



# **PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024 - 2025**

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## Message from the Director

August 2024

Welcome to our incoming Spark families and welcome back to our returning families! We have finished another amazing year and we are now onward and upward.

This year we will continue to focus on building a positive school culture and developing our social skills as students move to graduation. Communication is an important part of everyone's success and this will continue to grow. We want to get all of our families to be part of the school and the process so that we are working together to build our students' voices.

This year we will continue focusing on our SPARK values and on creating good learning habits and skills. This year each student will have a planner that will keep track of what is due and when, so that they can work on organizing their life and responsibilities. Please help us make

this be an amazing year.

Please read this Parent/Student Handbook carefully. Each school year brings updates that help us remain relevant and provide our students with an orderly and focused school experience. Handbooks are certainly about rules, but beyond that, they help us realize the goals established for us in our vision and mission. In doing so, handbooks become an important road map for us to follow.

Again, I want to welcome all of you to the 2024 - 2025 school year!

John Tuttle  
Director

## ***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. Sufficient notice may vary due to the time of year, magnitude of the change, and other variables. 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 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 requires 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 in writing 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 guidance counselor has been designated as the school's Title IX coordinator. Complaints regarding Title IX matters should be made to the guidance counselor.

## ***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 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 thirty (30) 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 thirty students per grade.

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 a certificate in Advanced Manufacturing.

## ***Transfer Students***

Students who wish to enter Spark Academy will come in as a first year student. Credits will be reviewed and a plan of study will be developed with the Guidance Counselor. Prior accepted high school credits will be listed on the Spark Academy transcript.

## ***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 could 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** is necessary for Spark students in order to include Manchester Community College classes in their schedules.
- **Order** is necessary whenever a group of individuals comes together with a specific purpose and goal. Our purpose 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 individuals 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 in writing to 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 individuals 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 outside of 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 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 students 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 their part and on the part of the parents or guardians, to comply fully with all policies, rules, and regulations of the school. Spark Academy reserves the right to revise or edit the rules and regulations herein at any time.

## ***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](http://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](mailto:firstname.lastname@sparkacademynh.org).

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

To contact the school by phone, please call the school office at: (603) 945-9151.

## ***Daily Operations***

### **School Hours**



School hours are from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Students may arrive at school beginning at 7:30 am. Parents/guardians must stay with their children before 7:30 AM. The first class of the day begins at 8:00, therefore **students are expected to be in their homerooms by 7:50**. 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.

## **School Calendar**

The school's calendar may be found on the school website at: [www.sparkacademynh.org](http://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.

## **Parking & Student Drop Off/Pickup**

The Spark Academy area for parking, student drop-off and pickup is Lot E, 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 entry and dismissal of our students.

Student drivers will also park in this area and are required to obtain an MCC parking sticker for their car from Spark Academy.

## **Dismissal at End of Day**

An adult will accompany students out of the building each day for bus and parent pick up and will 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 a staff member 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, the parent or authorized person must come in the building to meet the student and sign them out.

If a student is taking a college course after Spark school hours, Spark supervision will end at 3:00 pm and they will be acting as a college student from that point onward. Spark students who are not also MCC students are expected to depart the campus at 3:00 pm unless they are participating in a Spark afterschool activity.

## **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 message will be sent to phones, and a notification will be 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**

Humanities 8.0  
Mathematics 3.0  
Physical Sciences 1.0  
Biological Sciences 1.0  
Physical Education 1.0  
Electives 10.0  
**Total 24.0**

#### **Community Service Hours 150 hours**

- 1st year 15 hours
- 2nd year 30 hours
- 3rd year 45 hours
- 4th year 60 hours

## ***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 and demonstrating 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 or unwillingness to persist, complete assigned work, and/or 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

### Letter Grade Numerical Grade Numerical Equivalent (GPA)

A	93.33 - 100	4.0
A-	90.00 - 93.32	3.7
B+	86.67 - 89.99	3.3
B	83.33 - 86.66	3.0
B-	80.00 - 83.32	2.7
C+	76.67 - 79.99	2.3
C	73.33 - 76.66	2.0
C-	70.00 - 73.32	1.7
D+	66.67 - 69.99	1.3
D	63.33 - 66.66	1.0
D-	60.00 - 63.32	0.7
F	below 60	0.0

Numerical grades are used to calculate semester grades. Progress reports will be issued twice during each semester and report cards with final grades are run at the end of each semester.

