

UNIVERSAL INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOL

SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

AND

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2010-2011

Welcome to Universal Institute Charter School! UICS is looking forward to working with you and your child this school year. This handbook is designed to provide you and your child with the necessary information needed to have a successful academic school year. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to call us. We will be more than willing to help you in any way we can to answer all questions.

From the Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance (April 23, 2004)

The Universal Institute Charter School and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (participating children), agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State's high standards.

UNIVERSAL INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOL HISTORY

The renowned music impresario and creator of the Sound of Philadelphia, Kenny Gamble, Founder and CEO of Philadelphia International Records founded Universal Institute Charter School in 1999.

Universal Institute Charter School is a subsidiary of Universal Companies and managed by Universal Educational Companies, Inc.

The vision of Mr. Kenny Gamble is to provide a 'world class' academically rich program to the children of Philadelphia through his amazing efforts to revitalize the South Philadelphia community. The sole purpose of Universal Homes and Universal Educational Companies, Inc. is to put **children first** through the many efforts of our parent organization. It is with this vision in mind that Kenny and Faatimah Gamble's unprecedented socio-economic and socio-educational initiative in Greater South Philadelphia began.

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MISSION

The mission of the Universal Institute Charter School is to provide a School -To - Career Academic Program that emphasizes self-sufficiency, civic responsibility and problem solving through Mathematics, Language Arts and the Sciences. The educational program will utilize community resources within the Universal Institute's immediate neighborhood through a variety of before, during, and after school partnerships with families, businesses, social agencies, civic groups and community organizations to enhance the academic program and to support students and their families.

Universal Institute Charter School is a school of choice. Students and their parents/guardians are required to adhere to the rules and regulations as described in this handbook. The handbook has been prepared and approved by parents, staff, administration and the board of directors. Violation of these rules and regulations can result in consequences including dismissal.

Universal Institute Charter School Information

Administrative Staff

Johnny Walker, Principal

Universal Message

Be respectful

Be responsible

and

Get a good Education!

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Universal Institute Charter School is a public school with a capped enrollment. Therefore, admission is through application and a lottery process which is held on the third Friday of March at 10:00a.m. of each school year. Applications for admission are good up to December 31st of each school year and must be submitted prior to the lottery date. Students are admitted based on available grade slots and in the order of the lottery selection.

INTENT TO RETURN POLICY

Students who are currently enrolled must submit an Intent to Return form by April 30th and a signed parental contract must be on file by the last day of June for the upcoming year.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Universal Institute Charter School maintains a firm policy regarding the confidentiality of its students and prohibits the discussion of any student or student matters in any public venue.

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL HOURS

Students will be in school Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

PARENT PICK-UP OF STUDENTS

Parents may pick up students from school at 3:15p.m. Students must be picked-up no later than 3:40p.m. Parents or guardians who arrive past 3:40 p.m. will be charged a \$10.00 late fee for each 15 minute period. Students who are not picked up by 6:00 p.m. will be brought to the 17th police precinct.

ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance assures that our students will not miss valuable instructional time and opportunities that will enhance their success in school. Students are required to be in school every day except for:

- Illness
- Approved religious holidays
- Family emergencies

If a child is absent, the parent should notify the school. All absent students are expected to submit a parental note with the reason for the absence upon their return. If a student is absent for three days or more for illness, a physician's note is required. Please notify the school nurse if your child is ill with a communicable disease, i.e. chicken pox, meningitis, strep throat, etc.

It is the policy of Universal Institute Charter School that all children attend school regularly, on time and for the entire school day in accordance with the laws of the State of Pennsylvania.

We take seriously the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as it applies to student attendance. Students with excessive unexcused absences, lateness's or early dismissals will be contacted by letter to meet with the administration. A second contact regarding the same issue will be notice that a report will be submitted to the Department of Human Services and Office of Truancy Prevention. Any further violation will require parent/guardian to appear before the Board of Directors for recommendation of possible dismissal from the Universal Institute Charter School.

LATENESS

Being prompt to school is a habit that will remain throughout life and will benefit your child's efforts. If your child is late for school, he or she must report to the main office to sign in and receive a pass to enter the classroom.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled after school hours as they can interfere with your child's learning program. When children have an appointment that requires them to leave early, the following procedure must be followed:

- Send a note stating the reason for early dismissal that morning by 10:00am or come to the main office to ask that your child be excused early.
- Notify the office if someone other than yourself is picking up your child (the person must be listed on the approved pick-up person that you submitted, and must have photo ID for security reasons).
- You or the designated pick-up person must sign your child out at the office. Those picking up students, including parents, may not go directly to the child's classroom.

No student is released from the school during regular hours without being accompanied by a responsible adult.

