



SPARK

academy of
advanced technologies
igniting your purpose!

Public Charter School Grades 9-12

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
2019 - 2020**

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Message from the Director

July 2019

Greetings! Welcome to Spark Academy of Advanced Technologies Public Charter School.

Spark Academy exists because passionate and dedicated people came together to create a high school that prepares students to find good careers in the trades as advanced technicians through certification and an opportunity to earn an associate's degree. It will also be possible for you to continue on to a two or four-year college program or enter the workforce with a good-paying job as soon as you graduate from Spark.

We pride ourselves on discovering each student's learning style and abilities so that we provide a learning experience that understands you, individualizes your experience, and challenges you to be your very best.

We know that the world rewards those who work hard and always strive to improve. That is why we emphasize effort so much. When you come to Spark Academy, you are telling us (and more importantly yourself) that you are willing to work hard and to learn the most you can. We are here to help you, but you must also help yourself with consistent effort and with the determination to persist in your efforts.

We also want your Spark experience to be one that you will look forward to each day. We can work hard to learn and enjoy our time at school as well. We have activities to help us share what we have learned, provide great public speaking experiences, and allow us to learn through interesting activities.

We are ready if you are so that you can have a great high school experience and a great life after graduation.

Denis Mailloux
Director
Spark Academy of Advanced Technologies

Mission

To empower our students with opportunities to master technical skills, both practical and theoretical, in the context of a high school and early college program that emphasizes the dignity and value of work. Students will discover an appreciation for the power of the sciences combined with an understanding of the humanities. They will develop into innovative problem-solvers, ready to enter technical careers of their choice upon graduation or through further study.

Vision

To provide students with a high school and early college education based on problem-solving, real-world experience, and a sound work ethic. They will cultivate their skills, ingenuity, and character, ready to challenge the future with confidence, courage and curiosity.

Handbook Statement

A handbook cannot address all situations and circumstances which may affect students. It is intended to be a specific articulation of the broad range of understandings and expectations which guide the school in accordance with its mission. It is intended to inform both parents and students of the specific policies and practices which have developed from these expectations. Parents and students are advised to read this handbook carefully prior to signing and returning the acknowledgment form on the first day of the school year.

The board of trustees reserves the right to revise or edit this handbook at any time with sufficient notice to families prior to the implementation of new or amended policies. The director is empowered by the board of trustees to enact school policy and practices and waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his or her discretion.

Both students and parents should feel welcome at any time to discuss the school's policies and practices. The result of open dialogue such as this will help to ensure continued improvement of our school and greater understanding of the reasons for the development of these policies and practices.

Students and parents may appeal the director's decisions to the board of trustees at any time. The board requests that such appeals be made in writing. Appeals will be heard during the public session of regularly scheduled board meetings though requests may be made for special hearings.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Spark Academy admits students of any race, color, sex, religion, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex religion, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Title IX

The law regarding Title IX is very clear: *No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*

Spark Academy follows the letter and intent of the law with respect to all forms of discrimination. It is our intent to provide all Spark students with equal opportunity in accordance with the law and with the respect, consideration, and care which we consider to be essential to our mission.

The office manager, Mrs. Jennifer Larochelle, has been designated as the school's Title IX coordinator. Complaints regarding Title IX matter should be made first to Mrs. Larochelle.

Due Process

As in any matters involving conflict with school policy or the implementation of policy, students and/or parents may request an opportunity to meet with the director and/or the board of trustees for resolution. Our intent is always to treat our students with dignity and respect for all.

Non-Custodial Parent

This school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non - custodial parent with access to academic records and other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with a court-certified copy of the court order.

Criteria for Acceptance

Spark Academy is a free and public high school, open to all students who have been promoted from the 8th grade at their former school. Enrollment is open to all students until such time as the enrollment threshold of sixty students per grade is met, after which time students will be entered into an enrollment lottery for admission as space becomes available to maintain an enrollment of sixty students per grade. The Spark Academy program consists of four years. Students may transfer into the first year of the program only.

The Spark Academy program is a dedicated four-year experience, based upon a distinctive sequence of courses and approach to learning with opportunities for trade certification and a pathway toward completing an associate's degree. For this reason, all students will begin in year one.

Transfer Students

Spark Academy is a four-year program, offering students opportunities for certification in various technical areas of study. Additionally, Spark students have opportunities to begin work toward an associate's degree as they earn their high school diplomas. Successful completion of the Spark program requires a full-four years. For this reason, students who wish enter Spark Academy after their freshman year of high school may do so only as first year Spark students. Prior high school credits will be listed on the Spark Academy transcript without being added to the calculation of their Spark GPA or class rank.

Code of Conduct

The basic principles of our expectations for student and staff behavior at Spark Academy are that students and staff conduct themselves in a manner that is **safe, respectful, ethical, lawful, mature, orderly**, and consistent with the **mission** of Spark Academy.

- **Safety** is of the utmost importance in every situation, and a school is no exception. Safety is especially important as Spark students take classes such as those in the technical fields where harm may result from carelessness.
- **Respect** should be evident in the dignity we show to everyone through our words and actions.
- **Ethical** behavior can be seen in our drive to do what is right, not simply what is convenient or in our self-interest.
- **Lawful** behavior can be witnessed in our understanding that laws are a necessary part of our living as part of a greater community, one that is built upon respect, safety, ethics, and order.
- **Maturity** will be necessary for Spark students in order to include Manchester Community College classes in their schedules.

