



2026-2027
Parent-Student Handbook

STARS Charter School

Parent–Student Handbook

Introduction

This handbook is designed to provide families with a clear understanding of how STARS Charter School operates and what is expected of students and parents.

STARS is a tuition-free K–8 public charter school focused on academic rigor, structure, and a safe learning environment.

This handbook is not all-inclusive and may be updated as needed. Families are encouraged to communicate with school staff whenever questions arise.

Our Purpose

STARS Charter School provides an academically rigorous program infused with artistic experiences that prepare students for long-term success.

We believe:

- Every child can learn
 - Staff are responsible for student success
 - Instructional time must be protected
 - A structured environment leads to strong outcomes
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School Leadership

Executive Director: Wes Graner, Ed.D.

Elementary Principal (K–4): Benita Taylor-Law

Middle School Principal (5–8): Megan Ridgeway

Associate Principal and SVA Principal: Jonathan Seawell

Associate Principal and Director of EC Services: Christina Harrison

School Hours

Monday–Thursday

Students: 7:45 AM – 3:10 PM

Friday

Students: 7:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Attendance

Attendance is required by North Carolina law.

Parents must:

- Provide a note or email within 3 days of an absence
- Include the student's name, date, and reason

Unexcused absences may result in:

- Attendance meetings
- Attendance contracts
- Possible legal action or withdrawal

Educational absences must be approved **two weeks in advance**. Please email:

elementaryattendance@starscharter.org (grades K-4)

and

middleattendance@starscharter.org (grades 5-8) for any absences.

Tardies

Students arriving late must be signed in by a parent.

Early Checkout

Students must be signed out in the front office.

Early checkouts should be limited to emergencies or appointments.

Transportation

Car Riders

- Follow designated drop-off and pick-up locations
- Do not drop students off before supervision begins

Bus Transportation

- Riding the bus is a privilege
- Students must follow all rules and driver directions
- Misbehavior may result in suspension or removal from the bus

School Safety

- All visitors must report to the front office
- Visitors must wear identification

Visitor Access

To help maintain a safe learning environment, all visitors must check in through the front office and obtain a visitor badge before entering campus beyond the reception area.

Visitors who are not properly checked in and wearing a visitor badge may be considered trespassers and may be asked to leave campus immediately. Only parents, guardians, and approved visitors may be on campus during the school day unless prior authorization has been granted by school administration.

- Unauthorized individuals will be treated as trespassers

Health Policies

Students must remain home if they have:

- A fever
- A contagious illness
- Symptoms that prevent participation

Medication must be handled through the school office. A doctors note is required for all Over the Counter medications and verbal permission will not be accepted.

Communicable Diseases

Students are excluded from school in cases of communicable diseases. When a student is suspected of having one of the following communicable diseases, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact their primary care provider for verification and treatment before the student can return to school.

1. **Bad Cough/Cold Symptoms:** Student with bad cough should be sent home. It is the responsibility of the parent to contact their primary provider for treatment before student can return to school.
2. **Chickenpox:** Student is excluded until all lesions are dried and crusted.
3. **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** Student is excluded if there is redness of eyes with pus.
4. **Diarrhea/Vomiting:** Student should be kept at home until the illness is over and for 24 hours after the last episode (without medicine).
5. **Fever:** Students with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher should be sent home. Student should be fever-free for 24 hours (without medicine) before returning to school.
6. **Flu (Influenza):** Exclude based on written directives from a licensed health care practitioner or symptom free for at least 24 hours without medication.
7. **Hand, Foot, and Mouth:** Student is excluded until there is no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and the rash is scabbed over/no open lesions.
8. **Impetigo:** Student is excluded from school if he/she has more than two sores and until seen by primary care provider and treated with a prescription antibiotic for 24 hours.
9. **Measles (Rubeola/Rubella):** Student is excluded until physician's approval is given and student is no longer contagious.
10. **Mild Cough/Runny Nose:** Student with no fever and feels well may stay in class.
11. **Mono (Mononucleosis):** Any exclusion is based on written directives from a licensed health care practitioner.

12. Pediculosis (Head Lice): Student is excluded until treatment is completed and there are no live lice. There must be a significant reduction of nits prior to re-entry into the classroom.

13. Rash: Students with a skin rash should see their doctor as this could be one of several infectious diseases. Student may return to school when cleared by physician.

