



# Family Handbook

**A.C.H.I.E.V.E.**

**Accountability, Community, Hard Work, Integrity, Empathy, Vision, Excellence**

## MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

Dear Parent/Guardian:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Amani Public Charter School. When Mr. Stern and I began to plan to open a Charter School we could never have imagined that we would be here 12 years later continuing to close the achievement and opportunity gap for our scholars.

It is my privilege to have this opportunity to get to know you and your family over the time that you are with us at Amani. It is our goal to surround your scholars with a strong and coherent message that they are loved, that they are special, that they are smart, that they are filled with a positive light and energy. We are thrilled to be working in partnership with you to support your child's academic, social and emotional growth throughout their time at Amani.

We are pleased to present you with this parent handbook. The handbook provides information that explains the code of conduct and policies upheld at Amani. It also offers information about how your child's progress is measured.

As specific questions arise over the course of the year, please refer to this handbook to address your inquiries. Please feel free to call the school or your child's teacher with any additional questions you may have.

Parents play an integral role in their children's education and in making our community great. We cannot achieve the mission of Amani without you. We encourage you to participate in our PTA, our programs and extracurricular activities.

I thank you in advance for believing in our school and working together with us to best support your child's growth this year. As always, we have the highest of expectations for our scholars and for our community. At Amani we are intent on closing both the achievement and opportunity gap for our scholars by providing a multitude of experiences both inside and outside of the classroom that are aligned with the mission.

## **Board of Trustees**

The Amani Board is ultimately responsible for the strategic goals of the school. The Board adopts the school's budget and has fiduciary oversight of the institution. The Board sets clear priorities and strategic vision for the school that we then execute against. It is the role of the Executive Director to direct the school to achieve its missions and vision aligning with the goals and strategic planning of the Board.

## **The Mission of Amani Public Charter School**

The mission of the Amani Public Charter School is to provide 100% of Mount Vernon Scholars who attend the school from the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade with the academic and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in competitive high school programs, college and the careers of their choice. Amani graduates are academically accomplished, intellectually curious, and civically engaged young people who tackle challenges diligently and creatively.

## **The Vision of Amani Public Charter School**

### ***Rigorous Academic Program***

We will develop a standards-based, rigorous academic program, with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy.

### ***Ridiculously Great Teaching***

Without Great Teachers, Nothing Else Matters. Our faculty will be the champions and the backbone of the Amani community.

### ***Strong School Culture***

We will create a purposefully structured environment marked by rules, rituals and routines.

## **Core Values**

Our core values will lay the foundation for our scholars to grow into mature young adults. These values will prepare our scholars for an exciting and rewarding future and allow you to make a difference in your community. Scholars are expected to learn these values, practice them, and model them for your peers, families, and future Amani scholars.

**Accountability** is being responsible for your actions and Scholar obligations.

**Community** is providing service to others and accepting differences through collaborative efforts and democratic actions.

**Hard Work** is putting forth your best effort, going the extra mile, and never giving up in order to advance in your academics.

**Integrity** is being true to your values and doing the right thing when no one is looking.

**Empathy** is to identify with and understand feelings and situations of others.

**Vision** is setting short and long-term goals for yourself, dreaming big, and striving to better yourself.

**Excellence** is striving for a high standard in your daily actions no matter how big or small.

## **Academic Policies**

### *Preparedness*

Scholars are expected to come to school prepared with their educational tools. How can you learn if you have no pen and paper? If scholars have misplaced any of their tools, they should speak to their teacher immediately before instruction has started. All binders must be neatly organized and scholars must not have any loose papers in their book bags or desks.

### *Reading*

Every member of the Amani community will participate in DEAR. During DEAR time, scholars are allowed to read any appropriate piece of material and can bring in books from home. DEAR will take place every day in addition to independent reading for homework. All scholars must enter DEAR and begin reading. If an adult is scheduled to read with a scholar or a scholar needs to be pulled out for other academic reasons, scholars must wait until that adult arrives to retrieve them

### *Homework Expectations*

All Amani scholars are assigned homework every night and on weekends. Homework packets are assigned for extended vacations from school and are expected to be completed upon return to school. All scholars will go home with a book from the classroom and will be assigned reading every night. Homework reinforces the learning that scholars are doing in their classrooms. Homework is assigned to establish patterns of responsibility and help scholars develop strong study habits. Homework may also be assigned through an online learning tool. For example, Khan Academy, Renaissance Learning, etc.

Parents are expected to check all homework before scholars turn in assignments. Some homework assignments may involve the participation of family members. All Amani scholars are expected to submit homework of the highest quality. This includes neat handwriting and clean and wrinkle-free sheets of papers.

### Amani Honor Roll

The Amani Public Charter School honor roll is designed to recognize student achievement. All Amani scholars have the opportunity to make honor roll each quarter, which includes public acknowledgment and certificates. Scholars can achieve this distinction by meeting the following criteria:

- High Honor Roll w/ Distinction 95 and above GPA
- High Honor Roll - 90- 94.9 GPA
- Honor Roll - 85 - 89.9 GPA
- There must be no grade below a C. (Below a 70)
- Having NO significant disciplinary action taken involving the Dean of Scholars and Families
- Having three or fewer unexcused absences (per quarter)
- Having three or fewer unexcused late arrivals (per quarter)

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

The instructional program at the Amani is specifically designed to meet all of the NYS CCLS. Our goal is for students to meet and exceed performance and assessment standards. Instruction is age/grade appropriate, with strong emphasis on numeracy and literacy.

### Course Breakdown

ELA

Math

Science

Social Studies

Music and Arts

Languages Other Than English

Advisory

PE and Health

Athletics

Assessments

ALSO INCLUDING GRADING POLICY AND REPORT CARDS

## **Homework**

### Homework Expectations

Homework reinforces the learning that scholars are doing in their classrooms. Homework is assigned to establish patterns of responsibility and help scholars develop strong study habits. Amani scholars are assigned homework every night and on weekends. All scholars will go home with a book from the classroom and will be assigned reading every night. Homework may also be assigned through an online learning tool. For example, Khan Academy, Renaissance Learning, etc.

Parents are expected to check all homework before scholars turn in assignments. Some homework assignments may involve the participation of family members. All Amani scholars are expected to submit homework of the highest quality. This includes neat handwriting and clean and wrinkle-free sheets of paper.

## **Family Responsibility to Support Learning**

Families make a conscious choice to enroll their children in the Amani Public Charter School. This translates to an ongoing commitment to do all that is necessary for scholars to learn and to be successful. This must be a top priority.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

Amani Public Charter School adheres to an extended day - extended year model. We are in session 190 days of the year. The regular school day is from 7:50 am to 3:25 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays, school ends at 1:15.

## **SCHOOL CLOSING AND EMERGENCIES**

In the event of inclement weather and snow days, Amani generally will follow the Mount Vernon City School District. Please tune to News12 Westchester for updated information. In some

cases, Amani may make a determination before the Mount Vernon City School District. An automated phone message will also be sent forecasting or informing families of school delays and closures.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Arrival and dismissal times are limited and therefore are not designated for lengthy conversations with teachers. Parents/guardians are encouraged to call or schedule a meeting to discuss any concerns. Lower School and Upper School scholars must enter the campus using the South entrance. Lower School scholars will exit the building using the Main and/or North Entrance. Upper School scholars will exit the building using the South Entrance. Parents are expected to make arrangements to have their child picked up promptly or released on their own at the end of the school day.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Missing school and arriving late has an impact on a scholar's academic progress. Therefore, it is important that each scholar makes it to school every day on time. In the event a scholar will be late or absent, please contact the office at (914) 668-2553 ext 101. If email is a more convenient form of communication, please email [attendance@amanicharter.org](mailto:attendance@amanicharter.org).

If the parent or guardian does not contact the school, SchoolTool will be used to automate calls to parents/guardians regarding student absences or latenesses from school or class(es).