MAKE UP WORK

Upon request, we will make every effort to provide assignments for a child who has an excused absence for three days or more. When absence is anticipated, please let your child's teacher know ahead of time so that you and the teacher can work together to provide the necessary work assignments during the period of absence.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

It is the policy of the Universal Institute Charter School that all of its employees are to be aware of, and comply with, the Child Protective Services law of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. **This law makes it mandatory** for UICS employees to report suspected cases of child abuse

and/or neglect to the Principal, who must file a report with the Department of Human Services. Compliance with the laws of Pennsylvania and the policies of UICS will serve to protect everyone concerned.

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

Universal Institute Charter School provides a free and reduced breakfast and lunch program through the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The students will receive a full lunch every day in the **Universal Café**. **All parents must submit a lunch form requested from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia at the beginning of the school year to determine qualification.**

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL UNIFORM

The Board of Directors has approved the Universal Institute Charter School Uniform and Dress Code. The uniform provides the school with a cohesive look and satisfies the city mandate. The appearance of the student is primarily the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Students who continually come to school out of uniform, violates the dress code and he/she will receive disciplinary actions that can lead to dismissal.

Outerwear that is worn over the school uniform during the school day must be **a solid navy or black in color**. Hoodies with the UICS logo can be purchased from the school. **No other colored hoodies or variations of colored outerwear will be accepted.**

To promote our School -To- Career philosophy, **all students are to have a neat and clean appearance daily**. The school colors are Navy Blue.

Boys – K-4 White button down Oxford shirt, Navy Twill Pants, Navy sweater 2/logo, red tie, navy socks, navy belt

Girls – K-4 White Peter Pan Shirt, Plaid Jumper, Navy sweater w/logo, red criss-cross tie, navy socks

Boys 5 – 8 White button down oxford, navy twill pant, navy blazer w/emblem, red tie, navy socks, navy belt

Girls 5 – 8 White Peter Pan shirt, Plaid skirt, Navy Blazer w/emblem, red criss-cross tie, navy socks

All students are to wear black, or navy shoes.

Physical education is a requirement of the academic curriculum. Students who are not properly prepared for gym cannot participate and can fail the course due to lack of participation.

Hats are not permitted to be worn in the school, pants must be worn on the waistline and girls cannot wear dangling or hooped earrings. (Earrings cannot be larger than the size of a quarter.

Exceptions to the uniform policy for religious purposes are made on an individual basis and require the approval of the Chief Academic Officer.

UNIVERSAL EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURE

Universal Institute Charter School follows the same emergency closing procedure as the School District of Philadelphia.

Most local radio stations, TV and Cable TV stations broadcast school closing information beginning very early in the morning beginning at 5:00a.m. If for any reason, Universal Institute Charter School must close due to a unique emergency; our school code number is **W 26**.

If it becomes necessary to close during the school day, information will be forwarded to local radio stations, TV and cable TV stations.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Students will participate in two evacuation drills per month which include fire drills and shelter-in-place. These unannounced drills are to prepare the students and staff for any emergency that may arise which would require the building to be evacuated. We ask that you reinforce the importance of following directions during an evacuation drill at home.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The school nurse handles a variety of student concerns each day and maintains medical records on each student. Please inform the nurse of any special health problems. When the nurse is not in school, the Principal (or designee), who has received training by the nurse, may administer medication under the guidelines established by the Pennsylvania Health Services Commission.

If a child becomes ill during the school day, he/she will be given immediate attention. You will be called if your child is too ill to return to class. Please advise your children that they should not personally call home if they feel ill but should go directly to the nurse's office or the Principal

Please complete the **Emergency Contact Form and the Student Medical History Form** for the school nurse by the first day of the school. These forms provide important information, which can help to keep your child safe and healthy during school hours. Please note that it is still the parent/guardian's responsibility to directly inform the nurse of any special medical conditions or needs by phone or in person.

IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS

All students must be completely immunized or exempted before admission to any public, parochial or private school in Pennsylvania. This is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Philadelphia County Board of Health and Universal Institute Charter School.

The purpose of requiring immunization is to protect students from preventable communicable diseases and their medical and educational complications.

Immunization: Required for Admission

Immunization	Number of Doses
DTD	Five
OPV	Five
Hep.B	Three
MMR	Two
Varicella	One to Two

There are two exemptions:

Religious Exemption – Pupils need not be immunized if the parent or guardian objects in writing to the immunization on religious/ethical grounds.

Medical Exemption – Pupils need not be immunized if a physician or his designee provides a written statement that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child. When the physician determines that immunization is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the medical exemption ceases to be valid and the child must be immunized.

In the event of an outbreak of a disease for which the child is exempt from the requirement to be immunized, that child will be excluded from school until a competent medical authority determines that the child may return, or until the child is appropriately immunized.

Disposition of Immunization Records

When transferring from one school to another, parents should request the Certificate of Immunization from the current school and take it to the new school. No pupil will be admitted to a new school without the certificate. The Certificate of Immunization shall follow the student when he/she transfers, graduates, withdraws or otherwise leaves UICS.

MEDICATION POLICY

For the safety of all students, NO medication (this includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, may be given OR taken in school unless we have ALL of the following in the health office:

- 1) written orders from the student's health care provider,
- 2) written permission from the parent/guardian, and
- 3) properly labeled medicine (in a container from the pharmacy or the health care provider, including the date the prescription was filled).