11. Scabies: Student is excluded until after treatment completed.

12. Streptococcal and Staphylococcal Infections: Student is excluded from school until treated with a prescription antibiotic for 24 hours and fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours.

Medical Plans

Students who require medical accommodations, emergency medical interventions, specialized health procedures, or modifications to the school day due to a medical condition must have appropriate medical documentation and any required physician-completed medical plans on file with the school. The school may require updated documentation as needed to ensure student safety and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Concussions and Head Injuries

Any student who suffers a head injury during the school day will be evaluated by appropriate school personnel and parents will be notified. Students exhibiting signs or symptoms consistent with a concussion may be removed from physical activity and school activities until appropriate medical evaluation and clearance are provided. STARS follows applicable North Carolina laws and guidelines regarding concussion management and return-to-learn/return-to-play procedures.

Communication

Parents should:

- Contact teachers first regarding classroom concerns
- Follow the chain of communication if needed
- Maintain respectful and professional communication

Weather and Emergency Closures

In the event of inclement weather, emergency conditions, or other circumstances requiring school closure, STARS may utilize remote instructional days as permitted by North Carolina law. Families will be notified through the school's communication systems regarding delays, closures, early dismissals, or remote learning expectations. Students may be required to complete assignments provided through approved instructional platforms during remote instructional days.

Sandhills Theater Arts Renaissance School (STARS) provides its students access to a variety of technological resources. These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within the school community and with the larger global community.

STARS intends that students benefit from these resources while remaining within the bounds of safe, legal, and responsible use. Accordingly, this policy is established to govern student use of school system technological resources. This policy applies regardless of whether such use occurs on or off school system property, and it applies to all school system technological resources, including but not limited to computer networks and connections, the resources, tools, and learning environments made available by or on the networks, and all devices that connect to those networks.

A. EXPECTATIONS FOR USE OF SCHOOL TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The use of school system technological resources, including access to the Internet, is a privilege, not a right. Individual users of the school system's technological resources are responsible for their behavior and communications when using those resources. Responsible use of school system technological resources is use that is ethical, respectful, academically honest, and supportive of student learning. Each user has the responsibility to respect others in the school community and on the Internet. General student behavior standards, including those prescribed in applicable school policies, the Parent-Student Handbook, and other regulations and school rules, apply to use of the Internet and other school-supplied technology.

In addition, anyone who uses school system computers or electronic devices or who accesses the school network or the Internet using school system resources must comply with the additional rules for responsible use listed in Section B, below. These rules are intended to clarify expectations for conduct but should not be construed as all-inclusive.

Each School Year, before using school system technological resources, students must sign a statement indicating that they understand and will strictly comply with these requirements and acknowledging awareness that the school system uses monitoring systems to monitor and detect inappropriate use of technological resources and tracking systems to track and recover lost or stolen equipment. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in disciplinary action, including revocation of user privileges. Willful misuse may result in disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution under applicable state and federal law.

B. RULES FOR USE OF SCHOOL TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. School system technological resources are provided for school-related purposes only. Acceptable uses of such technological resources are limited to responsible, efficient, and legal activities that support learning. Incidental and occasional personal use of technology resources will occur. Those supplemental activities should be limited and adhere to these governance policies. Use of school system technological resources for commercial gain or profit is prohibited.
2. Under no circumstance may software purchased by the school system be copied for personal use.
3. Students must comply with all applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records. Any use that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited. Plagiarism of Internet resources will be treated in the same manner as any other incidents of plagiarism, as stated in the Parent-Student Handbook.
4. No user of technological resources, including a person sending or receiving electronic communications, may engage in creating, intentionally viewing, accessing, downloading, storing, printing, or transmitting images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages, or other material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, or abusive.
5. Use of software, hardware, or techniques to circumvent Internet filters or compute limitations is strictly prohibited.
6. Users may not install or use any Internet-based file sharing program designed to facilitate sharing of copyrighted material.
7. Users of technological resources may not send electronic communication fraudulently (i.e., by misrepresenting the identity of the sender).
8. Users must respect the privacy of others. When using e-mail, chat rooms, blogs, or other forms of electronic communication, students must not reveal personal identifying information or information that is private or confidential,

such as the home address or telephone number, credit or checking account information, or social security number of themselves or fellow students. In addition, users may not forward or post personal communications without the author's prior consent.

