



**Parent and Student Handbook  
Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School**

**2010-2011**

**Mrs. Sala Sims, Principal  
Mrs. Deanna English, Assistant Principal**

## **The Catalyst Schools' Mission Statement**

**The Catalyst Schools believe that every child possesses inherent value and potential, regardless of background, educational level, or life circumstances.**

Our college-preparatory schools partner with urban communities to offer K—8 students welcoming educational settings that nurture academic, social, and emotional growth. As students move on to high school, they remain vital members of the Catalyst community through our graduate support programs. We help all students and graduates discover a fruitful path to high school, to college, and to a citizenship that embraces peace, justice, and respect. We actively engage students' families and neighborhoods, striving to create strong connections between students' education and the communities they live in. Guided by this mission, we empower our students to become agents of change.

**Catalyst means.....Community**

**Catalyst means.....Values**

**Catalyst means.....Respect**

**Catalyst means.....Rigor**

**Catalyst means.....Excellence**

**Catalyst means.....Promise**

**Catalyst means.....Hope**

**That every child can become  
an agent of change**

## **Philosophy Statement**

### **A Community of Compassion**

We are all educators, a community of administrators, teachers, staff, volunteers, and families animated by a spirit of trust and zeal. In our educational mission and in our search for purpose in our lives, we seek to be models of what can be done with effort and the development of our innate talent. In the witness of our lives and the action of our programs, we strive to lead each other and our children to emotional, physical, and intellectual health through inspiration not indoctrination, inclusion not separation, and affirmation not condemnation. As professionals who serve the educational needs of children, we recognize and affirm the power of compassion and love to transform our lives, the lives of our families and children, and the world.

As a community of compassion, all of us – students, teachers, families, and staff – seek to be better, to be competent, to have compassion for each other, to achieve our potential. We are an educational community, learning together, working together, and planning together. We, as educators, strive to help students understand the complexities of human relationships and enable them to resolve their conflicts in a peaceful and non-violent manner. We believe mistakes are part of the process of learning and opportunities for learning rather than as failure in life.

### **Parents Are The Primary Educators**

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children. We believe our families desire a better quality of life and education for themselves and their children. We believe that our families may not have full access to the opportunities for a better quality of life because of the cycles of poverty, gangs, violence, migration, and discrimination.

We believe each student possesses special talents and gifts. We believe that each student is capable of learning. We believe that students can be lifelong learners regardless of home influences, socioeconomic status, or racial/ethnic background.

### **“An Innovative and Accessible Education”**

We believe that all people are entitled to a relevant education. We believe that the purpose of teaching is to involve students in learning that is liberating and empowering.

Learning that is liberating and empowering is grounded in the belief that all students can succeed; incorporates different learning and teaching styles; and highlights the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Literacy, the ability to communicate effectively, skills in self-understanding, empathy, and decision-making, the ability to work in groups and resolve conflicts, and a sense of service and compassion toward others are products of learning that liberate and empower.

# ACADEMIC PROGRAM

## Admissions

Catalyst Schools does not discriminate on the basis of academic ability, gender, race, religion, color, or national and ethnic origin in regard to admission of students, administration of educational policies, or participation in school programs.

For the admission of a new student, parents shall present:

1. A completed Catalyst Schools student application
2. An official copy of the child's birth certificate
3. A record of compliance with State of Illinois and local health requirements
4. An official transfer from the school previously attended
5. Official transcripts and standardized test scores from the school previously attended

To ensure the proper placement of the child, registration will not be finalized until the parent or the transferring school furnishes previous academic records to be examined by the Catalyst Schools Administration.

After the child is admitted to Catalyst, the school will test the child to establish baseline information and to assist the staff in developing the appropriate Success Plan for every student and any Individualized Educational Program that might be needed.

## Daily Schedule

7:30 a.m.	Breakfast begins
7:50 a.m.	Breakfast ends
7:30 a.m.	School staff supervision inside of school begins
8:00 a.m.	Assembly/Classes begin
3:30 p.m.	Instruction ends, student dismissal K-4 <sup>th</sup> grades
4:00 p.m.	Instruction ends, student dismissal 5-8 <sup>th</sup> grades
1:00pm	Dismissal every Friday

***Students will be supervised at all times during the above hours. Supervision is not provided before 7:30a.m.***

**Parents will be charged \$10.00 (per child) for every 15 minutes their child/children are dropped off before 7:30a.m. and/or picked up after 3:30pm (K-4) or 4:00pm (5-8). Failure to pay fees will result in student not being re-enrolled for the following school year.**

## Curriculum Overview

Students receive instruction in the following core academic areas:

Character and Citizenship	(120 minutes per week)
Reading	(400 minutes per week)
Language Arts	(400 minutes per week)
Math	(300 minutes per week)
Science	(150- 200 minutes per week)
Social Studies	(150- 200 minutes per week)

Critical skills including keyboarding, penmanship and technology literacy are integrated throughout the core academic areas above. Additional experiences in which all students participate include:

Renaissance Classes...45 minutes per week, including physical education, art, spanish, and other electives, including drama, choir, field experiences

### **Assessments**

Students will be assessed regularly both formally and informally. Formally assessment will usually occur on Fridays. However, assessments may be given at in time during the week, so consistent attendance by students on all school days is a must. Unexcused absences may result in a grade of zero percent for a given assignment.

### **Grading Philosophy**

The staff of Catalyst Catalyst Schools recognizes that a wide range of abilities, aptitudes, stages of cognitive development, and levels of maturity exist among students. Therefore, we support methods of assessment that encourage the individual in the development of work habits, skills, and attitudes necessary for students to become life long learners. Policies developed by teachers confirm this belief. Grading practices will:

- Reflect student achievement of curricular goals in respect to their abilities;
- Reflect numerous and varied age-appropriate opportunities for students to succeed and demonstrate knowledge of subject matter;
- Foster student responsibility by considering work quality, effort, and task performance;
- Promote good communication between students, parents, staff, and community.

