



Parent/Student Handbook

Polaris Charter School

School Administrative Unit # 401

100 Coolidge Avenue

Manchester, NH 03102

Phone: (603) 634-0034

Website: <http://www.polarischarterschool.org/>

Welcome!

Polaris Charter School extends a warm welcome to you and to your children. We are proud and excited to be entering our fourth year as a public charter school!

This parent-student handbook is designed to serve the entire Polaris community. Although not every situation affecting students is addressed, the handbook articulates the broad range of expectations that have been derived from the school’s Mission Statement and Charter. The administrative guidelines written in the “Handbook” are approved by our Board of Trustees and are considered policy for the current school year.

It is important that every member of the Polaris community read and review this handbook. As new information comes to our attention, the handbook will be revised as necessary. Your comments and suggestions for improvements in our education program are always welcome, as we want to work together in building a joyful and exciting community of learners.

We look forward to your interest, reflection and active participation in supporting the Mission and Charter of Polaris Charter School.

The Polaris Charter School Staff

Approved by the Board of Trustees August 13, 2012
Revised and Updated November 17, 2015
Revised and Updated August 17, 2016

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Introduction

Mission Statement

The mission of Polaris Charter School is to create a joyful and exciting learning community for intellectually curious elementary-aged children. Through an engaging, inquiry-based curriculum, our students will develop the ability to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, think critically, and excel academically. Our program fosters creativity and the development of social and emotional skills, instilling a positive attitude about future studies and ensuring students are well prepared for the challenges of an ever-changing world.

“Polaris Charter School will:

- Implement a rigorous, project-oriented, interdisciplinary curriculum that ensures state standards are met and exceeded.
- Utilize flexible groupings in multi-age classrooms.
- Encourage each student’s progress with personal learning plans, combining social and academic standards with individualized goals.
- Motivate students to learn at their own pace and reach their full potential with a move-on-when-ready approach that allows for accelerated learning and is based on subject mastery.”

Notice of Implied Agreement

The registration of a student at Polaris Charter School is deemed to be an agreement on his or her part, and on the part of the parents or guardians, to comply fully with all policies, rules and regulations of the school as outlined in this handbook. For the remainder of this document, the term “parent” will apply to all legal guardians of the enrolled student. Polaris reserves the right to revise or edit the policies, rules, and regulations herein at any time. The Directors make the final judgment in all matters pertaining to the implied agreement.

Admissions and Enrollment

Polaris Charter School is an open enrollment, public school with no tuition for students who are New Hampshire residents. However, to be considered for enrollment, a student must meet the established eligibility criteria and complete the application process as published on our website annually (www.polarischarterschool.org).

Eligibility Criteria

All New Hampshire students who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply.

- The student is six to eleven years old, as of September 30th of the academic year for which the student is enrolling.
- The student and his/her parent agree that the student is likely to benefit from the Polaris Charter School program.
- The student and his/her parent are willing to abide by the policies and expectations of Polaris Charter School and to work collaboratively within the school community toward achieving the mission of Polaris Charter School.

New Hampshire statutes prohibit more than 10% of the resident pupils in any grade in a (non-charter) public school district to be eligible to transfer to a charter school without the approval of the local school board in the town where the child resides. The school district of residence of a student is defined by RSA 193:12, II.

Out-of-state students who meet the school's application criteria may apply, but will be admitted only after all New Hampshire applicants have been accepted, and if space at the school remains available. Non-New Hampshire students enrolled at Polaris Charter School will be charged tuition at an annual rate determined by the Board of Trustees.

Enrollment Selection: Lottery

In any given year, the number of openings available for enrollment will be dependent on the ages of currently enrolled students, the number and ages of sibling applicants, the optimum range of multi-age students within a class and the maximum student-teacher ratios permitted under the school's charter, as determined by the Directors and Board of Trustees.

If the number of completed applications submitted exceeds the available capacity of the school, siblings of currently enrolled students will be given first priority for placement. If the number of sibling applicants exceeds the number of available openings there will be a random lottery to select among sibling applicants.

If there are available openings beyond currently enrolled students and their siblings, applicants will be selected for enrollment through a random, publicly held lottery. If, during an application period, there are fewer applicants than spaces available, Polaris Charter School will admit all interested applicants and will not conduct a lottery.

Application Procedures

Charter schools in New Hampshire are schools of choice. Schools of choice depend on parents and students making informed enrollment decisions. For this reason, each new family interested in having one or more of their children attend Polaris Charter School are asked to attend one of several Informational Sessions about Polaris Charter School that are scheduled each winter, before applications are due. The admission process also requires that each family meet with a Polaris administrator or faculty member to discuss how the school's programs will fit your child(ren)'s unique needs. We encourage potential Polaris students participate in this family appointment as they have a crucial voice in deciding whether or not to attend the school.

Applications will also require a copy of the child's Birth Certificate, proof of medical examination, record of Immunization History, and a notarized Affidavit in Proof of NH Residency. Other details regarding application package requirements, due dates, lottery guidelines and waitlist information will be established by the Directors and posted annually on the school's website at www.polarischarterschool.org.

Completed application packages including electronic and paper components must be on file with the Polaris Charter School office by the posted deadline for new applications. Incomplete applications, including failure to attend an Informational Session or Family Meeting, will not be considered for inclusion in the lottery. If a student is not enrolled, a new application must be submitted each subsequent year that the student applies for enrollment.

Note: Under state and federal law, public school teachers are obligated to identify students who may need special intervention. If a student seems to need significant accommodations, a referral to the student's home district will be made in compliance with professional guidelines, following a discussion with the parent.

Continued Enrollment

Once a New Hampshire resident is admitted to Polaris Charter School, he/she is guaranteed enrollment for all subsequent elementary years, unless the student voluntarily withdraws, is not benefitting from the educational program, or surpasses the age limit established by the school charter.

A student's successful education requires a partnership between the child's parents and the school. Just as the parent has a right to withdraw a child from Polaris, the school administration reserves the right to recommend withdrawal of a student if it is determined that the student is not benefitting from the school's educational program, the parent-school partnership has broken down, or there is a pattern of failure to follow through with parental responsibilities. Polaris Charter School also reserves the right to dismiss a student or place a student on disciplinary probation for serious infractions of school regulations as described later in this handbook.

Calendar

The annual calendar for Polaris Charter School is posted, and updated if needed, on the school's website at www.polarischarterschool.org. **Please note that every Wednesday throughout the school year is an Early Release day unless otherwise stated.** The major holidays and vacation

weeks noted on the calendar are generally taken from the approved Manchester School District calendar. Every effort is made to have the Polaris Charter School calendar approved by the Board of Trustees by the month of May preceding any given school year.

Daily Activities

Arrival 8:00 - 8:20 AM, Monday - Friday

Children arrive and go to their classroom. At 8:15am, they go to the Gathering Room for all-school Morning Gathering.

Morning Gathering

Starting at 8:20 each morning, the entire school comes together for announcements, celebration of special events or achievements, activities and discussions around a monthly social/ emotional Core Value, a song led by a student volunteer, and The Pledge of Allegiance led by another student volunteer. This is an important time for our school to come together as a community.

Classroom Instruction

Polaris teachers are encouraged to manage their individual classroom schedules according to the needs and activities of their students. Therefore, schedules will vary between classrooms and from one day to the next. Despite these differences, each classroom will dedicate time to a Morning Meeting, Project Based Learning (based on each child's Project Contract), Skills Exploration and Assessment (based on each child's Personalized Learning Plan), and for Snack, Lunch, Recess, and Specials.

Snack and Lunch

Polaris does not have a meal program. Students must bring a snack and lunch to school daily. Please prepare food that can be left at room temperature or preserved with a small ice pack, as students do not have access to a microwave or refrigeration. If a student forgets to bring lunch, they will be allowed to call their parent/guardian so one can be delivered. If lunch cannot be provided from home, there will be a **limited** supply of lunch and snack options available so no child goes hungry. It is greatly appreciated when families help restock this reserve with healthy options, as any child in need may be given food from the available supply.

We encourage families to pack snacks and lunches that are nutritious, easy to open and not too messy (children will be eating in their classrooms). To avoid unnecessary exposure of children with nut allergies, each room will have a designated table for those wishing to eat peanut-butter or tree nuts. The Polaris staff will actively discourage children from sharing food to avoid potential problems for children with allergies. Please be sure that your child's health record notes *any* allergies that he or she may have.