## Incomplete Grades

Circumstances may occur whereby a student fails to complete his or her required work by the end of a marking period. When this occurs, a grade of "Incomplete (I)" may be recommended by the student's instructor for the course in which the incomplete grade is to be assigned. This recommendation of an incomplete grade must be approved by the director. Once the student receives a grade of Incomplete (I), they will have two weeks from the end of the marking period to make up any missed assignments/quizzes/tests. At the end of the two week period, all completed work will be graded, and a new final average for the marking period will be calculated.

In rare occurrences, there may be a need to extend the two week period of completion due to extreme extenuating circumstances such as illness, family issues, etc. When such circumstances exist, the student must submit a request in writing for additional time to the director who has final approval for any extension. The amount of additional time allowed will be determined by the director in conjunction with the student and their parents.

## Academic Recovery

A student who fails a class at Spark Academy is provided with opportunities to remediate the class for passing credit in one of the following ways:\*

1. Enrolling in a summer school class that is the same or similar to the class failed.
2. Taking the same or similar class through an approved online learning program such as the Virtual Learning Academy.
3. Completing a Spark teacher-designed remediation packet with requirements for completion established by the teacher in consultation with the director.
4. Completing an Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) that is student-generated and teacher-supported.

\*Passing credit is understood in the following manner:

- a. The student's Spark Academy transcript will indicate that the student has failed the class (F).
- b. The remediation class will be listed on the student's transcript with a grade of Pass (P) or Fail (F). Should the student receive a numerical grade or letter grade for the remediated course, that letter or numerical grade will be noted on the student's transcript. Credit will be awarded toward graduation if the student receives a Pass (P) for the course, and that credit will be noted on the student's transcript.
- c. Credit recovery courses will not be factored into the student's grade point average (GPA), nor will they be used in determining Honor Roll Status.
- d. A student may petition the director in writing to be allowed to retake a failed class in its entirety for full credit depending upon class availability and feasibility within the student's schedule. Retaking a class may result in delay of the student's graduation from Spark Academy.
- e. The failure of three or more Spark Academy classes will necessitate that the student repeat a semester or year in order to progress through the remainder of the Spark Academy curriculum.
- f. Any class/program taken for credit recovery must be approved by the director of Spark Academy prior to beginning the class/program.

## ***Academic Integrity***

At Spark Academy, having trust between instructors and students is crucial. It is expected that students uphold a standard of good character and academic integrity in regards to their work at Spark. Academic integrity is defined as an implicit understanding that all work with a student's name on it is their own, and that ideas or formulations acquired from other sources or other students are given proper credit. Students at Spark Academy are expected and encouraged to work both independently and collaboratively with other students, and as such a group effort might contain the same wording in several different papers based on this cooperation. To whatever extent possible, students should explicitly acknowledge this group effort to their instructor.

Plagiarism, forgery, cheating, and use of Artificial Intelligence in place of student work are considered lapses in academic integrity. If it has been determined that there has been academic dishonesty on an assignment or assessment, the instructor will notify parents or guardians, the Guidance Counselor, and the Director. The consequences of purposeful academic dishonesty are outlined below:

***1st Infraction:*** After the appropriate channels have been notified of the academic dishonesty, an in-person meeting will be held between the student, instructor, Guidance Counselor, and a parent or guardian about the assignment or assessment where academic dishonesty occurred. At the instructor's discretion, the student will be asked to re-submit a comparable assignment or assessment where the maximum grade available will be 50% due to the infraction of academic dishonesty.

***Future Infractions:*** After the appropriate channels have been notified of the second occurrence of academic dishonesty, an in-person meeting will be held between the student, instructor, Guidance Counselor, the Director, and a parent or guardian about the assignment or assessment where academic dishonesty occurred. The student will lose credit for the assignment or assessment and will not be able to recover the grade. Repeated offenses may lead to the student's expulsion from the school.

**It is acceptable to:**

- Use general or common knowledge of a topic without acknowledging a specific source (Ex: There are four seasons in the year, water freezes at 0 degrees Celsius).
- Follow up your reading of a text by using a reading guide, such as Cliff Notes or SparkNotes to reinforce your understanding.
- Work collaboratively on an assigned group project with other students.
- Work cooperatively with another student on homework, and submit separate and different work.
- Use ideas that were openly discussed in class for an assignment or assessment.
- Use ideas that were discussed with an instructor or tutor for an assignment or assessment.