### **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

Student achievement is formally documented through student report cards and progress reports.

**Report Cards** are given out at the end of each ten-week grading period. Grades given by teachers on report cards are final grades, and, therefore, are permanent and remain on the student's record.

**Progress Reports** are given to parents during Student Conferences, which are held at the midpoint of each ten-week grading period. These grades indicate the current progress of the student. They are intended to let parents/guardians know how their child is progressing in each subject. *Progress Report grades are not permanent.*

Parents/guardians are expected to review the progress reports and report cards with their child. Letter grades are given based on these teacher evaluations:

A	90-100%	Excellent progress
B	80-89%	Good progress
C	70-79%	Satisfactory progress, but could do better
F	Below 70%	Failing

### **Grading Formula**

Kindergarten: Standards based proficiency report, no grades are assigned

Grades 1 and 2: Test 45%, Quizzes 25%, Projects, Presentations, and Graded in-class independent assignments 30%

Grades 3-5: Tests 45%, Quizzes 25%, Projects, Presentations, and Graded in-class independent assignments 25%. Homework 5%  
Grades 6- 8: Tests 45%, Quizzes 25%, Projects, Presentations, and Graded in-class independent assignments 20%, Homework 10%

***It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to attend Progress Report Conferences and to ensure the presence of their child.***

### **Honor Roll**

Students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement throughout the course of a marking period, based on the criteria below, shall be recognized on the Honor Roll.

***“A” Honor Roll:***

Total GPA of 90% or higher  
No grade below 85%

***“B” Honor Roll:***

Total GPA of 85% or higher  
No grade below 80%

### **Graduation**

Students shall be issued a diploma upon successful completion of the following criteria:

1. Fulfillment of all academic and attendance requirements (see Promotion Criteria, below)
2. Achieving a passing grade on the United States and Illinois Constitution Tests
3. Payment of all fees

### **Promotion Criteria**

Students must meet the following yearlong criteria to pass:

1. Total Grade Average of 70% (C-) or better \*\*
2. Reading Average of 70% (C-) or better
3. Language Arts Average of 70% (C-) or better
4. Math Average of 70% (C-) or better
5. No more than 12 unexcused / uncompensated absences
6. No more than 12 unexcused / uncompensated tardies
7. Completion of fieldtrip or service hour requirements

\*\* All subjects (Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies and Physical Education, Art, Spanish, ARC) combine to form the Total Grade Average. All specials grades combine to form one Enrichment Grade.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an integral part of the school's academic and formative curriculum. Teachers regularly integrate them into their teaching throughout the year. Field trips are privileges afforded to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. Prior to the trip, the school requires the written consent of a parent/guardian, typically given by signing a permission slip provided by the school. The form must be returned to the school prior to the trip in order for the student to participate. Parents/guardians should generally assume that students should come to school in

uniform on days of field trips, unless otherwise noted.

Field trips are taken to enrich the educational experience of the students. Students who do not participate in field trips are missing important opportunities. If a student does not accompany the class or group on the trip, he or she is still expected to be in attendance at school. If a student chooses (or the parent/guardian chooses for them) to not attend a major field trip he or she will be required to compensate for the missed opportunity by completing service hours at the discretion of the principal.

### **Attendance**

Students must attend school every day in order to attain maximum success and achieve their fullest potential. Parents/guardians will help their children develop much needed self-discipline and important life skill by insisting and ensuring that students get to school on time each day.

Parents/guardians shall follow the guidelines below regarding attendance:

1. When a student must be absent due to sickness or family emergency, a parent/guardian must call to advise the school between 7:30 AM and 8:00 AM.
2. When a student returns from absence of fewer than 3 days, he or she must present a note of explanation, signed by a parent/guardian.
3. When a student returns from an absence of 3 days or more due to illness, he or she must present a doctor's note.
4. If possible, schedule doctor and other appointments on Friday after 1pm- outside of school hours.
5. Do not plan extended family trips or vacations during school time.

Students who accumulate excessive absences and/or tardies will be at risk of not being promoted or not graduating. Students on pace to exceed 12 unexcused absences will be considered candidates for being retained at their grade level.

A five (5) day truancy letter will be sent home stating that your child has been out of school for 5 days (total or cumulative) **without** valid cause. You will then be asked to consult with the social worker regarding the absences.

A ten (10) day truancy letter will be sent home will be sent home stating that your child has been out of school for 10 days (total or cumulative) **without** valid cause. You will then be asked to consult with the principal's designee to discuss the absences.

A twelve (12) day truancy letter (total or cumulative) will be sent home informing the parent that your child (ren) may be retained in the current grade, the next school year.

### **Late Arrival & Early Dismissal**

Students arriving late to school must present a note of explanation, signed by a parent/guardian. When it is absolutely necessary for a student to be excused from school for medical appointments or an emergency, a note must be sent to the school office. No student will be permitted to leave the building with any other person besides his/her parent/guardian or other authorized adult (21 years or older) specified in the note. A student release log must also be signed in the office when picking up the student. Upon returning, the student must likewise be signed-in at the office. In the cases of late arrival and early dismissal, absences and tardies

shall accumulate according to the following guidelines:

<u>Student Arrival</u>		<u>Student Dismissal</u>	
8:00-8:29	Tardy	8:00-9:29	Full Absence
8:30-9:59	¼ Absence	9:30-11:59	¾ Absence
10:00-11:59	½ Absence	12:00-1:59	½ Absence
12:00-1:59	¾ Absence	2:00 or later	¼ Absence
2:00 or later	Full Absence		

**(more on next pages)**

## HOME – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

### Home-School Teamwork and Communication

Communication between parents/guardians and teachers is an extremely critical factor in your child's education. The learning years are important in making the transition from home setting to school setting a smooth one. We encourage informal talks with teachers. It is important to stay in touch with the child's teacher. In order to keep you up to date on what is happening, you will be given a school calendar. Calendar updates will be given to the children each week and will be sent home in the information packet.

