



Flat River Academy  
Student and Family Handbook  
2021-2022

**MISSION OF Flat River Academy:**

Flat River Academy will engage learners in a comprehensive education using an innovative, project-based curriculum designed to inspire and prepare them to be college and career ready.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Flat River Academy relies on parents for their involvement in their child's education, growth, and development. Parents are the first and most effective teachers for their children. We encourage parents to become active partners with the classroom teachers. Research clearly reports that student's success is closely tied to a significant adult in their lives.

**Volunteers**

Parents and other community members are sought as volunteers to assist the faculty and staff to achieve the educational program and provide quality services for all students. Volunteer activities include such responsibilities as tutors, mentors, youth motivators, classroom assistants, computer assistants, media center assistants, room mothers, after school programs, Fine Arts, and PTO. Parents, grandparents, and friends are encouraged to become volunteers.

**Parent Teacher Organization**

The PTO is an organization of parents, teachers, and interested citizens working for the improvement of education for all Flat River Academy students. Meetings, informative programs, student productions, and fund raising activities are held throughout the year. Meetings are open to the public and all parents are encouraged to become active members and to attend monthly meetings. There is no membership fee to join the PTO, just an interest in working to: improve school spirit, encourage parent and community partnerships, assist with curricular and extracurricular activities, and enhance working conditions for staff. All parents and friends are encouraged to participate and support the Academy.

**Partnership in Responsibility**

The Code of Student Conduct is titled—Partnership in Responsibility—in anticipation of parents, students, teachers, administration, support staff, and Board of Directors forging a strong bond on behalf of the children of Flat River Academy. Commitment to student success, commitment to diligence and strong work ethic, a respectful environment, team work, and discipline, as adopted by the Board of Directors, stand as the Academy's core values. The Partnership is based on mutual respect, responsibility, and results. You are encouraged to embrace the partnership philosophy and translate it into action.

## **STUDENTS**

### **Entry Guidelines**

A child is eligible to enroll in kindergarten if he or she is at least five years of age on or before September 1 of the school year of enrollment.

A child that will be 5 by December 1st may enroll in kindergarten with an approved waiver.

Parents of a student under suspension or expulsion from another school must petition the Board of Directors to seek enrollment of their child at the Academy. Complete academic and discipline records must be provided before a petition is forwarded to the Board for consideration.

### **Directory Information**

The Academy is required to provide directory information on your child to anyone who requests it unless the parent has provided a written statement indicating his or her desire for directory information to be withheld from public requests. Directory information includes such information as the child's name, address, telephone number, and other information.

### **School Hours K-8**

For the 2021-2022 School year, all students will begin school at 8:00. School will be dismissed at 3:00.

## **ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

The staff and administration of Flat River Academy believe that the maximum educational achievement occurs for students through regular attendance in classes. The student and their parents/guardian are responsible for regular class attendance. Excessive absences from any class may result in poor achievement and/or failure to earn credit required for graduation. Because class attendance is necessary for learning and academic achievement, as well as for developing the habits of punctuality, dependability and self-discipline, it is a relevant objective criterion, which can be related to a pupil's course grade. The purpose of the attendance procedures is to help students develop these responsibilities and to maintain academic standards for earning credits.

### **Excused absences may be granted for the following reasons:**

- a. Illness of the student. The principal may require a doctor's statement. A doctor's statement of illness must be presented if a student is absent more than three consecutive days or accumulates more than 5 absences during a semester.
- b. Illness in the immediate family which requires absence of the student from school.
- c. Death in the immediate family.

- d. Religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the student's faith.
- e. Absences for other reasons as approved by the principal upon request of the parent.

Upon return to school, a student is to check with his or her teacher(s) to schedule make-up work.

When a pupil's absence is known ahead of time, as in the case of an out-of town trip, please make arrangements with the teacher and notify the office.

A student who is absent for ten consecutive days will be withdrawn from the Academy unless the parent or guardian has given advance notice to the principal and received approval.

### **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCES**

If a student must be absent from school, the parents/guardian should call Flat River Academy (616) 754-9360 by 10:00 on the day the student is absent. Please specify the following: A. Who is calling B. The student's name and grade C. Reason for the absence D. Date of the absence E. Expected length of absence F. Phone number at which a parent/guardian may be reached.

#### **Late Arrival**

Students are tardy to school if they arrive after the school day begins at 8:00am. Teachers are expected to begin opening exercises promptly and transition smoothly into instruction. A tardy student must report to the office upon arrival and receive a tardy slip to admit him or her to class. Excessive tardiness may result in truancy unless it is for an appointment. Documentation may be needed to excuse excessive tardies.

