



**A Revolutionary Education
Through Music**

**Student and Family Handbook
2017-2018**

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Board of Trustees Welcome Letter

August 5, 2017

Dear WHIN Families,

On behalf of the WHIN Board of Trustees, we wanted to wish you a warm, heartfelt welcome to the inaugural school year of WHIN Music Community Charter School.

We are thrilled that you have chosen WHIN, and deeply appreciate the trust that you have placed in our school leaders, faculty and staff to educate and care for your child.

You should know that we, as founding Board members of WHIN, have been actively and deeply committed to this school since its inception. We are aligned with its mission to provide “rigorous academic instruction, intensive music education and a positive learning environment so that every student can thrive academically and personally.”

We hope that you find the WHIN school community welcoming, vibrant and joyful. We encourage you to participate in the many different opportunities for family engagement that will arise throughout this school year.

Sincerely,



Greg David

WHIN Music Community Charter School, Board Chair

WHIN Music Community Charter School Board of Trustees

Gregory David, Board Chair

Robert Green, Board Treasurer

Andrea Profili, Board Secretary

Kenneth Grover

Ivonne Norman

Melissa Randazzo

Executive Leadership Welcome Letter

Dear Esteemed WHIN Students, Parents, and Families,

We are humbled and excited to welcome you to the founding year of the Washington Heights and Inwood (WHIN) Music Community Charter School. It is inspiring to see how many families nurtured this idea from inception, joined us on this journey, and chose WHIN for their children. It is with great pride and a commitment to each of you that today we begin to realize our mission to...

provide our diverse student population with a rigorous academic instruction, intensive music education and a positive learning environment so that every student can thrive academically and personally.

This journey started in August 2012 with the launch of the WHIN Music Project, a grassroots El Sistema-inspired after-school program that started with just 50 students and in three years was serving more than 500. Through the support of many students, families, and community members we were urged to push the boundaries of what a fully inclusive music education could be. WHIN Music Community Charter School grew as an organic outgrowth of the quest to serve more students and transform hundreds of children's and families' lives.

WHIN is a unique school. Our progressive model and use of El Sistema as a way to build life-long and life-wide learners who are empathetic and compassionate individuals committed to being agents of social change can only be realized when as a community, we all share this commitment to each other. As a founding school community, we each play a crucial role in helping ensure WHIN is the greatest school it can be. Since its inception WHIN has engaged in conversations with parents and community members to share our school model and hear how we can best serve your family's needs. We have worked closely with community organizations as well as local politicians and activists to ensure that our school model reflects our communities and serves all its members.

As our exciting journey continues into our inaugural year we want you know that our commitment to do this work has only grown deeper with time, more resolute with each parent and student we have met, and more joyous with every smiling face we see joining our fast-growing school community. We ask you to continue sharing your experiences and ideas with us so we can meet you and your family's needs. We invite you to learn with us so we are always aligned in this work. We invite you to play music with us and bask in the transformational powers of our shared artistic experiences. We invite you to strive for greatness with us.

We invite you to WHIN.

Sincerely,

Charlie Ortiz and David Gracia

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School Overview:

What is a Charter School?

Charter Schools are public schools that operate independently and are overseen by a governing board of directors whom report to an authoring agency. Charter schools were established to provide students and families more opportunities for academic success. Charter schools are non-profit and non-sectarian organizations that are authorized by the Board of Regents and the State of New York. Like all public schools, Charter schools are free.

Charter schools are publicly funded and open to all students in New York State through a non-discriminatory admissions lottery. Charters have freedom to establish their own policies, design their own educational program, and manage their human and financial resources. Charter schools are accountable, through the terms of a five-year Charter Agreement, for high student achievement.¹

WHIN Music Community Charter School Mission Statement:

The Washington Heights and Inwood Music Community Charter School (“WHIN Music Charter School” or “WHIN”) will provide our diverse student population with rigorous academic instruction, intensive music education and a positive learning environment so that every student can thrive academically and personally.

Governance:

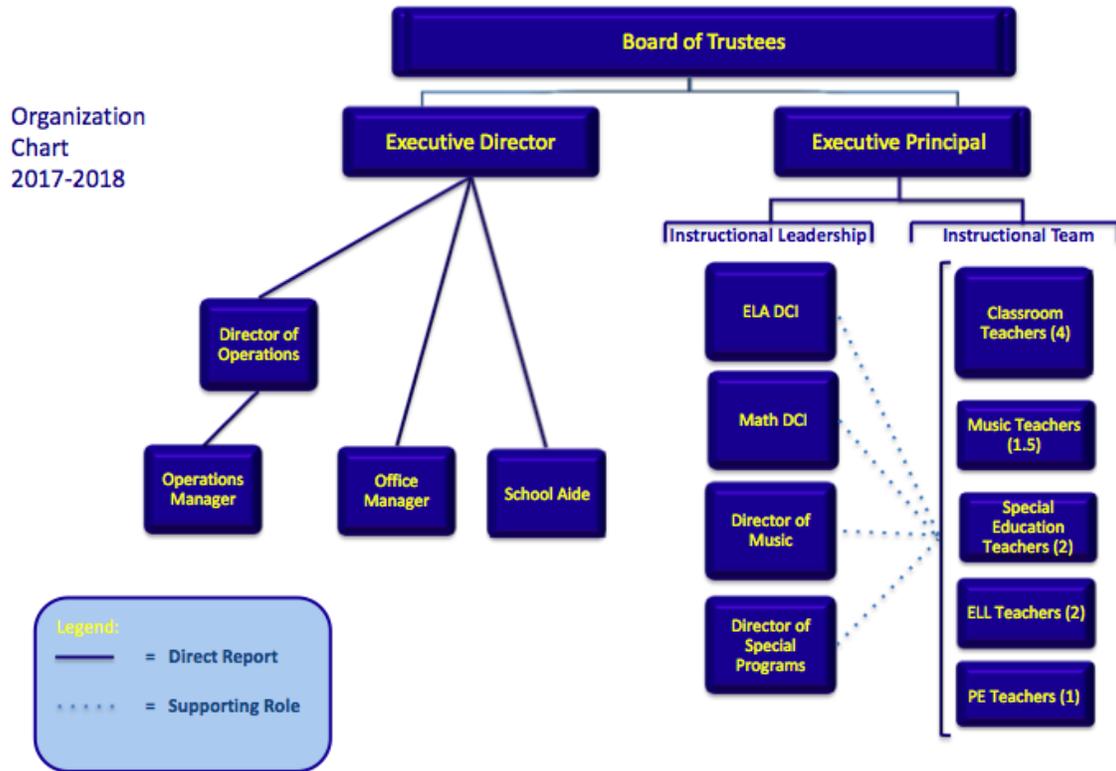
WHIN Music Community Charter School Authorizer:

On June 14th 2016 the WHIN Music Community Charter school was granted a Charter by the New York State Education Department (SED) and Board of Regents to operate a K-5 Elementary School based in Community School District (CSD) 6- Washington Heights and Inwood. SED supports, guides, and ultimately holds the WHIN board of directors accountable to the mission, student outcomes, and program design detailed in their approved charter.

Board of Directors:

The WHIN Music Community Charter School Board of Directors is comprised of educators, CSD6 community members, and leaders who volunteer their time to support the school’s executive leadership and ensure they fulfill the mission of WHIN Music Community Charter School. Membership on the board is solely voluntary and may end upon formal resignation of the board. New members can be voted to join only once per year before the commencement of a new academic year.

WHIN Organization Chart:



School Hours:

WHIN opens at **7:30am** for drop off/breakfast. Morning Meeting starts in the classroom promptly at **8:00am**. On Mondays-Thursday, the school day concludes at **4:30pm**. On Fridays, the school day concludes at **2:00pm**.