Recess

Every child at Polaris Charter School has scheduled recess time daily. Though Polaris has very limited outdoor play space, we encourage children to make the best use of the playground by engaging in cooperative games and leaving the area free from hazards. To allow sufficient play space for everyone to enjoy, recess will be taken in shifts before and after lunchtime.

All children will be expected to participate in outdoor activities except when excused for medical reasons or during inclement weather. Recess will be held outdoors unless it is actively precipitating or the “Feel’s Like” temperature is below 20° F. Due to our small staff, we cannot keep children inside when they are not dressed appropriately. We ask parents to ensure that their child comes to school dressed for the prevailing weather conditions, including appropriate coats, snow pants, boots, mittens, hats, etc. (Remember to label all clothing with your child's name to avoid mix-ups or loss.) In order to maintain their health and safety, children who are not appropriately dressed may have a limited outdoor area in which to play.

During inclement weather, recess will be held in the classrooms. Children will be encouraged to play cards or board games, draw, talk and play creatively. Electronic games will not be allowed during indoor or outdoor recess.

Specials

Each week, students will attend special classes in Music, Art, Physical Education, and STEM. Due to the early dismissal time, there will not be a Specials class on Wednesday. Specials teachers work with the Directors to align their lessons with Polaris’s mission and goals.

Regular Dismissal 2:50- 3:10 PM, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
Students will join together in the Gathering Room. When their name is called by the staff on duty, they will be escorted to their bus, car or Enrichment classroom. To ensure that students are able to hear their names being called, this is a time for reading or other quiet activities.

Weekly Early Release 12:50- 1:10 PM, Every Wednesday
Every Wednesday is an early release day to facilitate teacher collaboration and preparation for our individualized educational program. For this reason, Wednesday afternoons may be a good time for parents to schedule appointments and/or lessons for their children.

NOTE: Manchester bus transportation is not available until 2:50 daily, including Wednesdays, so ALL students must be picked up in private vehicles between 12:50 and 1:10 PM or plan to attend the After Care Program or an enrichment activity.

Cancellations, Delays & Dismissals

Cancellation & Delayed Opening Notification

Polaris Charter School generally follows the Manchester School District’s weather-related decisions. However, Polaris may occasionally make an independent weather-related decision because our students commute from many towns and cities across New Hampshire. In either instance, the decision will be made and reported by 6:30 AM on the following radio and TV stations:

WZID-FM (95.7)

NH1-WBIN Comcast Channel 18

WGIR-AM (610) & FM (101.1)

WMUR-TV Channel 9

If there is a delayed opening for the Manchester School District on a Wednesday, Polaris Charter School will be closed.

Parents are encouraged to use their own discretion in commuting on days with snow or icy conditions. If a parent decides that travel conditions are too hazardous, whether or not school has been delayed or cancelled, their child(ren) will be given an excused absence. If Polaris is in session, weather-related absences should still be reported to the school office via email (attendance@polarischarterschool.org) or with a call and subsequent note signed by the parent upon return to school.

Unscheduled Early Dismissals

On rare occasions, conditions may cause Polaris Charter School to call for an unscheduled early dismissal. Should Polaris, or the Manchester School District, need to issue an unexpected dismissal, a notification will be posted on the Polaris website (www.polarischarterschool.org) and the Polaris Educational Foundation (PEF) Facebook page, an email will be sent to all parents' email addresses on file with a reply requested, and phone calls will be made as needed in a final effort to reach all parents.

Polaris Charter School requests that all students not regularly scheduled for bus transportation be picked up by private vehicles promptly at the time stated in the early dismissal notification. In a situation warranting a dismissal, we do not want to jeopardize the safety of staff members by asking them to remain in the building beyond the scheduled dismissal time. If you are unable to pick up your child by the stated time, please arrange for someone else to do so and notify the school of the arrangement.

Transportation

Car Transportation

Our car drop-off and pick-up zone follows Coolidge Avenue. Cars enter from the north and ease into the parking lane along the sidewalk, forming a line starting at the Amory Street intersection and wrapping the corner onto Cartier Street if necessary. **Arrival is 8:00 - 8:20 AM, Monday - Friday and Dismissal is between 2:50 - 3:10 PM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday and 12:50 - 1:10 PM Every Wednesday, Early Release Days.** Staff will monitor this area throughout the drop-off and pick-up periods, greeting families and guiding students into and out of the school. Families will be given placards listing their student's last name. Additional placards can be provided if needed.

- Once in line, use your hazard lights to alert other motorists to our drop-off/ pick-up area
- Place the name placard with your child's last name on the passenger side of the windshield. Keep it there until the students are in your vehicle
- DO NOT park in the parking lot between 8:00 - 8:20 and after 2:30 to drop off or pick up your child(ren). If you need to escort your child in, please park on Cartier St. and use the door on that side
- Please DO NOT go around the car in front of you at pick up/drop off unless the person on duty waves you around

- Please do not exit your car. Have your child to use the passenger side. This keeps everyone safe and allows the line to move as efficiently as possible.
- If you arrive after the scheduled arrival or dismissal time, park on the street and accompany your child into/ out of the school.

We provide a 20-minute window for arrival to allow for unpredictable traffic conditions and ensure that your child is able to settle before our Morning Gathering starts at 8:20. To ensure the safety of all students:

- Children will not be allowed to wait on school property or enter the school building before 8:00 AM.
- Please keep your child in the car until a staff member is at the curb and ready to accompany them into the building. Do not allow them to wait on the sidewalk or walk across the walkway/ parking lot by themselves.

Parents will also be asked to provide a list of drivers authorized to pick up their child(ren) at Polaris, including driver's name and vehicle make and color. This list will be checked before releasing a student to an unrecognized driver. Students leave school from the Gathering Room when their name is called, based on these placards and authorized driver lists.

Unless a note with a parent's signature (or from a recognized parent email) is sent to the Administrative Coordinator, students will not be released to drivers whose names are not on the authorized pick-up list. The note must state the driver's name and their vehicle make and color. Notes received at noon or later and verbal requests or phone calls *may not be honored*, if we are unable to communicate the necessary information to the staff member on duty before dismissal.

Please make every effort to arrive on time. Staff members often have meetings after scheduled dismissal times. If you will be unavoidably late, please call to notify the school office so that your child and our staff won't worry. If drivers are consistently late, the administration will request a meeting to discuss alternatives.

Carpools

Polaris Charter School is aware that commuting can be stressful. The Polaris Educational Foundation has volunteered to coordinate carpools to ease this stress if all parties involved are willing to share information, expenses, and/or driving responsibilities. Contact the PEF if you are interested in setting up a carpool. They will help put families in contact with each other. It is up to each group to make their own arrangements regarding scheduling, costs and insurance requirements.

Bus Transportation

Eligibility

Children who live in Manchester are the beneficiaries of the Manchester School Board's generous transportation policy. School bus transportation within city limits is provided by the Manchester School District, for any Manchester resident child.

Bus Routes and Schedules

Bus routes are usually published by MTA during the last two weeks in August. Daily routes are planned to deliver students to Polaris between 8:00 and 8:20 AM and pick them up between 2:50 and 3:10 PM. An adult will escort students to and from the bus through the playground gate on Cartier Street.

Bus drop-off and pick-up times are the same, regardless of whether or not it is an early release day. Families who use Manchester school buses can arrange private transportation for 12:50 PM each early release day or enroll in After-Care or an Enrichment so their child can ride the bus when it picks up at 2:50 PM.

Bus schedules are determined by the bus company in conjunction with the Manchester School District and the Polaris Administrative Coordinator. The Administrative Coordinator works to maintain regular communication between the district and Polaris families. The information provided to Polaris by parents is shared with the bus company for use in designing bus rosters, routes and schedules. If your circumstances change, it is important to notify us immediately as it may take several days for busing changes to take effect. Similarly, Polaris will inform parents of any expected delays, route changes or emergencies involving student transportation by Manchester School District buses.

NOTE: The bus company regularly reevaluates routes to ensure efficient transportation. As policy, riding patterns will be used to remove students from the roster for any unused times. For example: If a student hasn't ridden for ten consecutive mornings they may be removed from the morning roster. Therefore, if your family's use of the bus will change temporarily, let Polaris know so we can communicate these expectations and avoid unnecessary confusion.

