotion - Students 5th – 8th grade receiving a “C” or better grade average will be promoted to the next grade level. Students who do not obtain this academic goal and receive letter grades of “D” or “F” in 3 or more of the core subject areas (math, language arts, science, and social studies) may be recommended to the Board of Directors for retention. Each case will be determined individually. Generally, students recommended for retention shall receive the “returning student” preference for purposes of the lottery.

However, in the event that teacher/school records indicate contributing factors of poor attendance and/or consistent failure to complete school work assignments, the student will not only be recommended to the Board of Directors for retention but also will NOT be eligible for the “returning student” preference for purposes of the lottery. The student will be allowed to apply through the school’s lottery process to re-enter and repeat the grade level that was not completed successfully. Because the annual lottery occurs in the spring, prior to the end of the current school year, the 3rd quarter report card will be evaluated for those students in 5th-8th grade to determine which students may be entered in the lottery to repeat their current grade level. This will allow the

student an equal opportunity to be drawn in the lottery, although the final decision for retention will be made at the end of the school year when final grades have been determined. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to enter the student's name in the lottery, per recommendation of the Compass Public Charter School Board, by completing a lottery application and following all of the same deadline procedures as outlined in the lottery policy.

K-8 Homework Philosophy - The education of today's children must be considered a team effort by both parents and teachers. Research shows that the most successful students, regardless of family income level or ethnic background, are those who have regularly structured homework time. This parent-assisted practice serves a dual purpose:

- It communicates to the child his/her priority in the parent's life. This contact time develops more than academic skills; it develops a sense of self-value, and builds memories.
- The discipline of nightly homework creates a habit that will benefit the student throughout life.

School's objective for homework:

- Practice/Review – reinforce skills and concepts taught during class
- Responsibility – develop organizational and time management skills as well as self-discipline
- Feedback – gives teachers a view of students understanding and application of material taught (4th-8th)
- Preparation – students preview material that will be presented and discussed in more detail during class (6th-8th)

It is our intent to require reasonable and constructive assignments that will encourage the student's success in the classroom. It is important that our parents share our beliefs about homework and will support us in this. We view parental support in the homework area as encouragement, setting a homework time, and following through to ensure that the work is completed. We don't expect parents to re-teach the assignment to their child or check the homework for errors. Additionally, to do well in school your child must be present, on time, healthy, rested, and attentive.

POLICIES SPECIFIC TO COMPASS HONORS HIGH PROGRAM

High School Attendance Policy

Unexcused absences – Three (3) unexcused absences in any class during one semester will result in a loss of credit unless the absence is cleared by the school administrator as extraordinary within five (5) days of the absence.

Excused absences - Students who receive six (6) absences in any class during one semester will lose credit unless the absence is cleared by the school administrator as extraordinary within five (5) days of the absence.

Excessive absences – If a student is absent for 15 days in a semester, whether or not the absences are verified, the student will be dropped from school. If the student seeks re-enrollment, the student will be required to present his/her academic goals and attendance commitment to a faculty committee. Following this process, the student may be re-enrolled if space allows. Otherwise the student will be placed on the waiting list for his/her grade.

Administrators will make decisions in keeping with the overall intent of this policy. The appeal process will be first to the secondary principal, then to the school administrator and finally to the board of directors.

Tardies – Students are expected to be in their assigned seats at the start of each class period; if they are not, they will be considered tardy. The only “excused” tardies are for illness or scheduled medical appointments. Three (3) unexcused tardies is equivalent to one unexcused absence and furthermore subject to the policy/consequences related to unexcused absences. In addition, for every three (3) unexcused tardies, high school students will serve one (1) hour of detention.

HOMEWORK PHILOSOPHY - The Compass Honors High School administration and teachers consider the practice of homework as one of the vital means by which students can better learn the required material in each curricular area. The primary responsibility of homework belongs to the students themselves. The administrators, teachers, and parents also play an integral role in a successful homework experience. The need for active communication is essential throughout the homework process.

PURPOSES OF HOMEWORK

At the high school level, the purposes of homework include:

- **Preparation:** to introduce material to be presented in future lessons
- **Practice/Review:** to reinforce and/or master basic skills already presented in class
- **Feedback:** to give teachers valuable feedback to monitor student progress
- **Application:** to enable students to connect skills and concepts to new situations within the subject matter
- **Extension:** to provide students with opportunities to transfer specific skills or concepts from one subject to another

Academic Warning and Probation

- A student is placed on academic warning for:
(1) receiving one F or two grades of D or lower in a marking period.

A parent conference will follow.

- A student is placed on academic probation for:
(1) receiving two Fs or three or more grades of D or lower in a marking period, or
(2) being placed on academic warning for two consecutive marking periods.

A parent conference will follow.

If, after the next marking period the student remains on probation, another parent conference will be held to consider alternatives to attendance at Compass Honors High School. Parents may also at this point appeal to the Board of Directors for continued enrollment.

Any student who receives an F in a course will not receive credit. Arrangements shall be made to retake the course inside or outside of the regular school day. Any applicable course fee shall be paid by the student.

Concurrent College Credit

Keeping true to our mission of preparing students for success in college, we also encourage our students to enroll in classes that will earn both high school and college credit. CHHS has developed a partnership with the College of Western Idaho (CWI) that provides our students the opportunity to earn college credit while taking courses both at CHHS as well as on the CWI campus. While students must pay for the college credit they earn, the cost is significantly less. Students with less than a 3.0 GPA will be counseled on a case by case basis in regards to enrolling in concurrent college credit. Students eligible under CHHS guidelines to enroll in concurrent college classes must take the COMPASS placement exam to determine course placement/eligibility. Students who are highly motivated and who choose to enroll in college courses during the summer could graduate from CHHS with a College Associate Degree.