Total instructional minutes per subject (weekly):

Subject	ELA	Math	Ensemble	Sci/SS	PIN	PE
Minutes	540	410	450	240	180	150

School Calendar: 2017 -2018

August 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

7 – 25: Staff development

September 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

5, 6: Staff development
7: 1st day of school
21, 22: Rosh Hashanah
28: Curriculum Night

October 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

5: El Sistema Performance
9: Columbus Day

November 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

7: Election Day//Full day for staff
10: End of Quarter 1
15 – 17: Family/Teacher Conferences
23, 24: Thanksgiving Recess

December 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

7: Parent workshop
14: El Sistema Performance
25 – 29: Winter break

January 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1: New Years Day
15: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
18: Parent Workshop
26: End of Quarter 2
31: Family/Teacher Conferences

February 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

1, 2: Family/Teacher Conferences
15: El Sistema Performance
16 – 23: Mid-Winter Recess

March 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

15: Parent Workshop
30: Spring Recess

April 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2- 6: Spring Recess
13: End of Quarter 3
18 – 20: Family/Teacher Conferences
26: El Sistema Performance

May 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

17: Parent Workshop
28: Memorial Day

June 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

6: Parent Workshop
7: Anniversary Day
11: Clerical Day//Full day for staff
15: Eid al-Fitr
22: End of Quarter 4
26: Last day of school – early release

- El Sistema Performance
- School Closed/Holiday
- 2pm dismissal//Staff development
- First/last day of school
- Family Engagement Night

Arrival:

Students should arrive between 7:30am and 7:50am to have breakfast. After students enter through the 164th street door, they will proceed immediately downstairs to the cafeteria. At 7:50am, students will transition with their teacher upstairs to their classrooms to begin their day.

Dismissal:

The school day is over at 4:30pm on Mondays through Thursdays and at 2pm on Fridays. At dismissal, families can pick up their students from school. Those students who take the bus will be escorted by a staff member to their bus. Early dismissal is discouraged, as our instructional day is designed to maximize student learning; if for some reason students need to leave school early, the main office should be notified in advance and students will need to be signed out by a parent/guardian.

Attendance & Tardy Policy:

All students are expected to attend school when it is in session for the entirety of the school day. Our goal is for 100% student attendance, and WHIN is committed to supporting families in ensuring students arrive to school on time each day, and we encourage families to reach out for support before excessive tardies or absences are acquired. Based on the Chancellor's Regulations A-501, students must maintain a goal of at least 90% attendance (no more than 18 days absent) in order to meet the promotion standards of the NYC Department of Education.

If a student is absent, families should contact the main office ahead of time. Upon returning to school after an absence due to medical reasons, a doctor's note should be submitted to the main office within 2 days of the student's absence to qualify as an excused absence. Similarly, a note from a parent/guardian explaining the cause of the absence is requested for all other absences and should be submitted, in writing, to the main office within 2 days of any absence, though these are not necessarily excused absences. Excessive absences (>5) per year will result in a family meeting with Executive Leadership and could potentially lead to retention.

Tardiness:

If a student arrives after 8:01am, he/she is considered tardy and parent/guardian(s) **must** accompany the student to the 4th floor main office and sign the child into school. The student will receive a late pass and proceed to class. Excessive tardiness (>5 tardies) will result in a family meeting with Executive Leadership and could potentially result in additional absences added to the student's attendance record.

School Closings Information:

WHIN will follow the NYC DOE regarding school closing due to weather or other emergencies; families will also be notified via email, all-call, and social media of any updates regarding school closure.

Uniform Policy:

WHIN believes that a student's attire should represent his/her self-respect, respect for WHIN, and respect for his/her community. WHIN also believes students are able to perform at their best and be joyful when they are wearing comfortable clothing. As such, WHIN students are required to wear a uniform that is respectful and conducive to an active and engaging learning environment.

The 2017-2018 WHIN Music Community Charter School student uniform is:

- Bottom: Dark Blue Pants or Dark Blue Romper (with WHIN Logo)
- Top: Light Grey Polo-Shirt with WHIN Logo or Light Grey blouse (for under Romper)
- Optional- Dark Blue or Dark Grey Sweater with WHIN logo and belts (Black) are optional
- Footwear- Black Sneaker or School Shoes
 - Socks and tights worn with Romper must be Grey with no patterns or designs
- Gym Uniform- Dark Blue Sweatpants and polo-shirt with WHIN logo
 - Can be worn all day on gym days
- Jewelry- Students may chose to wear jewelry that stays close to the body (ie. studded earrings, tight bracelets, etc.). Jewelry should be safe to wear during high-activity situations and not disrupt the learning environment. WHIN is not liable for the loss of jewelry, and recommends that students do not wear jewelry to school.
 - The following types of jewelry are not permitted:
 - No hoop, hanging, or dangling earrings are permitted
 - No jewelry with spikes, points, or sharp edges are permitted
 - Students may wear one (1) ring per hand

School Day Schedule: Sample

Monday - Thursday

Time	Classroom A	Classroom B
7:30	Drop off/breakfast	
8:00	Morning Meeting	
8:20	ELA	Math
9:20	Ensemble	Science/Social Studies
10:10	Math	ELA
11:10	Recess	
11:30	Lunch	
12:00	Science/Social Studies	Ensemble
12:50	ELA part 2	
1:50	P.E.	PIN (Small group instruction)
2:20	Snack	
2:30	PIN (Small group instruction)	Gym
3:00	Ensemble	
3:50	Math	
4:20	Closing Circle	
4:30	Dismissal	

Friday (early dismissal)

Time	Classroom A	Classroom B
7:30	Drop off/breakfast	
8:00	Morning Meeting	
8:15	Math	ELA
9:15	Ensemble	Math* (ends at 10:15)
10:05	ELA	Ensemble
11:05	PIN (Small group instruction)	Gym
11:35	Lunch	
12:05	Gym	PIN
12:35	PIN #2	Sci/social studies* (ends at 1:15)
1:05	Sci/social studies	PIN #2
1:45	Closing circle	
2:00	Dismissal	

Parent Involvement and Communication:

Nucleo

Drawing from El Sistema’s structures and ideals, we strive to create a “nucleo” environment. El Sistema nucleos are the centralized locations where music instruction takes place, though they are much more than just physical spaces - a nucleo represents a haven of safety, learning, and community. At WHIN, that means creating an open-door policy and safe space for families to thrive alongside their young learners. WHIN will offer monthly parent involvement opportunities, including family nights, workshops, and community outreach projects. Parents and caretakers can also participate in our school-wide Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) as well as volunteer in the classroom, participating in Morning Meeting, Closing Circle, and Community Meeting. WHIN welcomes families to participate in weekly readings and music on Fridays when announced, as well as other opportunities, at the discretion of the classroom teachers and Instructional Leadership Team. Families are encouraged to take an active role in their student’s learning and development.

Family Teacher Conferences

WHIN has 3 formal Family Teacher Conferences scheduled at the conclusion of the first, second, and third quarters. Because these are crucial for understanding student performance and growth, WHIN strives to have 100% of families engaged in these conferences. Translation services will be provided as needed to ensure ease of communication, and parents will pre-select preferred appointment slots to flexibly accommodate different schedules.

Visitor Policy

WHIN welcomes visitors to tour our school to see authentic learning take place. All visitors must check in with the security in the lobby of the school building as well as at the main office on the 4th floor to receive a visitors pass. **All visitors must wear his/her pass in an easily visible area while at WHIN.** Visitors should provide notice whenever possible before coming to the school to ensure their presence is not disruptive to learning. Student meetings should also be scheduled in advance so as not to disrupt the teaching schedule and preferably take place before or after school hours.

Curriculum and Instruction:

Overview: We believe students learn best when content is connected to real-world issues and needs, and thus espouse a student-centered,² interdisciplinary teaching philosophy based on Inquiry and Project-Based Learning Models. Our curricular choices reflect these philosophies in all content areas.

² A learner-centered instructional approach in which “learners (students) are treated as co-creators in the learning process, as individuals with ideas and issues that deserve attention and consideration.” See B. McCombs & J.S. Whistler, *The Learner-Centered Classroom and School: Strategies for Increasing Student Motivation and Achievement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, (1997).