- **Order** is necessary whenever a group of individuals come together with a specific purpose and goal. Our goal is to provide an educational experience that achieves the goal of forming young people to become responsible and productive individuals.
- **Mission** guides our understanding as to why we are members of the Spark Academy Community where both students and staff must act in a manner that leads our students toward becoming responsible young women and men who are prepared for their future both academically and personally.

The director or designated staff will determine the manner in which infractions will be assessed and addressed. Teachers and staff have the responsibility of addressing student behavior and of making referrals to the director when necessary. Students and parents may appeal conduct-related decisions with the director and/or board of trustees.

Teacher and Staff Code of Excellence

The expectations for all staff are essentially the same as those of the students. However, the expectations placed upon staff manifest themselves in ways specific to the planning and implementation of each day's activities and of the curriculum.

Mission drives us to plan and conduct all school activities with the purpose of preparing our students to become young men and women of character who have been able to take advantage of the many opportunities available through the Spark Academy and Manchester Community College curriculums through persistent effort and the guidance of a caring staff.

Safety must always be foremost in our planning and execution of the many activities which are an important hallmark of Spark Academy. For this, there is no compromise.

Respect and ethics will be evident not only in the manner with which we conduct ourselves and interact with our students. Respect begins with understanding and with the cultivation of our students' understanding that we are all members of the human race and that as such all people are entitled to respect. The curriculum must include experiences whereby our students develop a greater understanding of our shared human experience.

Lawful behavior governs our conduct within and without the Spark Community. Our students' understanding of the law must also be included in our school experience.

Order is necessary for a community to reach the goals which bring its members have come together in the first place. Some rules are in place simply to facilitate a community's ability to realize goals for the benefit of its members.

As those entrusted to teach the young women and men of Spark Academy, we have a responsibility to guide our students as they expand their horizons, work hard, and persist. We must present them with the challenges that will lead them to become increasingly responsible, eager to learn, and guided by **confidence, courage and curiosity**.

Notice of Implied Agreement

The registration of a student at Spark Academy 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. The Academy reserves the right to revise or edit the rules and regulations herein at any times.

Board of Trustees

Spark Academy is governed by a board of trustees that has general supervisory control and authority over the operation and policies of our school. Trustee selection is based on personal and professional background and a commitment to the school's mission, support, and sustainability. The list of board members and the minutes for all board of trustees meetings can be found on the school website: www.sparkacademynh.org

All members of the Spark community are encouraged to attend board meetings or committee meetings. Those meeting times are listed on the school website.

Contact Us

Email is an important and primary method of communication for parents, students, faculty and staff. To contact any Spark administrator or staff member by email use the following format: firstname.lastname@sparkacademynh.org.

All students, parents, faculty and staff are provided with a Spark Academy email account. Emails will be sent at the beginning of the year describing access. All school communications will be sent through the Spark email account. Spark will not send official school information to non-school email addresses. Emails from personal accounts will not be accepted or utilized for communications regarding students or school information.

To contact the school by phone, please call the school office at: (603) 316-1170

Daily Operations

School Hours

Students may arrive at school beginning at 7:20 am. Parents/guardians must stay with their children before 7:20 AM. The first class of the day begins at 8:00, at which time students are expected to be in their first class and ready to begin the day. Promptness is the first indicator of our work ethic and is expected each day.

There are other times when the staff (coaches, moderators, etc.) will schedule activities, and for such occasions, supervision will be provided only during the time of that activity. Parents are responsible for making arrangements regarding transportation, drop off, and pick up in accordance with these times.

Any students who need to be picked up prior to dismissal must be picked up before 2:30 PM. Students engaged in sports and other activities that may require a different arrangement must communicate this to the school in advance. We are committed to facilitating these activities and will do our best to accommodate our students' needs.

School Calendar

The school's calendar may be found on the school website at: www.sparkacademynh.org. Every effort will be made to have the Spark calendar approved prior to the start of the school year.

Requests for Early Dismissal

Please try to refrain from making appointments requiring early dismissal during the school day. In case of an emergency, a parent/guardian may request an early dismissal by phone or in person. Phone requests will be verified prior to dismissal. Parents/ guardians must come to the school office to have students dismissed outside of normal dismissal times. As stated above, students who are dismissed early must be picked up before 2:30 PM.

Parking & Student Drop Off/Pickup

The Spark Academy area for parking, student drop-off and pickup is located directly behind the entrance to the school and at the rear of the Manchester Community College campus. Parents are asked to use the designated areas in the parking lot for the safe and orderly entrance and dismissal of our students.

Dismissal at End of Day

An adult will accompany students out of the building each day for bus and parent pick up and remain outside 15 minutes after the final period. After this time, remaining students will go back into the school and will remain under the direction of an adult until a parent or authorized person picks up the student. If the adult picking up the student arrives after the students are back inside the building, an adult must come in the building to meet the student and sign the student out.

Emergency Early Dismissal

If inclement weather or another situation occurs during the day necessitating emergency dismissal, a notification will be posted on the Spark Academy website, an email will be sent to all parents' email addresses on file, and phone calls will be made via the student automated call system. Every effort will be made to reach all parents in a timely manner.

NOTE: All students must be picked up at the time stated in an emergency early dismissal notice. In a situation warranting an emergency early dismissal, we cannot jeopardize the safety of staff members by asking them to remain in the building.

School Cancellations and Delayed Openings

Spark Academy generally makes a decision on school cancellations and delayed openings no later than 6:30 AM when weather conditions are sufficiently stable to do so. Notifications of school closings and delays can be found at the following locations: WMUR-TV Channel 9, its websites, and the Spark Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SparkAcademyNH>. Additionally, at the earliest convenience of the Director, an automated voice message will be sent to phones, and notification sent by email. Spark parents should use their discretion when commuting on days of inclement weather, considering that our students come from many towns and cities throughout New Hampshire.