It is essential that parents and scholars complete the Emergency Card that is sent home at the beginning of each year. This is how the school collects updated phone numbers. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school if phone numbers have changed.

## **ABSENCES**

### **Excused Absences**

Excused absences are those which are unavoidable such as illness, death in the family, etc. The parent/guardian must provide the school with appropriate medical, legal or other documentation for the absence to be marked as an excused absence.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences are those which are avoidable as well as those for which the school is given no explanation or the explanation is not a valid excuse in accordance with NYS guidelines. Scholars who exceed 19 (10%) unexcused absences for the school year might be denied promotion/ graduation. Absences may be excused with proper documentation, and parents/guardians should provide this documentation to the Main Office within 10 days of the absence.

Unexcused absences will result in administrative intervention. These actions will include, but are not limited to:

- At five (5) absences - Warning Level 1 - parent/(guardian)/scholar conference with Guidance Counselor
- At ten (10) absences - Warning Level 2 - parent (guardian)/scholar conference with Guidance Counselor and Principal
- At fifteen (15) absences - Warning Level 3 - parent (guardian) /scholar conference with Guidance Counselor and Principal to discuss Promotion-In-Doubt. Being absent 15 or more days of school is considered excessive and could result in further action such as a home visit, and/or possible reporting to the appropriate authorities for educational neglect.

Being absent 15 or more days of school is considered excessive and could result in further action such as a home visit, and/or possible reporting to the appropriate authorities for educational neglect.

## **LATENESS/TARDINESS**

It is important that parents take responsibility for ensuring that their scholars are on time for school.

The school day at Amani begins at 7:50 am. Scholars must be in school by 7:50 am and sitting at their desks ready to learn at 8:00 am or will be marked late (tardy).

Students who arrive between 7:50 and 8:00 should still report to homeroom or first period. Students are late to school if they arrive after 8:00 am. Students who arrive after homeroom or first period should report to the main office to sign in and receive a late pass. The lateness will be noted in SchoolTool and a robocall will be sent indicating that the scholar was late for class.



After the third lateness, the parent or guardian must meet with a member of the Culture Team to discuss a plan of action moving forward to ensure that scholars are getting to school on time. We have a variety of resources that can assist with getting your child to school every day on time.

If your scholar reaches an excessive amount of latenesses parents/guardians will be required to meet with the Guidance Counselor and/or Principal.

## **Truancy**

Truancy is an absence without the knowledge of the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian contacts the School, providing notification the scholar is under parent/guardian supervision, although the absence may be unexcused, the scholar will not be considered truant. A scholar is considered truant when the scholar is:

- absent from school without valid excuse three school days in one school year,
- tardy or absent for more than 30 minutes during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year; or
- any combination thereof.

## **Electronics**

Cell phones and other digital/technological devices/toys are strictly prohibited in the school. Exceptions are made ONLY for students that have extenuating circumstances that require them to have a phone when coming to and from school. If a student must have a cell phone, the phone MUST remain in off mode and handed into homeroom teachers (Lower school) or remain in lockers (Upper School) between 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM.

If student is attending after school programming, the phone is to remain off until the student leaves the after school program. The use of a cell phone camera, sending/receiving pictures, and using social media is also prohibited during the school day.

ANY cell phone or other electronic signaling device that is visible is considered in use and will be subject to confiscation by the school staff and administration.

ANY cell phone or other signaling device that rings or vibrates at a prohibited time or location is considered in use and will be subject to confiscation by the school administration.

Any device that is confiscated by the administration will not be released to the student but shall only be released to the parent/guardian of the student. If a cell phone or any electronic device is confiscated, a parent/guardian MUST come to the school to retrieve between the hours of 9:00 AM- 3:00 PM of the item being confiscated. We realize that having to pick up a student's phone or device may be inconvenient and therefore we recommend you discuss this policy with your child in order to avoid this problem. Confiscated phones and devices will be labeled with the student's name and kept in the main office until the parent takes possession.

AMANI IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST, STOLEN OR BROKEN CELL PHONES AND WILL NOT PAY FOR PHONES THAT ARE LOST, STOLEN OR MISPLACED BY STAFF MEMBERS AFTER CONFISCATION.

## **School Lunch Program**

Breakfast and lunch will be available at Amani as part of its participation in the School Nutrition Program (a federal program that subsidizes scholar meals). We are committed to providing every student in our school community with all the tools they need to succeed, including nutritious meals that everyone can enjoy together. We offer school breakfast and lunch every day to all students at no charge as part of the The Community Eligibility Program ("CEP") a provision from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students.

Amani strongly encourages parents to review the menu weekly with your child. If he or she does not like the offering of the day, they have the opportunity to bring lunch from home. NO other meals, other than what is posted on the menu, are available that day.

### **Packing Lunch for Students**

Parents are not to send food to school that requires warming. For students that do not participate in the school lunch program, a coldbagged lunch is recommended.

### **DROPPING OF LUNCH AND OTHER ITEMS**

Students are expected to come to school with everything needed to be successful for the day. Our security guard will not accept lunch or any other forgotten items from the parent/guardian. No adult is permitted to deliver any item to the classroom directly. Between the hours of 9:00 am-10:00 am, parents are allowed todrop off items for their child (lunch, money...). All items must be: Clearly labeled with the child's full name and classroom number Items must be in a plastic bag and must be given to the receptionist Items not labeled by the parent/guardian will

not be accepted for delivery to the child's classroom We cannot guarantee that your child will receive the item that you are dropping off by a specific time as we does not have staff available to do deliveries to classrooms Parents, please supervise and remind your child to pack their belongings at home before leaving for school. We appreciate your understanding and support.

## **Classroom Parties, Birthdays, and Other Events**

To maintain the structure and consistency of the school day as well as to preserve sacred learning time, Amani does not allow individual celebrations of birthdays or other holidays during the school day. Families should not bring in food treats or other gift items for birthdays or holidays as the school cannot commit teacher or other staff time to distributing them and because such items can distract scholars from their learning.

## **Water**

Each Amani scholar is encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle labeled with their name to school each day. This is to ensure that valuable instruction time is not wasted with scholars continuously leaving the classroom to visit the water fountain. There will be several opportunities daily when scholars can refill their water bottle. Scholars will not be permitted to leave the classroom to get water. We do not provide cups for water in the cafeteria or classrooms.

## **Closing the Opportunity Gap**

We encourage the participation of students in extracurricular activities. It is obligatory for a parent/legal guardian to provide the school with written consent allowing their child to participate in any after school, extra-curricular activity or field trip. Phone and verbal consent from a parent cannot and will not be accepted. Students will not be permitted to, and may not, participate in any after school activity without written permission from a parent or legal guardian.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

The school encourages teachers to take students on field trips. Field trips are meaningful educational learning experiences that allow students to experience education outside of the classroom. When students return from a field trip, an opportunity should be provided for them to write about their experiences and discuss what they learned.

Principal must approve all trips, destination, date, etc. The school encourages class fundraisers to raise money for transportation and other trip related costs to ensure that all students are able to participate in field trips regardless of cost.

Bagged Lunches. The school will provide all students with a bagged lunch, unless parent informs the teacher that the student will be bringing their own lunch on the trip. Teachers require a one week notice if a student will be bringing their lunch.

Parent Consent. Timely notification is sent to parents to advise them of upcoming trips. Parent must return the signed consent form by the due date in order for students to be permitted to attend any class trip and/or out-of-building school activity. No exceptions will be made for any student failing to return a signed permission slip from a parent and/or guardian. Permission by telephone will not be honored.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD WALK PERMISSION FORMS**

Parents sign a neighborhood walk consent form that gives teachers permission to take a walk with students to a nearby area around the school. These neighborhood walks are usually intended to complete a class science assignment/experiment, collect leaves, or do nature observations outside of the school building. Signing a neighborhood walk consent form will give teachers immediate permission to have your child participate in a class activity on an as-needed basis. Please note that these forms cannot be utilized as permission to take a child on a field trip, or to any activity that is further than one or two blocks from the school.