Curriculum Framework: The backbone of the WHIN curriculum framework is the belief that students learn best when presented with a cross curricular, rigorous, inquiry-driven, and data-driven learning experience directly connected to Common Core State Standards and differentiated for *each* learner's unique needs while developing his/her social-emotional and character skills. As such, we will use a school wide, sequential, and cross-curricular Understanding By Design (UbD) framework. This framework will be overseen by the Directors of Curriculum and Instruction and developed in partnership with the Director of Special Programs and Director of Music as well as the schools teachers drawing upon the success data-supported curriculum of the Conservatory Lab Charter School.

ELA Program

Overview - components of content curriculum

At WHIN, students engage in hands-on project-based learning and are committed to the philosophies of expeditionary learning. Therefore, WHIN's core literacy program will be EL (formerly Expeditionary Learning) Education's K-5 English Language Arts curriculum (EL ELA), which is a comprehensive, standards-based core literacy program that engages teachers and students through compelling real-world content. It rests on the following academic pillars: Mastery of knowledge and skills, Character, and High-quality work. Using this program, teachers are able to teach and formally assesses all standards and strands of the new English Language Arts standards. Students engage in these lessons for sixty minutes each day. The EL English Language Arts Program also has Skills lessons and assessments that explicitly address the Common Core Learning Standards Reading Foundations standards and Language standards associated with spelling and letter formation. It uses a structured phonics approach, grounded in the Phase Theory of Dr. Linnea Ehri, which describes behaviors related to the types of letter-sound connections students are able to make as they learn to read and write. This systematic cycle of instruction ensures that students master the phonological, awareness, phonics, decoding, and spelling necessary to be highly proficient readers.

ELA Assessment

To ensure all our students are reaching English Language Arts benchmarks, track progress, and differentiate for student needs, students will be tested in their reading skills four times a year using the Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) assessment. STEP is a research-based formative assessment, data management, and professional development system developed from the University of Chicago. STEP assesses children's literacy skills, provides key data to teachers to develop students' reading development through a 13-level system toward reading proficiency. STEP is used in conjunction with the unit assessments and performance tasks included in each EL ELA module.

Math Program

Overview - components of content curriculum

At WHIN, students experience math through a lens of fun, exciting discovery. Math units are not taught in isolation, but rather multiple skills and standards are interwoven to create rich tasks and scenarios for learners, and standards are revisited throughout the year to ensure student mastery. We are using as Bridges, an elementary math curriculum, as our cornerstone program. Bridges includes a daily math workout/calendar routine during Number Corner, followed by math lessons focused on problems and investigations, and small group instruction and practice through hands-on workplaces. Math instruction is also enhanced with weekly Number Talks and Number Stories, inspired by Cognitively Guided Instruction practices. These are opportunities to build listening and speaking skills as well as develop fluency in demonstrating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in WHIN's young learners.

Math Assessment

WHIN students are regularly assessed to ensure learning is progressing and developing and to target students for early intervention when needed. Benchmark assessments are administered four times per year (approximately once per quarter) to determine student numeracy skills; WHIN is adopting Assessing Math Concepts (AMC) as the tool to support this work in the lower elementary grades. AMC is a performance-based assessment where students demonstrate understanding by modeling and explaining their thinking in response to different prompts. This is used in conjunction with the summative assessments included in each Bridges unit and with teacher observations and student work samples to analyze how students' mathematical understandings are developing. Students who are struggling to meet grade level standards receive additional support in the form of small group instruction and possibly Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention as well.

Music Program

Overview - components of content curriculum

El Sistema is a model for social action through music, founded in Venezuela in 1975 by Maestro José Antonio Abreu, who believes that "music has to be recognized as an...agent of social development in the highest sense, because it transmits the highest values - solidarity, harmony, mutual compassion. And it has the ability to unite an entire community and to express sublime feelings." WHIN musicians participate in two ensemble, or group, rehearsals a day that approach music literacy through best practices in Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze methodologies. One ensemble focuses on the development of the singing voice as a primary instrument, while the other ensemble takes applies musicianship skills built through vocal pedagogy to the study of a musical instrument. Students will play percussion across all grade levels; string instruments will be introduced in 1st grade, and wind and brass instruments will

be introduced in 3rd grade. El Sistema pedagogy is based on ensemble instruction; as students progress on their instruments, there will be more individualized levels of instruction, including sectionals and peer-led. Repertoire will be varied including arrangements of great orchestral works, folk songs, musicals, R&B, and film scores.

Participation in singing and instrumental instruction nurtures a natural love of music while developing critical musicianship and non-cognitive skills.

Ensemble Assessment:

WHIN offers daily informal assessments (which often look and sound like playing games) and short bi-weekly formal assessments (which also look and sound like playing games) that measure musical growth across a variety of musical elements including rhythm, melody, harmony, and instrumental technique. Musical assessments take a various form, from simple pitch-matching exercises to written dictations or rhythmic patterns to solo performance on an instrument. Every quarter, students will participate in full-ensemble El Sistema concerts, offering authentic performance experiences in front of a live audience.

Physical Education Program

Physical Education (P.E) at WHIN will be part of a holistic, balanced education. Teaching children how to respect, develop, and take care of their physical health is just as important as teaching academic content. With this philosophy in mind, students will have:

1. PE class (based on *Physical Best*, a comprehensive health-related fitness education program that focuses on each child's individual preferences and capabilities),³
2. Music & Movement activities based on the Dalcroze Eurhythmics method, where students will gain physical awareness and experience of music through training that engages all of the senses, particularly kinesthetic, and develops gross motor skills)⁴
3. Organized playtime with games and activities during recess

Science/Social Studies Program

Our Science and Social Studies curriculum will be aligned with the New York State Learning Standards, including the standards of the New York State Testing Program for Science and Social Studies, and the Common Core literacy standards for K-6 Science and Social studies strands. WHIN will use the project-based instructional philosophy of Expeditionary Learning as the main mechanism and model for Science and Social Studies and include:

- **Project-based Learning**
- **Cooperative Learning Structures**
- **Discovery-Based Lessons:** A five-step process that allows students to improve their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as to develop their depth of understanding.

³ <http://www.shapeamerica.org/prodev/workshops/physicalbest/physicalbestfaq.cfm>

⁴ <http://www.dalcrozeusa.org/about-us/history>

1. *Engage*: teachers engage students (e.g., with a demonstration, brainstorm, problem) to raise questions and elicit responses that uncover what students know or think about the topic.
2. *Explore*: students then explore the topic together, without direct instruction from the teacher. The teacher asks probing questions of students and listens as they make meaning.
3. *Explain*: teachers ask students to explain their thinking based on their explorations and provide students with clarifications, definitions, and direct instruction.
4. *Extend*: students extend their knowledge of the topic by applying concepts and skills to new problems and tasks.
5. *Evaluate*: the teacher assesses students' knowledge or skills and asks them to assess their own learning.

Daily “PIN” Block:

Each day, students will receive small group instruction aligned to their specific academic and enrichment needs as determined through various assessments and teacher observations. PIN stands for “Practice I Need.” During the PIN block, students may receive remediation in specific subject areas, extension work to further develop their understanding, and hands-on practice, working with peers at different levels.

Special Education Services:

WHIN is committed to instructing students with different abilities and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) through the promotion of inclusion in all areas of academics including a rigorous music program. Given the correct support of instructional differentiation and accommodations, students have the opportunity to learn alongside their peers. To create a successful inclusion model, WHIN's special education programs offer the following:

- **ICT:** Integrated Co-Teaching/Collaborative Team Teaching (ICT/CTT) classrooms with one special education teacher and one general education teacher *or* one ENL teacher and one general education teacher in the classroom to service all students.
- **SETSS:** Special Education Teacher Support Services service provided by a special education teacher to a student or the student's general education teacher. The student receives the service in a general education setting, small group pull out, or push in delivery.
- **Related Services** such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, and other related services are offered through related service providers with the NYC Department of Education. Related Service Agreements (RSA) may be provided by the CSE for students who need to secure providers for specific support service that cannot be provided at WHIN during the school day.