Bus Safety

Students transported on buses for Polaris Charter School shall be considered to be under the jurisdiction of the school from the time they board the bus until they get off. Consequently, all Polaris rules apply to students while on buses. The following list of additional rules apply to *any* bus transportation, whether it is daily transportation or an occasional field trip. These rules must be followed to keep the privilege of riding the bus:

- Be seated quietly at all times.
- Keep arms, legs and belongings out of the aisle and away from open windows.
- Obey any request by the bus driver concerning safety and conduct.
- Respond to bus evacuation procedures as directed.
- Absolutely no fighting.
- Students are financially responsible for any damage caused to bus equipment.
- Students will only be allowed to leave the bus at school or the established discharge point unless prior written arrangements have been approved.

Violation of bus rules or any other applicable school rules shall result in the following disciplinary actions:

- Upon the third report of inappropriate bus behavior, or earlier if any single incident could cause injury and/or severe property damage, a student may be suspended from the bus for up to ten days. The parent and student will need to appear before the Board of Trustees to have the suspension lifted.
- The parent of any student suspended from the bus becomes responsible for the student's school-related transportation during the suspension. Furthermore, *suspension from the school bus shall not be considered an acceptable excuse for non-attendance at school.*

Walkers

A few fortunate students live within walking distance of Polaris Charter School. Due to the traffic surrounding school, parents or parent-approved adults should supervise students of any age while walking to or from school. Walkers should enter and exit the school from the Cartier Street door. A staff member will be there to greet families and escort student to/from the building.

Before and After School Options

Before Care: The Boys & Girls Club

You are welcome to use the Boys & Girls Club of Manchester before school program, located at their Union Street Clubhouse. It is staffed by Boys & Girls Club program leaders under the direction of Union Street Clubhouse Director Antonio Feliciano. The program is open to students from several Manchester public schools in addition to Polaris Charter School, with a maximum of 75 students enrolled. Registration will be taken in the order received.

Planned program activities include: gym, homework time, computers & games room. A light breakfast will be served each day. Please note that the program will begin on the first day of school in September and will end on the last scheduled day of school in June (per the Manchester School Dept. calendar).

The Boys & Girls Club will bus students to Polaris for the start of school each day. Financial assistance is available for program fees. If you would like further information, please call Ken Neil at (603) 625-5031, x-230.

After Care: YMCA

The YMCA provides after school care onsite at Polaris Charter School. They have an excellent reputation for high quality, inexpensive child care. There are discounts for siblings and they are authorized by the State of New Hampshire to receive payment through various programs run by Health and Human Services and The Division for Children and Youth Services that help families who qualify for assistance.

Hours: After school; Dismissal – 6:00PM

Registration Fee: There is an annual \$30 registration fee per child

School Age Child Care Discount: There is a \$5 discount for each additional child enrolled (full time program)

Weekly Rates:

Enrollment	Weekly Rate
Full Time (4-5 days)	\$73
Part Time (3 days) <i>*can include early release Wednesdays</i>	\$61
1 day	\$22
Early Release Program <i>*Wednesdays from 12:50PM – 2:50PM</i>	Call for Pricing

School Vacation Days: Child care is provided at the YMCA of Downtown Manchester when the Manchester School District is not in session from 7:00AM – 6:00PM for an additional fee.

Snow Days: Child care is provided at the YMCA of Downtown Manchester when the Manchester School District is not in session from 8:00AM – 6:00PM for an additional fee.

School Age Child Care Director: Nicole Burke | (p)603.232.8670 |
(e)nburke@graniteymca.org

YMCA Child Care State Assistance Contact: Lisa Larocque | (p)603.232.8665 |
(e)LLarocque@graniteymca.org

Billing Inquiries: Dawn Richardson | (p)603.232.8609 |
(e)drichardson@graniteymca.org

After School Enrichments

The Polaris Educational Foundation arranges a series of after-school classes and extracurricular activities. There will be an enrichment activity every Wednesday as an option for students after the early dismissal. Enrichment activities will be arranged on other days whenever volunteers are available to organize and chaperone them. The classes will range from music, art and performance, to science and nature. Most of these classes will have tuition fees. Scholarships may be available for

families in need of assistance. Anyone interested in organizing an extracurricular program is encouraged to contact the PEF at PEF@polarischarterschool.org.

Attendance

Polaris Charter School is an interactive, collaborative learning environment. We view each day as an opportunity to learn and experience together. School attendance is essential to our learning community. Attendance is also critical for students to achieve their goals in academic and personal growth. For these reasons, regular and punctual patterns of attendance are required of each student enrolled at Polaris.

We want you here, *every* day and *all* day!

If you're not at school we *miss* you!

Your education is important.

Your participation at Polaris Charter School is a privilege!!

Responsibilities

It is the school's responsibility to:

- Check and report classroom attendance each morning by 8:45AM.
- Keep timely and accurate records of absences, tardiness, and dismissals for individual student records and for state reports.
- Call parents of any student whose absence was not verified in advance.
- Notify parents if at any point a teacher or director identifies that a student has had excessive absences of any kind.

It is the family's responsibility to:

- Be familiar with all school attendance policies and procedures as stated in this handbook.
- Follow all school attendance policies and procedures as stated in this handbook.
- Make attendance decisions that protect the health and well-being of your child and the other people who share the Polaris Charter School environment.

Excused or Unexcused

Absences, late arrivals, and early dismissals will be excused if they are due to one of the following exceptions:

- Illness
- Family emergencies
- Death in the family
- Observance of religious holidays
- Medical appointments that can't be scheduled after school
- School-related appointments
- Adverse weather conditions (when school is open)

NOTE: Full or partial-day absences for reasons other than those listed above will be considered unexcused and should be avoided whenever possible.

Full-Day Absence

Daily attendance is very important to your child's social and academic success at school, however, absences are sometimes unavoidable. If you cannot avoid an absence, please contact the school office before 8:20 a.m. to notify us that your child will be absent.

EITHER:

Email attendance@polarischarterschool.org. Messages should include the student's name, parent's name, and the reason for the absence.

OR:

Call the attendance line (634-0034) AND submit a written verification of the reason for the tardiness to the school office upon the student's arrival.

When to Return to School:

Since the leading cause of student and employee absence each year is illness, we ask parents to use discretion when deciding whether to keep their child home from school. Unnecessary absences should be avoided, however, we ask that you keep your child home until they have been free of ALL of the following symptoms for AT LEAST twenty-four hours WITHOUT assistance of medication.

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Temperature above 100° F
- Undiagnosed rash

Late Arrival / Tardiness

We provide a full twenty minute arrival period to allow for unpredictable traffic conditions and to ensure that your child is able to settle before Morning Gathering starts.

Because of the importance of this Gathering time, we ask that parents attempt to limit late arrivals to unavoidable circumstances. If you cannot avoid a late arrival, please contact the school office before 8:20 a.m. to notify us that your child will be late.

EITHER:

Email attendance@polarischarterschool.org. Messages should include the student's name, parent's name, and the reason for the absence.

OR:

Call the attendance line (634-0034) AND submit a written verification of the reason for the tardiness to the school office upon the student's arrival.

If you arrive after 8:20, please accompany your child into the school building and sign them in on the Student Attendance Log on the main floor. They will be marked tardy. The tardiness will be considered unexcused unless one of the designated exceptions applies or there was an unavoidable travel delay. (See Excused or Unexcused)

NOTE: Students arriving after 11:30 a.m. will be marked with a half-day absence. Half day absences accumulate toward total absences in the student's attendance record.

Individual Early Dismissal

We ask that dismissals be kept to a minimum and that parents attempt to limit early dismissals to unavoidable circumstances. They will be considered unexcused unless a designated exceptions applies (see Excused or Unexcused). You must pick up your child before 2:30pm. If you arrive after 2:30pm, you will be asked to join the carpool line on Coolidge Ave and pick up your child with everyone else. If an early dismissal is unavoidable, the following is required:

- The child's parent must send an email or signed permission slip to the school office prior to the dismissal, including the date and time of the requested dismissal, the name of the person picking up the child and their relationship to the student, if they are not the child's parent.
- The adult designated by the parent note must come into the Front Office and sign the child out of school on the Student Attendance Log before leaving.
- Early Dismissal must before 2:30pm.