#### **Early Dismissal Requests**

Any student being dismissed during the school day must sign out in the office and leave with a parent or a person approved by the parent. When students leave school early, they miss instructional time. Students should not be picked up early unless they need to attend an appointment or other important function. Excessive early dismissal may result in truancy unless a note is provided from a doctor or other appointment.

#### **Truancy**

There are both personal and social costs for students who fail to attend school on a regular basis. Flat River Academy is committed to making sure students have access to an excellent education. It is important to communicate with the school if your child will be absent. Please review the following guidelines:

- 3 unexcused absences = You will receive a letter, call or visit (maybe all 3) to alert you that your child is missing too much school.
- 5 unexcused absences = Flat River Academy will contact the MAISD Truancy Officer for a meeting.

- 8 unexcused absences = Flat River Academy and the MAISD Truancy officer refers the student/parent truancy case to the Prosecuting Attorney for judicial review/action.

### **Visitors**

Visitors will be limited during the 2021-22 school year to reduce the possible transmission of Covid-19. Visitors must have prior permission before entering the school and they must undergo screening. All parents or visitors must report to the office for permission to be on the school grounds, including in the school building. A daily sign-in sheet will be available for the use of parents and visitors who have been pre-approved to visit in the school. All guests are to stop in the office, sign-in, and tell the office manager or principal who you wish to visit. Sign-in and approval is necessary for the safe protection of our children and to avoid disruption of Classes. No one is to bypass the office and go directly to the classroom or to the playground area. The staff must be able to provide safe, secure supervision of all children. Student visitors and small children are not permitted to visit classrooms during school hours, without prior approval.

### **Messages to Students and Staff**

Students are not allowed to use cell phones for calls or texts at any time during the day, this includes between classes and lunch. Parents, please do not contact your child on their phone during the school day.

If a student is using their cell phone during the school day, it will be held in the office until a parent picks it up.

Messages to students and/or staff must be dropped off or called into the office. Messages will be delivered when it will cause less disruption to student learning. Parents are encouraged to communicate the message as early as possible to ensure timely delivery to the proper person.

### **Early Release Days -**

Early release dates may be scheduled during the school year for professional development workshops and parent conferences. A school calendar is sent home at the beginning of the school year listing the dates. The school calendar is also available on the school's website. The school newsletter includes reminders of these dates and any additional ones.

On early release days, students will be dismissed from school at 12:00. Lunch will be served before dismissal.

### **Emergencies**

Most emergencies involve the weather. Procedures have been developed in an effort to ensure safety and security for all children when they are under the care of the Academy. Parents are encouraged to keep informed of weather conditions and possible school closings and to make sure child care arrangements are in place for the emergency closing of school. Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills are regularly scheduled to prepare students about safe practices in case of an emergency. The teacher will review rules of safety and evacuation routes with students. Evacuation routes and tornado watch locations are posted in each classroom and

common use  
area of the Academy.

The fire buzzer, or other distinct sound, will sound monthly fire, tornado, and emergency drills. Intermittent ringing of a bell will sound tornado drills. The teacher or person responsible for a group of students will take class roll to determine the presence of all students who are present on that day. Students and staff will return to class when the teacher is given approval—verbal or hand signal—by the principal or designee.

### **Tornado**

Students will not be dismissed from school when there is a tornado warning, or actual tornado. During a tornado watch, students will remain inside the building in designated areas, local radio stations will be monitored closely, and staff will take safety precautions. Students will be released to their parents or designated adult upon request.

During a tornado warning or tornado, all students and staff members will remain in the building, will take shelter in designated areas, and will follow outlined safety precautions. Students may be detained beyond the usual dismissal time. Parents who have come to the school to pick up students are encouraged to stay at school until the tornado warning or tornado has passed and safe conditions prevail. Out of respect for parental responsibility, a student will be released to parents only.

### **Delays/Cancellations**

There may be times when school is delayed or cancelled due to weather or other circumstances.

Notice of school cancellation is given by announcements on several radio and television stations WOODTV and FOX17 (use of regional GRAIL system) and Remind.com (the school's text service). You can also check our Facebook page.

### **Emergency Closing During the School Day**

In the event of severe weather or other unexpected emergencies, the school may be forced to dismiss students early. If school must be dismissed early, parents are encouraged to have pre arranged adult supervision for their children.

Parents are expected to make sure an adult is at home when the child arrives with a previously arranged, designated adult. Parents are encouraged to discuss emergency procedures with their children.