The programs implemented by the teams play a significant role in the expected steady academic, social, and emotional progress made by all students participating at WHIN. These efforts are monitored to demonstrate an increase in student achievement as well as a decrease in the number of referrals to the CSE. Utilizing the strengths of all of WHIN's educators will bring success for all of our students.

Response to Intervention

WHIN Music Community Charter School will use a Response to Intervention (RTI) program consistent with the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) regulations⁵ that is in compliance with the United States Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Child Find mandate. WHIN's Response to Intervention program is a general education initiative that includes a multi-tiered instructional framework. It is a school wide approach used to address the needs of all students, including at-risk students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs) and students that excel with grade level curriculum.

⁵p12.nysed.gov/specialed/RTI/guidance/application

WHIN's RtI program consists of three tiers the first tier is core curriculum in the general education classroom and the last tier is a referral for further evaluations to assist in understanding a student's academic needs and if any other related or supplemental instruction/services may be warranted to help a student learn to his/her maximum potential. Data driven instruction, problem-solving, and review occur with teams of teachers and administrators at each of the three tiers and help target necessary instruction as well as identify possible misconceptions that challenge a student's learning. As students are identified as needing more or less support and move through the tiers, WHIN engages parents and members of the Child Study Team (CST) to review current levels of functioning, identify areas of challenge, and structure meaningful interventions.

Child Study Team (CST)

Within the RtI program, the CST operates as a Problem-Solving model and meets to analyze and evaluate data. The CST consists of teachers, Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in both Math and ELA (DCIs), Director of Music (DOM), Director of Special Programs, Executive Principal, parent/guardians, and other related service providers as needed. Parents are engaged with the CST and are part of the problem-solving and instructional/intervention process. The CST's purpose is to review and analyze data, define strengths and areas of need for the student, and plan for specific interventions and monitor student progress to ensure students meet with success. The RtI interventions are based on the individual student's needs. Students are instructed and supported in small homogenous groups dependent on their needs. Students complete frequent probes to monitor progress and ensure each student is responding to the interventions. The information gained from probes and other assessments is used by teachers and members of the CST to make supportive and informative decisions for students and to ensure academic/social-emotional/behavioral progress is made to close gaps.

English as a New Language (ENL)

WHIN anticipates having an ELL population that accurately reflects CSD 6's language learning needs and as such is structured to meet that need by using a full inclusion model. Upon registration, parents are asked to fill out a Home Language Identification Survey. Scholars who speak a language other than English take an exam called the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL.) The score on the NYSITELL determines whether or not a scholar is entitled to receive ESL services. At WHIN ESL services are offered through push-in and/or a pull-out model. WHIN's ESL teachers include strategies throughout the academic day including daily reading, writing, speaking and listening activities. Each spring, all emergent bilingual students are required to take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). This exam evaluates English proficiency. the student continues to take the NYSESLAT until he/she is considered proficient. Once a student reaches proficiency determined by the NYSESLAT, he/ she is still eligible to receive ESL supports for 2 additional years. Through a full inclusion model WHIN implements the following strategies to support ELL students:

- Create an environment where learners feel secure and are comfortable taking risks
- Include the learners language and culture in the curriculum (including bilingual books)
- Teach the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in an integrated way
- Use visual cues, graphic organizers, and manipulatives to represent, organize, and clarify concepts
- Use cooperative learning structures and information-gap activities where learners work together to complete tasks and meet the learning targets
- Link new information to prior knowledge

Referral Process

If a student is not accessing the curriculum and has been referred to the CST and participated in RtI targeted intervention cycles, a referral for further testing can be made to the NYC DOE Committee on Special Education (CSE). Student evaluations can be completed by CSE (or approved outside evaluation sites) and are comprehensive, addressing the range of functional areas (academic, social, physical, management) that impact a student's ability to succeed in an inclusive classroom.

Diagnostic testing information is completed and interpreted by the CSE along with WHIN's Director of Special Programs, Special Education Teacher, ENL Teachers, General Education Teachers, and Related Service Providers. WHIN leaders and teachers will document student progress and assist in the interpretation of the information so that parents understand the implications of the disability on learning. If it is determined by the CSE that a student has a disability impacting his education an IEP will be created and services will be initiated.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Compliance:

WHIN complies with all the regulations and requirements of IDEA. We are aware that eligibility is determined by whether there is an identified disability that adversely affects a student's educational performance enough to require special education services to support the student's access to the curriculum. WHIN adheres to all the requirements to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). At WHIN we provide for the needs of identified students according to their IEPs, and English Language status, and we actively seek to identify students who present with challenges and who may qualify for special education supports.⁶

504 Plans

It is WHIN's intent to periodically review and update student health records, and bring to CST meetings students that may need the supports offered through a 504 plan. The CST will identify and evaluate students qualified under Section 504 who are in need of accommodations to participate in school programs on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers. Students who may be in need of such accommodations are evaluated by the WHIN Music Community Charter School CST team and, when appropriately approved by the

⁶ IDEA 20 U.S. Code § 1412

parent, are provided accommodations pursuant to a written 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan)⁷ that outlines the accommodations the student will receive.

School staff and parent/guardian can request an evaluation by the CST for any student who is reasonably believed to be disabled and in need of accommodations, within the meaning of Section 504, in order to attend and participate in school activities on an equal basis with his or her non-disabled peers. When staff members initiate a referral through the CST, the Executive Principal or the Director of Special Programs must notify the parent within five school days (aligns with IEP timeline) that they have received an evaluation request and document in a student information system such as Power School. The Executive Principal or Director of Special Programs will ensure that parents are well informed of the Section 504 processes through delivery of the Notice of Non-discrimination and the Parental Rights Notice. Parent consent is required before an evaluation can be done. All initiated 504 plans are renewed yearly by the CST.

Student Promotion and Retention Policy:

All WHIN students must demonstrate mastery of grade level skills and knowledge in core academic areas. Common Core State Standards and our Understanding by Design curriculum framework provide the necessary targets students must master to be promoted. Summative assessments will be used to assess each student's progress towards unit mastery within each academic area. Daily formative assessments, our Response to Intervention (RtI) program, and school wide benchmark assessments will be used to identify struggling students early so we can implement the necessary interventions to support each learners needs.

If a student is in danger of being retained the following steps will happen:

1. Parents will be notified immediately if a student is failing to make adequate grade level progress.
2. The school will request a meeting with the student's parents and teachers to discuss the student's progress, potential solutions, and to create a timeline to assess progress.
3. If the school determines a student needs to be retained another meeting will be scheduled between the school and family to discuss next steps.
4. The Executive Leadership of WHIN will make the final decision on student retentions

School Culture and Student Code of Conduct:

School Culture:

The Washington Heights and Inwood Music Community Charter School's mission is to provide our diverse student population with rigorous academic instruction, intensive music education and a positive learning environment so that *every* student can thrive academically and personally. To that purpose, we envision a learning environment that promotes personal

⁷ USDOE Office of special education and rehabilitative services Memorandum January 2011

development, advances social inclusion, and develops community building for *all* students and families. Our learning environment is founded upon three philosophies/practices: El Sistema, Restorative Justice, and Responsive Classroom.

Building upon El Sistema culture, WHIN will strive to create a safe, inclusive learning environment where *all* students feel welcome and enjoy the learning process. The Restorative Justice philosophy will help students reflect on their choices, understand the consequences of their choices, and make amends when necessary. Responsive Classroom will help instill positive, preventive discipline and a warm school culture through various classroom management strategies.

Preventative discipline is an integral component of our school culture that will help to ensure *all* students can take advantage of the unique learning opportunities at WHIN. We believe using respectful and responsible language with an emotionally neutral tone allows staff and students the opportunity to be reflective, active participants in creating a school culture that benefits and supports all. It is WHIN's belief that students should not be removed from the learning environment unless it is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, WHIN's effective discipline policy requires the understanding, belief in, and support of all students, staff, and families.