Excessive Absences

While we understand that there are times when absence or partial-day absence from school is justified, we are required to monitor attendance in accordance with NH RSA 193:1, which states that parent(s)/guardian(s) have the legal obligation to see to it that their children attend school during all the time school is in session.

To ensure that parents are kept informed when a student has accumulated greater than average absences, the school administration will mail a written notification to the legal address on record if a student's attendance record shows a total of 5 unexcused absences, including full and partial-day absences.

If at any point the teacher or director identifies that a student has had excessive absences of any kind, intervention with the student, the student's parents/guardians, and other staff members may be necessary. The intervention shall be on a case-by-case basis and can involve processes including, but not limited to:

- Investigating the cause(s) of the student's absences
- Considering the modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the absences
- Involving the parents in the development of a plan designed to reduce the absences
- Referral to outside agencies

Health Issues

Student Illness at School

It is the parent's responsibility to assess a child's health before sending him/her to school, especially if the child has been unwell the day before. If a student becomes ill while at school, a parent will be contacted and asked to make arrangements for the child's early dismissal. It is important that parents maintain up-to-date contact information in the Student Information System (SIS) so contact can be made in a timely manner. Please note, Polaris does not employ a school nurse and, thus, it is office

staff who will care for ill children. They will do their best to make the child comfortable until the parent arrives.

Contagious Diseases/ Infectious Germs

To maintain a healthy school environment, Polaris asks for your cooperation communicating about any infectious diseases. The child's name will remain confidential, but the general presence of an infection will be shared if it is pertinent to the health and safety of other school members. Examples of illnesses that should be reported are strep throat, bacterial conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, impetigo, and head lice.

Head Lice

The Polaris Charter School Board of Trustees and the school administration recognize the disruption caused by a head lice infestation. It leads to school absences for the student, absences from work for the parent and the expense of treatment. Everyone wants to avoid such disruption, but to control an infestation and avoid further spread, the affected student must completely eradicate the infection before returning to school.

In the event that a child is found to have either head lice or nits, the parent will be notified and required to take the child home for treatment. Your child's medical provider can provide written instructions for treatment and may be able to provide a prescription treatment that is both gentle and effective for young children. A member of the administration will screen all students in the infected child's classroom, other students known to have been in close contact with the child, and staff members.

The child may return to school when successful treatment is confirmed. Successful treatment is indicated when no live lice are seen and the removal of nits is close to completion. Confirmation of successful treatment can be provided with either written documentation signed by a health professional or a physical check performed by a member of the administration. If a check is performed by a staff member, the parent must bring the student into school. **Students may not ride on the school bus until school has confirmed successful treatment.**

Health Requirements

New Hampshire state law requires that record of a set of immunizations be on file BEFORE entry into school for all students. Polaris Charter School requires an official record of these immunizations as part of the student's admission packet. If you have questions about the requirement and/or exemptions from the requirement, the New Hampshire Department of Education has relevant questions and answers on their website

(www.education.nh.gov/instruction/school_health/faq_immunizations.htm). For questions concerning the specific immunizations, there is a list of the immunizations on the NH Dept. of Health and Human Services website (<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/index.htm>).

Medications

To ensure the safety of all students, ALL medication- whether over-the-counter or prescription- MUST be kept in the Front Office and administered by a school administrator. In addition, written parental permission must be on file for all medicines provided in school. Forms to authorize the Polaris staff to

administer medications will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. New forms must be completed each academic year.

Over the Counter Medicine

With permission on file, administrators will be allowed to provide students with over-the-counter medications, including but not limited to cough drops, hydrocortisone cream, ibuprofen (Advil), acetaminophen (Tylenol), and Benadryl. If a parent knows their child will need medication during the school day, they are encouraged to send the desired medication in its original packaging along with any special instructions for use. The parent should also notify the administration that the medication is being sent by calling (634-0034) or emailing (attendance@polarischarterschool.com). Should an unexpected need arise, Polaris will keep a limited supply of the medicines listed above.

Prescription Medicine

Prescription medication must be provided to the school in the original container, along with written parental permission AND a physician's written order for the medication. *Parents* should bring the medication and the authorization form to the Front Office for approval. Students in possession of any medications outside of these parameters will be subject to disciplinary action.

Each classroom has an Emergency Backpack that travels with the students everywhere they go (i.e. specials, recess or a field trip). Emergency medications such as inhalers and Epipens will be kept in the child's classroom backpack for quick access. Non-emergency prescription medications will be kept in the Front Office in a locked receptacle and administered per written orders from a medical professional. Should a parent feel it necessary, they may also request and/or provide staff training in the use of a device or medication. In these cases, a special form must be filled out indemnifying Polaris Charter School staff member(s) and giving them permission to use the medication or device to save the student's life.

Physical Exam

A report of a physical exam *must* be on file before a student begins classes at Polaris Charter School. Transfer students may attend school for a limited period of time without this report. If there is no physical exam on file within thirty days of enrollment or transfer, proof of a medical appointment *must* be presented to the school or the child may be excluded from school. (RSA 200:32.)

Emergency Preparation and Response

Fire Drills and Alarms

When there is a fire alarm, students shall quickly and carefully exit through the nearest door in an orderly fashion. Students should remain silent during the evacuation in case staff or emergency personnel need to issue instructions. Students will report to the designated area and line up according to instructions. They will remain there until given the signal to re-enter the building by the school administration.

Polaris Charter School is required by New Hampshire public school safety law to have at least 10 fire drills per year. We recognize that the sound of a loud alarm may be upsetting to some of our students. To minimize the trauma some children may experience, classes will practice with and without the alarm and teachers will explain the need for and sound of fire alarms. Please let your child's teacher know if your child may need special support during a fire alarm.

Emergency Response

To prepare and protect our students, we ask everyone in the Polaris Charter School community to assist with emergency planning. Please help us prepare and protect all Polaris students:

- By providing the school with emergency contact information, listing 3 contacts
- By making back-up plans with other students and parents for use when transportation difficulties prevent timely pick-up from school
- By providing written permission for student transport to the nearest emergency medical center in case of a medical emergency
- By providing names and contact information of all important health service providers for students
- By participating in emergency evacuation drills when in school
- By guaranteeing no implements which could be used harmfully (for example, knives or tools) are transported with students.

Students who are ill or injured are not allowed to contact parents directly. If a student requires care due to illness or injury, they should immediately notify an adult. The administration will then initiate emergency response measures, such as contacting the parent, performing first aid, and/or arranging for transport to a medical facility according to emergency response information provided in the information provided in the Student Information System (SIS).

Emergency Response Information

At the beginning of each year, parents will be emailed a username and password for Polaris's Student Information System (SIS). At this time, emergency contact information, pick up authorization and medical information should be reviewed and updated as necessary. Please note that **updated emergency response information** can be extremely important in case of an emergency. Be sure to inform the Administrative Coordinator if you need assistance with making changes to your address, contact info, health plan, etc.

First Aid

If a student gets hurt, first aid will be provided as appropriate. Depending on severity, the student may return to class, a parent may be called or the student may be taken to the nearest hospital as deemed appropriate by a member of the administration.

Emergency Early Dismissal

Only a very unusual situation would cause Polaris Charter School to call for an Emergency Early Dismissal. If a situation occurs during the day necessitating emergency dismissal, a notification will be posted on the Polaris website (www.polarischarterschool.org) and the Polaris Educational Foundation (PEF) Facebook page, an email will be sent to all parents' email addresses with a reply requested, and phone calls will be made as needed in a final effort to reach all parents.

Polaris Charter School requests that all students not scheduled for bus transportation be picked up by private vehicles promptly at the stated time. In a situation warranting an emergency dismissal, it will be important for all students and staff to leave the school in a timely manner. If you are unable to pick up your child by the stated time, please arrange for someone else to do so and notify the school of the arrangement.

Academics

Primary and Intermediate Classrooms

The vision at Polaris Charter School is to motivate students to learn at their own pace and to reach their full potential with a move-on-when-ready approach that allows for accelerated learning. We recognize that a student may be able to perform academically well beyond their expected age or current grade level. Our program is designed to meet each student's needs with individualized instruction in multi-age classrooms. Students at Polaris are assigned to either a primary-age classroom or an intermediate-age classroom.