**It is *NOT* acceptable to:**

- Copy, paraphrase, summarize, or use words or ideas without giving credit to the original source (individual sentences, pictures, quotes, data).
- Use SparkNotes, Cliff Notes, reading guides, or video/DVD as a substitute for actual reading of an assigned text.
- Submit an assignment completed in one course for credit in another course without both instructors' permission.
- Submit all or part of someone else's paper or assignment (including those from the Internet) with or without modifications (this includes homework, artwork, translations, labs, music, programs) and present it as your own.
- Use Artificial Intelligence, like ChatGPT, to create, finish, or write an assignment without the instructor's explicit permission.

**\*\*\*\*These are not comprehensive lists. Spark Academy reserves the right to identify what is and what is not acceptable beyond these lists.\*\*\*\***

## ***Grade Reporting & Credits***

Student grades will be available to parents at any time through the Canvas Learning Management System. Information will be sent home to our families as to the log-in procedure. Log-in questions should be addressed to [jennifer.larochelle@sparkacademynh.org](mailto:jennifer.larochelle@sparkacademynh.org). 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. Manchester Community College offers Early College Courses to our students. Grades obtained through those Spark Academy approved classes will be reported on the students' Spark Academy report card at the end of each semester. 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 "A's," "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 a 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 in writing. 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. Many of these items are on loan, 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.

The cost for textbooks, materials, lab fees, etc., for Early College Courses are the responsibility of the student.

## ***Transcripts***

An official transcript may be requested by calling the school and will be provided within 30 days.

## ***Community Service Hours***

At Spark Academy we continue to work with students to help them find their voice and to learn about themselves as individuals. It is important for them to see that they have the power to change and create a better world for everyone. Community Service is a key part to seeing how one can make a difference in the world.

There are also a lot of benefits in community service:

- Creates a sense of accomplishment
- Fosters a sense of community
- Helps to explore career interests
- Develops new skills
- Encourages social interaction

We expect that students complete at least 150 hours of community service during their 4 years at Spark Academy. This is broken down as follows:

- 1st year - 15 hours
- 2nd year- 30 hours
- 3rd year - 45 hours
- 4th year - 60 hours

Community Service can be performed during the school day, after school, on weekends, and during the summer. It is really up to the student and their schedule.

Eligible community service activities are:

- Performed for no pay
- Beneficial to at least one person and/or larger community
- For a non-profit organization or with prior approval from school administration.

Examples of eligible community service activities are:

- In-school volunteering
- Tutoring or mentoring another student
- Volunteering at MCC events (i.e. Build-a-Bed, robotics competitions) • Unpaid camp counselor or counselor in training
- Hours for direct participation in charity fundraising

## ***Student Expectations***

### **SPARK Values**

At Spark Academy we work on building all types of skills, not just academic skills. Our SPARK Values are to help students build and understand their role as a student and a member of the Spark Community.

- 1. Spirit and Community Involvement**
- 2. Perseverance and Growth Mindset**
- 3. Accountability for Behavior, Academics and Attendance**
- 4. Respect and Integrity**
- 5. Kindness**

### **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 in writing.



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

Students are expected to conduct themselves according to Spark standards when they are in all other areas of the MCC campus as well, including the parking lot. Students who drive themselves to school and are unable to follow appropriate conduct in the parking lot may have their driving privilege revoked at the discretion of the director.

### **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 students and not punish them as the first response to issues relating to absenteeism; however, continued membership in 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 relation 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 students 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 is 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](mailto: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; and
- 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 Unexcused Absences**

Absences not defined as excused are considered unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern on non-attendance. Examples on unexcused absences include but are not limited to:

- Family vacations outside of established school calendar
- Childcare
- Non-medical appointments unauthorized by Administration
- Drivers Education

### **Examples of Excused Absences**

Students must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below which may require documentation. Excessive excused absences shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance.

- Illness
- Recovery from an accident
- Required court attendance
- Medical and dental appointments
- Death in the immediate family
- Observation or celebration of religious holidays
- School Sporting or other events (must be approved by Administration) •College visitation as approved
  - 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 needed which includes dates of illness and recommendations for further care. The director or designee may waive this requirement upon request.

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. The director shall have the discretion to address whether such absences demonstrate a pattern of non-attendance.

### **Tardiness**

Tardiness is defined as a student not being in the classroom when the class is scheduled to begin.

