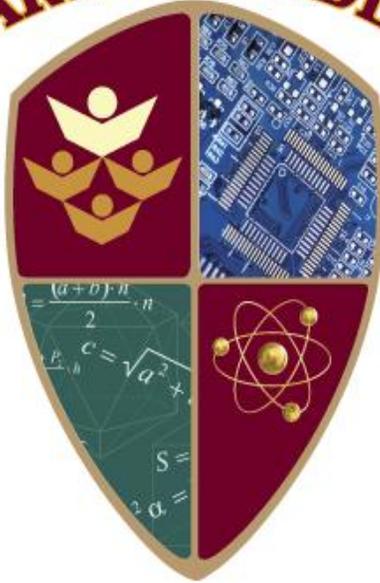


NORTH IDAHO STEM CHARTER ACADEMY



Science Technology
Engineering Math

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2012 - 2013

Vision Statement

To provide a challenging learning environment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, which maximizes individual potential and ensures students are well-equipped to meet the challenges in the world around them.

The Mission Statement

The mission of North Idaho STEM Charter Academy is to prepare students, through rigorous and relevant content, to be productive and successful citizens by developing a strong work ethic and the higher-level critical thinking skills needed to solve problems in the real world.

We Believe:

- Parents are the first and primary teachers. They are responsible for their children's basic needs and values.
- Schools provide a safe, positive, organized setting with clearly defined behavior expectations.
- Effective character education enhances the academic program.
- Knowledge and application of current technology prepares student for tomorrow's world.
- All students can learn and each is a valued individual.

Educational Program

The school's purpose is to increase students' interest in science, engineering, and math through technology, in order to better prepare students for higher education and jobs in our increasingly technical economy. It will also teach all normally

expected coursework. This school will utilize a project-based approach.

Project-based learning incorporates all traditional teaching tools and methods, including lecture, text-books, and conventional assessments. However, the nature of project-based learning requires students to spend the bulk of the project actively working in groups or individually to research the question and come to conclusions.

Project-based learning requires students to use specific skills such as collaboration, teamwork, time and task management, and presentation skills to conclude a project successfully. These same skills prepare them to become productive, capable citizens in a technology-dependent society through comprehensive student assessments including traditional tests, project-based learning presentations and portfolios.

Exploration is an opportunity to investigate a variety of approaches to a given topic. Approaching a subject or a topic from different points of view and in different ways is essential. At North Idaho STEM Charter Academy, our educational approach will require students to stretch their interests into previously unidentified areas.

Character Education

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy believes strongly in a character education program that works in conjunction with the academic program. Quality character education is critical in order to create a safe, caring, and successful learning environment that supports academic development. Character education is everything you do that influences the character of the students you teach. Character education helps students act upon core ethical values.

Every adult in the school shapes the character of the students they come into contact with by the way they talk, the behaviors they model, and the expectations they transmit. Effective character education transforms the culture and life of the school.

School Calendar

Monday through Thursday 2012-2013

Four day-a-week schedule

8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

September 4th to June 7th

Pros of a four day school week:

- Every school week will consist of 4 school days. On the four main holidays (Labor Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day) students will have a 3 day week
- Consistent schedule. No ½ days or early release days.
- Fridays are reserved for teacher professional development, training, collaboration, conference days
- Longer school day to allow for project-based learning and science labs
- Allows for families to schedule events on Fridays without students missing school (medical, dental, travel, hobbies, events, volunteering, community service, etc.)
- Student and teacher attendance improves (ADA)
- Most districts already have many four day weeks.
- Students and teachers benefit from an increase in actual instruction/class time as a result of longer class periods and fewer transitions which increases the efficiency of instruction

Cons of a four day school week:

- False perception of less school
- Longer school day by 1.5 hours

Attendance Procedure:

1. If a student’s unexcused absences reach 6 during the year, the Charter Administrator, classroom teacher, parents and/or student, when appropriate, will meet to formulate a Plan for Improvement.