Despite our program design, there are times when Polaris Charter School must assign each student to a grade level, such as when the school participates in the required New Hampshire State Testing Program or must report our enrollment data to the New Hampshire Department of Education. To meet such mandatory requirements, the child's age will be used to determine to which grade level the student will be assigned. For example, if a child turns six by September 30th of the current school year, the child will be assigned to first grade; if a child turns eleven by September 30th of the current school year, the child will be assigned to sixth grade. The only exceptions to this grade placement procedure will occur if a student attending Polaris has been "grade-skipped" or "retained" by a school the student previously attended. In such cases, the student will be assigned to and tested at the appropriate grade according to the student's cumulative record.

When a child transfers or graduates from Polaris Charter School, the child's age, current assigned grade level and (most importantly) Personalized Learning Plan and Portfolio will be used to analyze the most appropriate classroom placement in the student's new school. Both the student's Personalized Learning Plan and Portfolio will have accurate information about the skills and concepts the student has mastered, including the grade level(s) at which the student has demonstrated mastery in specific content areas. Whether or not a student transfers to a school with standard grade levels, the child's records from Polaris will provide accurate data about the child's achievement levels in mathematics, reading and language arts.

Field Trips

Field Trips are a means of helping students learn about the world in which they live. In many instances, field trips afford students the opportunity to apply or realize the application of their studies in a real world situation. As Polaris Charter School does not have a field trip budget, we will be looking for ways to support class and school-wide field trips through fundraising efforts and private donations. The Polaris Educational Foundation will often be able to help with trip costs, but students and their families may need to meet additional costs for admission and/or material fees.

If financial assistance is needed to enable a student to attend a scheduled field trip or an off-site school activity, the parent should contact the Director of Student Services. Scholarships may be awarded for partial payment of the total cost or on a sliding scale fee depending on need and the number of requests.

Before each trip, permission slips will be sent home to parents. These must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the school before a student will be allowed to go on the trip. Parents will be informed in sufficient time to plan any special transportation or to make financial arrangements.

Parent chaperones are welcomed on Polaris field trips to provide adequate supervision. However, it is important to note that **parents wishing to chaperone must have completed the volunteer application process. Results usually arrive in approximately 3-4 weeks. Please plan accordingly.** For information regarding this application, ask the Student Services Assistant/Administrative Coordinator. Unless special authorization is provided by the Director of Student Services, *siblings or friends who are not enrolled as students at Polaris Charter School will not be able to participate in field trips.*

Transportation for most field trips will be provided on a Manchester school bus. Students should review the Bus Safety section of the Parent & Student Handbook prior to the field trip to be familiar with all rules and expectations.

If you do not wish your child to participate in a scheduled field trip, please notify your child's teacher or the Director of Student Services. Any student who does not attend a field trip will be marked absent. The absence may be excused or unexcused, depending on the rationale for missing the field trip.

Homework

Students will be continually challenged by and involved in mastering Personalized Learning Plans during each and every day they attend Polaris Charter School. As the daily schedule shows, our school days are also longer than most other public elementary schools. The rationale is that the vision of Polaris Charter School calls for us to "motivate students to learn at their own pace," while "instilling a positive attitude about future studies." We think our mission and vision are best accomplished without assigning daily homework, which can become meaningless practice, a drudgery, or a source of conflict between school and home. Polaris supports our students pursuing extra-curricular and social activities outside the school walls.

We want every child at Polaris to make continual progress in their education and to feel good about their school accomplishments. If a teacher or a parent notes that a child has stopped making progress and/or is dissatisfied with the progress he/ she is making, then a parent-student-teacher conference should be held to discuss various options. One option might be to develop a homework plan, but there could also be other solutions, such as peer-tutoring or a new instructional strategy or tool to provide the needed assistance. In other words, homework is not assigned to a whole class, nor on a daily basis, nor for a minimum amount of time. As with all the other aspects of the Polaris curriculum and instructional program, homework is individualized and assigned only as needed basis with the approval of the teacher, the parent and, most importantly, the student.

Special Education

Students Previously Identified

Polaris Charter School welcomes all children who will benefit from our mission and charter, which may include children with identified and, sometimes unidentified, special educational needs. As part of the application process, we ask parents to let the school know if their child has a special

educational need which has been identified by the public school district where the child lives, and which has resulted results in the development of an Individual Education Plan for that child.

Our faculty and staff are willing and prepared to make any classroom accommodations which are stipulated in a child's Individual Education Plan. To make these accommodations, we need to have a copy of the child's current Individual Education Plan, which is why we ask for this information at the time of enrollment.

When a child's Individual Education Plan requires specialized instruction such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, specialized equipment or remedial services, the public school district where the child lives is legally required to provide or pay for those services. These services may be provided at our school site, or at the child's resident district. If the special educational services are to be provided back at the child's local public school, that school district must provide transportation to and from the services.

To discuss the most appropriate services and where the services will be delivered for a child with an Individual Education Plan, it is best to have a member of the Polaris faculty attend the annual Special Education Team Meeting, with the parent/ guardian, at the local public school. This can prevent miscommunication and/or any disruption of services for a child with identified special educational needs.

Students Not Previously Identified

Occasionally, a child will show symptoms of learning difficulties or social/ emotional concerns that interfere with the child's continuing progress at school. While Polaris Charter School is committed to meeting the needs of all students, a Special Education referral, and subsequent evaluation will be conducted by the student's home school district.

When the teacher, student or parent observes a problem, the teacher will first try different instructional or management strategies. Additional or alternative strategies may be suggested after conferencing with the parent, professional colleagues and/or health care professionals, (with permission from the parent/guardian), who might already be working with the family.

If documentation of the alternative strategies does not show improvement or progress over time, the student should be referred to the Special Education Team at their local public school for an educational and/or psychological evaluation. The Director at Polaris, teacher, parent or a physician may make the referral to the Special Education Team. The student's parent/guardian is automatically a member of the Special Education Team that will determine the student's eligibility and need for special education services. A teacher or administrator from Polaris should be in attendance to share information about the child's classroom performance and observed learning difficulties.

A parent with a concern about a student with possible special educational needs should first contact the child's teacher. Following that, they should contact the Director of Student Services at Polaris. For more information about the process leading to special educational services, the parent may wish to review the regulations and mandates found on the NH Dept. of Education website at www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/index.htm. The State of New Hampshire also has laws to guide the implementation and interpretation of the Federal Statutes, (RSA 186). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1978, (IDEA, P.L. 94-142), and Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are two federal statutes which govern what public schools must provide to students with disabilities.

Assessment and Testing

All students are assessed periodically by classroom teachers to determine appropriate placement and to measure how individuals are progressing through the Math, Reading and Language Arts standards set forth in the K-12 Common Core State Standards and how they are progressing through our social/emotional curriculum. A few of these assessments may be paper-and-pencil tests, but most will require the student to demonstrate an understanding through an oral presentation, dramatization, experimentation, group work, software information or a record-keeping document. The results of the student's performance on some of the classroom assessments will be included in the discussion of the student's Personal Learning Plan, which occurs at Parent/ Student/ Teacher Conferences at the end of each period.

State mandated standardized tests are given at specific grade levels to compare the results of the educational program Polaris to what is achieved at other schools in New Hampshire. Polaris Charter School also compiles assessment data to meet the goals of our accountability plan, which all NH charter schools must design and submit to the New Hampshire Department of Education to be eligible for continued funding. Parents are notified when the individual student results of such testing is received (usually several months after the administration). Test results are mailed home to maintain confidentiality.

If you have any questions or concerns about testing or about your child's progress in school, please call your student's current teacher for more information. Another resource on testing is the Director of Student Services, who can be reached through the school's main phone number at 603-634-0034.

Educational Records

The information on the collection, maintenance and dissemination of pupil records is based on Board Policy JRA and the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, (F.E.R.P.A), of 1974. The intent of this law is to protect the privacy and accuracy of student educational records. According to Section 99.7 of F.E.R.P.A., a school district is required to provide parents annual notification of their rights regarding the accessibility of student records. Publication of these rights in the *Polaris Charter School Parent and Student Handbook* as follows satisfies this requirement.