Your observations at home are as important as teaching observations when it comes to your child's education. Be sure to let the teacher know about special occasions in your family or any changes that take place in your child's life (birth of sibling, death of a loved one, etc.).

While the resources within the school are excellent, there are occasions when the school suggests that a child receive additional help, or evaluations (learning, psychological, speech/language, neurological, etc.). The teacher or principal usually makes these suggestions in consultation with the family.

Parent cooperation is essential in a child's education. Current research shows that the more parents are involved in the educational process of their son/daughter, the better their child performs. Parental involvement includes:

- **Attendance at the Mandatory Parent Meetings and Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences (once every 5 weeks).**
- Showing interest in homework assignments.
- Reading nightly with your son/daughter.
- Participating in school events, especially extracurricular activities.

### Homework

Homework is an integral part of the school experience. It also provides for a vital partnership between teacher and parents/guardians through which the student benefits greatly. A student's success in school is often a reflection of the support and assistance that parents/guardians offer. Through homework, the lifelong habit of study and responsibility can be established. In addition to reinforcing classroom learning, homework assignments help students develop independent study habits and give them opportunities to use their preferred learning styles. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to make sure that homework assignments are completed.

***Each student will have a homework sheet or homework planner in which he/she is to write the day's homework. The parents'/guardians' responsibility is to check this sheet or planner and sign it each night.***

*Every night*, your child will be expected to complete 30 minutes of reading and a math assignment at home. He or she will almost always have additional homework in other subjects. The following are some suggestions for the supervision of your child's homework:

1. See that books/materials come home regularly. **Look at what your child is bringing home.** Ask to see your child's homework assignment book. Don't accept the excuse that "I did it in school" or "There is no homework." Remember...there will *always* be reading.
2. See that your child does homework in an **appropriate atmosphere that is free of distractions** and has proper lighting, etc.
3. Develop regular routines for homework in the house, for example, setting a homework time at the same time each day.
4. Look at your son/daughter's homework and **check to be sure it is done completely and to the best of their ability.** Insist that your child bring their homework home for you to check even if they finished it in school. This way you can hold them accountable for doing their best quality work and stay in touch with what they are learning.
5. **Ask your child what he/she has learned each day.** Show interest in their progress/learning. Ask your child to explain the concepts or information to you. If your child can't explain it to your satisfaction, he/she needs to study again or perhaps ask a question in class the next day.

If you have any questions about your child's homework or academic progress, please contact his or her teacher with any questions or to set up an appointment for a meeting. Homework accounts for 5% of a student's overall grade in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> and 10% of a student's overall grade on grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Progress Report Conferences and Parent Meetings**

Parents/guardians are required to attend all scheduled Progress Report Conferences and Parent Meetings. There are Progress Report Conferences scheduled throughout the academic year at five week intervals. In addition, one Parent Meeting is scheduled just prior to the start of each school year, and additional Parent Meetings may be scheduled throughout the year as necessary, particularly for parents/guardians of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students as they move through the high school discernment and admissions process.

**Progress report Conferences** occur in the middle of each grading period and must be attended by at least one (but preferably both) parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student. Conference times are generally arranged through the school office at least one week in advance. At this conference students and their parents meet individually with their teachers to discuss the achievement of the student during the marking period and receive his/her Progress Report. This communication among parents, teachers, and students is very helpful in setting a climate for cooperation between the home and school and in letting students know that their parents are interested and actively involved in their education.

***It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to attend Progress Report Conferences and to ensure the presence of their student.***

In addition to these conferences, parents/guardians are always welcome to call the school to make an appointment with a teacher or principal at any time during the year.

### **Conflict Management & Resolution**

As in all human relations, occasions will arise when, due to a lack of communication, some differences of opinion may arise between a teacher and parent/guardian. School policy dictates that any such occasion must first be dealt with in a meeting between the parent/guardian and the teacher, which may be arranged by telephone or in writing. If the teacher-parent/guardian meeting has proven unsatisfactory, an appointment may be made with a member of the Administrative team to further discuss the problem. For the sake of the student and in order to establish respectful relationships, it is best to keep differences between a parent and a teacher in confidence and not voice them in front of the student, other students, or other parents/guardians. Parents in violation of this policy will not be allowed beyond the front office of the school. Teachers in violation of this policy will receive a cautionary notice.

### **Visiting the School/Appointments**

You may feel free to discuss matters with the principal or conduct business with the school secretary at any time during scheduled office hours. During the regular school term, office hours are from 7:30 AM until 3:00 PM Monday through Friday. It is generally best to call for an appointment prior to visiting the school office to transit school business or meet with the school principal. If you wish to talk to a teacher, you may make an appointment either by writing a note or by arranging a time convenient to both parties through the school secretary. Teachers will not be called from their rooms to talk to a parent while classes are in session.

### **Weekly Information Packets**

Every week, typically on Tuesday, an information packet will be sent home with your child in a green folder, within a green folder, with important announcements and materials. This information will keep parents up-to-date with school related issues and activities. Parents/guardians must return the folder with appropriate documents signed to school the next day.

### **School Closing**

Catalysts Schools will close due to inclement weather only when the Chicago Public Schools closes all Public schools. Listen to local stations for more information. Catalyst staff will also leave a message on the schools answering machine with any school closing details.

### **Change of Address/Telephone**

If a change is made in an address (home or work) or telephone number, please notify the school office in writing immediately. It is very important that the school records be kept up-to-date so that parents/guardians can be contacted in an event of an emergency and so communication is not interrupted.