## **Visitor Identification**

To ensure that Amani is a safe and secure learning environment for scholars, all visitors are required to show proper picture identification (e.g. driver's license, state ID card, passport, etc.), sign-in at the security desk, and wear a visitor's pass. All staff members have been instructed to escort any visitor immediately to the security desk for proper identification.

## **Solicitation**

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member on the School property for any reason except those authorized by the Executive Director is prohibited.

## **Student Computer and Internet Use Policy**

Amani uses computers (including mobile and other electronic devices for purposes of this section), networks and Internet services, as one way of enhancing its mission to provide all of our students with the academic and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in competitive high school programs, college and the career of their choice.

The following rules are intended to provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited computer and Internet uses, but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by users. Failure to comply with Amani Public Charter School's Student Computer and Internet Use Policy and these rules may result in loss of computer and Internet privileges, and/or legal and disciplinary action.

### Use is a Privilege

Student use of Amani's computers, networks and Internet services is a privilege. No one will deliberately or willfully cause damage to computer equipment, network resources, or assist another in doing the same.

### Acceptable Use

Student access to Amani's computers, networks and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the curriculum and instructional goals. The same rules and expectations govern student conduct and communication on computers and online services. Students are expected to comply with these rules and all specific instructions from staff members when accessing computers and network resources.

### Prohibited Use

The student is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving school computers, networks and Internet services, and for his/her information, files, passwords and accounts.

Examples of unacceptable uses that are prohibited include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Accessing Inappropriate Materials - Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning or displaying materials that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal
2. Illegal Activities - Using computers, networks and Internet services for any illegal activity or that violates other Amani policies, procedures and/or school rules
3. Violating Copyrights - Copying or downloading copyrighted material without the owner's permission
4. Plagiarism - Representing as one's own work any material obtained on the Internet
5. Copying Software/Media Files - Copying or downloading software without the authorization of the system administrator; illegally downloading music, photos, movies or other such files
6. Non-School Related Uses - Using the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services for non-school-related purposes such as private financial gain; commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes
7. Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access - Sharing passwords, using other users' passwords without permission and/or accessing other user accounts
8. Malicious Use/Vandalism - Any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services, including but not limited to hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses
9. Unauthorized access to Social Networking/Chat Rooms/Newsgroups - Accessing social networking sites or software, chat rooms or newsgroups without specific authorization from the supervising teacher

#### No Expectation of Privacy

Amani retains control, custody, and supervision of all computers, networks and Internet services owned or leased by Amani. Amani reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by students. Students have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, software accounts, Internet services, email, and stored files. Each person will respect the rights of others to the protection of the files they store on a computer and will not alter or damage such files or accounts.

## **Health and Safety**

#### Policy on Medical Records and Health Services

New York State Law requires all scholars enrolling in a new school to have a physical examination before entering the school. Before a scholar can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- New York School Health Record. This form contains records showing that the scholar has: 1) had a physical exam in the twelve months prior; 2) up-to-date immunizations; and 3) had screening for vision, hearing, and scoliosis.
- Authorization for Dispensing Medication in School Form. If a child must receive medication during the school day, this form must contain the instructions and signature of the physician who ordered the medication and be signed by a parent or guardian.
- Physician Information Release Form. This form must be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian, so that the school may contact a Scholar's physician in case of an emergency.
- Office/Health Emergency Card. This form provides important information about a scholar's emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

### Health Services

The school's nurse or an appropriate designee will be at the school to administer medication to scholars, who require it during the school day, and to provide counseling as-needed on health-related issues, first aid to injured scholars, and care to ill scholars. Several staff members are certified in Red Cross Standard First Aid and CPR.

### **If a scholar requires medication while in school, the school must have on file an Authorization to Dispense Medication form, filled out by the scholar's physician.**

No scholar is allowed to bring medication to the school without the nurse's full knowledge. Scholars who have provided the school with medication dispensation authorization forms should bring the medication to the school on the first day, or contact the school to make other arrangements.

This requirement applies to all medication, including Tylenol, aspirin, and asthma inhalers. If a scholar needs to take Tylenol or aspirin during the school day, the scholar must have on file the authorization signed by his or her physician and a parent or guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. In addition, each day the scholar needs the medication, he or she must bring the medication and a note from a parent or guardian: (1) giving the school nurse permission to administer the Tylenol or aspirin; and (2) informing the nurse when the child was last given the Tylenol or aspirin. If such authorization is not on file, the parent or guardian of the Scholar must come to the school to administer the Tylenol or aspirin directly. If a scholar needs to have an asthma inhaler with him or her at school, the Scholar must provide the school nurse with the order from his or her physician stating that the scholar needs to carry the inhaler. The order must also be signed by a parent or guardian, and the scholar must provide the nurse with a second inhaler that will be kept in the nurse's office.

### First Aid Provision and Medical Emergencies

Minor accidents, cuts, scrapes, and bruises will generally be treated at the school by the school nurse or by selected teachers and administrators. The school is not equipped to handle medical services beyond basic first aid. In the event that a child requires emergency medical care, a parent or guardian will be notified as soon as possible. If a parent, guardian, or other emergency contact cannot be reached, the school may need to initiate medical treatment. Thus, it is essential that we have on file each scholar's Office/Health Emergency Card, which provides up-to-date contact information for parents and guardians, and which gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment if a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

### Health and Illness

The school requests that children do not come to school if they are ill. If school staff believes that a child needs to see a doctor, is contagious, increases the risk of illness to other children, or requires prolonged individual staff attention that interferes with the safety and regular functioning of the classroom, the school will contact families and ask them to pick up and take their child. Parents or guardians will be contacted if a child has a moderate to high fever; is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea; shows signs of contagious diseases; and/or has an illness that prevents the child from participating in activities. If a Scholar is out sick for 3 or more days parents must provide a doctor's note to the school before the scholar will be allowed to return to school.

## **Amani Official Scholar Uniform Policy**

The official uniform worn by scholars at Amani Public Charter School emphasizes that the school is both a community and a school that models success. Scholars dress in a professional manner that expresses their membership in the community and take pride in their appearance. Wearing the Amani uniform creates an identity for our school and is part of what shapes them into professional scholars. Their attire must be neat and tidy, and conform to Amani Public Charter School's uniform at all times unless other permissions are granted.

### Amani Public Charter School's Scholar Uniform - Grades 5 & 6

- An official Amani Public Charter School "polo" shirt in purple with the Amani logo
- Shirts must remain tucked in at all times. **Undershirts must be solid white or grey.**
- The official Amani Public Charter School sweater in heather grey with the Amani logo
- The official grey pants, worn with a **solid** black belt, or skirts of at least knee-length. Grey shorts are acceptable after May 1st, but shorts must reach to within one inch of the knee.
- Belts must be **solid** black leather, and should not have any ornamentation.
- Socks or stockings must be worn and must be **solid** white, black, purple, or grey.
- Headbands may be worn, but must be solid white, black, or purple. **Absolutely NO Bandanas.**



- Footwear in **solid** black or **solid** grey (no logos, laces, white soles or stitching in another color). Footwear may be of the loafer or lace-up style but they must not be open-toed, nor may lace-up shoes be worn unlaced.

#### Amani Public Charter School’s Scholar Uniform - Grades 7 & 8

- An official Amani Public Charter School “oxford” shirt in white with the Amani logo. Shirts must remain tucked in at all times. **Undershirts must be solid white.**
- The official Amani Public Charter School sweater in purple or official Amani Grey outerwear.
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars may also wear the Amani purple sweatshirt with logo.
- The official dark grey pants, worn with a **solid** black belt through belt loops, or skirts of at least knee-length. Grey shorts are acceptable after May 1st, but shorts must reach to within one inch of the knee.
- Purple neck tie (boys) and cross-over tie (girls) must be worn on academic days.
- Belts must be **solid** black leather, and should not have any ornamentation.
- Socks or stockings must be worn and must be **solid** white, black, purple, or grey.
- Headbands may be worn, but must be solid white, black, or purple **Absolutely NO Bandanas.**
- Footwear in **solid** black or **solid** grey (no logos, laces or stitching in another color). Footwear may be of the loafer or lace-up style but they must not be open-toed, nor may lace-up shoes be worn unlaced.