2. If a student fails to meet the requirements of the Plan for Improvement and the student’s unexcused absences reach 8 in a year, the Charter Administrator and classroom teacher will make a determination for an appropriate course of action resulting in either a continued probationary period or release of the student from North Idaho STEM Charter Academy.

Appeal:

Those students who have reason to believe that all or part of their unexcused absences are the result of extraordinary circumstances, may request a review of their case by the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy Board of Directors. All appeals must be submitted in writing to the board within 30 days of the student’s release from North Idaho STEM.

If your child is going to be absent from school, please try to notify the school by 9 a.m. We are obligated by law to verify the absence. When calling to report a student absent, please provide the following information:

1. Parent or guardian’s name
2. Student’s name
3. Reason for absence
4. Estimated date of return

Students who arrive at school after school starts must sign in at the front desk.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued to students at the end of each quarter. These reports show academic and effort grades, absences and tardies as well as information on pupil attitudes and work habits.

Grading Scale (%)

90-100.....	A
80-89.....	B
70-79.....	C
60-69.....	D
00-59.....	F

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be held at the end of the first and second quarters. Parents will be notified of scheduled dates and times.

Standardized Tests

Standardized tests such as ISAT’s and IRI are given to all students as required by state policies. The tests measure knowledge and skills accumulated by students in various subject areas. Results are given to students, parents and teachers to review achievement levels and areas needing improvement.

Appointments with Administrators and/or Teachers

We welcome your questions and concerns so please feel free to call the office if you would like to make an appointment to visit with our staff. The administration is committed to spending time with students and teachers and will be in classrooms much of the time. The administrator and teachers will, in general, operate on an appointment basis.

Medication at School

Students who need to take prescription or other medication during the school day must bring it to the office in a properly labeled prescription bottle or original container. A North Idaho STEM medication consent form must be completed by the parent and on file with the school for any medication to be given. Students who fail to adhere to this procedure are in violation of district drug policy.

Homeopathic, herbal, and/or nutritional supplements will not be dispensed at school unless a prescription is provided to the school from a licensed professional with legal prescriptive authority. Schools have the right at any time to refuse to administer any medication or supplement that does not meet standards of safe administration.

Emergency medications must be kept in the school's office. Please contact the school office regarding required procedures for emergency medications at school.

Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards, Rollerblades

Students are not allowed to ride bicycles, scooters, skateboards or rollerblades on the school grounds before or after school. Bicycles are to be kept in the bike racks. Scooters and skateboards must be kept in designated locations. Students should have locks to prevent theft. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged bicycles, scooters, or skateboards.

Checking Students Out of Class

If you need to pick up your child during the school day, please follow the procedures below. For safety purposes, students will

not be released to any person other than parent/guardian without written authorization from the parent/guardian.

1. All visitors must sign in and out at the main desk.
2. Sign student out on the checkout sheet at reception desk. Please DO NOT go directly to the student's classroom.

You may be asked to provide identification (driver's license) establishing your relationship with the child. If your name does not appear on the enrollment form, you may not pick up the child without written authorization from the parent/guardian. Additional measures may be necessary to establish permission to pick up a student.

We appreciate your patience with our safety measures. As we become familiar with parents' faces, identification may not be necessary each time for checkout.

Electronic Devices

Students, with permission of their parents and or guardians, may be in possession of a cellular telephone on school property. Phones must be turned off, kept in a backpack, and not on the student's person during school hours, unless an emergency situation exists that involves imminent physical danger or a certified employee authorizes the student to do otherwise. Students who bring any electronic device do so at their own risk. North Idaho STEM assumes no liability for damage, theft, etc.

If the policies are violated, administrators will determine consequences based on the severity of the incident. Electronic devices may not be visible and must be turned off during the instructional day unless otherwise specified. Violations will result in disciplinary action.

Fire Drills

Fire drills will be held monthly. When the alarm sounds, students will go quickly and quietly outside the building to designated areas. An announcement will be made when students are to return to class.