### **Student Conduct**

The essence of healthy discipline is self-discipline. The student must be free to choose one form of behavior or another, and to take upon him/herself the consequences of that chosen action. Respect, order and self-control are an outgrowth of good teaching at home and the

school. A self-disciplined child is one who takes responsibility for his/her actions and has control over them. A child first learns self-discipline at home. The faculty will work to maintain good order and discipline at all times: In the classroom, on school grounds, and at all school events. Courtesy, respect and charity are the corner stones of the Catalyst code of conduct. Ultimately, students are taught to adhere to the ancient maxim "Treat other people as you would like to be treated by them."

### **BIST (Behavior Intervention Support Team)**

Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School employs elements of the classroom and student behavior management model known as BIST. The goal of the BIST model is to help students manage their behavior in a way that does not interfere with their own learning and/or the learning of others and is not hurtful towards others. There are three skills that we focus on with students in order for them to learn to manage their behavior successfully and lead happy, productive lives both in the present and into the future. These skills are:

1. To make good choices for yourself even when you are mad
2. Do something even if you don't want to
3. To be okay (control oneself), when others are not okay

A central aspect of the BIST model is the Recovery Process, which employs "Safe Spots" to which students may be asked to go when displaying behavior that is disruptive, hurtful, or destructive. A Safe Spot is a non-judgmental place where a student can go to help himself or herself stop acting out and to calm down so that he or she does not have to get into trouble.

### **Safety Seat:**

The safety seat is a designated area in the student's regular classroom. It is intended to provide a safe place for students where their inappropriate behavior can stop and the student can begin "taking responsibility" for the behavior while continuing their academic course work.

### **Recovery:**

Recovery provides a safe place for students who are having difficulty controlling their behavior to the extent that the regular classroom is not the safest place for them. Depending on a student's progress, they may spend extended time in recovery room while working to meet the goals of their plan. When a student is asked to go the recovery room the parents/guardians will be notified. However, a teacher or administrator may chose to notify you about your child's behavior at any time. In the recovery room:

1. Students will be given time to think through the situation.
2. Students will begin taking responsibility for their actions.
3. Students will develop a behavior plan with teachers.
4. Students will receive and be expected to complete all classroom assignments.
5. Teachers will regularly check in with students in Recovery to provide instruction and assignments.

## **Serious Acts of Misconduct**

While the BIST model is an effective management tool in addressing disruptive, hurtful, and destructive behaviors, some student behaviors warrant more serious disciplinary measures in order to maintain the safety of both the school community and the offending student. Serious acts of misconduct which may warrant more serious disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Smoking, defined as holding a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe in or around school property.
- Failing to attend class or school without a valid excuse.
- Persisting in serious acts of disobedience or disorderly behavior.
- Making indecent, immoral, obscene, or offensive propositions or exhibitions.
- Vandalism of school or student property. This includes any form of graffiti.
- Possessing, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, a knife, laser pointer, gun, air gun, or any object that could be considered a dangerous weapon.
- False activation of a fire alarm.
- Assault of any student, teacher, or school personnel.
- Possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs at school or any school event.
- Use of intimidation, coercion, or force against any student or school personnel.
- Involvement with gangs and/or carrying out gang-related activities on or near school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, including the writing or flashing of gang signs or symbols on any school or personal property.

Potential disciplinary actions for acts of misconduct outlined above may include one or more of the following, at the discretion of the Principal, Assistant Principal, and/or Behavior Management Coordinator:

- Teacher-student-parent-principal (or principal designee) conference
- Detention
- Behavior contract
- Suspension
- Police notification
- Suspension
- Expulsion

## **Suspension**

Suspension is the isolation of the pupil from school and all school related activities. Parents will be notified. Days that a student is suspended will be counted as excused absences. A suspended student is personally responsible for assignments and subject matter covered in class during the enforced suspension. A conference with the parent and child is required for re-admittance. Except in unusual cases, the suspension should not exceed one (1) week. Suspension is ordinarily invoked to ensure the safety of members of the school community, prevent disruption of the school environment and to assist the affected pupil in overcoming a disciplinary problem.

## **Expulsion**

An expulsion is the termination of the pupil's privilege to attend the school and requires transfer of the pupil to another school. Except in extreme cases, expulsion will be imposed only after a period

of suspension and/or probation. Expulsion is ordinarily invoked to ensure the safety of members of the school community or prevent disruption of the school environment.

Please refer to the Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School Student Code of Conduct for complete explanation of disciplinary consequences. (To be distributed upon CPS Board Approval)

### **Substance Abuse**

Catalyst Schools is aware of the dangers and problems of substance use and abuse in the school and community. The safety and well being of the Catalyst students, staff, teachers and community demands all members of the catalyst family are free of the effects of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Therefore, Catalyst Schools does everything it can to provide a drug and alcohol-free school environment by early detection, intervention and prevention of the use or the effect of such substances in the school, in school operated buildings, on school property, and during school sponsored events.

The misuse of drugs and/or alcohol by any one is an unsafe practice. Students, administrators, or staff abusing drugs and/or alcohol create an increased risk to the safety of themselves, other students, and the public.

Accordingly, it shall be the policy that any student, administrator, or staff member found to be in possession of, under the influence of, impaired by, using, selling, offering for sale, or trading drugs and/or alcohol during school hours, while on Catalyst property including parking lots or while involved in a school sponsored event is in violation of this policy which may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Catalyst Schools recognizes that drug use and/or alcohol abuse by students, administrators, or staff member may be an illness for which treatment and rehabilitation programs can be made available to the parent/guardian for their son/daughter or to the staff member. Parents and professional substance abuse professionals may be brought in for collaborative evaluation, assessment, and recommendation of treatment when indicated. Students, administrators or a staff member suspended for drug and/or alcohol abuse MUST meet all recommendations by the referral agency/substance abuse professional in order to be accepted back into school and to remain in school.