#### Amani Public Charter School’s Athletic Uniform- All Grades

The athletic uniform at Amani Public Charter School is designed for simplicity, neatness, comfort and safety. For all athletic activities, scholars should wear:

- The official Amani Public Charter School physical education t-shirt and/or physical education sweatshirt (for cold weather) in grey or purple (**Absolutely NO hoodies**).
- The official Amani Public Charter School physical education sweatpants or sweat shorts in grey.
- **Solid black or solid grey** sneakers (i.e. “tennis shoes”). Sneakers should always be worn with socks and must remain tied at all times.
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars **only**, may also wear the Amani official purple t-shirt with their grey sweatpants or sweat shorts in grey.

Uniforms should be clean and neat at all times; scholars whose physical education uniform is unclean will be considered to be out-of-uniform and will be unable to participate.

#### The Scholar Uniform Policy at Amani Public Charter School specifically forbids the wearing of:

- Any clothing with legible writing or images (other than the Amani logo). This refers even to clothing worn under another shirt, for example a t-shirt under a polo shirt.
- Jeans

- Carpenter-style pants, cargo pants or pants with large pockets on the sides; **absolutely NO JOGGERS for Academic or PE uniforms.**
- Hats, caps, bandanas, hoods, night wraps, or bonnetts (scholars may wear headbands for the purpose of holding back hair, but they may not cover the majority of the head and they must be solid black, white, grey or purple);
- Jackets or overcoats (except while outdoors);
- Cell-phones, or other electronic items. These items will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian;
- Any clothing tied around the waist or neck;
- Any clothing which is inappropriate for the workplace (i.e. miniskirts, excessively baggy pants, elaborate jewelry).
- Sweaters and sweatshirts with hoods, a.k.a. hoodies.

All official uniform items must be ordered through *Lu-Del's Uniforms* (364 South Broadway, Yonkers, NY 10705) [www.ludels.com](http://www.ludels.com) with exception of ties for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Ties can be purchased through the main office.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Parents and schools need to be partners in a child's education. The two need to be aligned philosophically and reinforce each other's messages so that the child is surrounded by a coherent, consistent and collective voice that nurtures, encourages and demands academic success. We will foster a successful partnership with the parents of our children through information sessions, home visits, family surveys, newsletters and parent orientation sessions.

We have established a chapter of the Parent Teacher Association, chartered through the New York State PTA (NYSPTA). We have deliberately chosen to work with the National Organization of the PTA because they bring a wealth of resources and support for parents in terms of advocating on behalf of their children. We will host a monthly PTA meeting to address parent concerns and issues.

We will gauge family satisfaction through annual written family surveys. In addition to gauging familial satisfaction with the school and identifying strategic areas of improvement, surveys will be used to gather parental input on important issues of school administration and governance. Survey results will be carefully reviewed by school leadership, and the Executive Director will report results to the Board. A detailed analysis of results will be published in the school's annual report, and will inform future agendas for Board meetings.

## **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY**

## **Introduction**

Amani Public Charter School is committed to providing an educational and working environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality. Amani recognizes that discrimination, such as harassment, hazing and bullying, are detrimental to scholar learning and achievement. These behaviors interfere with the mission of the school to educate its scholars and disrupt the operation of the school. Such behavior affects not only the scholars who are its targets but also those individuals who participate and witness such acts.

To this end, Amani condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination, such as harassment, hazing and bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events.

Discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying that takes place at locations outside of school grounds which can be reasonably expected to materially and substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school or impinge on the rights of other scholars are prohibited, and may be subject to disciplinary consequences.

## **Definitions**

### **Harassment**

Harassment has been defined in various ways in federal and state law and regulation. Amani recognizes that these definitions are important standards, but the school's goal is to prevent misbehavior from escalating in order to promote a positive school environment and to limit liability. The Dignity for All Scholars Act (§§10-18 of Education Law) defines harassment as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a scholar's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a scholar to fear for his or her physical safety. The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived:

- race;
- color;
- weight;
- national origin;
- ethnic group;
- religion;
- religious practice;
- disability;
- sex;
- sexual orientation; or
- gender (including gender identity and expression).

### Intimidation

Intimidation is intentional behavior that would cause a person of ordinary sensibilities fear of harm or injury. It is not necessary to prove that the behavior caused the victim to actually be frightened.

### Bullying

Bullying is a form of harassment that consists of inappropriate persistent behavior including threats of intimidation of others, treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, stalking, or habitual put-downs and/or badgering of others, whether done directly, indirectly, face to face or remotely through electronic communication.

Types of bullying include:

- **Verbal**- involves taunting, teasing, name calling, and threats;
- **Physical**- the most common form; including hitting, kicking, pushing and taking personal belongings;
- **Emotional**- includes spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, and engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation;
- **Cyber**- including the use of cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass, threaten or intimidate someone.

### **Disciplinary Consequences and Remediation**

While the focus of this policy is on prevention (Please see earlier), bullying acts may still occur. In these cases, offenders will be given the clear message that their actions are wrong and the behavior must improve. Offenders will receive in-school guidance in making positive choices in their relationships with others. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration in accordance with the district's Code of Conduct, as applicable. If the behavior rises to the level of criminal activity, law enforcement will be contacted.

Consequences for a scholar who commits an act of bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the scholar, and the scholar's history of problem behaviors, and must be consistent with the school's Code of Conduct. Consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to:

### Consequences

- Admonishment;
- Temporary removal from classroom;
- Deprivation of privileges;
- Detention;
- Referral to Dean;
- In-School Behavioral Redirection
- Suspension;
- Loss of after school privileges;
- Legal action;

- Expulsion.

#### *Personal Remedial Measures*

- Mediation;
- Peer support group;
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation;
- Behavior management plan;
- Counseling;
- Parent conferences;
- Therapy.

#### *Environmental Remedial Measures*

- School climate improvement;
- School policy and procedures revisions;
- Modifications of schedules;
- Adjustment in hallway traffic;
- Parent conferences;
- Increased supervision in specific areas;

### **Training**

Amani recognizes that the effective implementation of this policy requires that it be part of a school-wide prevention/intervention program. The school-wide program would include the elements of prevention, intervention and consequences. Prevention would include: (1) training for administrators and staff to increase awareness of the prevalence, causes, and consequences of harassment, hazing and bullying and sharing strategies for preventing such behavior; (2) promoting scholar involvement in anti-bullying efforts, peer support, mutual respect, and creating a culture which encourages scholars to report incidents of harassment, hazing and bullying to an adult; and (3) collaborating with families and the community to inform parents about the prevalence, causes, and consequences of harassment, hazing and bullying. Intervention would include: (1) training for school staff on how to respond appropriately to scholars who bully, are bullied, and are bystanders who report bullying; and (2) remedial measures designed to correct the bullying behavior, prevent another occurrence, and protect the victim. Consequences would include: (1) discipline, including suspensions and expulsions consistent with Amani Code of Conduct and all rights under law and other applicable agreements; and (2) recognition for positive behavior exhibited by scholars who take an active role in addressing prohibited behaviors.

## **COMPLAINT POLICY**

### **Informal Complaints**

Any individual or group can bring complaints to the Amani administration at any time. Often, issues or complaints can be resolved informally at the school, and do not need to involve the formal complaint process described below. Where appropriate, you may wish to use this more informal approach, which may result in a more timely resolution of the issue and which is also suited to dealing with issues that do not involve a violation of the charter or law. Even issues involving a violation of the law or charter may be able to resolved informally and you may wish to use this avenue before making a formal complaint. You are not required to use the informal process and using the informal process does not prevent you from using the formal complaint process later.