Parents are expected to provide the school with an emergency number in case of the child's illness or emergency closing. If the parent cannot be contacted, the school will make reasonable efforts to contact the person designated for emergency situations. School staff will leave soon after school is dismissed due to the emergency situation.

### **Seasonal Attire**

Student attire must be seasonally appropriate for the time of year and the

activities in which the student will be participating. It is the parent's responsibility to see that their children are properly dressed for inclement or cold weather. Students do not go outdoors if the temperature is below 10 degrees F.

### **Recess K-8**

The recess period is given to provide a change of pace, exercise and release of tension.

If your child is well enough to come to school, we can generally assume he/she is well enough to go outside for recess.

All children are expected to go outside for recess unless the principal declares the weather is not suitable for children to be outside. This will occur when it is raining or when the wind chill factor is below 10 degrees F.

A written request from the parent asking that a child remain inside for recess will be honored one day at a time. Requests for extended periods inside (more than 3 days) will require a statement from your doctor.

### **Class Parties**

Grades K-8 will have seasonal celebrations. Teachers plan the parties, but may ask for parent support. You may be asked for a contribution or donation to help defray the cost of the party, however there is no obligation to do so.

### **Breakfast/Lunch Program**

Flat River Academy offers free breakfast and lunch to all students. Upon enrollment, we are asking each family to complete the Household Information Survey, which is needed for administrative purposes for our school to continue to qualify for this program. Breakfast begins at 7:40. Students that intend to have breakfast should arrive no later than 7:55.

### **Telephone/Cell phone Use**

Cell phones have been found to be a serious distraction to the learning environment. To protect your child's right to a safe and less-distracted learning experience, cell phone use by students is not allowed during the school day. We encourage students to leave their cell phone at home or turned off and stowed away for the day.

Students may make school-related calls to parents from the office phone, with permission from their teacher. **CELL PHONES ARE NOT TO BE USED.**

Students found with a cell phone will have the phone confiscated and must be retrieved by a parent. If the student refuses to allow staff to hold the cell phone, parents will be called to help resolve the matter. Students that refuse to follow this

policy may be suspended and sent home.

### **Student Desks/Lockers**

The school retains the right to inspect student desks and storage areas when there is reason to suspect infractions of the Code of Student Conduct. Materials considered pornographic, obscene, or offensive and articles considered to be dangerous to anyone are not to be stored in student desks or lockers at any time.

### **Pesticide Use**

If the principal finds that it is necessary to use pesticides at the Academy, parents will be notified in advance of the pesticide to be used and of their rights under the Pesticide Use Act. Inquiries concerning pesticide use should be directed to the principal.

### **Animals to School**

Animals of any type are not to be brought onto school property without prior written permission of the principal. The request must be curriculum related and there must not be a danger to students or employees or the animal.

### **Transportation**

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school/bus stop. Parents dropping off or picking up their children are reminded to pay close attention to movement of students, vehicles/bus in the parking area. Areas for student pickup will be clearly marked. You are also welcome to park your car in a parking space and walk and wait at the entrance of the school. Please do not park in front of the school and leave your car during before and after school dismissal.

### **Communications Chain**

Parents who wish to address specific issues or concerns about their child's education are asked to speak first to their child's classroom teacher to seek a suitable resolution. Unresolved issues should be brought to the attention of the principal. The principal has primary responsibility for management of the school.

### **Academy Newsletter**

The Academy Newsletter will be sent home at least monthly with each child. It contains information about school activities and programs as well as an updated calendar for the month. Parents should notify the school office if they do not receive their copy. Please stress with your child the importance of bringing these monthly newsletters home because they are the main source of communication between administration and home. It may also be posted to the Website, Facebook and Skyward.

## **Loitering**

Loitering is forbidden by anyone before, during, or after school. Any person who comes on the school grounds and does not properly sign in with the office will be considered a trespasser. The person will be asked to leave the school grounds immediately. Failure to leave the school grounds will result in the incident being reported to the Sheriff's Department for action.

## **Vacations**

The school discourages the practice of taking family vacations on school days or during times other than regular school vacation periods. If a student will be out of school for a family vacation, the student will be responsible for making up any work upon returning.

## **Medications/Immunizations**

Students are not allowed to keep any type of medication in their possession during school hours. All prescription medication should be sent to school in a container labeled by the pharmacist. Only enough medicine for the exact amount of doses given in school should be sent. We cannot send the bottle home on a daily basis.

Emergency medications such as inhalers or epipens may be carried by a child if requested by a parent. There is specific paperwork that needs to be filled out in the office.