Suspected drug and/or alcohol use by students, administrators, or staff and identified by staff, parents, or other students should be responded to immediately. Suspected drug and/or alcohol abuse can be a result of observation of suspicious behavior, behavioral changes, attitudinal changes, attendance problems, non-responsiveness or failing of classes or duties, etc. Catalyst Schools realizes that there may be many reasons other than drug and/or alcohol use for these changes or observations such as medical problems, family problems, peer pressure, etc. Therefore, professional school counselors and parents should be consulted prior to making any allegations and/or referrals. The principal or his/her supervisor, in an expedient fashion, shall coordinate referral sources for drug and/or alcohol testing, student or staff assessment and evaluation when indicated.

Any student, administrator or staff member observed in the school, on school property or during a school sponsored event in the possession of illegal drugs, controlled substances and/or alcohol is in violation of this policy, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion. Such possession shall be immediately reported to local law enforcement offices for confiscation and appropriate action, as well as (in the case of a student) to the student's parent/guardian. Upon confirmation by local law enforcement officials of the substance confiscated – student or staff member involved should be immediately suspended.

Any student, administrator or staff member identified as using or selling drugs may be required to undergo drug and/or alcohol testing. Upon returning to school, random drug testing may be scheduled and the results monitored by professionals to insure that the level of drug(s) and/or alcohol detected is decreasing. This process should be as recommended by the substance abuse professional and should be scheduled in collaboration with the parents/guardians of the involved student(s). The purpose of this random testing is to insure the person remains free of drugs and/or alcohol as a deterrent to abuse.

Any student, administrator or staff member who is arrested for off-school drug activity may be considered to be in violation of this policy. In deciding what action to take, Catalyst Schools principal and involved staff shall take into consideration the nature of the charges, the student's, administrator's, or staff member's participation in the charges, the student's school record or the administrator or staff member's performance record, parent/guardian input and other factors relative to the situation.

Any and all information developed or obtained on a student, administrator, or staff member relative to violation of this policy shall be construed as confidential information and shall only be disclosed to those persons who have a "need to know" for the assessment, evaluation, treatment, and on-going support of the student(s) or staff and administration. Absolutely no action shall ever be taken without the direct knowledge of the student's parent/guardian.

### **School Uniform and Dress Code**

Students are expected to be in complete, presentable, and clean uniform each day. Proper grooming is expected of each student. This includes routine bathing, proper care of hair, and neat uniform. While students are encouraged to take responsibility for meeting the school uniform code, **it is ultimately the responsibility of parents/guardians to see that their children are in complete uniform each day.** If it is absolutely necessary for a student to attend school without a complete uniform, a note must accompany the child, explaining the reason why he/she is out of uniform. In this case, the student must still be dressed in appropriate attire and may attend classes for up to two days without a complete uniform. A note explaining non-compliance will only be accepted from a student once.

***If a student comes to school out of uniform without a note, he or she shall not be allowed into the regular classroom, until the uniform issue is resolved. The school shall attempt to contact a parent/guardian so that they may be informed of the issue and come to school bringing with them the necessary uniform items.***

Students will present a neat and clean appearance at all times. Inappropriate dress, extreme hairstyles, accessories (rings, bracelets, large hoops or dangling earrings) or the wearing of make-up or brightly colored nail polish will not be allowed. Spiked hair, tails, and razor cut hair with designs are considered inappropriate. Any questionable hairstyles will be dealt with at the discretion of the Principal and/or Assistant Principal.

The good will and cooperation of all is expected. Gym shorts and shirts, polo shirts, and sweaters will be purchased exclusively through **SchoolBelles**. Uniform and dress code guidelines are as follows: khaki pants may be purchase from a different vendor.

Acceptable Dress – All Uniform Items (Excluding shoes) Must be Purchased exclusively through SchoolBelles: any items worn that are not purchased through SchoolBelles will be considered non-uniform items.

- Khaki dress pants – Required
- Hunter Green polo shirt – Required
- Hunter Green sweater or sweater-vest – Required
- White oxford and Hunter Green tie (young men)/bow-tie (young Women) – Required 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only. (long sleeves winter/short sleeves may be worn in May and June)
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade students should purchase white oxfords and ties – 7<sup>th</sup> grade students should not purchase additional green polos, but should wear their green polo shirts (purchased during the 09/10 school year) the first and second weeks of school Sept. 8 – Sept. 18 (in preparation for our leadership Ceremony)
- Black Belt
- All black dress shoes; No Black Gym Shoes or any kind. Athletic shoes while in the gym only
- Socks of any solid color
- Small post or hoop earrings (girls only)

#### **Unacceptable Dress**

- Make-up is not allowed; brightly colored nail polish
- Rings, bracelets, large or dangling earrings
- Jackets, sweatshirts, and hats may not be worn in class
- Inappropriate hair styles (outlined above)
- Gym shoes (except in the gym), boots, or dress shoes that are not all black
- Open-toe sandals, flip flops or mules
- Shirt un-tucked
- White oxford shirt sleeves rolled up White oxford

**Any student not in compliance with these specifications is in violation of the Catalyst Student Code of conduct. 10 or more violations of the Uniform policy will result in the student being expelled from the Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School and the Catalyst Schools Network of Schools.**

### **Arrival and Dismissal of Students to and from School**

All guidelines for student conduct shall apply on school grounds before, during, and after school hours and school events. School grounds shall be defined as West End Ave. to the North, Washington Blvd. to the South, Central Ave. to the East and Parkside Ave. to the West.

Students walking to school should cross the streets only at corners. In particular, students are required to obey the Chicago Police Department crossing guard at any intersection where they are present. Students are also required to obey all school personnel during dismissal time. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

School doors open at 7:30 AM. Students are to report to the Auditorium/Gym at that time for the beginning of the day assemblage. Supervision is provided each morning beginning at 7:30AM. No supervision is available for students prior to 7:30AM. Breakfast begins at 7:30AM. Students eating breakfast at school must arrive before 7:40 AM, and no students will be admitted to breakfast after 7:50am. Students arriving to school after 8:00 AM are considered tardy and must go directly to the office or security desk to receive a tardy slip.