To make an informal complaint, follow the process below:

For academic concerns contact the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. For discipline or culture concerns, contact the Director of School Culture. If the complaint is not resolved by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction or the Director of School Culture, the individual or group may bring the complaint to the Executive Director. For concerns that are not related to academics or discipline, contact the Executive Director. If the complaint is not resolved by the Executive Director, the individual or group may bring the complaint to the Board of Trustees.

If the complaint is about the Executive Director, the individual or group may bring the complaint to the Board of Trustees.

To contact the Board of Trustees, use the electronic form at <http://www.amanicharter.org/contacts/> or send U.S. mail to Amani Public Charter School, Attn: Chair of the Board of Trustees, 60 South 3rd Avenue Mount Vernon, NY 10550.

The Board of Trustees shall investigate and respond to all complaints in a timely manner and shall serve as the appeals body for any complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved.

When submitting an informal complaint, include

- A detailed statement of the complaint
- What, if any, response you received to date
- What specific action or relief you are seeking
- Contact information for you – name, address, email address, telephone number.

### **Formal Complaints**

Any individual or group may bring complaints to the APCS Board of Trustees. Complaints may be submitted to the Board at least one week prior to the regular Board meeting at which time the

complaint will be officially addressed. Complaints submitted less than one week prior to the next regular Board meeting will be addressed at the subsequent Board meeting.

Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regular meeting. Every effort will be made to respectfully address each matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group that presented the complaint. The Board, as necessary, may request the Executive Director and/or Director of Curriculum and Instruction or another responsible party to investigate and/or act upon the complaint and submit a written report to the Board. The Board shall create a written response, with appropriate determinations and rationales, to every complaint submitted in writing. Responses will be delivered in writing or via email within 30 days, or as soon as is practicable thereafter.

The manner in which the APCS Board of Trustees documents, manages, and responds to complaints is determined by the NYS Charter School Law [§ 2855(4)], which established a three-phase complaint process.

First, if an individual or a group has a complaint about the management or operation of APCS or about a possible violation of the APCS charter, or the NYS Charter School Law, the complainant may present the complaint in writing to the APCS Board. The complaint may be sent by electronic form at <http://www.amanicharter.org/contacts/> or by mail to Amani Public Charter School, Attn: Chair of the Board of Trustees, 60 South 3rd Avenue Mount Vernon, NY 10550.

The complainant should include the following details in the written complaint:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the Amani’s charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from Amani
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and Amani
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you – name, address, email address, telephone number.

Second, if the complainant believes the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may then appeal to the charter authorizer, the New York State Board of Regents (NYSED). Upon receiving such a complaint NYSED is required to investigate and respond.

### **Bringing a Complaint to the Board of Regents**

The Board of Regents has delegated the authority to the Commissioner of Education to handle complaints brought to the Regents concerning charter schools. All complaints brought to the Board of Regents/Commissioner concerning charter schools must be submitted in writing to the

State Education Department's Charter School Office, either via mail at: Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234, or via email to: [charterschools@nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@nysed.gov) The subject line of the email should read: Complaint: [Name of School].

The contents of the letter/email should include:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from the School's board of trustees.
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and the School and you. (You should maintain copies of all correspondence and materials for your own files.)
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you – name, address, email address, telephone number.

### **Investigation of a Complaint brought to the Board of Regents**

The Charter School Office, on behalf of the Commissioner and the Board of Regents, will conduct any investigation that it determines necessary and appropriate regarding complaints that have been appropriately filed concerning charter schools. This investigation may include contacting the School and the concerning the complaint, providing a copy of the complaint to the School, and requesting additional information or materials from you and/or the School.

Upon completion of the investigation of a complaint brought to the Board of Regents, a decision will be issued by the Commissioner, which may include a remedial order as appropriate. A copy of the Commissioner's decision will be provided to you and the School.

## **SCHOOL CULTURE**

**School culture** is made up of many different elements, norms, values, beliefs, traditions, rituals, ceremonies and myths created by a group of scholars, teachers, staff, administrators, and parents. The way these elements are expressed in the school will be varied, from the signs on the walls, the lesson plans, the classroom teaching and how the school feels about the participants and the community. Overall, we will build a culture of academic excellence and part of that will be to recognize and honor good behavior and have consequences for inappropriate behavior. But through it all, we will maintain a belief of our students that we care about them and that we are all working to support their success as Amani Scholars.

A sense of mutual respect among scholars, parents and staff is a goal of Amani Public Charter School. The cooperation of all members of the school community will ensure that a rich learning experience and educational success can be achieved for every Scholar. Our **Code of Conduct** has been drafted to meet the requirements of Education Law §§2801 and 3214, section 100.2(1) of the Commissioner's Regulations, and the Dignity for All Students Act. Unless otherwise noted, all statutory references in Amani's Public Code of Conduct refer to the Education Law of the State of New York.



All staff members will work together to follow through with consequences for infractions. By being clear, deliberate and predictable, students will quickly learn that at Amani, discipline is a serious matter and that students are expected to act accordingly. The foundation for this is consistency. Children thrive in an environment that is consistent. At the core, we expect that Amani students will behave in a scholarly and professional way.

Faculty will play an important role in promoting a safe and orderly learning environment. Faculty orientation will focus on building the school's culture and proactively building the positive school-wide culture we envision. Part of this process will stress the importance of having every adult in the building speak using one voice regarding behavioral expectations and administering consequences.

Behavioral expectations and school policies and procedures will be the focus of Scholar Orientation, which will occur during the first week of the school year. We recognize that this represents an investment of time and resources. We believe that because structure, discipline and order are the foundation of our program, this investment will reap dividends throughout the school year. A highly disciplined culture is integral to establishing an environment where students can achieve at high levels. We will clearly define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Our children will understand that within the walls of Amani we are respectful to each other and the learning process. Our school-wide behavior management system of rewards, including an internal token economy with students earning Scholar Dollars. Scholars will earn bonuses and deductions depending upon their behavior.

### **Amani Public Charter School Scholar Expectations**

Our scholars are held to very high expectations. These expectations are necessary to maintain a productive academic environment where our teachers can teach and our scholars can learn.

Amani scholars are expected to:

- STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN when an adult is talking!
- Follow directions!
- Be nice to others and respect property!
- Always try your BEST!

### **Kickboard**

Communication with our parents is essential to the growth and support of our scholars. A paycheck report will be sent home each Thursday with the total Scholar Dollar balance and details of the scholar's behavior throughout the past week. Parents must view this report, sign it and return it to school every Friday. Scholars who do not have their paycheck report signed on Friday will earn a \$50 deduction.

Our school will participate in the school's token economy to reward and correct behavior. Bonuses will be given for each positive behavior displayed and demonstration of each core value. Deductions will be given for any low level infraction consisting of non compliance to rules, policies, and procedures set by the school, negative display of the core values, and any un-scholarly behavior. Each bonus/deduction is valued at a dollar amount, which totals the amount of Scholar Dollars. Amani scholars will earn 10 automatic Scholar Dollars for daily attendance (none for days of absences) and can gain or lose scholar dollars when displaying proper or improper behavior. All staff members at Amani will be able to reward/correct behavior as it is witnessed and scholar dollars will be totaled on a weekly basis. Parents will receive a weekly progress report (paycheck), which will include information about their child's Scholar Dollar balance. These paychecks need to be signed by a parent and returned to school the following week on Monday. Scholars who do not return a signed paycheck will receive an automatic detention.

Scholars can earn rewards and incentives based on their Scholar Dollar balance or average amount. Balances and averages will also be considered for participation in special activities.

When a scholar does not meet behavioral expectations and an infraction of the school's Code of Conduct has occurred, clear and consistent disciplinary action will ensue.