Definition of an Educational Record

The Board of Trustees is intent upon maintaining an adequate individual student record system designed to benefit the education of every student enrolled at Polaris Charter School and to assist school staff in this process. It is the responsibility of school personnel to collect and maintain data to assure such benefit and to meet the data requirements by statute and regulations of the NH Department of Education.

An Educational Record is any record (in handwriting, tape, print, or other medium) maintained by the school which is directly related to a student EXCEPT:

- A personal record kept by a teacher or faculty member if it is kept in the personal possession of the individual who made the record and information contained in the record has never been revealed or made available to any other person except that staff member's temporary substitute;

- An employment record which is used only in relation to a student's employment by Polaris Charter School; or,
- Alumni records which contain information about a student after he or she is no longer in attendance at Polaris Charter School and the records do not relate to the person as a student.

Directory Information

As permitted under the Family Rights and Privacy Act, the following information has been designated as "Directory Information." This permits Polaris Charter School to use this information without prior written consent if, and only if, it is used to publish student yearbooks, programs for athletic teams, performing groups, and to publicize the academic awards and honors of individual students.

- The student's name
- The student's grade or class
- The student's extra-curricular activities
- The name of the school the student currently attends
- Achievement awards and/or honors

If any parent or guardian wishes that any or all of the items listed above not be used for the purposes stated, please inform the Administrative Coordinator in writing. Any information used prior to a request for non-use may be exempt from that request.

Specific written parental permission shall be requested for the disclosure of a student's address, telephone number, the date and place of the student's birth and/or photograph. The request for permission will include the purpose of such disclosure and the specific time limit for the release of such directory information.

Disclosure of Educational Records Information

Polaris Charter School will maintain a record of all requests for, and/or disclosure of information from a student's record, excluding requests of school officials and requests for directory information. The record will indicate the name of the party making the request, including a parent or legal guardian, and any additional parties to who it may be disclosed, and the legitimate interest the party had in requesting or obtaining the information. The disclosure record may be reviewed by the parents.

The Rights of Parents and Legal Guardians

- The right to inspect and review their children's educational record
- The right to seek to correct parts of this record if they believe it to be inaccurate or misleading
- The right to limit disclosure of information contained in the record
- The right to file a complaint if there is a violation of this law

Student Record Accessibility

Parents are to have access to their child's cumulative records upon request and after a mutually convenient appointment has been arranged with the teacher or the Director. (The appointment may not exceed 45 days after the initial request has been made.) Pupil records are not to be reviewed alone by a parent, but only in conference with the teacher and/or administrator.

When parents are separated or divorced, or for some other reason the student is not in the joint custody of both parents, information concerning the student shall be disclosed to both natural parents or persons having legal custody of the student and to a person having written authority from the legal custodian of the student.

Release of student records will occur if and when:

- The student's parent/guardian provides a signed written consent form. The written consent must be specific, stating that *Polaris Charter School* is requested to release *which records*, (i.e. health, permanent record, and/or special education records), and state *to whom* they are to be released. Each request for consent must be handled separately. Blanket permission for the release of information will not be accepted.
- A Polaris Charter School official has a legitimate educational interest, such as an administrator, manager, teacher, coordinator or a person employed by, or under contract to Polaris Charter School such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist.
- The officials of another school requests student records for the purpose of enrollment and/or financial scholarship
- Under a court order
- When data for outside research purposes or school accreditation is released, it should be in such a form that no individual student is identifiable. Records may not be released to anyone other than the person who collected the information and may be released to that person only for the use for which it was collected.

Technology

Philosophy

The computers, software, hardware, wireless network and internet connection (collectively, technology resources) owned by Polaris Charter School are intended for educational purposes. These technology resources are tools for enriching the curriculum and to help students gain twenty-first century skills such as critical thinking, technological and media literacy and research and problem solving. A technology agreement signed by the student and parent will be completed each year.

System Use

- Students are expected to use technology resources with respect: for their fellow students, their teachers, the equipment itself, the law, and the general online community.
- There should be no private business or commercial use of Polaris Charter School's technology resources.
- Students shall not access any websites or webpages that are not assigned to them.

Safety

- Web access will be filtered for inappropriate content using the Barracuda Web filter from Barracuda Networks.
- Students will not have access to email, chat or social media applications, except as a whole class led by the teacher.

- Intentionally accessing or distributing inappropriate or offensive content is not allowed. If inappropriate content is accessed accidentally, a teacher or administrator should be notified immediately.

Privacy

- Students shall never share passwords or accounts and shall not intentionally access other people's accounts.
- Students shall not post or share private information about themselves or others online or in messages.
- Students shall not access, change or tamper with other people's files or work without explicit authorization from the author. Changing, deleting or destroying other people's files is the same as destroying their written work and will not be tolerated in any form.

Etiquette

- Students shall never send or forward messages with harassing or threatening language or inappropriate content.
- The school's resources are limited; students should not intentionally overuse them to prevent other people from working.
- Electronic games and online games are only allowed when assigned by a teacher and never permitted at recess or lunchtime.
- Personal electronic devices, including cell phones, are not allowed at Polaris Charter School. If devices are brought to school they must be kept turned off and in the student's bag. There is no guarantee of security for such devices.

System Maintenance

- Students shall not download or upload unauthorized materials or programs.
- Students shall not install unauthorized programs on school computers or devices.
- Students shall not intentionally spread damaging or malicious software, such as viruses.
- Students shall not intentionally damage any of the school's computers or other hardware.

Information Security and Ownership

- All students at Polaris Charter School must respect copyrights for intellectual property. This includes music, images, data, and ideas.
- Students shall never copy someone else's work and claim it as their own.
- Polaris Charter School is not liable for data loss from any of its technology resources.
- All files on school computers and messages sent from school computers are the property of the school and may be accessed by school authorities.

Consequences

- Intentionally breaking these rules will result in disciplinary action. The action will depend on the severity of the infraction and may include: time out; parent and student conference with administration; loss of technology resource privileges, which would severely impact a student's ability to make continued progress at Polaris Charter School. If a student loses technology privileges, parents/guardians will need to supply written resources such as books, magazines and other sources in order for them to continue their work.

Behavior Guidelines

Discipline

Polaris Charter School staff have also been trained in the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching. It emphasizes teaching children to take care of themselves, each other, and the school environment so that everyone can learn at his/her best.

The Responsive Classroom approach is based on many of the great theories of how children learn and on the experiences of classroom teachers. There are seven basic principles behind the approach:

- Learning social skills is as important as learning academic skill
- How children learn is as important as what they learn. Process and content go hand in hand
- Children gain knowledge most effectively through social interaction
- To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control
- Knowing the children we teach-individually, culturally, and developmentally is as important as knowing the content we teach
- Knowing the families of the children we teach and inviting their participation is essential to children's education
- How the adults at school work together is as important as how skillful each individual teacher is. Lasting change begins with the adult community

Polaris Charter School also uses the Responsive School Discipline approach which ensures that children will feel physically and emotionally safe in school so that they can learn their best as well as learn the skills for working and learning cooperatively with others. The adults at Polaris Charter School will take the time to model and teach our students how to apply our school rules in different situations. When we begin this school year, we will introduce rules and behavior expectations and practice them! When a child misbehaves, the adults at Polaris Charter School will handle the misbehavior firmly while preserving the dignity of the child. Our immediate step is to stop the misbehavior as quickly and as simply as possible. If needed we will take further steps to help a child gain self-control, fix any problems caused by their mistake, and get back to productive learning.

When handling students' misbehavior we take the severity into account. We may:

- Give a reminder and tell the child to do something different with a brief word or gesture.
- Have the child sit closer to their teacher or another adult

- Use “take-a-break” in a designated space in the classroom to regain self-control
- Limit the child’s choice of activities for a while
- Provide guidance in fixing the problems the child created

When a student needs additional support, we may:

- Use buddy teacher take-a-break where the child goes to a distraction free space in another teacher’s room to regain self-control
- Use private take-a-break in one of the administrative offices
- Have the child stay for a longer period of time in school in a supervised place
- Have the child spend a period of time at home
- Meet with the child and/or parents to find other solutions
- When a child is asked to stay home from school, a parent must accompany the child to school the next day for a re-entry meeting with the teacher and an administrator.
- We at Polaris Charter School strongly believe that children want to do well. We value working with students and parents in partnership to feel good about going to school.
- You can learn more about the Responsive Classroom approach by going to www.responsiveclassroom.org

If a child's behavior consistently interrupts the education and/or well-being of any other student, the administration will take steps to find a solution including a required parent conference, possible special education referral and/or the implementation of a behavioral plan. The most severe disruptions or repeated infractions by the same student may result in a school suspension or an expulsion hearing with the Board of Trustees. (State mandates are listed under RSA 193.13 and RSA 193.13 III).