Dismissal time outside the school can be a potential for accidents. Parents/guardians are asked to be especially careful when dropping students off or picking them up. **By Police Order- Please do not double park when picking students up on Washington Blvd. or Central Ave.** While most students will leave the building immediately after dismissal each day, there are times when a student will be requested to remain in school for special help, disciplinary reasons, or on a volunteer basis to help the teacher. If a student must remain after school, a teacher or other member of the school staff will attempt to call the home to notify a parent/guardian. This does not include activities previously arranged such as athletics, clubs, or tutoring. Monday through Thursday K-4 students will be dismissed at 3:30 PM. Students in Grades 5-8 will be dismissed at 4:00pm. Students in grades K-4, who have siblings in grades 5-8 will participate in a study hall from 3:30- 4:00pm awaiting the dismissal of their 5-8<sup>th</sup> graded siblings. All 5-8 Grade students will be dismissed onto Parkside. Students in Grades 5-8 with K-4 siblings will dismiss as one group out of the Washington Street exit. **On Fridays Dismissal is at 1:00PM.**

### **Prohibited Items at School**

Money, games, or any articles that cause distractions at school are to be left at home. Teachers or administrators may confiscate any such item exhibited at school, such as video games, toys, portable CD players, or walkmans that is deemed disruptive or potentially disruptive of the learning process. Confiscated items will be kept in the school office and released only to a parent/guardian. This policy is in your child's best interest. Besides their potential to disrupt classes, such items can be lost, broken, or stolen. The school is not liable for any lost, stolen, or broken items or lost money. This policy also applies to after school activities and off-campus activities such as field trips.

### **Search and Seizure**

The school reserves the right to inspect all school property. Also, the school reserves the right to

inspect all student property brought to the school, including book bags, school supplies, and jackets when there is sufficient concern for the safety of the students. The school may confiscate any suspicious, inappropriate, or questionable material found during such searches.

### **Sexual and other Unlawful Harassment**

Sexual harassment of one staff member by another, of a student by a staff member, of a staff member by a student, or of one student by another is unacceptable conduct. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, physical appearance, or ability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Harassment consists of unwelcome statements or actions based on these characteristics or any other status that are sufficiently severe or pervasive. To interfere with an individual's work performance or participation in a program, or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment is strictly prohibited. Staff members or students who engage in any type of sexual or other harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, including or expulsionsuspension or expulsion.

Retaliation in any form against a staff member or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited, and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action. Any staff member or student, who knowingly makes false charges against a staff member or a student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse or embarrass that individual shall be subject to the sanctions for misconduct set forth above.

Any student or parent who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly take the matter to the principal or other school official. Catalyst Schools will determine the facts regarding any allegations of harassment in a prompt and confidential manner and will take appropriate corrective action when warranted.

### **Acceptable Use Policy for the Use of Computers & Telecommunications**

Computers, computer software, Internet connections, and all data storage and retrieval systems are the property of Catalyst Schools and not of staff or students. Computers and related technologies are provided for educational purposes. Staff and students are given the privilege of their use. Catalyst Schools expects all who are afforded use of computer and related technologies to use them for their intended educational purpose and in ethical and legal ways.

Examples of unethical or illegal use include:

- Transmission of material in violation of the law: threatening, harassing, bullying, pornographic or obscene material;
- The use of Catalyst equipment for personal financial gain, political lobbying, sending chain letters, junk mail, or product advertisement;
- Harming or destroying or changing another person's files or data;
- Creation and/or deliberate dissemination of computer viruses;
- Reading, copying, deleting or modifying another person's data without that person's expressed permission;
- Willful destruction of computer hardware or software;

- Posing as or pretending to be someone else in electronic communication;
- Utilizing social networking sites or chat room sites to threaten, harass, bully or send pornographic or obscene material to any Catalyst student or staff member.
- Any student in violation of the Acceptable Use Policy will be held accountable to the consequences set forth in the Student Code of Conduct Manual.

***Violations of the above may result in the suspension or revocation of computer use privileges as well as possible other disciplinary action including legal action. In addition, monetary remuneration will be sought for damage that causes the school to repair or replace equipment.***

Catalyst maintains the computer equipment and related systems but cannot guarantee anyone's privacy or the confidentiality of anyone's electronic documents or email. Catalyst reserves the right to access email to retrieve information and records, to do routine computer maintenance and housekeeping, or to comply with law enforcement agencies by disclosing electronically saved information. Anything contained on the school's hard drive computer disks, which are purchased by the school, is property of Catalyst Schools. Students and parents/guardians are required to read, sign, and submit the technology consent and agreement forms found at the end of this handbook. Any student who does not have these signed forms on file may be denied use of technology resources at Catalyst.

(more on next pages)

## **GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Child Abuse/Neglect by a Parent/Guardian**

If school personnel suspect child abuse or neglect by a person responsible for a student's welfare, they are mandated by the State of Illinois to report the suspicion to proper authorities.

### **Privacy and Release of School Records**

Catalyst abides by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (P. L. 93-380) with respect to parent/guardian right of access to their child's school records. The school also abides by the provisions of the Illinois law regarding the right of access of the non-custodial parent to their children's school records. Regardless of custody, both parents have the right to inspect and receive a copy of school records and reports in the absence of a court order to the contrary. Furthermore, parents/guardians have certain rights with respect to their child's records. These rights include:

Right to inspect: Parents/guardians have the right to look at all of their child's records maintained in the official school office. If parents are divorced or separated, the school presumes that both parents have access to the child's records unless otherwise stated by court order.

Right to prevent disclosures: The school will not disclose anything to third parties from a student's records unless a) the parent/guardian consents in writing prior to the disclosure or b) the information is directory information, not requested to be kept confidential.