A written, signed, and dated request from the parent/guardian indicating the reason and authorizing the administration of medication to the child during the school hours as indicated by the physician must accompany the medication. The child's medication schedule should be sent to school to ensure proper administration of the medication (dose needed during school hours). Every effort will be made to eliminate and minimize class disruptions by giving medications at lunchtime and recesses.

Over-the-counter medications, including aspirin, Tylenol, lotions or creams will not be administered without written consent from a parent. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to indicate in writing if the medication is to be discontinued early or extended. We will not change a medication schedule by student request.

**A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MUST BRING THE MEDICATION TO SCHOOL.  
DO NOT SEND THE MEDICATION WITH THE STUDENT**

Immunizations must be up to date in order to attend school, unless the parent has signed a waiver through the health department. Schools are required to report the immunization status of each student to the health department twice

per school year, November 1 and February 1. Any child that is not up to date will not be able to attend school.

### **Emergency Medical Card**

Parents will be asked to sign an emergency medical card to permit the teacher or adult in charge to secure medical assistance for the child in an emergency situation. The parents will be notified as quickly as possible of medical care being given to the child.

### **Insurance**

Parents are encouraged to be sure that their child has medical insurance. If the child does not have medical insurance and the parent wants insurance for the child, the parent is encouraged to notify the principal so they can work together to secure school insurance for the child.

### **Personal Property**

The Academy will work with parents to protect personal property. Reasonable guidelines will contribute to our success.

School Materials: Required textbooks and related learning materials are provided by the school free of charge. Students are responsible for taking care of school owned materials and are expected to pay replacement or damage costs if applicable.

Clothing: Clothing is very expensive and must be cared for. Proper care includes labeling articles that the child will most likely remove upon arrival at school. Items such as coats, hats, gloves, and boots should be labeled. The Academy does not assume responsibility for lost articles of clothing. A lost and found box will be kept near the office.

Money: Parents are encouraged to be sure the child has properly secured any money brought to school. If a large sum of money is required, parents are encouraged to see the teacher before or after school and make payment or the teacher will collect money upon the child's arrival at school. Parents are encouraged to place money sent to school in an envelope with a note stating the reason the money is being sent. The child's name and teacher's name should be clearly written on the outside of the envelope. Parents are encouraged not to allow children to bring large amounts of money to school.

Electronic Equipment: Electronic or battery operated entertainment or communications equipment are not permitted at school. Bringing a cell phone to school is strongly discouraged. Cell phones are not to be used at school in any manner, not at any time during the day. This includes passing time and lunch. If a student uses a cell phone during school hours, the first offense will result in the phone being stored in the office until a parent can pick it up. This is heavily enforced.

## **ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

### **Media Center/Computers**

The media center/library is available for student use. Students and their parents are required to sign the technology use permission statement to use school-owned technology.

### **Summer Programs**

Tuition-free summer programs may be offered to students who need additional instructional time to achieve proficiency necessary for promotion. Students who successfully complete summer school will be promoted to the next grade. Parents may request enrollment of their children in summer school for extra help.

## **STUDENT PREPARATION FOR CLASS**

In order for students to be prepared and ready for instructional activities, students will be expected to be at school on time, to have completed homework assignments, and to have proper instructional materials with them. Teachers will provide parents with a list of supplies needed for each class.

### **Homework/Planners**

Every student at Flat River Academy is given a student planner. These planners document homework assignments and are used as a tool to communicate between school and home. Students are required to take planners home and have them signed each day.

Homework is important to the learning process and is assigned on a regular basis in small amounts. Homework assignments vary in length and content for each subject. It may be in the form of a written assignment, studying for the next day's class, reading, art work, watching a television show or a video. Studying consists of reading and reviewing material orally or in writing. Parents can be helpful by offering assistance with studying by reviewing assignment notebooks and by asking questions.

### **Report Cards/Conferences/Progress Reports**

Students in grades K-8 will receive report cards at the end of each nine weeks of school. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled on the school calendar. The school will remind parents of parent-teacher conference dates and times.

Parents are encouraged to discuss the information on the report card with their child and to encourage excellence in achievement and behavior. The purpose of report cards is to communicate to parents and students the child's progress on the knowledge and skills the student is working on in class and to provide insight into the

child's behavior.

### **K-8 School Assemblies**

Periodically during the school year, there will be Grizzly Pride Assemblies for students to present their schoolwork, build character and engage in a presentation. A goal of the Academy is that students gain confidence in public presentations and find their "voice" as participating citizens in a democratic society. Parents are invited to attend.

### **Make up Work for Absence from School**

Students are responsible for getting and completing any work they have missed due to absence from class. Make up work should be completed within three days of return to school for short term absence of 1-2 days and within five days of return for absence of 3-5 days.