Academic Guidelines

Graduation Requirements

Content Area	Credits
Arts Education	.5
Information and Communication Technologies	.5
English	4.0

Mathematics	3.0
Physical Sciences	1.0
Biological Sciences	1.0
US and NH History	1.0
US and NH Government/Civics	.5
Economics	.5
World History, Global Studies, or Geography	.5
Health Education	.5
Physical Education	1.0
Electives	10.0
Total	24.0

Instructional Philosophy:

The educational philosophy of Spark Academy centers on a belief in the interrelatedness of all knowledge. While students are focusing on an experiential, project-based exposure to many technical fields, they will also be learning to seek relationships, understand common functioning principles, solve problems, come to personal conclusions, and develop new ideas.

Grading Philosophy:

Our belief in dignity and the importance of hard work will govern our requirements for course completion and grading. Completion of course work will be a requirement for good grades. Persistence and exceptional effort will be equally rewarded. “Work hard, don’t give up. Learn by persisting, demonstrate what you have learned.”

Grading System Understandings:

- A:** The student has exceeded expectations as to the completion of assigned work and has demonstrated a superior knowledge of the content in a manner which challenges the scope of the course curriculum, i.e., the student’s knowledge and initiative extend beyond the curriculum.
- B:** The student has met all expectations as to the completion of assigned work and has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the content.
- C:** The student has met expectations as to the completion of assigned work, has at times struggled to complete assigned work correctly, yet has persisted with that work and is able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the content to progress to the next level with ongoing reinforcement.
- D:** The student has either (1) failed to complete assigned work or (2) struggled with content knowledge at a level which calls into question the student’s ability to progress to the next level, without the addition of significant intervention and a re-taking of the course or an approved alternative.
- F:** The student has demonstrated an inability to persist and complete assigned work and demonstrate knowledge of content to a level which would prevent the student from moving to the next level without significant intervention and a retaking of the course or an approved alternative.

Grading System Numerical Conversion

In order to facilitate the calculation of marking period grades, the following numerical guide will be by teachers used for the grading when necessary. Assessment tools which lend themselves directly to letter grades alone will do so. When numerical grades are used, the following distribution will be used:

Grade Point Average Calculation

A - 100 - 94
B - 93 - 85
C - 84 - 76
D - 75 - 70

A - 4.0
B - 3.0
C - 2.0
D - 1.0

SMART Goals for individual students:

SMART goals will be established for each student upon entering school, based on prior achievement and standardized testing. SMART goals are: **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant** and **Timely**. Spark Academy strongly encourages a **Learning Agreement** with the individual student and parents to help students achieve their best. The areas to be reviewed with the family for the establishment of student goals include:

- Personal ability
- Motivation
- Study habits, study skills and organization

SMART goals will be reviewed annually with the director and head of student services in order to assist each student as she or he works to attain their very best.

Academic Integrity

Spark Academy's emphasis on good character will extend to all areas of functioning at the school, including academic integrity, which may be defined as an implicit understanding that all work with the student's name on it is his own and that ideas or formulations acquired from other sources or other students be clearly attributed to those sources.

Spark also affirms the importance of cooperative learning and studying. We encourage students to work together. A group effort might contain the same wording in several different papers, based on this cooperation. To whatever extent possible, students should explicitly acknowledge the group effort.

Cheating and plagiarism are lapses in academic integrity. Teachers will define these violations in discussions with their students and will either deal with these infractions in class, or, in extreme cases, refer them to the director.

Grade Reporting & Credits

Student grades will be available to parents at any time through the Rediker PlusPortals service which may be accessed on the Spark website. Report cards will be transmitted electronically shortly after completion of each marking period. Parents may request paper copies to be mailed home.

Technical classes will require student proficiency in each area of study according to the assessment standards established for each class.

As Manchester Community College offers semester classes, grades obtained through those classes will be reported on the students' Spark Academy report card after the second and fourth marking periods. The assessment criteria for each college class will be determined by the college instructors.

Honor Roll Criteria

Distinction: All "A's"

High Honors: All "A's" and one "B"

Honors: All "B's" and one "C"

Student Cohorts

Cohorts are the most significant element in student grouping. Through small student cohorts, "schools within a school" form to provide students with social network to support the students as they learn together and work together, collaborating in the spirit of a true learning community.

Homework

Homework is an integral element of the effort and persistence which will help bring students to proficiency. Homework will be assigned for the purpose of student exploration of new material, review of material for practice, review of material to help in preparation for assessment, or for the purpose of research and presentation.

Reading, thinking, note taking are essential to the process of becoming lifelong learners and thinking individuals who continue to grow throughout their lives. Successful Spark students will develop the habits of seeking knowledge and the understanding of concepts as the foundation of critical and creative thinking.

Alternative Reading Assignments

Parents may request alternative reading assignments for students. The alternative must meet with the approval of the teacher and director so as to accomplish the same purpose of the originally assigned material.

Make-Up Work

Students are responsible for making up missed work or assessments. Teachers will decide on the appropriate time period for work or assessments to be made up. Students are expected to discuss make-up work with the teacher immediately upon returning to the school so as to ensure that work due is completed in a timely manner. In this way, students complete the work so as to develop the greatest understanding of the curriculum and so as not to fall behind in their studies.

Schedule Changes

Once a student's class schedule has been planned, changes may, at times, occur. Requests for schedule changes may be made to the school director and/or Student Services Director. Scheduling requests will be carefully considered with the goal of creating the best educational experience for the students.