If a student's repeated tardiness impacts classroom instruction the teacher shall report this to the director. If a student is tardy 5 times or more, this shall be considered excessive and counted against the student as an unexcused absence. The director or designee has the ability to address excessive tardiness.

### **Limit of Absences**

When a student has been marked absent from a particular class five (5) or more unexcused days in

a marking period, that student shall receive a “NG” (No Grade) for the marking period. This grade can only be changed by a meeting and an attendance plan with the teacher and administration.

### **Attendance Plan**

Attendance Plans shall provide appropriate interventions for the students and their families and ensure communication between all parties. It is highly desirable to establish this communication prior to disciplinary measures administered by the school. The Attendance Plan shall include additional proactive interventions and consequences if the interventions fail to improve attendance issues.

Meetings to develop Attendance Plans shall be convened by the administrator or their designee with the parents and student following a student’s 5th full day of unexcused absence from school.

## ***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 to which we should all adhere and to the manner in which we demonstrate our character to ourselves and 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.

Spark Academy reserves the right to monitor all communications via the school/college network. Any communication on school devices and/or school/college network will be considered the property of Spark Academy 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 if there are breaches of Spark’s internet policy. Activities deemed to be infractions of the letter or spirit of Spark Academy rules or mission will also be addressed by the director.

## ***Recommended Devices***

Students will 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 responsibility 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 before school and during lunch. Students who are enrolled solely at Spark (not taking any MCC classes) shall secure their phones in a locker during the school day. All phone calls needed to be made during the school day will be permitted at the front desk or in the office only. For the privacy of all no video communication will be allowed in any public setting. 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 the director. 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.

Students that are taking MCC classes are able to have access to their phones, but when in Spark classes their phone should be put in their lockers.

## ***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. Depending on the infraction, parents and law enforcement may be contacted.

## ***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. 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, 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 they have been bullied may report the alleged act to the director

or staff or faculty.

- Other students or adults may also report bullying 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 their designee will initiate and complete their 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 alleged 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, expulsion. 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.

NH Law requires **any person** who suspects that a child under age 18 has been abused or neglected **must report** that suspicion **immediately** to DCYF. (New Hampshire RSA 169- C:29-31)

If a child tells a staff member that he or she has been hurt or there is concern that a child may be the <sup>victim</sup> of any type of abuse or neglect, the school is obligated to call the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Central Intake Unit at: Telephone: (800) 894-5533 (in-state) or (603) 271- 6562 (out of state)

24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays.

**For immediate emergencies, please call 911.**

◦ Proof of abuse and neglect is not required to make a report.

◦ Reports of abuse and neglect concerns are confidential and can be anonymous. If you have asked that your name not be disclosed, please know that DCYF makes every effort to remove your name from all DCYF records of the report and investigation; however, if the case ever goes to court, a judge may request identifying information.

## **Dress Code**

The guiding principles for student dress are that clothing be modest, clean, respectful, appropriate, and safe. At Spark Academy we feel that it is important to practice dressing like you would for a job. T-shirts may be worn in warm weather and when student safety will not be of concern. Long pants are recommended due to the nature of Spark classes wherein shorts would present a hazard. Shorts may be worn when school activities are appropriate for the students to do so. Shoes must enclose the entire foot for reasons of safety.

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that they are dressed for safety and prepared for what they are expected to do for the day. Teachers will communicate their expectations to the students on a regular basis to make sure they are reminded of these expectations.

All clothing must fit appropriately. For some classes

any loose dangling items - such as jewelry - may be a hazard and will be prohibited. Students may not wear sunglasses indoors unless for medical reasons.

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 (as 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 Spark Academy vehicles, or at school sponsored off site activities. Spark Academy is committed to providing a safe and secure educational and work environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors. The use and possession of firearms, weapons and explosive materials, even if legally possessed, are prohibited while in the building or while occupying any vehicle owned by Spark Academy whether on or off campus. Any person violating this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary, legal and/or administrative action, provisions of state and federal laws and may be subject to sanctions including but not limited to removal from Spark Academy.

## **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.

All students must sign out at the front desk when leaving and must be picked up by a parent/guardian or have email permission to leave when they are drivers.

## **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 identified as that which makes the other person and/or people around you feel uncomfortable. Opportunities will always be presented 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 they have been the victim of sexual harassment should report such behavior to a teacher or administrator. The incident will be fully investigated 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
- 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 communication (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: allegations of rape and any other criminal matters will be 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.