### **Amani High Flyers**

Each month, we will recognize scholars who have earned High Flyer status. High Flyers embody our ACHIEVE Core Values and continuously meet our expectations. High Flyers have also shown positive behaviors that go above and beyond our expectations. They are in school on time daily, dressed in full uniform, ready to learn, continuous active learners, and consistently uplifts the Amani community. Scholars can earn High Flyer status by meeting a scholar dollar requirement which will be determined by the Dean on a monthly basis.

**Privileges** - High Flyers have the privileges for that month of:

- Get out of detention free card
- High Flyer T-shirt as a uniform alternative
- High Flyer Luncheon
- Community Circle VIP

**Extra Incentives** - High Flyers will also have the opportunity to pick from the Incentive Box.

These incentives include:

- Dress Down Day
- Homework Pass
- Movie Passes
- McDonald's Gift Card
- Extra Pick Pass

- \$50 Bonus Card
- DEAR time snack
- Purple Ticket (highest value item)

**Losing High Flyer Status** - High Flyers will automatically lose High Flyer status and all related privileges by committing one of the following actions:

- Abuse of privileges
- 2 Lates in a week
- 3 Uniform infractions
- 10 deductions in a month
- Earning a detention
- Earning a suspension
- Failure to accrue monthly total gets you removed for the following month

## **AMANI CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **AMANI CODE OF CONDUCT**

Our school will use a point system of merits and demerits to reward and correct behavior. Merits will be given for each positive behavior displayed and for demonstration of each core value. Demerits will be given for any Level 1 infraction (**see Appendix A**) consisting of noncompliance with rules, policies, and procedures set by the school, disregard of the core values, and any un-Scholarly behavior. Each merit/demerit is valued at 1 point. Amani achievers will begin every week with 25 automatic “A-Merits” for coming to school on time (none for days of unexcused absences) and can gain or lose points when displaying proper or improper behavior. All staff members at Amani will be able to reward/correct behavior as it is witnessed and points will be totaled on a weekly basis. Parents will receive a weekly progress report, which will include information about their child’s “A-Merits.”

When a student does not meet behavioral expectations and an infraction of the school’s Code of Conduct has occurred, clear and consistent disciplinary action will ensue. Below is an overview of the Amani Code of Conduct, outlining the dimensions of our approach to student discipline.

#### **Detention**

Students who have committed a Level 2 infraction will serve a next day detention with the Dean of Scholars and Families. Once the detention has been assigned by the staff member, parents will be notified via telephone and email that their child will serve a detention that next day. It will be served from 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm and will consist of reflection, a writing assignment, and other appropriate tasks. Students are not allowed to complete any homework or reading assignments during detention.

## **In-School Suspension**

Students who have committed a Level 3 infraction will serve an In-School Suspension (ISS) ranging from one to three days. The Dean will notify parents of an ISS by telephone and in writing. Students serving an ISS are expected to attend school in full uniform and comply with school procedures. During the days of ISS, the student will spend the day receiving instruction outside of his/her regular classroom. The student will eat lunch with the Dean of Scholars and will not participate in any non-instructional activities. A parent meeting is requested before the student is reintroduced into the classroom. After all days are served, the student can return to class.

## **Out-of- School Suspension and Expulsion**

Students who have committed a Level 4 or Level 5 infraction may serve an Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) or may be expelled from Amani, depending on the severity of the infraction and the student's disciplinary history. A short-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of one to five days. A long-term suspension refers to the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of six days or more. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student from school.

A Discipline Code listing infractions that may be punishable by Demerits, Detention, In-school Suspension (ISS), Out of School Suspension (OSS) or Expulsion is included in APPENDIX A of this Code of Conduct. This Discipline Code, which is part of the Code of Conduct, applies in school during school hours, before and after school while on school property, while traveling on school buses, at school-sponsored events, and anywhere in the community when the behavior of a student violates Amani core values and negatively affects Amani students or teachers.

## **Procedures and Due Process**

### In-School Suspension (Up to 3 Days)

A teacher may report to the Dean that a student violated Amani's Code of Conduct by committing a Level 3 infraction (See Appendix A). The Dean will discuss the report with the student and give him/her an opportunity to respond. After hearing the student's side of the story, the Dean may decide that In-School Suspension is warranted. The Dean will inform parents by telephone and written note and will invite parents to come to school for an informal conference. It is expected that the conference will take place before the student returns to regular classes.

### Short Term Suspension (Up to Five Days)

A short-term out-of-school suspension may be imposed for a Level 4 or Level 5 infraction. Before imposing a short term suspension, the Dean shall inform the student of the charges, and shall provide an explanation of the evidence. The Dean will also offer the student a chance to present his/her version of events. These procedures follow the due process requirements for short-term suspension set forth in the decision of the US Supreme Court in *Goss v. Lopez* (419

U.S. 565).

Before imposing a short-term suspension, the school shall immediately notify parents by telephone that the student may be suspended from school. Written notice of the decision to impose suspension shall also be provided within 24 hours by personal delivery or express mail delivery. Such notice shall provide a description of the student's conduct which led to the suspension and shall inform parents of the right to request an immediate informal conference with the Executive Director or the Director of School Culture. To the extent possible, such notice will be in the parent's dominant language or mode of communication.

The informal conference will take place prior to the suspension of the student unless the student's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. If School Leadership believes the suspension must be immediate, parents will be notified and asked to make prompt arrangements to pick up the student. If no one is available to pick up the child, s/he will remain with the Dean until dismissal. If suspension is effective immediately, the informal conference will take place as soon as possible after the suspension.

Parents will be asked to meet with the Dean or Director of School Culture before the student returns to the building. Upon return, the student will be seated at a desk in front of the class for the first day back in the classroom.

The school's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parents in accordance with the charter school's complaint process.

Long Term Suspension (Six Days or More) or Expulsion

The school may impose a long-term suspension or may expel a student, if the Student is found guilty of a Level 5 Infraction at a suspension hearing before an impartial hearing officer. The hearing officer may be the Executive Director or her designee. The hearing will take place within five days of the initial suspension. If the family needs more time for any reason, the parent may request to reschedule the hearing, but the student will continue to receive alternative instruction until the hearing is completed.

Written notice of the scheduled hearing will provide parents with the details of the incident that gave rise to the suspension, the date and time of the suspension hearing, information about the student's right to have an attorney or advocate participate at the hearing, and information about the student's right to question witnesses and present evidence. The written notice will also include information about the alternative instruction the student will receive while suspended. To the extent possible, the notification shall be in the dominant language used by the parents.

At the hearing, the School will present evidence and witnesses to support the charges that are being reviewed and will also make a recommendation with respect to consequences. The student will also have an opportunity to present evidence and witnesses, to question the School's witnesses, and to provide a personal statement. The student's family may request a transcript or tape of the hearing record.

The hearing officer will first determine, based on the evidence presented, whether or not the student is guilty of a Level 4 or Level 5 violation of the Discipline Code. If the student is found guilty, the hearing officer will review the student's academic and disciplinary record, and parents and student will have an opportunity to present additional information relevant to the penalty. The hearing officer will make a recommendation regarding the penalty which may include long-term suspension or expulsion.

If the hearing is conducted by a designee of the Executive Director, the hearing officer's report shall be advisory only and the Executive Director may accept or reject all or part of it. The school's decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion may be challenged by parents in accordance with the charter school's complaint process

If the determination is appealed in accordance with the complaint process to the Board of Trustees, the Board will notify Parents of its final in writing. Such notice will include instructions regarding enrollment of the student in the City School District.

### **Appeal**

If the Decision of the Trustees with respect to short-term suspension, long-term suspension or expulsion is not satisfactory to the family, Parents may appeal to the school's authorizer, NYSED, by emailing [CharterSchools@nysed.gov](mailto:CharterSchools@nysed.gov) or calling 518-474-1762.

### **Provision of Instruction during Removal**

Amani will ensure that alternative educational services are provided to a child who has been suspended or removed. For a student who has been expelled, alternative instruction will be provided for up to ten days until the student enrolls in another school.