9. Users may not intentionally or negligently damage computers, computer systems, electronic devices, software, computer networks, or data of any user connected to school system technological resources. Users may not knowingly or negligently transmit computer viruses or self-replicating messages or deliberately try to degrade or disrupt system performance.
10. Users may not create or introduce games, network communications programs, or any foreign program or software onto any school system computer, electronic device, or network without the express permission of the technology director.
11. Users are prohibited from engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as "hacking" or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems, or accounts.
12. Users are prohibited from using another individual's ID or password for any technological resource.
13. Users may not read, alter, change, block, execute, or delete files or communications belonging to another user without the owner's express prior permission.
14. If a user identifies a security problem on a technological resource, he or she must immediately notify a member of school administration. Users must not demonstrate the problem to other users. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access.
15. Teachers shall make reasonable efforts to supervise students' use of the Internet during instructional time.
16. Views may be expressed on the Internet or other technological resources as representing the view of the school system or part of the school system only with prior approval by the Executive Director.

C. RESTRICTED MATERIAL ON THE INTERNET

The Internet and electronic communications offer fluid environments in which students may access or be exposed to materials and information from diverse and rapidly changing sources, including some that may be harmful to students. The school leadership recognizes that it is impossible to predict with certainty what information on the Internet students may access or obtain. Never-the-less, school system personnel shall take reasonable precautions to prevent students from

accessing material and information that is obscene, pornographic, or otherwise harmful to minors, including violence, nudity, or graphic language that does not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose. STARS shall ensure that technology protection measures are used consistent with the Children's Internet Protection Act and are disabled or minimized only when permitted by law and school policy. STARS is not responsible for the content accessed by users who connect to the Internet via any personal or unapproved method.

D. PARENTAL CONSENT

STARS recognizes that parents of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards their children should follow when using media and information sources. Accordingly, before a student may independently access the Internet, the student's parent must be made aware of the possibility that the student could obtain access to inappropriate material while engaged in independent use of the Internet. The parent and student must consent to the student's independent access to the Internet and to monitoring of the student's Internet activity and e-mail communication by school personnel.

In addition, in accordance with STARS' goals and visions for technology, students may require accounts in third party systems for school related projects designed to assist students in mastering effective and proper online communications or to meet other educational goals. Whenever possible, those 3rd party resources will be accessed with school credentials facilitated by the ClassLink Launchpad.

E. PRIVACY

Students, employees, visitors, and other users have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, delete, receive, or display when using the school system's network, devices, Internet access, email system, or other technological resources owned or issued by the school system, whether the resources are used at school or elsewhere, and even if the use is for personal purposes. Users should not assume that files or communications created, transmitted, or displayed using school system technological resources or stored on servers or on the storage mediums of individual devices will be private. The school system may, without notice, (1) monitor, track, and/or log network access, communications, and use; (2) monitor and allocate files server space; and (3) access, review, copy, store, delete, or disclose the content of all user files, regardless of medium, the content of electronic mailboxes, and system outputs, such as printouts, for any lawful purpose. Such purposes may include, but are not limited to, maintaining system integrity, security, or functionality, ensuring compliance with board policy and applicable laws and regulations, protecting the school system from liability, and

complying with public records requests. School system personnel shall monitor online activities of individuals who access the Internet via a school-owned device.

By using the school system's network, Internet access, email system, devices, or other technological resources, individuals consent to have that use monitored by authorized school system personnel as described in this policy.

F. USE OF PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY ON SCHOOL SYSTEM PROPERTY

The technology required to support educational initiatives and facilitate learning will be provided to students by STARS. No personal devices (Cell Phones, Games, Laptops, Tablets, etc) are permitted to be used on campus during school hours. The only exception to this policy is related to supplemental platforms/devices required for students within an Individual Educational Program (IEP).

G. PERSONAL WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

STARS may use any means available to request the removal of personal websites or social media content that substantially disrupts the school environment or that utilize school system or individual school names, logos, or trademarks without permission.

Though school personnel generally do not monitor students' Internet activity conducted on non-school system devices during non-school hours, when the student's online behavior has a direct and immediate effect on school safety or maintaining order and discipline in the schools, the student may be disciplined in accordance with school policy.