Please refer to Spark Academy Policy JBAA for more information regarding sexual harassment.

In addition to the process set forth by Spark Academy, 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.

## **Suicide Prevention Policy**

Suicide cuts across ethnic, economic, social, and age boundaries and has a tremendous and traumatic impact on surviving family members, friends, and the community at-large. After unintentional injury, suicide is the leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24. At a time when unintentional injuries have been on the decline, suicides have increased. Suicide is a complex issue that requires school, family, and community resources to be harnessed for appropriate and timely help to be available in order to prevent it. Everyone must do their part to reduce the number of suicides in our school population by ensuring that suicide prevention education and training is available to school personnel and to students and their parents using age-appropriate and evidence-based materials.

Spark Academy has adopted the following policy and practices as we join all schools in the State of New Hampshire to assist families in the prevention of suicide.

1. All school faculty and staff, including contracted personnel and designated school volunteers will receive at least 2 hours of training in the risk factors, protective factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, post-intervention, and resources available within the school and community. Training will take place before the beginning of each academic year and on an as-needed basis for new faculty, staff, contracted personnel and designated school volunteers. Training may take place in-person or self-training with materials approved by the director in accordance with NH 193-J:2, 193-J:2, and school policy.
2. Program will be provided to the students as to the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, recognizing risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others, and providing help-seeking strategies for oneself and others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.
3. The following information will be made available to students, parents, faculty, staff, and school volunteers through the Parent/Student Handbook, Faculty/Staff Handbook, and informational materials within the school:
  - a. The director of the School, Mr. John Tuttle, and/or the Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Melissa Minery, serve as the point of contact when a student is believed to be at an elevated risk for suicide.
  - b. We will work with our families in the process of making referrals, crisis intervention, and other related information both within the school and community.
4. The school will promote cooperative efforts with school districts, chartered public schools, and community prevention program personnel so as to connect the school community with resources to support the school's suicide prevention efforts.
5. All Spark ID badges have the National Suicide Prevention Hotline number on the back.

## **Immunity**

Per NH RSA 193-J:3, Nothing in this policy shall create a private right of action against school Spark Academy of Advanced Technologies, its board members, administrators, or any employee, contractor, subcontractor, or agent thereof.

Per NH RSA 193-J:3, a school administrative unit employee, school employee, chartered public school employee, public academy employee, regular school volunteer, pupil, parent, legal guardian, or



employee of a company under contract to a school, school district, school administrative unit, or chartered public school, shall be immune from civil liability for conduct arising from or related to the implementation of, or failure to adequately implement, this chapter.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

Careful as we try to be, accidents and 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 Tammy Roberts at the front desk, who will provide first aid materials to the student and, if necessary, 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 prevent 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 in the event 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 lesson 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 require 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 via suspension or expulsion 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: <https://mtabus.org>

## **Food in the School**

At Spark Academy we eat in the classrooms, because we do not have a cafeteria. It is important that students clean their areas before and after they eat. They are not allowed to have food or drinks near the computers and all water bottles must have a closed top.

Each classroom has access to a refrigerator and microwave for student access. This also means that they are all responsible to make sure that it is cleaned on a regular basis. Students can also store their lunchboxes in their lockers. Food is not allowed to be brought from class to class.

If a student forgets their lunch, we can provide one. No food delivery is allowed.

When you are in one of the labs, no food or drinks are allowed for any reason. If a student needs something at that time they need to talk to the teacher.

It is also not allowed for students to sell food to others unless it has been pre-approved by the director.

## **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 their student out of the assembly or program, they must do so in writing addressed to the director.

### **Excursions/Career Exploration**

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 may 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 classroom instruction. 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 they reach 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 if necessary. In the event of an 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 during the school day. No medication will be dispensed unless the medication is delivered to the school in the original container, along with written parental permission and a physician's written order for the prescription medication.

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 themselves, band aids and other first aid remedies will be made available. Depending on the severity of the problem, the student may go back to class, call home, or be taken to the nearest hospital or urgent care facility 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 dress properly will result in the student 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. August, 2024

Ratified by the board of trustees on 8/27/24

Student and Parent Handbook Agreement 2024-2025

This is to certify that I have received and read the handbook with my student, and we agree to abide by these rules and regulations of Spark Academy of Advanced Technologies.

Parent/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.**