Spark Academy Standardized Testing

Spark Academy employs the PSAT 8/9 in the first year in order to establish a baseline for student growth and the subsequent years. The PSAT will be utilized in the second year; the SAT in years three and four. The school's main purpose in conducting the PSAT and SAT exams is to measure program effectiveness while providing data to help measure student growth and program effectiveness.

Student Services

The guidance office is available to

- provide academic support to our students so that they may develop the practices that help them achieve their best
- coordinate services with resident school districts to help meet needs of students who are in need of support in accordance with the rights guaranteed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- establish reasonable accommodations to students with identified needs
- provide social and emotional support through difficult times
- help students and parents understand standardized testing results

Textbooks/Materials

Spark provides textbooks and other instructional materials to students in order to maximize their educational experience. These items are on loan to students, and all efforts must be made to keep them in good condition. Students need to report any and all problems with their textbooks and materials to the teacher immediately. Students will be issued textbooks and instructional materials only for those classes in which they are enrolled, and these items must be returned in good condition at the conclusion of each class. In cases where textbooks, library books, and other instructional materials are lost, damaged, or destroyed in excess of reasonable wear and tear, the student will be assessed an amount sufficient to cover replacement costs. Failure to return or compensate for school textbooks and materials may result in consequences to be determined by the Director.

Transcripts

An official transcript may be requested by calling the school.

Student Expectations

Standards of Conduct

The Code of Conduct expresses the principles on which the Standards of Conduct are based. The Standards of Conduct are intended to present tangible examples of those principles. It is impossible to anticipate each and every form of behavior which is or is not in keeping with those principles; therefore, families should expect the school to address specific concerns as they arise.

In general, expectations for student behavior include, but are not limited to:

- arriving to school on time
- being dressed in a modest, respectful, neat, clean and safe manner
- following the letter and spirit of school rules, some of which exist simply for the orderly and effective operation of the school
- being prepared for class through study and the completion of assigned work
- conducting oneself in a manner which helps create a welcoming learning environment for all
- being respectful of others
- being a helpful community member of the cohort and the school
- conducting oneself in the spirit of the Spark mission which includes integrity and honesty
- striving to learn with **confidence** in their ability, the **courage** to explore the unknown, and an unending sense of **curiosity**

The director or designated staff will determine the manner in which infractions will be assessed and addressed. Teachers and staff have the responsibility of addressing student behavior and of making referrals to the director when necessary. Students and parents may appeal conduct-related decisions with the director.

Appeals to the board of trustees may be made in writing for serious disciplinary action as in the case of expulsion.

Public Displays of Affection

Public displays of affection (acts of physical intimacy) are not allowed on school grounds or at any school functions. In cases where any dispute or misunderstanding occurs relative to PDA, the director will make a determination as to whether physical contact is too intimate for a school setting.

Attendance and Absenteeism

Basic philosophy:

Subject to New Hampshire legal requirements, we seek to understand our student and not to punish them as the first response to issues relating to absenteeism. However, continued membership of the Spark Academy school community does depend upon our students' attendance and participation in our program. We ask parents to support the school in this primary responsibility to our students.

Spark Academy regulations in relationship to attendance and absenteeism are based on the following New Hampshire statutes and administrative rules as well as additional rules as needed.

Legal References Related to Attendance:

RSA 189:34 Appointment

RSA 189:35-a Truancy Defined

RSA 193:1 Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil

RSA 193.7 Penalty

RSA 193:8 Notice Requirements

RSA193:16 Bylaws as to Nonattendance

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (a)(1) Attendance and Absenteeism

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section ED 306.04 (C) Policy Relative to Attendance and Absenteeism

Spark Academy requires that enrolled school-aged children attend school in accordance with all applicable state laws and administrative rules. The educational program offered by Spark is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in Spark during the days and hours that school is in session, except that the director may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of conditions or reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.

Notification of Absence or Tardiness

Parents/guardians are required to call and/or email attendance@sparkacademynh.org with the following information, when a student is absent:

- The student's name
- The parent/guardian's name

- The reason for the absence
- The phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached that day.

In the event this email is not received, an email from the school will be sent to the parent/guardian which will require an immediate response.

Examples of Excused Absences

- Illness
- Recovery from an accident
- Required court attendance
- Medical and dental appointments
- Death in the immediate family
- Observation or celebration of religious holidays
- Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the director or permitted by law

In the case of a prolonged illness, a detailed note from a doctor is proscribed, including dates of illness and recommendations for further care.

In the case of absences not related to illness, the parent will provide a written explanation of the reason for such absence to the director's discretion.

Repetitive Tardiness

If a student's repeated tardiness impacts classroom instruction the teacher shall report this to the Director. Excessive tardiness shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Habitual Absenteeism

Ten half days of unexcused absences during the school year will constitute habitual absenteeism.

The director is hereby designated as a Spark employee responsible for overseeing issues of habitual absenteeism.

Parents will be informed of the problem in an email which might include:

- A statement that the student has become or is becoming habitually absent;
- A statement of the parent's responsibility to ensure school attendance;
- A request for a meeting to discuss the student's absenteeism and to develop a plan.

Should the absences continue, stronger measures may need to be taken at the Director's discretion according to the welfare of the student and the dictates of state law.

Acceptable Use of Computers and Internet Agreement

The Code of Conduct applies to all we do, both students and staff. Computers and the internet are merely an extension of the principles which we should all adhere to and to the manner in which we demonstrate our character to ourselves and to others. Any behavior which violates those principles will be addressed in a manner commensurate with the nature of the offense. This applies to all matters involving the law, respect, ethics, safety, and age-appropriate considerations with which society as a whole and certainly a school must be concerned.