Home/School Communications

We will make every attempt to keep you informed of school events and your child's progress. We also encourage you to contact your child's teacher with any questions or concerns you may have. Working as a team benefits your child. You may contact your child's teacher by note, phone message, or by e-mail.

Bullying (Strictly Prohibited)

It is the policy of North Idaho STEM Charter Academy to maintain a safe school environment for all students while attending school and attending school sponsored activities.

Bullying, regardless of the specific nature of the students' behavior, is disruptive to a safe school environment and will not be tolerated.

Definition:

1. Bullying means any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal or physical act or threat by a student that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know, will have the effect of:

- Harming a student; or
- Damaging a student's property; or
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person; or
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to his or her property; or

- Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student; or
- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.

1. Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact. These include but are not limited to:

- Text message bullying involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone camera
- Phone call bullying via mobile phone
- Email bullying
- Chat room bullying
- Bullying through instant messaging (IM)
- Bullying via websites

Prohibited Behavior:

1. Physical abuse against a student, including but not limited to, hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking,
2. Blocking, or restraining another's movement; causing damage to another's clothing or possessions; and another's belongs.
3. Verbal abuse against a student, including, but not limited to, spreading harmful or inappropriate rumors regarding another, drawing inappropriate pictures or writing inappropriate statements regarding another, and intentionally excluding another from groups, or similar activities.
4. Bullying also includes any act of retaliation taken against:

- Any person bringing a complaint of bullying
- Any person assisting another person in bringing a complaint of bullying, or
- Any person participating in an investigation of an act of bullying.

Inappropriate behavior may result in removal from class, loss of recess privileges, in school suspension, suspension from school, or other disciplinary action.

Severe misconduct may result in police intervention.

We believe that students should behave appropriately. We teach students how to act with respect and responsibility in various settings including restrooms, assemblies, library, entering/exiting, before/after school, field trips, etc. In addition, each teacher has a discipline plan for managing his/her classroom.

Denial of Attendance to a Student:

Per Idaho Code 33-205 the school's board of directors may deny enrollment to North Idaho STEM Charter Academy to any student who is habitually truant, or who is incorrigible, or whose conduct, in the judgment of the board is such as to be continuously disruptive of school discipline, or of the instructional effectiveness of the school, or whose presence in the school is detrimental to the health and safety of other students or who has been expelled from another school district in this state or any other state.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

General Guidelines:

All students will arrive on campus in uniform and stay in uniform until they leave for the day. Parents and students are expected to know and follow the uniform policy.

Team/activity/spirit wear clothing must be approved by the school administration before being worn as part of the uniform.

Purchase of Uniform Items:

The Charter Academy strongly recommends that uniform items be purchased from an approved vendor. Be sure the items you buy have been approved as uniform items. The school is not responsible for clothing items purchased that do not meet the requirements as defined and explained in the uniform policy.

The Uniform Policy dress code is intended to assist in the creation of a positive culture in our school and is an integral part of our mission. By creating a reasonable and easy to follow dress code, we can minimize the differences between students, promote a good attitude toward learning, and focus the student's attention on schoolwork, not what they are wearing. In addition, neatness and modesty are important aspects of the Charter school environment.

Students should distinguish themselves by their academic performance, their citizenship, their behavior, and their attitude and effort on a day-to-day basis.

Clothing or accessories that are worn with the obvious intent of being different or unique are not in keeping with the purpose of the uniform policy.

Specific Uniform Requirements:

Polo Shirts:

Short and long sleeve collared knit polo shirts of any solid color are acceptable. The approved Academy logo **must be** silk-screened or embroidered on the upper left chest. There can be NO logos, patterns, pockets or labels on them except the school logo. Stained or torn shirts are not acceptable. They must fit appropriately: no longer than the top of the pants pocket or 6" below the waist of the pants. Anything longer must be tucked in. Conversely, students must be able to raise both arms above their head and not expose their midriff. Long-sleeved shirts may not be worn under short-sleeved shirts, even if the same color.

Oxford Shirts:

White or blue oxford button-down shirts are acceptable. These shirts must be tucked in. Oxford shirts do not require an Academy logo. Oxford shirts must be tucked in. A belt is recommended.