In cases of extended absence of more than five days due to illness, a student may request special consideration for additional time to make up work.

Requests should be presented in writing with a note from the student's parents/guardians to the principal.

### **Class Assignments & Accelerated Learning**

Each year the faculty gives serious consideration to class assignments. Class placements are based on the teacher's knowledge of students' previous performance and best educational judgments. Parents are given the opportunity, through conferencing and/or questionnaires, to provide input with regard to what will constitute the best educational assignment for their child.

The Academy's educational program embraces the principle of accelerated learning in which students who demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills are permitted to cross curriculum for more rigorous and challenging instruction in a subject or subjects. Each day, Flat River Academy has time dedicated for differentiated instruction (DI). During DI students may move up or down academic materials to receive instruction at their current level.

For new students, a child's class assignment will typically be made according to the information received from the child's last previously attended school. A new student may be asked to take a placement test to determine proper grade placement.

### **Character Education**

Flat River Academy is committed to the development of good citizens in the community. Character education themes are established for each month and will be integrated into units of study across the curriculum. Parents will be informed of the character education themes and will be encouraged to reinforce school instruction in the home.

### **Field Trips (suspended during phase 4)**

Written parental or legal guardian permission is required for a student to go on any field trip off school grounds. Parents may sign a blanket permission slip for school sponsored field trips. Parents will always be given notice of field trips and may choose to not allow a child to participate.

For trips involving travel by private transportation, parents should note any particular information involving lunches, spending money, departure and arrival times. Student/adult ratios may vary with the nature of the field trip.

Students who disobey school rules and/or defy teacher authority may be denied the right to participate in field trips. The decision will be made by the principal in consultation with the teacher(s) conducting the field trip.

### **Equal Educational Opportunity**

It is the policy of Flat River Academy not to discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, color, national origin, and/or handicap in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices as required by federal and state law.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX, Section 504, or any other federal or state regulations may be directed to the principal, the Michigan Department of Education, or the

Director of the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education. All reported incidents will be forwarded to Chief Administrative Officer or Board of Directors President for investigation.

### **Testing**

Students at Flat River Academy are given the following state assessments:

MSTEP - 3rd-8th grade

PSAT - 8th

The results of the state assessment tests are used to assist in the improvement of curriculum and instruction in the areas of English/Language Arts, Math, Science and Technology, and History and Social Studies.

All students K-8 will take the NWEA in order to monitor student progress and allow teachers to work with families to set goals/learning targets to support learning and design interventions.

Parents will be sent individual scores of their children. Test scores will be included in the child's cumulative folder.

## **Special Education**

Flat River Academy attempts to provide appropriate educational programs for children who are identified with disabilities and who have an approved Individual Educational Plan. The Flat River Academy charter embraces the instructional practice known as inclusion. When the IEP calls for pullout services, the student will be permitted to leave the classroom to work with a properly trained professional educator.

The goal of special education programming is to provide students with an educational plan that best meets their individual needs in the least restrictive environment. This means that, to the extent appropriate, students will be provided services within the regular education classroom with the necessary support.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, you are encouraged to speak with your child's teacher. If appropriate, your child's teacher will consult with a Teacher Support Team for suggestions on classroom and instructional modifications. For further information on all special education services and programming, contact the principal.

## **Summary of Regulations Pertaining to Student Records**

A parent has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and the student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee (.25 per page) may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials.

The parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school or a third party if desired with written approval of the parent.

## **Confidentiality of Record**

With few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

## **Amendment of Record**

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have a right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference, and the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not

satisfied with the decision, the decision may be appealed to the Board of Directors or the person designated by it.

**BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES** (additional information about behavior and consequences can be found the the Flat River Academy Code of Conduct)

### **Classroom Behavior**

Management of classroom behavior is the responsibility of each teacher. Students at Flat River Academy have the right to be treated with respect by their teachers and classmates. They are to be treated equally and fairly and with dignity. All students should be included in all activities and made to feel welcome in all activities of the Academy.

Through classroom discussions, students acknowledge that certain behaviors, such as talking without permission, calling out, passing notes, bullying, students making fun of other students, and talking back to teachers, interfere with learning. Bullying must not be tolerated in the classroom or on school grounds and is to be considered intimidation and, if severe, enough “assault.”

### **Consequences**

Students recognize that consequences for behaviors that interfere with their learning are necessary. Disruptive students may be removed from the classroom temporarily until the teacher and/or principal is confident the student is ready to return to class as a responsible participant.