To instill positive discipline and develop WHIN's school culture, we will use the following Responsive Classroom structures that will help us promote personal development, advance social inclusion, and develop community building:

- **Morning Meeting**—gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead. Songs and music will be an essential part of these periods.
- **Interactive Modeling**—teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through modeling appropriate behaviors and attitudes.
- **Positive Teacher Language**—using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self discipline.
- **Guided Discovery**—introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility.
- **Academic Choice**—increasing student learning by allowing students teacher structured choices in their work.
- **Working with Families**—creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches. El Sistema program has been proven very effective to build community and WHIN will use many performances, workshops and conferences to build a tight community of students, parents and teachers. School culture will be one of collaboration.
- **Collaborative Problem Solving**—using conferencing, role-playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students.

- **Logical Consequences**—responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity.

WHIN will work with students, families, teachers and all staff to ensure the school culture is based on the values of respect, worthiness, inclusion, and the understanding of the uniqueness of each student and situation. At the same time, our school culture will ensure that there is a clear system to deal with specific situations that may go against the school’s core values.

Restorative Justice will serve as the foundation to tackle behavior infractions through non-punitive consequences, so the focus of the interventions will be to ensure that the student is able to reflect on his/her actions, restore/make amends to the situation, and prevent any similar conflict in the future in alignment with the shared values of the entire school community.

WHIN anticipates all students to strive for academic, social, and personal excellence and meet the school expectations for personal responsibility, self-discipline, cooperation, and social responsibility. WHIN also knows that all students and situations are different and the same interventions will not work for all students and situations. As such, we have developed three tiers of general infractions and potential supports to guide staff as they help students work through challenges. Regardless of the challenges and possible solutions WHIN will always ground our response to student infractions in the ideology of El Sistema, Responsive Classroom, and Restorative Justice by being reflective, emotionally neutral, and kind.

The supports utilized to correct misbehavior will depend on the severity and the frequency of the behavior. Misbehavior is categorized into three (3) tiers of severity, where Tier 1 is the least severe and Tier 3 is the most severe. The below chart is a partial list of potential infractions as well as the potential range of consequences.

Examples of Infractions and Potential Consequences	
Potential Infractions	Potential Consequences
Tier One	
Calling out in class Not following teacher instructions Dress code violation Inappropriate Language Passive defiance	Verbal Reminder/Warning Loss of Privilege Logical Consequence Self-reflective Timeout Parent Call/Letter
Tier Two	

Repeated Level 1 Offenses Physical and Verbal Aggression Bullying/Threats/Abuse Disrespecting students and teachers	Self-reflective Time-out Parent Call/Letter Removal from the Class/Situation In school suspension Short Term Out of School Suspension
Tier Three	
Repeated Level 2 Offenses Possessing a weapon Possessing an illegal substance Abusing/ destroying school property Assaulting a teacher or student Discriminatory, Abusive, Obscene, or Derogatory speech Conduct which disrupts school/classroom activities and endangers/threatens to endanger the health, safety or welfare of others	Guided Self Reflection by authorized staff In School Suspension Short Term Out of School Suspension Long Term Out of School Suspension Expulsion

Respecting the Rights of Students:

Inspired by El Sistema, WHIN uses ensemble music “to enable every child to experience being an asset within her or his community.” This experience starts with a reciprocal respect between students, families, teachers and staff in order to develop a trusting community where everybody’s voice is appreciated and respected. Just as WHIN expects a reciprocal respect between students and teachers, WHIN also recognizes the rights of students as protected by State and Federal laws, including

- Equal Opportunity to take part in school activities
- Confidentiality of Records
- Freedom of Expression
- Freedom from Unwarranted Search and Seizure
- Due Process

Description of Expectations:

In the same way that WHIN holds the highest possible expectations for the school leadership, staff, and teachers, WHIN also holds the highest expectations for students in order to help them achieve their best. Specifically, students are expected to behave in the following ways (partial list):

- **Classroom Behaviors:** Students are expected to follow teacher instructions be kind to their classmates, and respect the learning environment.

- **Behavior in Halls:** Students are expected to walk quietly in the halls in order to maintain the learning environment.
- **Bathroom Behavior:** Students are expected to use the bathroom facilities respectfully and not deface or abuse them.
- **Behavior in lunchroom:** The lunchroom should be an orderly, calm, clean, and pleasant zone. Students should sit in their seats and converse using quiet “inside voices.”
- **Behavior on Buses:** Students should remain sitting in their seats and obey the driver or any caretaker on the bus. Students should refrain from any disorderly behaviors.
- **Behavior during School Field Trips/Activities:** Students are expected to behave on field trips in the same way as when they are in school.
- **Excessive Tardiness, Absenteeism, leaving school without permission:** Students are to report to class on time and come to school except when they are sick. Students are never to leave school grounds without permission from a school staff member.
- **Dress Code:** Students are required to wear the WHIN student uniform at all times in school, on field trips, and all other school related activities.
- **Fighting/Physical Aggression:** WHIN students should resolve conflicts verbally through the conflict resolution strategies taught in their Responsive Classroom instruction.
- **Cheating/Plagiarism:** WHIN students are expected to act with honor and be principled in their academic pursuits. Teachers will help and support students whenever they struggle with understanding a concept; therefore, there is no need to showcase another person’s work for one’s own.
- **Inappropriate Uses of School Technology:** WHIN provides a range of educational technology devices and equipment for the edification of its students. As such, technology should be used solely for educational purposes as determined by teachers.
- **Physical Threat/Attack on Staff or Fellow Students:** WHIN takes the establishment of a safe, secure learning environment very seriously; any physical threats or attacks on students or staff will be dealt with in a serious manner.
- **Verbal Threats and Abuse:** Students are to treat each other with respect and use positive language
- **Teasing/Bullying, Verbal or Nonverbal:** Bullying will not be tolerated in any form. All forms of teasing or bullying, big or small, will be dealt with immediately.

Bullying:

Bullying at WHIN will not be tolerated in any form. All forms of teasing or bullying, big or small, will be dealt with immediately. Students who are engaging in bullying will be reported to the Executive Leadership team who will inform the students’ parents/family of the situation and determine the appropriate consequence as outlined by the consequences for Tier Two and Three infractions. WHIN has adopted the definitions of bullying as set forth by the United States Federal Government which is detailed in the below chart.

Types of Bullying*	
Verbal Bullying	Saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes: Teasing Name-calling Taunting Threatening to cause harm Inappropriate sexual comments
Social Bullying	Referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes: Leaving someone out on purpose Embarrassing someone in public Telling other children not to be friends with someone Spreading rumors about someone
Physical Bullying	Involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes: Hitting/kicking/pinching Spitting Tripping/pushing Taking or breaking someone's things Making mean or rude hand gestures
Cyber Bullying	Bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyberbullying include: Mean text messages or emails Rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites Embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles
*All definitions of bullying are from www.stopbullying.gov and can be found at this link: https://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html	

Additionally, as part our Professional Development all WHIN teachers will receive ongoing Dignity for All Students (DASA) training as required by State Law.

For severe misbehavior (Tier 2 and 3 infractions), WHIN may use the following strategies, making sure to follow due process:

- Letter and/or phone call to parent
- Parent/Guardian meeting
- Admonishment by school personnel
- Intervention by counseling staff, including individual/group counseling
- Restorative approaches
- Peer mediation
- Development of individual behavior contract - Short-term behavioral progress reports

- Community service (with parental consent)
- Removal from the situation
- In-school suspension
- Out-of school suspension
- Expulsion

Referrals:

If a student's behavior has proven too disruptive to the learning environment or if repeated attempts to restore the situation have not produced an adequate outcome a teacher or other staff member may refer a student to the Executive Leadership. Referrals are considered serious and will only be used in response to severe and/or recurring student behavior infractions.

When staff make a referral they will complete a formal referral form detailing the misbehavior, steps taken to restore the situation, and the impact of the situation. The Executive Leadership will review these forms to determine next steps. A student's parents/family will be notified immediately whenever a referral is made. A parent meeting may be requested to help determine the best strategies and appropriate disciplinary actions to help the student correct their behavior and make amends.