Dress Code

Polaris students are asked to dress appropriately for the business of learning and for the comfort of themselves and their classmates. This means avoiding any clothing that contains noise-makers, flashing lights or other distractions. Clothing should be sufficiently loose to be comfortable for walking up and down stairs and for sitting on the floor. If there are any questions or a disagreement concerning the Polaris Charter School dress code, the Directors will be the final interpreters of what constitutes appropriate dress. Inappropriately dressed students will have a choice of borrowing clothing from the office supply or calling a parent for suitable clothing. The following dress code guidelines apply to all Polaris students:

- All shoes should be comfortable and safe. Please bring sneakers for P.E.
- Shirts must cover the midriff.

- Shirts and other articles of clothing with inappropriate pictures or lettering are not allowed, including clothing which advertises alcoholic beverages, alcohol-related messages, gender bias or sexual messages, smoking, substance use or violence.
- Hairstyles may not be maintained during class.
- Jewelry and accessories which pose distractions or hazards to the welfare, health, property or safety of students and others will not be allowed.

Personal Electronics

Unless the use has been approved by the child's teacher, Polaris students are not permitted **to use** cell phones, personal radios, cameras, tape recorders, CD players, Ipods, MP3 players, beepers, handheld video games or other such personal electronic devices during the school day. It is best for safety, security and privacy to leave all such electronic devices at home.

If a student must have a cell phone, it must be turned off and kept off during the school day. (This includes turning a phone on to check messages.) The school day is defined as the moment a student boards the bus or is dropped off at school in the morning until after they depart from the bus or off school property. Students who remain for after school activities may use electronic devices after receiving permission from a supervising adult in a designated area determined by that adult. At no time, however, will a student be allowed to access the school's network from personal devices.

Cell phones and electronic devices will be confiscated if the student violates this policy. The confiscated device may be picked up according to the following guidelines:

- First Offense: Student may retrieve the device at the end of the day.
- Second Offense: Same as first with an added written warning.
- Third Offense: Parents must retrieve from the front office.

Harassment

Racial and sexual harassment are forms of discrimination which violate Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1974, as amended, 42 U.S.C. et seq. Polaris Charter School prohibits employees and students from conduct and/or communications that may perpetrate sexual violence or racially or sexually harass another employee or student. (For the full text, see Board Policy #JBAA.) Any person who believes he/she has been the victim of racial or sexual harassment or sexual violence by a student or by an employee of Polaris Charter School, or a third person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment or sexual violence, should report the alleged acts immediately to the appropriate Polaris Charter School official.

Within Polaris Charter School, the Director of Student Services has been designated by the Board of Trustees to serve as the school's Human Rights Officer. He/She can be reached at the school office at 100 Coolidge Avenue in Manchester, or by telephone at 603-634-0034. Upon receipt of a report or complaint of racial or sexual harassment or sexual violence, the Human Rights Officer shall immediately authorize an investigation. This investigation may be conducted by the Human Rights Officer or by a third party designated by the Director of Student Services. In determining whether alleged conduct or communication constitutes harassment or sexual violence, all of the facts and surrounding circumstances will be reviewed, including:

- The nature of the comments
- The actions which occurred
- The conduct of both parties
- The reports of any witnesses, observers and/or bystanders

- The relationships between the parties involved
- The context in which the alleged actions occurred

Polaris Charter School will take such disciplinary action it deems necessary and appropriate, based on the results of the investigation. Disciplinary actions may include warning, suspension or immediate discharge to end racial and sexual harassment or other harassment and sexual violence and prevent its recurrence.

Furthermore, Polaris Charter School will discipline any individual who retaliates against any person who reports alleged racial or sexual harassment or other harassment and sexual violence.

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse, which may include filing charges with the Commissioner of Education, initiating civil action and/or seeking redress under criminal statutes and/or federal law.

Weapons

Weapons are not permitted on school property at any time. Visitors, faculty, staff and students are strictly prohibited from bringing any weapon, whether visible or concealed, into the school building, onto school property, on a school bus, or to any school-sponsored event. The term “weapon” pertains to, but is not limited to, firearms (rifles, pistols, revolvers, pellet guns, BB guns, etc.;;) knives (instruments of any kind that have sharpened or pointed metal blade of two [2] or more inches in length;) slingshots, metallic knuckles, firecrackers, billie stick, pistol canes, black jacks, or any other substance or object which, in the manner it is used or threatened to be used, is known to be capable of producing bodily injury.

The violation of this policy by any person, with respect to any weapon, will result in an immediate report to the Director, who shall in turn notify the police. A violation of this policy will result in immediate confiscation of the weapon and notice to the student’s parents or guardians. The Director is authorized to suspend any student possessing a dangerous weapon or any object used as a weapon while in the school building, on school property, while riding a school bus, or at any function held under the name of the Polaris Charter School, for a period of time not to exceed twenty school days. The Director will refer all such cases to the Board of Trustees for possible further action to include additional suspension or expulsion.

If the student or parent/ guardian violation involves a firearm, the Board of Trustees shall expel that student from Polaris Charter School in accordance with the mandates of RSA 193:13 III, and in accordance with the requirements of the federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. Any such expulsion shall continue for a period of not less than one (1) year, subject to the authority of a Superintendent of Schools presiding over a public school other than Polaris Charter School, to modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis.

The only persons who are exempt from this policy are law enforcement personnel.

Communication

Newsletter

Polaris Charter School posts a weekly newsletter on our website. Students, teachers, the Polaris Educational Foundation and anyone else with an interest in sharing information with our learning

community will be welcome to contribute to the newsletter. The newsletter contains important announcements as well as information about future events, important dates, and descriptions of activities that have occurred during the week. Parents are encouraged to “Follow” this newsletter blog to receive it automatically each week.

Notes: Don't Forget!

The Polaris Charter School Office must receive an email from a parent or a handwritten note that has been signed by a parent if the student:

- Has been absent, (even if the parent "called in" the absence)
- Is late to school, (arriving after 8:20 AM, and not by bus)
- Needs to be dismissed early from school (before 2:50 PM)
- Is not going to take the bus home as usual
- Is going to be picked up by a different driver

These rules are for student safety and the peace of mind of all responsible adults. **No permission will be granted for student requests made without an email or a signed note from home! NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Parent/ Student/ Teacher Conferences

Conferences at Polaris Charter School are for planning and assessment of each student's educational and social/ emotional learning progress at school. To provide parents and teachers with accurate and pertinent information to evaluate, the student must be present and participate fully in the conference.

During the conference, students will review their previous learning goals and present their completed work, including an updated portfolio and any completed projects. Based on a review of the student's learning outcomes, new goals for the next academic period will be established, along with notation of how the student proposes to accomplish the new goals. All of this information will be recorded on the student's Personal Learning Plan and copied for the parent and student. The original Personal Learning Plans (one per academic period) will become part of the student's permanent record and will be forwarded to the student's new school when the student transfers or graduates from Polaris.

The first conference of the school year is held during the Open House before school starts. This mini-conference lasts approximately 10 minutes. The remaining three conferences occur after each trimester and are scheduled on "No School" days and on one Early Release Day each period to allow 20 minutes for each conference. When possible, teachers will try to meet the scheduling needs of parent/ guardians with both day and evening conference times available and coordinating back-to-back conferences for siblings. The Conference dates will be posted in the school newsletter and individual appointment times will be available for online sign-ups well in advance of scheduled Conference days. The dates are also marked in Polaris's annual calendar. We ask that parents note the dates that have been reserved for conferences and plan accordingly. **It is a requirement of continued enrollment at Polaris Charter School for parents to attend a Conference after each academic period.**

Community

Celebrations

As the mission of Polaris Charter School calls for the creation of a joyful and exciting learning community, we expect to have many celebrations. There will be some exciting "firsts" to observe, much new learning to commend and many good times to share. Because we have so many celebrations, we are limiting party food to rare occasions and we would prefer healthy alternatives. If you are providing food for a celebration, you must email the teacher at least two days in advance to let them know what you plan on sending. Because of food allergies, an alternate snack for some students might need to be arranged. We require that anything sent to school contain no food dyes.