Legal References: Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5)

Referenced Artifacts: This policy is adapted from the NC School Board Association, *Technology Responsible Use* template. Policy 3225/4312/7320.

Grievance Policy

STARS Charter School is committed to resolving concerns in a fair, timely, and consistent manner. Parents and guardians are encouraged to address concerns at the lowest level possible before proceeding to formal steps.

Definition of a Grievance

A grievance is a formal complaint regarding the application, interpretation, or alleged violation of a school policy, procedure, or decision that directly affects a student.

Informal Resolution

Before filing a formal grievance, parents are expected to attempt to resolve concerns through direct communication with school staff.

The recommended order of contact is:

1. Teacher
2. Assistant Principal
3. Principal
4. Executive Director

Most concerns can and should be resolved at this level.

Formal Grievance Process

If a concern is not resolved through informal communication, a formal grievance may be submitted.

Step 1 – Written Submission

A formal grievance must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director within 10 school days of the incident or decision.

The written grievance must include:

- Student name
- Description of the concern

- Relevant dates and details
 - Any steps already taken to resolve the issue
 - The requested resolution
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Step 2 – Review by Executive Director

The Executive Director will:

- Review the grievance
- May request additional information
- May meet with involved parties

A written response will be provided within 10 school days, when reasonably possible.

Step 3 – Appeal to the Board of Directors

If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, they may submit a written appeal to the Board of Directors within 10 school days of receiving the decision.

The Board may:

- Review the documentation
- Request additional information
- Allow limited presentation if deemed appropriate

The Board's decision is final.

Limitations

- Grievances must follow the steps outlined above
 - Anonymous complaints may be reviewed but cannot proceed through the formal process
 - Issues related to personnel matters may be subject to confidentiality limitations
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Good Faith Requirement

All grievances must be submitted in good faith. False, malicious, or intentionally misleading complaints may not be considered.

Non-Retaliation

STARS Charter School prohibits retaliation against any individual who submits a grievance in good faith.

Governing Authority

This grievance policy is established in accordance with STARS Charter School Board policy and applicable North Carolina charter school requirements.

Student Conduct Overview

Student behavior expectations are defined in the **STARS Student Code of Conduct**.

All students are expected to:

- Follow directions
 - Respect others
 - Maintain appropriate behavior
 - Support a safe school environment
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Discipline at a Glance (Parent Guide)

This chart provides a general overview. Consequences may vary based on severity, intent, and history.

Behavior & Consequences Guide

Behavior Type	Examples	Possible Consequences
Minor Disruption	Talking out, off-task behavior	Warning, parent contact, detention

Behavior Type	Examples	Possible Consequences
Repeated Disruption	Ongoing classroom issues	Loss of privileges, ISS
Defiance / Disrespect	Refusal to follow directions	ISS, OSS
Fighting / Aggression	Physical altercation	OSS, possible long-term suspension
Bullying / Harassment	Repeated targeting of others	Suspension, possible enrollment review
Serious Violations	Drugs, weapons, threats	Immediate suspension, possible revocation

Important

In the event of any conflict between this handbook and the full STARS Student Code of Conduct, the **full Code of Conduct shall govern.**

Technology Use

- Personal devices are not permitted during the school day unless approved
 - Students must use school technology responsibly
 - Unauthorized recording or sharing is prohibited
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Dress Code (Overview)

Students must:

- Dress appropriately for a learning environment
- Avoid clothing that is distracting, unsafe, or inappropriate
- Follow school guidelines

Students may be required to change clothing if necessary.

Bullying and Harassment

STARS does not tolerate:

- Physical aggression
- Verbal harassment
- Cyberbullying

Students should report concerns to a trusted adult.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly
 - Be prepared and on time
 - Respect staff and peers
 - Follow all school rules
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Final Notes

STARS Charter School is committed to maintaining a structured, safe, and high-performing environment.

Families play a critical role in supporting student success. We appreciate your partnership.

This handbook is intended to provide a summary of important school expectations and procedures. The STARS Student Code of Conduct, Board Policies, administrative procedures, and applicable federal and state laws govern when additional detail or clarification is required.

In the event of any conflict between this handbook and the full STARS Student Code of Conduct, the Student Code of Conduct shall govern.

Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the STARS Parent–Student Handbook and understand the expectations and policies outlined. I understand that this signature also represents the acknowledgement of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy regarding student use of technology.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____