The school reserves the right to monitor all communications via school/college network. Any communication on school devices and/or school/college network will be considered the property of the school and, as such, may be monitored or confiscated at any time. Cellular communications on private devices which are deemed to violate school policy will be addressed with legal authorities as appropriate and/or through school action.

It is important to note Spark Academy will access the internet through MCC WiFi and that the college WiFi does not include content filters. Spark students are expected to respect the letter and spirit of the Spark Academy Code of Conduct and the expectations expressed in this handbook when accessing the internet through MCC WiFi and/or through Spark Academy at any time. This expectation includes behavior during any school-related event, on or off campus.

Gambling is not allowed under any circumstances whether by internet or through any other means.

Legal authorities will be notified in accordance with the law. Activities deemed to be infractions of the letter or spirit of Spark Academy rules or mission will be addressed by the director.

Recommended Devices

Students will be able to have access to laptops where such access is integral to work within the school. Students may use cell phones, tablets, or laptops when such use is specifically allowed by staff and only in the manner permitted. Use of such devices and/or access to the school/college network brings a high level of expectation regarding their use. Students who are unable to follow school policy or staff direction will lose the ability to use such devices for a specified amount of time and perhaps with the imposition of additional sanctions.

Personal Cell Phones, Cameras, etc.

The use of cell phones by students will be allowed with permission from staff each and every time the student wishes to use the device. All forms of cell phone communication not specifically allowed by staff or in conflict with school policy are not allowed. A student's inability to follow this policy will result in the requirement that their phone be turned in to the office at the beginning of each day and retrieved only when the day has ended. The duration of this sanction will be determined by the director.

Photography and/or video will be allowed only when specifically permitted by staff. Failure to follow this rule will result in suspension of the student's ability to carry his or her phone during the school day as noted in the previous paragraph.

Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use, Vaping

Spark Academy does not tolerate the unlawful use, possession, sale, distribution, or manufacturing of alcohol, drugs and tobacco on school grounds. All prescription and over the counter medications must be kept at the front desk. The school's policy extends to being under the influence of prohibited substances on school grounds. Drugs are defined to include, not limited to:

- Any controlled substance prohibited by law.
- Any beverage containing alcohol.
- Any prescription or over-the-counter drug, with the exception of those authorized by parents/guardians and held by school personnel in accordance with school policy.
- Hallucinogenic substances.
- Inhalants.
- Vaping of any kind.

The director or designee will deal directly with students who violate this policy.

Hazing

Under the provisions of RSA 631 7, student hazing is strictly prohibited and punishable by law. Hazing is the “coercion or intimidation of a student to act or participate in or submit to any act, when such an act is likely or would be perceived by a reasonable person as likely to cause physical or psychological injury to any person; and when such an act is a condition of initiation into, admission into, continued membership in or association with any organization.” Hazing is not tolerated at Spark Academy or at any Spark Academy related activity, and any such incidents will be dealt with severely with respect to any coach, faculty member and/or students involved.

Bullying

Spark Academy does not tolerate bullying and adheres to the legal definition and regulations concerning bullying per NH RSA 193-F. Allegations of bullying will be investigated by the director or designee and or the board of trustees. Investigation and subsequent action will be conducted with the intent of fair evaluation of the allegations and protection of the rights of all parties involved. Where appropriate, those designated by the school to address the matter will attempt to bring increased awareness, discussion, agreement, and resolution, and restoration to all parties concerned.

Definitions:

Bullying is defined as a single significant intentional incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination, directed at another pupil which:

- Physically harms a pupil or damages the pupil’s property;
- Causes emotional distress to a pupil;
- Interferes with a pupil’s educational opportunities;
- Creates a hostile educational environment; or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying shall include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a pupil’s actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs or motivated by the pupil’s association with another person and based on the other person’s characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.

“Cyberbullying” is any conduct that is defined as bullying within this policy, which is undertaken through the use of electronic devices which include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and websites.

Spark Academy reserves the right to address bullying and/or cyberbullying that occurs on school property or a school-sponsored activity or off school property if the conduct interferes with a pupil’s educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Reporting Procedure:

- Any student who believes he has been bullied may report the alleged act to the director or staff or faculty.
- Other students or adults may also report to the director or other adults in the school.
- Reporting may be anonymous, but verification will be necessary to effectively resolve the incident.
- Notification to parents will be within 48 hours, respecting the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

- A written waiver to the notification time period may be given in the best interests of the students involved.
- Investigation and Restorative Action
- The director or his designee will initiate and complete his investigation promptly
- After 10 days, the director may request an extension, if necessary.
- The director will notify students of the results of the investigation within 2 days.
- Within 2 days, parents will receive a phone call of the results and/or an ensuing letter.
- No student records will be disclosed about the matter.
- The director or his designee will determine the manner and scope of the investigation, which might include documented interviews either separately or together with bully and victim(s), and when appropriate, with their parents. The purpose of the investigation is always to establish the facts, to heal the wrong and to set all students on a positive path.
- Consequences of serious bullying may include check-ins, apologies to all stakeholders and, where applicable making amends. The safety of all students is paramount and the return of both bully and victim to healthy functioning is also a primary goal of any action taken.

Dress Code

The guiding principles for student dress are that clothing be modest, clean, respectful, appropriate, and safe. Clothing with messages of any kind may not be worn. Acceptable logos will be posted on the school website. T-shirts may be worn in warm weather and when student safety will not be concern. Long pants are required due to the nature of Spark classes wherein shorts would present a hazard. Shorts may only be worn when the director indicates that a school day will be safe and appropriate for the students to do so. Shoes must enclose the entire foot for reasons of safety.