Illegal Activity:

If a student is engaged in illegal activities the Executive Leadership will notify the student's parents/family immediately to discuss the situation and determine next steps. Upon review of the situation, the Executive Leadership will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if needed. Examples of illegal activities can include:

- Assaults or Threats of Assault
- Possession of Weapons
- Theft
- Sexual Abuse
- Property Damage
- Drug or Alcohol Use

Student Searches

WHIN retains the right to search students and their property to ensure the safety of students and staff. Student searches will only be conducted by the Executive Leadership with at least one additional staff member present to ensure the safety of the student being searched.

Suspension

Executive Leadership, or a designee, may suspend a student for up to ten (10) days. In the event of a student suspension the school shall immediately contact the student's parent/family and inform them of the suspension. Parents, or a legal guardian, must pick the student up from school when they have been suspended. During the suspension the student is expected to complete all of their schoolwork. The suspended student, along with his/her parent or legal guardian must meet with the Executive Leadership and any staff member who was involved in the incident before they are able to return to school.

Expulsion

An expulsion is the removal of a student's right to attend the school by the Board of Trustees. Expulsion is considered the most severe discipline the school can take and is approached with the utmost care and seriousness. Only the Executive Leadership can make a formal recommendation of expulsion to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Leadership may pursue expulsion in the instance of criminal activity, when a student's presence greatly disrupts the safety and learning of classmates, and upon three or more Tier 2 or 3 infractions. Expulsions are final. Students are not permitted on school grounds or any school related activities if they have been expelled.

Due Process

In the case of disciplinary action (suspension or expulsion) involving the removal of students from class or activities, parents will be notified. Students will be told of the charges against them and evidence will be presented. The student will have the opportunity to describe his/her version of the incident. In accordance with Federal due process law (*Goss v. Lopez*), in cases of suspension for a period of 10 days or less, students will be given oral or written notice of the charges against him or her.

The parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible via phone or email. If the student denies the charges, the school administrators and/or teachers will present the evidence held against the student. The student will be afforded the right to present his or her version of the incident. For suspensions of more than 10 days and for the rare case of expulsion, students will be afforded full Due Process protections including the right to secure counsel, the opportunity to confront and cross examine witnesses supporting the challenge, and the opportunity to call his or her own witnesses to verify his or her own version of the incident.

Suspension/Expulsion of Students with Special Needs

In accordance with Federal Special Education law (IDEA 2004) students with an IEP or a 504 plan are protected by certain rights in regard to disciplinary action. That being said, all students are expected to follow the school rules. WHIN will consider the individual student, the student's needs, and the student's plans when making disciplinary decisions. If it is discovered that the behavior of a student with an IEP or a 504 plan is a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student will be returned to class after the maximum of 10 days

of suspension. If the Manifestation Determination hearing finds that the student’s behavior was not a manifestation of the student’s disability, then the child may be disciplined in the same manner as a child without a disability. In this situation and following due process, the Executive Leadership can recommend a student with special needs be placed on a long-term suspension and/or expelled by following the below process

1. Follow the appropriate procedures for the suspension and/or expulsion of all students
2. The Director of Special Programs will review the situation with the District’s Committee of Special Education (CSE).
3. If the CSE supports the suspension and/or expulsion hearing the parent will be notified of the time and place of the hearing.

Partnership with Parents and Families to Resolve Discipline Issues and Promote Learning:

WHIN firmly believes that our preventive discipline model and strong discipline policies must include the support and enforcement of parents and families. Therefore, teachers and/or administrators will be in communication via email, phone or face to face meetings whenever there is a situation or potential situation that might distract a student from learning.

Annual Review of the WHIN Student Discipline Policies:

Every year a team of WHIN stakeholders including school leadership, teachers, staff, students and their families will review these policies and make recommendations for change. It is solely the WHIN Board of Directors discretion to accept- in part or in whole- any recommendations presented.

WHIN Ways of Being

WHIN is committed to developing students holistically and authentically; instead of setting aside a specified time to perform character development, WHIN integrates elements of character strengthening within all content areas.

Specifically, we aim to create students who are:

Lifelong and Lifewide Effective Learners <i>How we learn together</i>	Empathetic, Compassionate Community Members <i>How we treat each other</i>	Agents of Social Change <i>How we impact our community</i>
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Within each of these larger categories, we include a rich variety of well-researched factors that contribute to long-term success, academically as well as personally. These include (but are not limited to) fostering a sense of responsibility, perseverance, self-control, zest and curiosity, as well as developing empathy for others, being service-oriented, taking initiative, expressing

gratitude, and using art for social change. El Sistema has long-incorporated more than just musicianship into its teaching and practice, and we draw from the successes and work accomplished around the world in the El Sistema movement to ensure WHIN students are given not just the highest quality instruction and academic development but also the tools necessary to experience a rich, fulfilling life. Staff members at WHIN also embody these qualities and serve as models for one another and our young learners.

School Food

Cafeteria:

A monthly calendar of meals will be shared with families. Meals are provided by the NYC DOE for WHIN students. The NYC DOE cannot provide a nut, milk, or allergen-free school environment because the risk of accidental exposure is always present whether in food other students bring to school or due to trace elements of allergens in foods prepared. Please alert the WHIN office if your child has any known allergies or dietary restrictions and share a doctor's note specifying those restrictions.

Lunch Forms:

WHIN participates in the DOE School Foods lunch program. NYC schools that choose to take part in the DOE lunch program must submit a lunch form for each household. To obtain the various benefits for students from Title 1 funding, lunch forms must be completed each year.

WHIN offers universal free lunch. In order to provide free and reduced price meals to students all parents must submit lunch forms to WHIN each year to ensure eligibility for Title 1 funds. School food authorities can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in afterschool educational or enrichment programs.

Snack policy

WHIN provides a healthy snack to students every day. If you choose to send your child to school with a snack, please send in a nutritional snack (ie fruit, vegetables).

Candy or gum will be discarded. If a child in the class has life-threatening food allergies, we will ask families to refrain from sending their children to school with foods that might pose a danger.

Celebration policy

WHIN recognizes that healthy eating results in better learning. However, we recognize that at times, moments of celebrations can call for special treats that are not what we typically eat. If you choose to celebrate a child's birthday at school, please contact your child's classroom teachers in advance to discuss the most appropriate time for a short celebration. Celebrations must be scheduled in advance and shall not take the place of instructional time. When selecting treats to share with the class, please be mindful of potential food allergies.

Cupcakes, cookies, fruit cups, or other individual treats are appropriate foods to contribute to a classroom celebration. Please refrain from bringing in sheet cakes, food that requires on-site preparation, food that requires refrigeration, or food that requires extensive set-up or clean-up. We ask families to speak with teachers to ensure paper plates, utensils, and cups are available for celebrations.

Field Work

Experiences outside of the classroom offer WHIN students hands-on opportunities to apply classroom instruction to real world situations. WHIN students participate and share an active role in the community. Teachers organize and arrange trips to coincide with the curriculum they are teaching. All students are expected to attend all out of school functions. These opportunities range from walks in the neighborhood to visits to local cultural institutions, such as museums and theatres. Classes will travel on foot, by school bus, city bus, subway or chartered bus. Teachers will notify parents of upcoming trips and give specific information regarding lunch, transportation, admissions fees, etc. Please notify your child's classroom teachers if assistance is needed to cover any trip costs or fees.

Teachers will also request parent chaperones to accompany the class and to assist in supervision. Family chaperones will be needed on many trips and play a vital role in maintaining the safety and educational value of the trip. WHIN is a community based school and we welcome and appreciate all of our families that support and participate in school activities. In order to chaperone, please fill out a parent chaperone form at least 7 days in advance of the trip. We require 1 adult over 18 years of age for every ten students as a minimum.

Chaperone Guidelines for all outside of school functions:

- Please do not bring siblings of any age on WHIN sponsored field trips.
- Follow the instructions of the teacher(s) who organized the trip.
- Turn off all cell phones and limit adult socializing during the instructional component of the field trip
- Do not purchase souvenirs or food for your child or any students while on the trip, unless requested to do so by the teacher.
- Do not smoke during the trip
- Remember that chaperones are a part of the learning community at WHIN and participate for the benefit of all students – not just one's own.