Right to request information: Parents/guardians have the right to present evidence that the school should amend any part of the student's record which they believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise a violation of students' rights. If the school decides not to change the record, parents/guardians may insert an explanation in the record.

### **School Fees**

Catalyst requires parents/guardians to pay \$60 per year (which can be paid in increments of \$20.00 three times a year) The school fee is used to defray the cost of renaissance programming (i.e Educational Endeavors, Muntu Dance etc.,) Field trip costs are the responsibility of parents unless otherwise notified by the school. Failure to pay the school fee may result in your child not be re-enrolled for the following school year.

### **Illness**

**If a student has symptoms of a cold or the flu, which may include but are not limited to: a sore throat, earache, runny nose, skin rash, eye infection or elevated temperature of 99.6 F., the student should be kept at home.** If a student becomes ill during the school day, a parent/guardian will be contacted at home or work. Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up their child. The student will not be dismissed until a parent/guardian or other authorized adult comes to the school office to sign the student out.

### **Communicable Diseases**

When a child has been absent due to a communicable disease, a doctor's note must be presented to the teacher upon returning to school. The following diseases require exclusion from school: lice, scabies, chicken pox (no fewer than six days after outbreak), German measles (five days after appearance of rash), and mumps (nine days and until all swelling is gone).

### **Immunizations, Medical and Dental Examinations, and School Exclusion**

Illinois State Law requires that every student's parents/guardians present to the school proof of immunization from communicable disease. This information must be on file for every student in school. The Department of Public Health requires proof of immunity from Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Poliomyelitis, Measles, Rubella, and Hepatitis B. The mumps vaccine is strongly recommended. Also in compliance with state law, all students must have records of a current medical examination on file, and sixth graders must present records of recent dental examination or the appropriate waivers. Any student whose parent/guardian has not presented proof of a required health examination, dental examination, or immunizations by the stated deadline shall be excluded from school. Illinois law generally sets this deadline as September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year.

### **Administration of Medication**

No school employee or representative shall dispense medication of any kind to students without the expressed, written consent and direction of a parent/guardian. In general, parents are encouraged to come to the school and dispense any drugs the child may need. When a student requires daily medication for a chronic condition, a written note from both a parent/guardian and the prescribing physician must be presented specifying the exact dosage and time for administration. All such medication must be registered and kept in the school office. Students may not carry any medication. A student may not self-administer any medication without their primary care physicians and parents consent.

### **Excused from Fitness Activities**

To be excused from a fitness class, a written request from the parent or guardian is required. If a child is to miss more than one week of fitness class, a note from the doctor is required. Should a child have any health conditions that would prohibit him/her from certain classroom or other school activities, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the teacher, in writing, of this condition; a note from the doctor is also expected and will be kept on file.

### **Insurance**

Catalyst Schools has obtained insurance as required by law with respect to the Catalyst School. Catalyst Schools has obtained insurance as required by law with students during school hours and when participating in any activity related to school.

### **Crises, Emergencies, and Emergency Contact Information**

In the event of a crisis, the school crisis plan will be put into effect and parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible. If a student becomes ill or is the victim of an accident during the

school day, the school will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact person. If the parent/guardian, family physician, or the adult listed as emergency cannot be reached, one or more school representatives shall seek emergency medical care on behalf of the student. It is extremely important that each student has accurate emergency contact information on file in the school office. If any such information changes during the year, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to notify the school immediately. It is extremely important that the school be able to easily and quickly reach at least one parent/guardian at any time during the school day or a school-sponsored event. In accordance with state law, the school will routinely conduct fire and disaster drills. All students are made aware of the exits and precautions to be taken and must obey all directions given by school staff during drills and actual emergencies. If a tornado warning is in effect, the students will be taken to a safe place. If a tornado warning occurs near dismissal time, students will not be dismissed until the warning has expired.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

- Students may carry a cell phone to school ONLY if the parent/guardian signs a written consent granting the child permission to do so.
- If the child has permission, the phone MUST be turned in to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the school day upon entering class. The phone MAY NOT be kept in the child's pocket.
- The phone must remain SHUT OFF, and may not be used until dismissal or in the case of emergency with the teacher's permission.
- If the phone rings during class, or the child is using it at times other than at dismissal, it will be confiscated and held in the office. The parent must pick it up for it to be returned.
- Abuse of cell phone policy will result in student not being able to carry a cell phone to school, even with parental consent.

### **Right to Amend Handbook**

Catalyst Schools retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause.

## Parent/Guardian and Student Handbook Agreement

I/we have read the Catalyst Schools Parent/Guardian and Student Handbook and agree to be governed by the policies and guidelines contained herein.

Parent/Guardian 1 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian 2 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Use of School Computers and Telecommunications

## Parental Consent Form

Catalyst Schools has chosen to permit students access to computer and telecommunication resources to further its educational goals and objectives. Reasonable care has been taken to assure the appropriateness and educational quality of the material available through the use of educational software and telecommunications. However, parents and guardians are warned that Catalyst Schools does not have total control of the information on the Internet. Parents and guardians are the primary authority responsible for imparting the standards of ethical and legal conduct their child or ward should follow. Therefore, Catalyst Schools supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not their child may have access to this resource.

1. I am the parent/guardian of the below named student. I have read the **Acceptable Use Policy for Computers & Telecommunications** ("the policy") and I have either explained it to my child/ward ("student") or I have assured myself that the student understands it. I also understand my own and the student's responsibilities regarding computer hardware, software, and Internet access at Catalyst.