All clothing must fit appropriately. Torn clothing is not allowed. For some classes, jewelry of any kind may be a hazard and will be prohibited. Students may not wear sunglasses indoors unless for medical reasons. Students may not wear outer wear or hats in the building(s) after arrival to the school and must be stored in lockers.

Specific dress code direction will be given for activities such as field trips or outdoor exploration.

Firearms/Weapons

Weapons of any type such as, but not limited to, firearms, explosives, knives, incendiaries, martial arts weapons (s defined in RSA 159:20) clubs, metallic knuckles or containers of chemicals, such as pepper gas or mace, or the use of any object as a weapon, are prohibited on school property, in vehicles used for the transportation of students, or at school sponsored off site activities. Even for serious violations, there should be a discussion with the offender to allow him the opportunity of taking responsibility and apologizing. Because the safety of other students is involved, the offender will likely need to be absent from school for a period of time. At some point there should be a discussion with the student and his parents and a consequence should be administered. The period of absence may be necessary, but it should not be the consequence. The consequence might include such actions as checking in every day to have his clothes and locker examined, as well as a discussion how he is doing in other respects. A truly dangerous student would have to be expelled for safety reasons. Even then, the school should monitor his future to make sure that something worse doesn't happen down the road.

Leaving School Grounds

Students are not permitted to leave school property without prior permission from the director and appropriate parental approval and are required to remain within designated school

boundaries during school hours. A violation will result in a discussion with the director prior to notification of parents and possible consequences.

Respecting Personal Space

Students are expected to use common sense, decency, and good judgment regarding their personal boundaries and actions. Students are also expected to consider the feelings of others. Inappropriately invading another's personal space is that which makes the other person and/or people around you feel uncomfortable. Opportunities will always be sought out to help students understand the importance of respecting personal space.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any student, faculty staff or advisor who believes that he has been the victim of sexual harassment should report such behavior to a teacher or administrator. The incident will be fully researched for context and seriousness.

Sexual harassment, as it has been defined by state and federal law, includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of employment or educational advancement; or
- Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual's employment or educational status; or
- That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or educational status; or
- That conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- unwelcome verbal (usually, but not necessarily, of a sexual nature)
- harassment or abuse, including teasing, joking or making derogatory or dehumanizing remarks;
- subtle pressure for sexual activity;
- sexual contact or other inappropriate contact,
- physical violence or abuse including leering, inappropriate patting or pinching, or other forms of unwelcome touching, attempted rape, and rape; NOTE Rape and any other criminal matters are reported immediately to local police.
- intentional brushing against a student's or an employee's body;
- displaying offensive pictures, posters, T-shirts, or other graphics;
- demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's educational or employment status; and demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's educational or employment status.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct that has sexual connotations, will not be tolerated in accordance with state and federal law. Depending upon the circumstances and degree of the harassing behavior, the offender may be disciplined, including discharge of a school employee from employment or expulsion of a student from school.

Two individuals (complaint managers) have been designated to receive formal complaints of harassment and sexual harassment. The school's complaint managers are Mr. Denis Mailloux, director, and Mrs. Jennifer Larochelle, office manager. The selection of two individuals (one male and one female) for this purpose is to assure those making complaint (complainants) that they may do so with someone of the same sex. Complaints may also be received by any trusted member of the staff who will then assist the complainant in bringing a formal complaint to forward to the designated manager.

Should a complaint be made against one of the designated complaint managers, the complainant may request an alternative complaint manager. Further information regarding the complaint procedure will be provided to complainants by the complaint managers. In addition to this process, complaints may be made to:

The State of New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth & Families (800) 894-5533

Student Reporting of Incidents

Students who witness any abuse of fellow students, such as bullying, uninvited teasing or other inappropriate behaviors, shall report the incident to a staff member as soon as possible. All student-reported incidents will be kept confidential.

Accidents and Injuries

Careful as we try to be, accidents injuries occur. Report of the injury should be made immediately to the staff person in charge of the activity during which the injury occurred. That staff person will report the injury immediately to the administrative assistant who will provide first aid materials to the student and possibly call the student's parents to inform them of the injury.

Emergency situations will be referred to the director who will contact MCC Campus Security for further action.

Every significant injury or accident will be recorded with an accident/injury report.

Philosophy of Discipline

Far too often students become the object of a teacher's attention due to behavioral issues. Far less frequently do we provide our students with attention for positive behavior and achievement. For this reason, Spark Academy promotes an atmosphere of positive and restorative reinforcement as the foundation for the personal discipline which we wish to engender in our students. While a positive atmosphere cannot preclude all behavioral issues, it can do much to reduce behavioral problems while encouraging students to be their best.

To the extent possible, negative student behavior will be addressed privately with the student, though in some cases, this is not possible as in incidents of major disruption or dangerous behavior.

The general premise for Spark Academy's approach to negative student behavior will be to address problem behavior privately while praising positive behavior publicly, thus sparing the student public embarrassment while providing public and esteem building public praise. The venue for public praise may simply involve acknowledgement of positive behavior before a student's peers in class or at school-wide activities/events.

The process of establishing and maintaining positive classroom and school-wide discipline includes teachers and administrators who promote a positive school atmosphere by providing

positive reinforcement for positive behavior and promoting achievement as an ongoing objective for less on planning and in all interactions with the students.