Student Admission, Re-enrollment, and Transfers

Admission:

As a tuition free public charter school, WHIN Music Community Charter School (“WHIN”) *shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, national origin, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in*

order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school. WHIN welcomes applications from all elementary students who are eligible under the laws of New York State to attend public school in New York City. In compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Section 2854(2) of the New York Education Law, governing admission to a charter school, WHIN will admit 54 kindergarten students and 54 first graders in its first year of operations. In each subsequent academic year, we will admit 54 new kindergarten students.

Enrollment: Applicants to WHIN must be residents of New York State at the time of application. Enrollment will be done through an application process; if there are more applicants than the allotted spaces, a public lottery will be held. Prospective Kindergarten students must be 5 years of age by December 31; prospective First Graders must be 6 years of age by December 31st. WHIN does not use additional criteria (including admissions tests, interviews, essays, attendance at information sessions, etc.) as a condition of enrollment.

Parents will be required to produce an original birth certificate, proof of address, social security card and immunization records to prove eligibility. Enrolled students are guaranteed spots in future years in all K-5 grades offered. Every spring, we will gather information about our students' plans to re-enroll in order to allow for proper recruitment for any empty seats.

Lottery:

In the event that there are more applications than spots, an annual public lottery will be held using the NYSED Weighted Lottery Generator to applications for students who are in the economically disadvantaged subgroup as evidenced by Free and Reduced Lunch criteria. Our rationale to implement a Weighted Lottery Generator targeting the economically disadvantaged subgroup is based on two principles:

1. According to the New York State Education Department's Student Information Repository System data for 2014-2015, 85% of students in CSD 6 are Economically Disadvantaged. This represents a larger need than ELL students (31%) and students with disabilities (19%).
2. El Sistema was created and serves to help students born into- or living in poverty develop the necessary academic, social-emotional, interpersonal, and self regulatory skills for academic success and upward mobility. Including a Weighted Lottery Generator in our school design allows us to always serve CSD 6 students who are economically disadvantaged.

The lottery will be conducted in a manner that will ensure fairness and be in compliance with all state and local law. No more than seven days after the lottery, WHIN will inform applicants of the lottery results via email and mailed letters that will indicate required next steps for accepted families to enroll their students. In alignment with the Open Meeting Law,

notice for the admissions lottery will also be provided to the public on the school's website as well as via newspaper advertisement.

Wait List: Students who do not get a seat after the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order that they were drawn. If there is a vacancy, the family of students first on the waiting list will be informed via phone of an admission offer and given 24 hours to make a decision about attending WHIN. Students who wish to apply to WHIN after the lottery will be placed on the waiting list based on their application date. WHIN will keep accurate records of their waitlist containing, the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission.

Process of Removing a Student from Enrollment: Students may be removed from enrollment during or after the enrollment period if they have shared false and/or incorrect information or fail to submit all necessary forms by the required date. If a parent is unable to submit the required forms by the required date the child's place can be secured by contacting WHIN and indicating their intent to enroll. If the documents are not received by the requested date and parent notification of intent has not been made, WHIN will make at least two attempts to contact the parent prior to moving a child to the waitlist.

Transfers: In the case of any empty seats due to attrition, transfer or location moves, we will backfill vacant seats until December 31st. Students who come into the school once the semester has started will be welcomed into the community through an orientation program aimed at easing the transition.

General Policies

Money and Other Valuable Property

WHIN students should not bring money or other valuable property to school. In the event that parent wishes to send his/her child with money or valuable property, all items must remain in the student's backpack for the duration of the school day. WHIN takes no responsibility for the loss or destruction of money or personal property on or off school grounds.

Cell Phones and Other Electronics

WHIN students are not allowed to use cell phones or other electronic devices during the school day. In an emergency, parents may contact children by calling the main office. In cases where there is no emergency, families should wait to speak to their children after the end of the school day. WHIN takes no responsibility for the loss or destruction of cell phones or electronic devices on or off school grounds.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

In accordance with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of students' records, WHIN Music

Community Charter School has adopted the following regulations to protect the privacy rights of its students.

These rights are explained below:

- As a parent/guardian or eligible student you may have access to all of the student's education records maintained by the school, including report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules. When these records include information on more than one student, parents/guardians are limited only to information pertaining to his/her child. Unless it is impossible for parents/guardians or eligible students to inspect the records for reasons such as great distance, WHIN is not required to provide copies of materials in education records and if provided, the school may charge a fee for copies (see below under "Accessing Student's Records" section).
- Schools are required to ask for written consent before disclosing your child's personally identifiable information to individuals other than you. However, there are a few exceptions allowed by the law to disclose records and "directory" type information (see below under "Accessing Student's Records" and "Directory Information").
- As a parent/guardian or eligible student, you have the right to review your child's or your education records and to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading (see below under "Amending or Appealing Student's Records").
- Student records or other identifiable information are maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or need to be disposed are done so in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.

Accessing Student's Records

Schools must honor your request to review your child's education records within 45 days of receiving the request. While you can inspect and review your child's education records, schools are not required to provide copies of materials, except in limited circumstances (for example, for reasons such as great distance), in which case, there may be a fee for copies. For those parents whose children receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the school district, local special education director, or state special education director can answer questions about any additional rights and remedies with regard to their children's education records.

The process to access students' records is as follows:

1. All requests to inspect and review a child's record must be in writing and submitted to the main office.
2. Upon receipt, the school has 45 days to honor a parent's/guardian's request. If the requester is not a parent/guardian, the school will send a Consent for Release Student Information letter to the parent/guardian asking for permission to release their child's record.
3. Once permission is granted to inspect and review a student's education record, the requester must sign the Record of Access form. If a student has an IEP, the requester must Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also sign the Confidential File Access Log form in the student folder.

Schools are prohibited from disclosing personally identifiable information about your child

without written consent with exception of the following disclosures:

- To school officials with legitimate educational interests;
- To another school at which the student intends to enroll;
- To state or local education authorities for auditing or evaluating federal or state supported education programs, or enforcing federal laws that relate to those programs, and state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law;
- To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- To accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; or appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- Including information the school has designated as “directory information.”

Directory Information

FERPA defines “directory information” as information contained in a student’s education record that generally would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

Directory information could include:

- Name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, and grade level;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- Degrees, honors, and awards received; and
- The most recent school attended.

A school may disclose directory information to anyone, without consent, if it has given parents:

general notice of the information it has designated “directory information;” the right to opt out of these disclosures; and the period of time they have to notify the school of their desire to opt out.

Amending or Appealing Student Records

1. If a parent/guardian believes their child’s education records contain inaccuracies, are misleading or in violation of their child’s right to privacy, he/she may ask that the record be amended. This appeal must be in writing to the School’s Executive Leadership and must include the following:

- a. Information that is claimed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights
- b. Specific records in which the parent/guardian believes the information is contained
- c. Basis for the claim (i.e., reasons why he/she believes the information is inaccurate, etc.)
- d. The parent’s/guardian’s proposed change(s)

2. The Executive Leadership will review the request, make a determination, and send a letter

to the requester within fifteen school days of receiving the letter. This letter will lay out the reason(s) for the school's decision in response to the parent's/guardian's request. If the request is warranted, the school may decide to remove, modify, or expunge the information in the record, without this being an acknowledgement that the entry was improper or that any person acted improperly by including the entry on the record.

Contact the School's office for more information: office@whinmusic.org
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Email: info@whinmusic.org Website: www.whinmusic.org

3. If the request is denied or no ruling is made in the allotted time, the parent/guardian has the right to a formal hearing with a hearing officer appointed by the Board of Trustees. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record. While Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA, the actual means of notification is left to the discretion of each school and could be in the form of a special letter, student handbook, newspaper article, among others. This document constitutes the means of notification at WHIN. For additional information or technical assistance, you may contact our School's office at office@whinmusic.org.