Any student, who repeatedly interferes with a teacher's ability to teach, another student's right to learn, or demonstrates an inability to improve behavior will be removed from class and sent to the principal. Parents will be notified each time a child is sent out of class.

If there is not significant improvement in the child's behavior, the parent may be scheduled to spend a day with his/her child to observe the classroom dynamics in the hopes that this may lead to a resolution of behavioral issues without disruption of attendance at school.

### **Playground/Recess, K-8**

The recess period is given to provide a change of pace, exercise and release of tension. Students are provided with the opportunity to engage in unstructured, open-ended, social interaction during lunch, and afternoon recesses. Recess time is supervised by a playground monitor and/or classroom teacher who is (are) responsible for student safety. Recess is a time for fun and relaxation and appropriate behavior is expected.

Students who do not demonstrate proper playground behavior will be placed in “time out” until they are able to return to the playground activities. A student will be sent to either his/her classroom teacher or the principal for additional consequences depending on the severity and frequency of misbehavior.

### **Lunchroom Behavior**

Lunchtime provides students with another opportunity to practice social skills in an informally structured environment. During lunch, students are expected to:

- o Speak softly.
- o Walk to their tables.
- o Remain seated while eating lunch.
- o Be considerate of those eating after them.
- o Clean up after themselves.
- o Be courteous to the people in charge.

Students who are unable to follow lunchroom rules may be given an assigned seat.

### **Dress Code**

Students wearing attire that disrupts the educational process or promotes activities contrary to school policy, such as profanity, obscenity, violence, the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco, sexual harassment, and/or the violation of civil rights will be asked to change into more appropriate clothing. No midriffs, low-cut tops or baggy pants that expose underwear are allowed. Undergarments should not be exposed and shorts and skirts must be mid thigh in length. Failure to change to proper attire may result in disciplinary action by the teacher or principal. Students will be asked to remove hats and coats while in the school building. Leggings should be accompanied by longer shirts or dresses. Tank tops should have at least 1” straps and muscle shirts should not expose the chest (on either boys or girls). Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times.

Backpacks should be kept in lockers during the school day. Small purses for adolescent females may be carried for personal hygiene items.

### **Student Safety Zone**

Michigan law establishes a Student Safety Zone that extends 1,000 feet from the school property in relation to weapons, drugs, registered sex offenders, and tobacco. Individuals are prohibited from engaging in these activities on Academy property, within the Student Safety Zone, or at any Academy-related event.

### **Registered Sex Offenders**

Registered sex offenders are not to come within 1,000 feet of school property.

The Principal will immediately report presence of registered sex offenders on Academy property, within the Student Safety Zone, or at any Academy-related event to local law enforcement authorities.

### **Smoke Free School Zone**

The use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.

### **Drug and Alcohol Use**

The use and/or possession of drugs or alcohol are illegal and will be treated by the school as a serious offense. Any student found with or using alcoholic beverages or drugs during school hours or at school-related activities shall be referred to the principal for long term suspension or expulsion. The student's parent(s) will be notified and required to attend a conference with the principal and possibly the Board of Directors. The police will be notified and the student may be liable for arrest and prosecution.

Any teacher suspecting a student of using drugs or alcohol will report this to the principal and the student will be seen and evaluated immediately.

### **Firearms**

The federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 requires school districts to expel a student from school for a period of not less than one year if it is determined that the student brought a firearm to school. Expulsion may be permanent.

### **Bullying**

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important school goals.

Bullying defined: The definition of bullying is when an individual or a group of people with a real or perceived power imbalance, repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, immigration status, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying (bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication) and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, stalking, sexual violence, causing psychological harm, threatening or causing physical harm, threatened or actual destruction of property, or wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above.

Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the assistant principal or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the principal or any staff member.

Anonymous reports are also accepted by phone call or in writing.

Complaint Managers: Principal or designee

Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in intimidation or harassment will be subject to disciplinary consequences as

provided in the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to, suspension and expulsion consistent with the school and district discipline policy.

Parents of students who have engaged in the above behavior will be notified. Any student making a knowingly false accusation regarding harassment may also be subject to disciplinary consequences.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Flat River Academy is committed to providing a working and learning environment based on dignity and respect, free of harassment or intimidation. All those associated with the Academy are expected to foster a climate that is supportive, respectful and conducive to teaching and learning.

Sexual harassment is among the behaviors that are destructive to a positive working and learning climate, and as such is prohibited by state law, federal law, and Flat River Academy policy. Any member of the school community who engages in sexual harassment as defined below will be in violation of this policy. The Employee Manual is explicit in its discussion of sexual harassment and consequences of inappropriate behavior by employees.