Alternative instruction will be provided to students suspended or expelled in a way that best suits the needs of the student. Instruction for such students shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress, and shall provide them the opportunity to complete the assignments, learn the curriculum and participate in assessments. Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the child's home, a contracted facility, or a room at the school other than the regular classroom. During any removal for drug or weapon offenses, additional services shall include strategies designed to prevent such behavior from recurring. Instruction will be provided by the student's teacher(s), a substitute teacher, an assistant teacher or a tutor hired for this purpose.

Additional services will be provided to students with disabilities, as described below.

#### **Student Records**

Amani will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

#### **Disciplinary Policy for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities have the same responsibilities as all other Amani students but they also have special protections in disciplinary matters. In order to assure these special protections, the school works closely with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) and the Section 504 Team of the Mount Vernon City School District.

If a student with an IEP or a Section 504 Plan is charged with a Level 5 infraction punishable by an OSS of more than ten days or a short-term suspension is considered which would bring the total number of suspension days to more than ten days during the school year, the School will refer the student to the CSE or the 504 Team for a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR). The MDR will take place after the suspension hearing (if the student is found responsible for the conduct which is the subject of the hearing) or before the tenth suspension day in a series of short term suspensions.

In order to ensure that a student with a disability is not removed from school on a series of short term suspensions for more than ten days during a school year, Amani will ask the CSE to review the IEP of any student who has had a series of short term suspensions totaling eight days over the school year. The CSE will be asked to conduct an MDR and, if the conduct is found to be a manifestation of the student's disability, to consider revising the student's behavior intervention plan or evaluating the student for a change of placement. In considering change of placement for a student referred because of disciplinary problems, the CSE will follow its ordinary policies with respect to parental notification and involvement

### **Consequences of the Manifestation Determination Review**

If the MDR Team of the CSE or the Section 504 Team finds that there is a connection between the student's disability and the behavior that is the subject of the disciplinary proceeding, the School and the CSE or Section 504 Team will help Amani develop a plan to address the behavior, and the student will return to class.

If, however, the hearing officer who conducted the suspension hearing finds that the student violated the Discipline Code by bringing drugs or a weapon to school or by inflicting serious bodily injury on another person, the student may be removed from school for up to forty-five days, whether or not the conduct was related to the student's disability. The student will be provided with educational services in an interim (temporary) alternative educational setting (IAES) that is arranged by Amani in cooperation with the CSE.

If, the MDR team or the 504 Team determines that the student's conduct was not a result of his/her disability, the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a student without a disability.

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination or the IAES. The hearing will be conducted by an Impartial Hearing Officer appointed by the Mt. Vernon City School District. The student will remain in the current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing. If the student has been placed in an IAES for an offense relating to a weapon, drugs or a serious bodily injury, the child will stay in that setting pending the decision

of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and Amani agree otherwise.

The special protections, described in this section, may, under certain circumstances, be available for students who do not yet have an IEP or Section 504 Plan. Parents may ask for these protections if they or teachers at Amani requested a CSE evaluation or expressed concerns about a possibility of a disability before the misbehavior that resulted in the disciplinary action occurred. The protections will also be provided if an evaluation has been scheduled or a CSE review meeting is pending.

Students with disabilities have the following additional protections:

- If the student’s IEP includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), the student will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective, the School will refer the Student to the CSE for an updated functional behavioral assessment.
- If the CSE finds that behavior that is the subject of the disciplinary is a manifestation of the student’s disability the School will work with the CSE to develop a plan for the student’s immediate return to school and will conduct a new functional behavioral assessment for the purpose of revising the behavioral intervention plan;
- The School will also provide the parent of the student with a copy of the procedural safeguards notice and a notice of IDEA rights to students whose parents have expressed concern about possible disability.
- The School will work with the CSE to expedite evaluations of students who are suspected of having a disability.
- Alternative education provided during any suspension of a student with a disability will include any special services required by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared by the Committee on Special Education (CSE).
- Alternative educational services during suspension will address the behaviors that led to the suspension and will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and to achieve the goals of his or her IEP.

---

<b>Bonus Actions of a True Amani Scholar</b>		
<b>A.C.H.I.E.V.E. Category</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Evaluate Self</b>
<b>A</b>	Responsibility	Am I accepting responsibility for my actions?
		Am I accepting responsibility for my language?
		Am I being responsible for my classwork and homework?



		Am I taking responsibility for cleaning up after myself?
<b>C</b>	Citizenship	Do I help others around me?
		Do I celebrate the achievements of others?
		Do I display actions that positively affect my class/school?
		Can I be a mediator when I witness conflict?
<b>H</b>	Hard Work	Do I complete all my homework to a high standard?
		Do I complete all my classwork to a high standard?
		Can I persevere through tough challenges?
		Do I ask for help instead of giving up?
<b>I</b>	Honesty/Trustworthiness	Do I lie about a choice I have made?
		Do I tell the truth no matter what others think?
		Do I do the right thing when no one is watching?
		Do I make choices that are true, good, and right?
<b>E</b>	Care	Do I show care, compassion and concern for others around me?
		Do I help others who may need help?
		Am I selfless, not selfish?
		Am I open to sharing, taking turns, and compromising with others?
<b>V</b>	On Task	Do I set academic and social goals?
		Do I make decisions that will positively affect my future and the future of Amani?
		Do I show positive leadership qualities?
		Do I take initiatives to improve myself and others around me?
<b>E</b>	Quality	Am I taking extra time to complete assignments above standards?
		Am I always prepared for class at all times with my educational tools?
		Do I go above and beyond in my academics and social experiences?

	Can I be creative and think “outside of the box”?
--	---

**Deduction Reason List**

These are examples of which low-level behaviors earn a deduction. All deductions are valued at -\$2 SD.

Deduction Categories		
Not completing academic work	A1	Accountability
Leaving an area dirty	A2	
Not following directions/expectations	A3	
Disorganized space	A4	
Littering	A5	
Not putting things back where they belong	A6	
Calling out	C1	Community
Distracting others	C2	
Horseplay	C3	
Not celebrating others	C4	
Talking back to adults	C5	
Respecting other’s personal space	C6	
Inappropriate classroom behavior	C7	
Incorrect posture (slouching, head down, chair tipping)	H1	Hard Work
Giving up on classwork	H2	
Lack of participation	H3	
Not seeking help when needed	H4	
Destroying property	I1	Integrity
Touching other people’s items without permission	I2	
Leaving class without a hall pass	I3	
Lying after the negative actions of others	I4	
Teasing	E1	Empathy
Making fun of a scholar who is being disciplined	E2	
Laughing at other’s mistakes	E3	
Using hurtful words	E4	
Talking during instruction	V1	Vision
Playing with items during instruction	V2	
Not showing STARS	V3	
Throwing items (into garbage or to another scholar)	V4	

Passing notes in class	V5	
Sleeping during instruction	V6	
Eating/drinking outside of snack time	V7	
Being unprepared for class	X1	Excellence
Rushing through tasks	X2	
Lack of drive	X3	
Low quality work	X4	
Messy work (wrinkled, stained, etc.)	X5	

**APPENDIX A**  
**DISCIPLINE CODE**

The following Discipline Code applies in school during school hours, on school property before and after school, while traveling on school buses, at all school-sponsored events, and anywhere in the community when the behavior of a student violates Amani core values and negatively affects Amani students or teachers.