Addressing negative student behavior:

- Discipline issues often begin with lesser infractions which, when unaddressed, become greater issues.
- When lesser negative behaviors occur, i.e., tardiness, speaking/acting in a manner incongruent with school/class activities, the behaviors will be addressed through private discussion with the student by removing him or her from peers just outside the classroom or after class so that the student is not humiliated by teacher direction.
- Chronic problem behavior and/or more significant behavioral issues will be addressed after consultation with the director who will meet with the student to attempt resolution. This meeting may result in an improvement plan with the student who will, at that time, become accountable with the director regarding his or her behavior. For lesser transgressions, parents will not be contacted so as to work toward building self-control and self discipline in the student. This is an age-appropriate approach for lesser transgressions.
- Should the student continue to demonstrate problem behavior, a meeting with the parents/guardians will be required. Should the parents/guardians refuse to meet, the student will receive greater sanctions, i.e., restriction from school activities and school-related service.
- As our students will rely heavily on bus transportation and as many parents do not have the ability to take students home from school, detention will not be employed.
- Resolution of problem behavior will always result in a student's full ability to continue without any stigma. The ability to begin anew is integral to making discipline a matter of finding teachable moments and thus leading to the true development of the student's self-discipline.
- Dangerous behaviors will result in the contacting of law enforcement and the appropriate documentation. For these behaviors, the school will follow all mandated legal requirements. Spark Academy will comply with all state-reporting requirements. As part of its discipline procedures, Spark Academy follows, among other, the following policies:
 - Student Due Process, according to RSA 193:12—to be printed in the Student Handbook, according to RSA 189:15;
 - Assault, defined in RSA 362, which may include a necessity for a student to leave school for a period not exceeding 10 days, and notification of the board of trustees;
 - Child Restraint, which will be adopted in accordance with Section Ed 1114.07 and RSA126-U;
 - Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying, in accordance with RSA 193-F.

Students also understand and agree that the school has a right to exclude them from the student body at any time if their conduct or attitude is considered by the school to be unsafe or potentially unsafe during police investigation.

Bus Behavior

When riding the public school buses, students must obey the rules of the Manchester Transit Authority found at this website:

Food in the School

Expectations for behavior in the cafeteria are consistent with behavior in all areas of the school. Students should exhibit polite table manners and use a normal tone of voice. Students should clean up their eating area. School laptop computers and other electronics are not allowed in the cafeteria.

School Cleanliness

All students, faculty and staff have a responsibility to keep the school as clean as possible. Students may take turns emptying trash, cleaning surfaces, sweeping and straightening up school areas at the end of each period as assigned by faculty and staff. All students, faculty and staff are responsible for disposing of their own trash.

Enrichment Assemblies and Programs

At various times throughout the school year, students will be required to attend enrichment assemblies and programs. Such assemblies and programs are presented by guest speakers to discuss and present topics of interest to students. When possible, enrichment assemblies and programs will be announced to parents and students in advance. Should a parent choose to opt his/her child out of the assembly or program, he/she must do so in writing addressed to the Director.

Field Trips

Students must adhere to all school policies and regulations while on trips sponsored by Spark Academy. Spark reserves the right to refuse permission to any student to participate in a field trip because of academic standing and/or if it is felt that his or her conduct does not properly represent Spark standards. Students are required to present a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian and verified by the advisor planning the trip. A trip is not considered to be school sponsored if prior permission for the trip has not been given by the director. Students who fail to submit the proper form by the designated return date will be excluded from participation in the field trip. Every field trip is nonrefundable unless otherwise stated.

User Fees

Fees will be assessed for students participating in activities outside regular school days. These fees generally cover the cost of transportation and admission to field trips and similar experiences.

Lockers and Student Assigned Desks/Cabinets

Students will be provided locks for lockers. Personal locks may not be used as the school must have access to student lockers as a matter of school safety. Students may not change locker assignments without permission from the school office. Students should never leave food or beverages in their lockers or desks overnight. Inappropriate pictures and/or signs should not be attached to lockers or desks. Students may use magnets to attach mirrors and other personal items. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged articles; students who store valuables in their lockers or desks do so at their own risk.

Students will be held financially responsible for damage to lockers, desks, or other equipment, furniture or fixtures, or school property or the property of anyone else in the school. Therefore, Spark reserves the right to examine their contents, including personal belongings when there is reasonable cause to believe that the contents of a locker threatens the health, safety, or welfare of anyone in the school. Spark reserves the right to restrict locker or desk privileges if they are abused.

Spark Academy reserves the right to inspect any space on school grounds as a means of helping to ensure the safety of the entire Spark and Manchester Community College campus. This includes, but is not limited to lockers, vehicles, or personal belongings.

Publicity

Photos, articles, awards, etc., may be posted on the school's website and social media pages, as well as released to news publications. At the beginning of the school year, parents must specifically request that their student be excluded from materials used for said purposes.

In the absence of such notification, the school will post photographs of the students on the school's Facebook page and website. Parents may request that photographs of their student be taken down from the school's Facebook page or website at any time. The school will respond in a timely manner. Photographs to be used for printed publications will include parental permission.

Access to Student Records

In 1974, the Federal Government passed the Family Educational and Privacy Act (FERPA). The intention of this law is to protect the accuracy and privacy of student educational records. Without prior written permission, only parents, legal guardians and authorized school staff, and eligible students may review a student's records. Under this law and board policy, parents and legal guardians are entitled to the following rights:

- The right to inspect and review their child's educational records.
- 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.

Also, as permitted under the Family Educational and Privacy Act, the following information has been designated by Spark Academy board of Trustees as "directory information." This permits Spark Academy to use this information without prior written consent if, and only if, it is used to publish school yearbooks, programs for performing groups, and graduation ceremonies, as well as to publicize the academic awards and honors of individual students:

- The student's name and class (i.e. ninth, tenth, etc.),
- The student's extracurricular activities,
- Achievement awards and honors,
- The name of the school the student currently attends.