2. **Check one:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I hereby consent to my child's having access to, and use of the telecommunications resources at Catalyst. I also hereby indemnify and hold harmless Catalyst Schools from any claims or loss resulting from any infraction by my child of the policy or any applicable law.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not consent to my child's having access to, or use of, the telecommunications resources at Catalyst.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent/Guardian (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

# Use of School Computers and Telecommunications

## Student Agreement Form

I have read the **Acceptable Use Policy for Computers and Telecommunications**. I understand its significance, and I agree to voluntarily abide with all terms and conditions\_of it. I further understand that violation of this agreement would be unethical and might even constitute a criminal offense. Should I choose to violate this agreement, my privileges will be revoked and disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

---

Student Signature

---

Date

---

Name of Student (please print)

---

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print)

---

Street Address

---

City/State/Zip

## Promise Between Parent/Guardian and the The Catalyst Charter Schools

As a parent of a student at Catalyst Charter School, I commit to these actions and terms on behalf of my child:

- I will provide my child with a quiet, orderly place at home to complete each night's homework; I will check my child's homework every night, and I will only accept his or her best performance;
- I will be sure my child gets to school on time.
- I will be sure my child eats breakfast, either at home or at school;
- I will send my child to school each day dressed in a clean school uniform and I know I need to send my child with a written note if there is any reason why he or she is not in the school uniform. **I understand that my child will not be allowed in the classroom if he or she is not in uniform. I also understand I will be called if my child is out of uniform without a note from me;**
- I will keep my child out of school only for **reasons of illness or family emergencies.**
- I will call the school NO LATER than 8:00 a.m. on any day I know my child will be absent or late; I will send a note with my child the day he or she returns to school after being out. If I feel there is an issue that needs to be discussed with a teacher or the school, I will do so quickly and in private with the teacher or principal; I will not be negative about a teacher or the school in front of my child;
- I will work together with my child's teacher, and I will be supportive of the teachers' efforts to correct inappropriate behavior;
- I will attend every student conference and every parent meeting throughout the year. I understand that if I miss any such conferences or meetings, I will have to accompany my child to school before he or she is admitted to any subsequent class;
- If my child cannot walk home alone and must be picked up after school, I will arrive at the proper place to pick up my child NO LATER than 10 minutes after dismissal.

---

Name of student

---

Signature of student

---

Parent or legal guardian

---

Principal

## Parental Consent Form

### Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Permission for child to receive counseling and other social work services when deemed appropriate during school hours at Catalyst Schools – Howland Campus

---

Student Name

Date of Birth

---

Home Address

As the parent or guardian of the above named child, I hereby grant permission for my; child to receive counseling and other social work services during school hours when the staff of Catalyst Schools believes it will help my child.

---

Parent/Guardian

---

Address

---

Home Phone

Work Phone

Mobile Phone

---

Date of Consent

## Consent, Waiver, and Release

I hereby grant irrevocable and unrestricted consent for me or my child to be photographed and/or videotaped by Catalyst Schools and or any/person or entity acting with its authority and permission. I consent to the release, use, re-use, publication, republication, exhibition, alteration and reproduction, in any medium whatsoever, of any and all resulting materials, in any form, including digital form by Catalyst Schools to its designate agents, for public relations, news articles or telecasts, education, advertising, research, inclusion on the Catalyst website, fundraising or any other such purpose. Catalyst Schools will not use identifying information other than a child's name in association with a photograph, publication, republication, exhibition, alteration or reproduction in any medium or form (no phone numbers, addresses, neighborhoods or other personally identifying information – except names - will be used).

I waive any ownership interest I may have in any and all original footage, negatives, and positives, and otherwise finished photographs and videos, including those in digital format and agree that said materials shall become the sole property of Catalyst Schools. I hereby grant to Catalyst Schools, the irrevocable and unrestricted right and permission to copyright, in its own name or otherwise, the aforementioned materials in which I or my child may be depicted, as well as any alterations of same, without restrictions as to alterations made through any medium now or hereafter known.

I waive all rights to inspect or approve any photograph, video, or film taken by Catalyst Schools or any person or entity designated by it. I waive all right that I may have to any claims for compensation, payment or royalties in connection with the creation, exhibition, broadcasting, or other publication and irrespective of whether a fee for admission is charged.

I release Catalyst Schools and its officers, employees and agents, from any liability connected with the creation, recording, publication, and/or use of said photographs, videos, and/or recordings, and from any liability arising by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form, whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the use of the materials.

I declare that I am either (i) eighteen (18) years of age and am legally competent to execute this release, or (ii) that I am under eighteen (18) years of age and have acquired the written consent (which is affixed to this document) of my parent or guardian named below. Their signature indicates they have read and understood this document before signing. I understand that the terms herein are contractual and not a mere recital, that this instrument is legally binding, and that I have voluntarily signed this document,

I have fully read and informed myself of the terms of this consent, waiver and release before signing it.

---

Name (print clearly)

---

Signature

---

Date

---

Address

---

Home phone

Work phone

Mobile phone

## Parental Authorization for Self-Administered Medication

I, \_\_\_\_\_ parent/guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_, a student at Catalyst Schools – Circle Rock Campus,  
hereby request and authorize school personnel to administer the following medication to my child:

---

Name of medication

---

dosage

---

time(s) when it is to be administered

---

Name of physician who prescribed the medication

Physician's phone number

I understand that the medication must be delivered to the school office in its ORIGINAL CONTAINER.

I understand that if the medication is a prescription medication, the pharmacy label must show the student's name, the date prescribed, and the name of the medication, the dosage, and times to be taken, the expiration date, the prescribing physician, the name and address of the pharmacy.

## Permission to Release Confidential Records

Re: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student

I hereby request and authorize \_\_\_\_\_ to exchange and share information with the following agency/individual by phone, postal service or email:

The Catalyst Schools- Circle Rock Charter  
5608 W. Washington Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60644

### Information to be released:

- **Name, address, telephone, ethnicity, gender, grade, age, birth date, etc.**
- **Academic records (includes coursework, grades, attendance, class rank, extra curricular activities, etc.)**
- **Performance records (includes aptitude and achievement tests results and results from all standardized tests, IEP, special education, etc.)**
- **Medical and related health records**
- **Psychological evaluations and/or social work reports**
- **Disciplinary evaluations and related reports**

---

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date