This policy encompasses behavior of adults towards adults or students, and students towards students or adults.

#### **DEFINITION:**

It is a violation of this policy when a person makes any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to or rejections of advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of benefits, privileges, employment or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement.
2. Such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's education or career by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational or employment environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include, but is not limited to, the following: verbal or written harassment or abuse, pressure for sexual activity, repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc., display of lewd or sexually explicit materials, inappropriate jokes, or language of a sexual nature.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

All persons associated with Flat River Academy are responsible for:

1. Ensuring that his/her behavior does not sexually harass any other person associated with the school.

2. Reporting any observed or experienced harassment or mistreatment immediately to the Sexual Harassment Grievance Officer and cooperating fully in the investigation of alleged sexual harassment; and
3. Actively participating in the Academy's effort to prevent sexual harassment in the school.

Retaliation of any form, including threats, intimidation, reprisal or harassment, towards any person who makes a sexual harassment complaint, or who assists in or participates in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing is unlawful and will not be tolerated and can be considered grounds for dismissal of staff and/or removal of a student from school.

FALSE REPORTS:

False (fabricated) claims of sexual harassment can cause permanent damage to the victim of such claims and must therefore be treated as a very serious matter. A false claim may be considered grounds for dismissal of staff, or discipline including the removal from the educational setting for a student, who makes a false claim.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Reports and complaints of sexual harassment will be kept as confidential as possible consistent with the rights of all parties.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE OFFICER:

The Board of Directors has appointed Chief Administrative Officer, or his designee, as the Grievance Officer who will be responsible for processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES:

1. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may be viewed as sexual harassment by another person. Therefore, the victim should make clear to the harasser that the behavior is offensive and must stop. If the harasser does not stop the behavior or the victim is uncomfortable confronting the harasser, or if the behavior warrants further action in the opinion of the victim, the victim should lodge a complaint with the Grievance Officer.
2. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the sexual harassment Grievance Officer will investigate the matter. The complaint should be as specific as possible, including names, dates, times, places, witnesses, and specific words or action which were experienced as offensive. In cases involving students, the student's parents will be notified immediately of the complaint, the steps to be followed, and the ways in which they will be involved in the process.
3. All complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated. Depending on the circumstances, the investigation may encompass any or all of the following:
  - a) The alleged victim may write a letter to the alleged harasser

describing the offensive behavior, the circumstances under which it took place, the way the behavior made the victim feel, and requesting that the harasser apologize and promise not to repeat the behavior. The Grievance Officer will then meet with the alleged harasser, hear the harasser's account of the situation, present the victim's letter, and discuss the matter.

b) Where appropriate in the opinion of the Grievance Officer, a meeting will be held between the alleged victim and the alleged

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harasser to clarify the facts and to attempt to mediate a resolution.

c) The Grievance Officer may interview all parties and witnesses to the alleged harassment.

4. In cases of alleged student harassers, the Grievance Officer will determine if these facts constitute harassment. Disciplinary consequences such as detention, suspension, or expulsion consistent with school rules may be implemented.

5. In cases of alleged adult harassers, the Grievance Officer will report the facts of the alleged harassment and will determine if these facts constitute harassment. The Grievance Officer will recommend to the Board of Directors appropriate action which could include disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

6. If disciplinary steps are taken, copies of the reports of facts and the written decision will go to the harasser, the personnel file in cases of adult harassers, and to the parents in cases of student harassers. The victim, and his or her parents, if the victim is a student, will also be informed of the determination as to whether harassment occurred.

7. Repeated or extreme forms of harassment, violence, or civil rights infringements will result in a recommendation for expulsion or termination from Flat River Academy.

The Grievance Officer will make complete records of all sexual complaints, facts, steps taken, determinations, and resolutions, and those records will be kept in a central file in the principal's office for a period of 60 years.

#### STATE and FEDERAL REMEDIES:

In addition to the above, if someone believes he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment, he/she may file a formal complaint with either or both of the governing agencies set forth below. The complaint process does not prohibit filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC - 180 days; MCAD - 6 months).

1. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

2. State of Michigan

Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI)

It is the policy of Flat River Academy that twice a year the principal will

request from the Kent, Montcalm and Ionia County Sheriffs' Departments the names of individuals in the community who have been registered under the Sex Offender Registration Act. The requests will seek to encompass the widest geographical inquiry allowed under the act. This information will be shared with appropriate teacher(s) and the Board of Directors if appropriate.

### **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Academy Board has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students;

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights, including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from harassment and discrimination; the responsibility not to harass and discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.
3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspensions, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure his or her rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy in respect to the school's records.