Ceremonies

It is Polaris Charter School's intent to avoid the promotion of religion in pageants, plays, recitals and/or in other literary productions, discussions, aesthetic displays and dramatic activities. This does not preclude teaching about religions, religious holidays and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the school since insights in this area can enhance mutual understanding needed by all citizens in a pluralistic society.

Each morning, the Pledge of Allegiance is led by a student volunteer in the Gathering Room. Everyone is asked to rise and participate, or to rise and remain silent out of respect for the patriotic words and symbol of the United States of America.

Chores

All students, faculty, and staff will share in daily general maintenance chores to keep the school as clean as possible. Students will take turns emptying trash, cleaning surfaces, sweeping, and straightening up school areas on a regular basis.

Library

The students at Polaris Charter School have a huge variety of interests and a wide range of reading levels. While we would like to have a sufficiently large library to meet the needs of our students and to challenge them, it isn't possible within our current budget demands. We have purchased some books and our teachers are willing to share their own personal collections and have obtained library cards to borrow books from the Manchester Public Library. However, we will always need additional picture-story books, easy readers, poetry and short story anthologies, fiction and nonfiction, as well as informational texts for students researching history, science, social studies, geography and so much more. Until we have a sufficient inventory of books to circulate, we will not be allowing students to take books home from the Polaris Charter School Library. Donations of books in good condition will be cheerfully accepted and screened for suitable content by our Volunteer Librarian. Please remember our library needs when you clean out a bedroom or basement or stop at a neighborhood yard sale!

Lost and Found

To prevent loss of clothing and other belongings, parents are urged to sew labels or mark their child's name on clothing, boots and all personal articles. Please also write your child's name on his or her lunch bag or lunch box. Students should not bring valuable or sentimental items to school. Should

students choose to disregard this warning, they assume all risks of loss or damage to the items they bring to school.

A small box of Lost and Found items will be kept in the Gathering Room. Valuable items such as glasses, rings and watches should be sent to (and may be re-discovered in) the Front Office. Students and parents should check for lost articles as soon as they are discovered missing. Due to health concerns, clothing cannot be stored in Lost and Found for more than a few weeks. Unclaimed clothing will be cleaned and donated to a non-profit organization.

Visitors

We welcome the community to visit our school. If you wish to visit a specific classroom at a specific time, please call the Front Office (634-0034) and make arrangements for your visit. All visitors should enter the school from the door facing the parking lot and must report to the Front Office to sign in. **PLEASE DO NOT GO DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM.** We have very strict rules to maintain security for all students and staff. Unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave the building immediately.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a welcome and valuable addition to Polaris Charter School. We are so dependent on, and appreciative of, the many ways in which Polaris Charter School volunteers assist teachers, the students, the administration, the library and the Polaris community as a whole that we require at least ten hours of school volunteer service from each Polaris family. Each and every hour contributed by our volunteers has a direct benefit on those who need and deserve it the most---our students!

All new Polaris families filled in a form as part of their application, identifying how they will volunteer for the school. Additional forms will be sent home, or contact will be made online, throughout the year asking for assistance in the school in various areas. We encourage all families to carefully review and consider the variety of options presented, talent and/or services. You can work out of your own home or at school. The hours are flexible.

Please note that all visitors to Polaris Charter School should enter the building from the door facing the parking lot and must report to the office to sign in before reporting to a classroom or volunteer area. All volunteers are subject to a criminal records check, agreement to a Code of Ethics and agreement to a Statement of Confidentiality. **Criminal record checks results usually take 3-4 weeks to arrive. Please plan accordingly.** Please contact the Administrative Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns about volunteering at Polaris Charter School.

Polaris Educational Foundation

The Mission of the Polaris Educational Foundation (PEF) is to support the mission and vision of the Polaris Charter School through fundraising and programs designed to support the entire school community. The Polaris Educational Foundation fulfills its mission by working in four areas:

Community

The PEF fosters a sense of community at Polaris by creating relationships:

- Within the school community, between teachers, staff and families;
- Between the school and the local business community;
- Between the school and the larger educational community, including other charter schools,

- o local elementary schools, and colleges and universities
- o Between the school and the local non-profit community.

Fundraising

The PEF seeks to help sustain the financial well-being of Polaris Charter School through fundraising and other revenue generating projects.

Enrichment

The PEF seeks to enrich the curriculum at Polaris through planning and helping to fund:

- o Field trips
- o In-school enrichment programs
- o After school enrichment opportunities

Support

To support all members of the Polaris community, the PEF:

- o Organizes carpools for parents and students
- o Creates and manages a volunteer schedule.
- o Coordinates the many volunteer opportunities available at school.

Websites to Explore

Websites that will give you info about the school or help you and your child

- o **Polaris Charter School:** <http://www.polarischarterschool.org>
- o **Polaris Educational Foundation:** <http://polariseducationalfoundation.org>
- o **Student Information System(Sycamore):** <https://www.sycamoreeducation.com> (Medical Info, Emergency Contacts, Family Directory)
- o **Dreambox:** <https://play.dreambox.com/login/hyr7/polariscs> (Math practice)
- o **Discovery Education:** <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/>
- o **Reading A to Z:** <https://www.readinga-z.com/>
- o **Lexia:** <http://www.lexiacore5.com/> (Phonics learning)
- o **New Hampshire Department of Education:** <http://www.education.nh.gov> (Links to NH Schools, Laws, Legislation, Rules, Reports and Statistics)
- o **Project Help:** <http://www.instagrok.com>: (Ask a question and it develops a graphic web tool with connections to research, project info, videos, etc.)
- o **Computer Design:** <http://www.3Dtin>: (Create 3D pictures and animations. Needs Google Chrome or Firefox.)
- o **E-Mag / Search Engine for Kids:** www.4kids.org
- o **Instruction in variety of topics:** www.khanacademy.org
- o **Parenting Information:** <http://www.tnpc.com> (The National Parenting Center)

Faculty and Staff

Director of Student Services	Jennifer Murdock-Smith
Director of Business, Operations, and Admissions	Elizabeth Putnam

Student Support & Administrative Coordinator	Nancy Sherwood
Primary Teacher	Katharine Dudley
Primary Teacher	Lea Fesh
Primary Teacher	Alyssa Gilbert
Intermediate Teacher	Lisa Vlasich
Intermediate Teacher	Katie Haynes
Intermediate Teacher	Meredith Perham
Intermediate Teacher	Ashley Rainey
Educational Assistant	Lea Meli
Educational Assistant	Martha Pepek
Educational Assistant	Christin Crowell
Educational Assistant	Robert Daniel
STEM Teacher	Preston Moulton
Art Teacher	Christa Zuber
Music Teacher	Angelica Rosenthal
Physical Education Teacher	Shirley Butterfield

Contacting Faculty and Staff

Email is the preferred means for communication outside of school. To email any Polaris employee, use the following format: firstinitial.lastname@polarischarterschool.org (for example n.sherwood@polarischarterschool.org).

Should it be necessary to contact a faculty or staff member by phone, please call the school office at 603-634-0034.

Board of Trustees

Polaris Charter School is governed by a Board of Trustees that has general supervisory control and authority over operations of the charter school. The Polaris Board of Trustees holds a monthly meeting which is open to Polaris community members and the public at large. The schedule and minutes of all Board of Trustee meetings can be found on the school website:

www.polarischarterschool.org. To contact the board, please email board@polarischarterschool.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS	
Chairperson	Jill Cane
Vice Chairperson	Ali Nakip
Treasurer	Jim Aguiar
Secretary	Susan Hartford
Board Member	
Board Member	Camila Miranda
Board Member	Elizabeth Velez
Board Member	Sharon Klardie

Trustee selection is based on personal and professional background and a commitment to the school's Mission and Vision, charter, and sustainability. Appointment of new Trustees must be approved with a vote by the sitting Board of Trustees.