**Level 1: Off Task Behavior**

1. Unprepared for class
2. Irrelevant topic of conversation during small-group discussion
3. Playing with supplies during instruction
4. Not tracking speaker
5. Head down or on hand
6. Not seated properly
7. Talking without permission during silent expectation
8. Non-Amani outerwear on during school day or shirt not tucked in
9. Gum chewing
10. Doodling

**Level 2: Disruptive Behavior**

1. Shaking desk or chair
2. Inappropriate voice level
3. Running in class or hallways
4. Electronics – electronic noises in classroom; use of electronics in classroom
5. Being in an unauthorized area
6. Leaving class without permission
7. Ignoring or refusing to respond to staff
8. High level blow up
9. Wearing inappropriate, insufficient, or disruptive clothing or attire, or violating the scholar dress code
10. Laughing at someone who is being disciplined
11. Conduct in violation of Amani values, including “double dipping,” doing work for another class while a lesson is being conducted, writing on board without permission

**Level 3: Disrespect for Core Values**

1. Vandalize school property causing minor damage
2. Engage in conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity or endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of other
3. Cheat on quizzes, exams, or commit plagiarism
4. Steal, or attempt to steal, or possess property either known or suspected by the scholar to be stolen

5. Engage in gambling
6. Abuse school property or equipment
7. Use obscene or abusive language or gestures
8. Play fighting

#### **Level 4: Disrespect to Others**

1. Use of force or threats of force that reasonably place the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury
2. Engage in acts of verbal, physical, or sexual harassment
3. Hate Language: related to race, color, religion, religious practices, weight, disability, national origin, ethnic group, sexual orientation, sex, or gender (applicable to oral, written, or electronic communications, including texting, emailing and social networking)
4. Inappropriate touching
5. Bullying

#### **Level 5: Dangerous or Violent Behavior**

1. Possess tobacco, alcohol, or any illegal substance
2. Persistent harassment or bullying based on race, color, religion, religious practices, weight, disability, national origin, ethnic group, sexual orientation, sex, or gender (applies to oral, written or electronic communications as in 4.3).
3. Possess, use, attempt to use, or transfer of any firearm<sup>[1]</sup>, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other object that can be used to inflict harm or threaten others
4. Commit, or attempt to commit arson on school property or intentionally create a risk of fire on school property
5. Intentionally assault any other scholar or staff member, whether or not a physical injury results
6. Assault of any other scholar or staff member causing serious bodily injury
7. Participate in a fight which is intended to cause injury to another or causes a significant risk of injury to another
8. Vandalize school property causing major damage
9. Make a false bomb threat or pull a false emergency alarm
10. Use or attempt to use tobacco, alcohol or any illegal substance in school, on school property, on buses or at any school function

---

[1] Firearm Violation: In the absence of special circumstances, Federal and New York law require suspension from school for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school. Amani may also expel a student for this offense. In addition, Amani will refer a student who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to law enforcement for delinquency proceedings.

# AMANI PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

## SCHOLAR-FAMILY ACCOUNTABILITY COVENANT

**2018-2019**

When you joined the Amani Public Charter School community, you joined a team. The goal of this team is exemplified through the mission to provide scholars with the academic and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in competitive high school programs, college and the career of their choice. To achieve our goals, we must work together. We all need to have a full and clear understanding of the responsibilities of the members of this team. This contract spells out many of the most important responsibilities.

### SCHOOL COMMITMENT

#### **High Quality Education**

1. We will work tirelessly to ensure that our scholars get the excellent education they deserve. We will neither make nor accept excuses.
2. We will work a longer school day, longer school year, offer scholars extra help and support, and always offer our scholars the best we have.

#### **Respect and Fairness**

3. We will encourage and respect every scholar. We will listen to scholars and their needs. We will not tolerate scholars disrespecting each other.
4. We will communicate with families when scholars fail to meet expectations as well as when they exceed expectations. Decisions, including consequences, will be made in the best interest of our scholars.
5. We will give scholars recognition, incentives and privileges if they do well and give consequences and remove privileges if they do not.

#### **Communication**

6. We will communicate regularly with families about their child's progress and make ourselves available in person and on the phone.
7. We will return parent phone calls as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours.

#### **Homework and Academic Support**

8. We will assign quality homework every night to reinforce and support skills and concepts learned in class.
9. We will support scholars with excellent teaching and additional help during the school day and after/before school, as needed.

#### **Safety**

10. We will always work to provide a safe learning environment.

We will always work to protect the safety, dignity and rights of all individuals

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMITMENT**

### **Attendance and Promotion**

1. I will ensure that my child comes to school every day at 7:30am if they eat breakfast or 7:50am to be able to begin the day's activities.
2. I will not schedule family vacations during school time. I will do my best to schedule important appointments for out of school time.
3. I will make alternative transportation plans if my child is required to stay after school for tutoring or detention.
4. After school commitments are mandatory. My child will only be excused in case of an emergency.
5. I understand that my child may be retained if s/he fails 2 or more core academic classes.

### **Homework and Academic Support**

6. I will provide a quiet place to study and see that my scholar completes approximately 2 hours of homework and 30 minutes of independent reading nightly.
7. I will check my child's planner and homework every night. If, and only if, Amani standards have been met, I will sign my child's planner.
8. I will help my child study for tests and quizzes and give him/her support when they need help and praise him/her when they do well.

### **Behavior**

9. I understand that my child will serve detention after school if his/her behavior warrants it. I further understand that my scholar will receive Homework Club for missing/incomplete homework assignments on any day.
10. I understand that my child may have an In School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension if they violate the Code of Conduct.
11. If a scholar behavior requires it, I will come to school immediately. If Out-of-School Suspension is warranted, I will understand that I will be asked to remove my child from the building.
12. I understand that my child will be recommended for an expulsion hearing if they earn more than 3 suspensions and/or 5 days, whichever comes first. Once a student receives 6 suspensions and/or 10 days, whichever comes first, your child will be expelled from the Amani Public Charter School.

### **Dress Code**

13. I will send my child in proper dress code every day. If my child arrives out of uniform, I'll arrange for a family member to bring proper attire.

### **Family Support and Communication**

14. I agree to work as part of a team for the academic success and behavioral growth of my child. I will return phone calls, review and sign documentation sent home including progress reports and Paycheck Reports. I will attend parent teacher conferences and meetings about my child.

## **SCHOLAR COMMITMENT**

**Effort and Help**

- 1. I understand that my education is paramount. Being a scholar is my job. I will always work, think and behave in the best way I know how.
- 2. I will do whatever it takes for my fellow scholars and me to learn. I will do all my homework. I will work to exceed the school’s expectations.
- 3. If I need help, I will ask for it. If I can give help, I will give it. I will not criticize other scholars.

**Attendance**

- 4. I will come to school and be ready to learn by 7:50am in order to complete my morning responsibilities.
- 5. If I need to miss class or school, I will ask for and make up all assignments. I will stay after school if/when I am required to do so.

**Uniform**

- 6. I will wear the proper uniform every day and remain in uniform throughout the day.

**Communication**

- 7. I will listen to directions. I will read and re-read directions before asking for help. If I cannot solve the problem myself, I will raise my hand and ask for help. I will help my classmates if they need help. I will not make excuses. I will be honest with my teachers and myself.

**Responsibility and Honesty**

- 8. If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept responsibility for my actions. I will do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

**Behavior Expectations**

- 9. I will respect my teachers, my peers and myself. I will refrain from all disrespectful behavior including smacking teeth, rolling eyes, etc.
- 10. I understand the behavior expectations of Amani. I will follow the school rules to protect the safety and rights of all individuals and not detract from the educational opportunities of others. I will accept the consequences if I do not meet the expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Scholar Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



## **What We Know to Be True At Amani Public Charter School**

### We believe that our scholars:

- Can and want to learn.
- Will produce high-quality work.
- Will flourish in a safe and nurturing learning environment.
- Will be responsive and reflective.

### We believe that our staff and families:

- Must establish strong partnerships.
- Must promote respect and cooperation through healthy communication.

### We believe that our learning community:

- Is a place where everyone is continuously working and learning together.
- Is a dynamic school environment that addresses the comprehensive needs of the whole child.
- Encourages Scholars to develop critical-thinking skills.
- Must employ effective teaching strategies to foster mastery of skills and concepts.

Amani Public Charter School will not discriminate against any student, employee, or other person on the basis of national origin, ethnicity, gender, or disability or any other ground that would be unlawful if done by any other public school.