The Board of Directors believes that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights and of the legal authority of the Academy Board to make and delegate authority to its staff to make rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior. The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, are made available to students and their parents through the Code of Student Conduct which is distributed annually. Parents are required to sign the Code of Student Conduct as an acknowledgment that they have reviewed and discussed the Code with their children.

### **Child Abuse or Neglect**

Michigan State law rightfully requires the school to report any suspicious or obvious abuse or neglect of a child to the Michigan Family Independence Agency. Please be aware that the staff takes this responsibility seriously and will act immediately to meet this reporting requirement of the law. We hope that we will never have to carry out this law but we will!

## **Detentions, Suspensions, Expulsions**

Detentions, suspensions, and/or expulsions are levels of consequences that are administered to students who demonstrate disobedient, disruptive, violent, disrespectful, or otherwise harmful behavior at school. Students whose presence create, or is likely to create, a specific threat or risk to the safety or well-being of the school community or any of its members will be suspended or expelled from school.

The Code of Student Conduct clearly spells out the responsibilities of parents and students, appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, and consequences for unacceptable behaviors.

The principal has the authority to suspend or recommend expulsion of a student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance, or who assaults school personnel at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games. All action will be in compliance with the Academy policy on weapons and violence at school (policy 5610).

## **Interrogations and Searches**

### **Searches by Staff**

The right to inspect students' desks, backpacks/purses, and belongings is inherent in the authority granted school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property.

In exercise of that authority by school officials, it is incumbent upon them to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools.

### **Interrogation by Police and Other Outside Agencies**

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials and representatives of other agencies. Therefore:

1. When law enforcement and or agency officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school principal or designee will be present when possible. An extensive effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian to ensure that the responsible individual is notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest is/are involved, the principal will request that all

procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Student Organizations**

Student organizations are encouraged when they meet the criteria of contributing to student self-esteem and performance and should operate within the framework of state statutes, Board policies, and administrative procedures (NOTE: Board of Directors has determined that activities outside, e.g: clubs, non-Flat River Academy sponsored activities, etc... are outside the Board's jurisdiction).

Guidelines for the establishment and operation of student organizations require the approval of the principal prior to the formation of any club or organization in the school and assignment of at least one faculty or designated adult advisor to each approved student organization. Within such guidelines will be provisions for a periodic review of all student organizations.

The formation of any student organization that may engage in activities of a controversial nature shall require approval by the Board.

All student organizations shall be required to open membership to all interested and/or eligible students. Disruptive groups, secret societies, and/or gangs shall not receive recognition in any manner under this policy.

All forms of hazing in initiations shall be prohibited in a student organization.

No initiation shall be held for a student organization that will bring criticism to the Academy or be degrading to the student.

The faculty or designated adult advisor must attend every meeting of the student organization whether conducted on school premises or at another location.

### **Student Activity Accounts**

Student funds may be raised to finance the activities of authorized student organizations. Student activity funds are considered a part of the total fiscal operation of the district and are subject to policies established by the Board of Directors. The funds shall be managed in accordance with sound business practices which include accepted budgetary and accounting practices. A student activity account is not to hold funds in excess of one year's operating budget unless the Chief Administrative Officer grants written approval.

## **Student Fees, Fines, and Charges**

The Academy Board recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. No students will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges.

A fee may be charged only with the approval of the principal. The teacher, with approval of the principal, may charge students enrolled in certain courses for materials used in projects that will become the property of the student. Students will be charged for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment belonging to the Academy.

Students who are indigent are exempt from paying fees. However, indigent students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment.

All student fees and charges will be described in written form and will be distributed to each student. The notice will advise students that fees are to be paid and of any penalties for failure to pay them. Permissible penalties may include the withholding of report cards until payment is made or denial of participation in extra class activities.

Any fee or charge due to the Academy and not paid by the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the Academy.

## **Academic/Sports Teams**

The principal and teachers will seek opportunities for students to participate in competitions such as Science Fairs, Math Fairs, Odyssey of the Mind, Reading Days, Lego League, Robotics, Academic Student Showcase, Technology, Sports, etc.

## **Closing**

Parents are the critical partner in all Academy functions. Each child's best interests are served well through cooperation of parents and school staff. The faculty and staff pledge itself to be available for parents and their children as needs arise. Parent/student signatures on the Flat River Academy Verification of Partnership Agreement (last page of Code of Conduct) will verify that both Code of Conduct/Family Handbook were reviewed.

School Leadership and Office Staff

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