The rights and protections given to parents under FERPA and this policy transfer to the student when he/she reaches the age of 18 or enrolls in an institution of postsecondary education.

Transfer of Records

Spark Academy complies with RSA 193-D:8 and will, upon formal request, furnish a complete school record for a pupil transferring to a new school system.

First Aid, Medical and Emergency Procedures

Emergency Response

Students and families are asked to assist with emergency planning as follows:

- by providing the school with emergency contact information, listing 3 contacts in order of priority and various ways of making contact;
- by making backup plans with other students and parents for transportation difficulties that 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. Please note that in the case of an emergency, per the rules and regulations of Spark Academy and the Manchester Police Department, students cannot be released to parents/guardians without express permission of the director or designee;
- by providing names and contact information of all important health service providers for students;
- by participating in emergency evacuation drills when in school;
- by ensuring that no harmful devices are transported with students.

If a student requires emergency care due to illness or injury, someone in authority (teacher, staff) must be notified immediately. The administration will then be notified and appropriate emergency response measures will be initiated. **Students who are ill are not to use cell phones to contact parents directly.** They are to inform a teacher or administrator who will then contact parents.

Emergency Response Form

At the beginning of each year, Emergency Response Forms should be completed by the student's first day of classes. It is important that parents promptly fill out and sign emergency forms. These forms are kept on file in the school office and disseminated to school agencies in an appropriate manner. In the event of emergency, this information provides the authorization and guidance for proper notification and care. It is important that parents submit updated information in the event of changes in address, phone, etc.

Medications

All medications brought into the school must be registered with Spark staff who will establish an appropriate protocol for administration of medications during the school day. No medication will be dispensed unless the medication is delivered to the the school in the original container, along with written parental permission and a physician's written order for the prescription medication.

Students who may need inhalers, EpiPens, or insulin during school hours are required to submit a written authorization form, which may be obtained from the school office. Parents should bring the medication, along with the authorization form to the school office for approval. New forms will be required each academic year. Students in possession of any medications outside of these parameters will be subject to disciplinary action.

In cases where an EpiPen or other life-saving device is required, parents may want staff to be trained in its use in the event of an emergency. In these cases, a special Spark form must be filled out identifying Spark staff member(s) and giving them permission to use the device to save the student's life. Before the form is filled out, the parent/guardian must acknowledge that a Spark staff member(s) has permission to administer. Spark Academy is not required to have a nurse on staff.

Parents may also give the school written permission to allow their child to take over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). In these cases, the student would be allowed to receive such medications from Spark staff if the need should arise.

First Aid

If a student hurts him or herself, band aids and other first aid remedies will be made available to the students. Depending on the severity of the problem, the student may go back to class, call home, or be taken to the nearest hospital as outlined in the procedures above.

Lab Safety

Spark Academy has available MCC laboratory facilities for the physical and biological sciences, which meet mandated federal and state guidelines.

All students will be instructed in the safe operation of equipment and safe handling and disposal of chemicals. Teachers will provide lectures, demos, and videos to reinforce safety in the laboratory. All students and their parents will be required to read, understand and sign a safety contract. Students must pass a safety test before being allowed to work in the laboratory.

Appropriate attire is mandatory on laboratory days. This includes closed toe shoes, long pants or skirts to cover legs, no dangling jewelry or scarves, hair must be pulled or tied back, goggles must be worn at all times unless instructed otherwise by the teacher. Failure to come properly dressed will result in being barred from the lab.

There will be zero tolerance for misbehavior in order to ensure everyone's safety. Unauthorized science experiments are not allowed. Inappropriate conduct of any kind will result in exclusion of the student from the lab area and will require a student-parent-teacher-administrator meeting to determine appropriate disciplinary and remedial action.

Fire Drills

Fire exit procedures will be reviewed periodically with the students and staff. These procedures will include escape routes and assembly instructions outside the building in a manner consistent with Manchester Community College procedures.

Lock Down Drills

The school will conduct various emergency drills and procedures in conjunction with local emergency agencies and in a manner consistent with Manchester Community College procedures.

Parental Support

We ask parents to help the school in its efforts to build self-confidence and resiliency in our students by encouraging their students to:

- advocate for themselves as much as possible
- communicate their needs to the staff
- work hard and set high goals
- study at home with a schedule, habits, and an environment that supports student success
- develop strong and independent work habits
- complete assignments well and on time
- develop initiative to learn simply for the sake of learning
- seek self-improvement

Amendments to Spark Student Handbook

Spark Academy board of trustees and administrators reserve the right to amend, update, revise, edit this parent-student handbook at any time throughout the academic year.

Rev. Summer 2019

Ratified by the board of trustees on _____.

Student and Parent Handbook Agreement 2019-2020

This is to certify that I have received a copy of the handbook. I have read the handbook with my son/daughter, and we agree to abide with these rules and regulations of Spark Academy of Advanced Technologies.

Mother/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Father/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Student Name _____ (Print)

When students enroll at Spark Academy, they accept the school's philosophy of education, regulations, and policies.

Students also understand and agree that the school has a right to exclude them from the student body at any time if their conduct or attitude is considered by the school to be unsafe or potentially unsafe during police investigation.

Students and parents/guardians further understand and agree that parent/guardian conduct and attitude during school functions and events can also provide grounds for a student's exclusion from the student body. The school reserves the right to revise or edit the rules and regulations at any time with appropriate prior notification to our families.

Please print this page and return it to school with the appropriate signatures no later than the first day of school.