More Information For more information about FERPA, contact the

Department's Family Policy
Compliance Officer
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-5920
202-260-3887
FERPA.Customer@ED.Gov

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)

WHIN Music Community Charter School's policies and procedures comply with the New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) (Article 6 of the New York Public Officers Law), pursuant to Education Law §2854(1)(e), and include the required FOIL "regulations" and notice. It is the policy of WHIN Music Community Charter School ("WHIN") to furnish to the public the information and records required by the Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL"), constituting Article 6 of the Public Officers Law ("POL").

Complaint Policy

In our effort to address the specific concerns of a parent, individual or a group of parents, WHIN distinguishes between informal and formal complaints, being the main difference that the former does not involve an alleged violation of law and/or charter while the latter do.

While issues involving a violation of law and/or charter may be resolved informally, the complainant can at any time during the process initiate the formal complaint process. In compliance with Education Law Section 2855(4), the complainant can direct his/her formal complaint directly to the Board of Trustees. Below is a detailed account of WHIN Complaint Policy Procedures.

Informal Complaints

The types of complaints that address issues that are problematic for a student or group of students (such as behavioral, academic, etc.) but not involve violations of law and/or charter, are considered informal complaints. Since the education and well-being of every single student in our school is of paramount importance WHIN will work closely with parents and students to resolve these issues in a manner that is respectful, thoughtful, and beneficial for both parties. Additionally, and in our goal to implement a strong school culture based on trust and respect between the school leadership and parents, it is our hope that these 'informal complaints' would be resolved quickly at the school level and not handled by the school's Board of Trustees.

Procedures for filing an Informal Complaint:

- Complaints on behalf of your child should be made as quickly as possible via email, in person or in writing to your child's teacher who will work with you and your child to resolve the issue at hand. If the teacher does not resolve the issue to your satisfaction you may inform him/her you are taking your complaint to the executive leaders of the school: complaints related to educational staff should be directed to the Executive Principal while those related to operational staff should be directed to the Executive Director.
- Complaints about a school administrator (director) or teacher should be made to the person involved via email, in person or in writing. If you are not able to resolve it with the person involved, you should proceed to the appropriate executive leader (EP for educational staff or ED for operational staff).
- Complaints about executive leadership should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

After an Informal Complaint has been filed:

- You should expect a response via email or in writing within five business days. If you do not get a response within this timeline you may move the complaint via email or in writing to the executive leaders. If you do not receive a response within five business days of receipt of your complaint, you may proceed directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, under what would be a violation of this policy, which is part of the school's charter.

Upon resolution of an Informal Complaint, WHIN will provide you with:

- A response in writing and in person that includes the reason for the action taken, if any.

WHIN will keep a written record of informal complaints as well as their resolutions. If a parent is not satisfied with the resolution or action taken, he or she may appeal to the executive leadership team.

Formal Complaints

A parent, individual or public agency may bring a complaint to the Board of WHIN Music Community Charter School alleging a violation of the Charter Schools Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), state law/regulations related to students with disabilities, or any other provision of law relating to the management or governance of WHIN.

All formal complaints must be submitted in writing (a complaint form is available in the school's main office), and should include:

- A detailed account of the nature of the violation including the name(s) of the individual(s) involved, the time/date/place the incident(s) and/or action(s) at issue occurred.
- An allegation referring to the specific term of the charter or provision of law that the school has violated.
- What response, if any, was received from the school thus far.
- What relief the complainant is seeking.
- The signature and contact information (name, address, and phone number) of the complainant.

All formal complaints must be addressed to the Board Chair of the Board of Trustees of the school. Once a formal complaint has been filed:

- You can submit your complaint to the Office Manager in the school's main office, where he/she will date stamp it and place it in the mailbox of the Executive Leadership unless the complaint directly involves the Executive Leadership, in which case the Office Manager will directly submitted to the Secretary of the Board. After reviewing the complaint, the Executive Leadership will submit all formal complaints to the Board of Trustees within 5 days of receipt.

- In compliance with Education Law Section 2855(4), you can always file a formal complaint with the Board of Trustees by submitting your complaint in writing to the Secretary of the Board. If the complaint directly involves the Secretary, the complaint may be submitted to the Board Chair.

- The Board of Trustees will act on the complaint and provide a final response to the complaint within 30 days of receiving the formal written complaint or by the next regularly scheduled Board meeting unless extenuating circumstances outlined in the complaint form require an expedited review.

Upon resolution of a complaint, WHIN will provide you with:

- A written determination and any remedial action to be taken and the reasons for such determinations.

- A written notice informing you of your right to appeal the determination to the NYSED Charter School Office if the complaint involves a violation of law or charter

If the complainant believes the WHIN Board of Trustees has not adequately addressed the complaint, or hasn't responded to your complaint in writing within the timeline that is described above, the complainant has the right to bring the complaint to the NYS Board of Regents, who shall have the power and the duty to issue appropriate remedial orders to the Board of Trustees of WHIN under their jurisdiction to effectuate the provisions applicable under Education Law.

Staff Gifts

WHIN agrees with the NYC Department of Education Regulation of the Chancellor that no students or parent/guardians are required or expected to contribute towards any gift to a school employee. As such, WHIN employees may only accept gifts that are sentimental in nature (ie homemade cards).

Health, Safety and Security

Providing a safe learning environment for all students and staff is essential. To ensure emergency readiness, WHIN conducts eight evacuation drills and four soft lockdown drills per year in accordance to New York State Law. In the event of an evacuation you will be contacted.

Student Health Concerns and Immunizations

If a child requires medication of any kind:

- An Authorization to Dispense Medication form must be submitted
- The medication must be given to the nurse or to the Office Manager by a parent/guardian in it's original container.

Any student that carries an asthma inhaler with him/ her must provide:

- An Authorization to Dispense Medication form stating that the student needs to carry the inhaler with him/ her and
- The second inhaler that is to be kept in the nurse's office or with the Office Manager.

WHIN follows all health, safety, and immunization regulation and laws of New York State

AED/ CPR Training:

In compliance with all New York State regulations WHIN provides staff certified in adult, child, and infant Automated External Defibrillator (AED)/(CPR) training.

Incident Reporting

Whenever a student receives medical attention at school an Incident/Injury report will be completed. WHIN will immediately notify you if your child becomes sick or has an accident that requires medical attention. If your child is sent to the school nurse and it is determined that he/she has a fever, is contagious, or otherwise cannot remain in school for the remainder

of the day, you will be contacted to pick up your child as soon as possible. If you are not available, the emergency contact will be notified.

If your child is injured during the school day, a supervising staff member will complete a Student Incident/Injury Report that will be kept on file at school, a copy will be sent home, and will be reported on PowerSchool. The nurse or attending adult will make every effort to contact you by phone and ensure all attempts are recorded in PowerSchool. In the event that a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the nurse or attending adult will attempt to notify the emergency contact and will send a report home with the student. All information will be reported on the Incident/Injury form and a record of the details of all events will be housed in PowerSchool.

Safety Drills and Evacuation Procedures

WHIN administers routine fire drills as mandated by NYS law. The school has established evacuation plans and procedures as well as designated safety areas. Copies of the Evacuation Plan and Procedures for the school building have been posted in each classroom, office, and common area. WHIN also conducts lockdown drills throughout the year. These drills are practiced to prepare for medical emergencies within the school or from threats posed outside the building. The procedures for this drill are detailed within our School Safety Plan.

Mandated Reporting

The WHIN community cares deeply about the health, safety, and well-being of our scholars, families, and community. Under New York law all school employees are required to report suspected child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect when they have a reasonable belief that such abuse is occurring or has occurred.

Transportation

According to Chancellor's Regulation A-801, transportation eligibility for children who are not mandated for specialized transportation because of their IEP (Individualized Education Program), is determined on the basis of the student's grade level and the distance between the student's residence and school.

Pupils in grades K - 2 are eligible for free transportation if they reside ½ mile or more from their school. Pupils in grades K - 2 are eligible for half fare transportation if they reside less than 1/2 mile from their school.

Should transportation services be needed, parents are required to request transportation at the time of enrollment. During enrollment parents are required to provide WHIN with any/all necessary information needed to secure transportation.