T-shirts that show below the waist or sleeves are not acceptable.

Fleece Vests/ Jackets/ Sweatshirts/ Cardigans:

These do not have to have the school logo; however, the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy logo will be the **only** allowable logo. Students will be able to wear their vest and sweatshirt (pullover or zippered) as a layering piece inside the school. Solid colored button-down cardigans are also acceptable. No other jackets may be worn inside the school building. Outside jackets do not have to have the school logo.

Pants:

Khaki, black, or navy blue pants must reach the top of the shoe, fit properly - no oversized or super-baggy - and have no

external cargo pockets on the sides i.e. cargo, painter pockets, or zippers and snaps. Pants may not be excessively tight, revealing, or torn. Pants may not be denim, but corduroy is acceptable. Stitching on the pants must be the same color as the pant.

Shorts/ Skirts:

Khaki, black, or navy blue shorts should fit properly - not tight fitting or baggy. They may not fall below the knee or be shorter than one hand width above the knee. The shorts may not have external cargo or painter pockets and the stitching must be the same as the short. No denim. Girls may wear skirts using the same length guidelines as the shorts. If a skirt extends below the knee, it may have a slit that goes no higher than the knee. Long skirts tend to be a safety issue on the playground. Solid color tights, of the same color as pants, may be worn under skirts in cold weather. The only exception for dresses is the Old Navy Girls Uniform Polo Dress with sleeves and the school logo.

SHOES/SOCKS

Flip flops, open heeled shoes without a strap, or slippers are not appropriate footwear at school and will not be allowed. Activity appropriate footwear is necessary for safety reasons. Colors are acceptable. Knee socks and tights must be a solid color (black, navy blue, white, or skin toned).

Gym shoes (tennis shoes) will be required on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These will **not** be left at school. These may also be worn any day of the week.

Boots: Students may wear traditional snow boots and flat-soled suede winter boots under the following conditions:

- *They may be worn with a skirt. If worn with a skirt they must be worn with uniform-compliant tights.*
- *The boots must be solid black, brown or tan.*
- *They may be worn over slacks.*
- *No spike heels, decorations (buckles, tassels), fashion stitching, or baggy fabric).*
- *They must fall below the knee.*

Boots that do not meet the stated criteria must be covered by slacks at all times while on campus.

*Sleeveless tops, spaghetti straps, tank tops, low openings and visible undergarments are not acceptable. Anything that creates a disturbance or interferes with the educational environment or is a safety hazard is not appropriate. This includes clothing, jewelry, accessories, hair style, footwear and body adornments.

* No exposed undergarments including t-shirts.

* No visible skin at the midriff.

* No visible tattoos.

* Body piercing is limited to ears only.

* Sunglasses, hats, visors or bandannas may not be worn inside the school building.

*Hair must be kept out of your eyes.

*Hair color must be a color that occurs naturally as a hair color.

* Spikes or studded jewelry are not permitted

*Dress code is required on school property or at school events. When school is dismissed, students will not be allowed to change out of dress code unless they are leaving to participate in athletic events.

**If there is any doubt about attire, ask first and then wear.
If clothing is deemed inappropriate, parents will be called**

to bring in alternative clothing, or the student will be asked to leave school for the day.

Test for Appropriateness:

If you were part of a group of students during the school day, would something about your dress or physical appearance draw attention to yourself? If so, you would be considered in violation of the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy uniform policy.

Note to Students:

You forfeit your chance for life at its fullest when you withhold your best effort in learning. When you give only the minimum to learning, you receive only the minimum in return.... even with your teachers' best efforts, in the end it is your work that determines how much and how well you learn.

When you work to your full capacity, you can hope to attain the knowledge and skills that will enable you to create your future and control your destiny. If you do not, you will have your future thrust upon you by others.

Take hold of your life, apply your gifts and talents, work with dedication and self-discipline. Have high expectations for yourself and convert every challenge into an opportunity.

---National Commission on Excellence in Education