This **medication process must be restarted each school year**, beginning with the first day of school and ending on the last day of school.

Under special circumstances, the school nurse may give permission for the student to take his/her own medication if the **Student Contract Form** has been completed and signed by the parent/guardian and the student.

UNIVERSAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Level 1 Offences

Rule 1: I will not disrupt school and the learning process of others or myself. I will not be late for class, be unruly or ignore staff's directives.

Rule 2: I will not use disruptive and/or offensive language, including profanity, in classrooms, hallways, etc.

Rule 3: I will wear the school uniform proudly each and every day. I understand that the proper school uniform consists of the requirements below:

Boys – K-4 White button down Oxford shirt, Navy Twill Pants, Navy sweater 2/logo, red tie, navy socks, navy belt

Girls – K-4 White Peter Pan Shirt, Plaid Jumper, Navy sweater w/logo, red criss-cross tie, navy socks

Boys 5 – 8 White button down oxford, navy twill pant, navy blazer w/emblem, red tie, navy socks, navy belt

Girls 5 – 8 White Peter Pan shirt, Plaid skirt, Navy Blazer w/emblem, red criss-cross tie, navy socks

All students are to wear black, or navy shoes.

Denim jeans are not allowed under any uniforms. In the event of inclement weather the gym sweat pants may be worn under dresses or skirts. This policy will be strictly enforced everyday and a grade will be recorded on the report card each marking period.

Gym Uniform

A Navy Blue Sweat Suit with no logos or school approved logo and navy blue tee shirt no logo or school approved logo.

Rule 4: I will not damage, destroy or remove the property of other students, staff or visitors.

Rule 5: I will not fight or horseplay with other students, push other student's or exhibit behavior that leads to, or could lead to injury.

Rule 6: I will not abuse computer and/or Internet privileges.

If I break Rules 1 through 6

- **I could receive an out-of-school suspension from one to four school days, depending on the severity of the incident. At the Principal's sole discretion, in-school suspension, Saturday School, a service requirement and/or a written warning may be substituted for out-of-school suspension.**
- **The police may be contacted for anything unlawful, such as property damage, weapons, theft, .**
- **My parent/guardian will be contacted and they will receive a letter outlining the seriousness of the incident.**
- **A meeting will take place with me, the Dean of Discipline and/or the Vice Principal, and my parent/guardian.**
- **The breakage of the rule will result in my being placed on probation, as a second breakage of rules 1 through 6 will lead to out-of-school suspension, and a third breakage of the rules will lead to me having to return to my neighborhood school.**

Level 2 Offenses

Rule 7: I will not use any gesture or say anything (or write anything) to another student that is threatening or frightening or puts that student in any kind of jeopardy.

Rule 8: I will not harass others (physically, racially, sexually or through bullying and tormenting). I will not bring objects that can jeopardize the safety of others students and staff.

Rule 9: I will not expose myself indecently, or sexually offend others, including unwelcomed sexual advances or gestures.

Rule 10: I will not possess drugs or alcohol for personal consumption.

If I break Rules 7 through 10.....

- **I will receive an automatic out-of-school suspension for five school days. There will be a meeting with student, parents/guardians and Dean of Discipline prior to re-instatement.**
- **The police may be contacted for anything unlawful, such as possessing drugs, indecent exposure or threats.**
- **The breakage of the rule will result in me being placed on probation.**
- **My parent/guardian will be contacted.**

PARENTAL PROCESS FOR CONCERNS

Parents/guardians and teachers can address problems, issues, and/or concerns by following the process listed below:

1. Schedule an appointment with the Dean of Discipline or his designee to discuss and resolve problems, issues, or concerns.

2. As a result of any unsatisfactory resolution, parents may request an appointment with the Vice Principal to express and rectify their concerns. If a decision is reached that is still unsatisfactory to parent/guardian, then the parent has the right to request a meeting with the Principal to resolve the issue.

STUDENTS DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

The Board recognizes that exclusion from the education program of the Universal Institute Charter School, whether by in-school suspension, suspension, or expulsion is a severe sanction that can be imposed upon a student. However, no such reprimand can be imposed without due process:

This process includes all of the following:

- Investigation by school administration
- Parent notification by the administration, or his/her designee
- Rendering of a school-based decision which may be appealed through parental complaint outlined above
- Post-conference with school administration

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Parents are requested to place the name of their child clearly on all personal items such as coats, jackets, book bags, lunch boxes, etc. Please encourage your child to be responsible for looking for and finding lost items. The Lost and Found is located in the cafeteria.

Responsibility

Care should be taken when you approve of your child bringing valuable or irreplaceable items to school. The school cannot be responsible for items that are lost, damaged or otherwise missing.

Items Not Permitted

- Electronic games, pagers, walkman, radios, CD players, headphones and telephones are not permitted in school. **If an electronic item is confiscated it will not be returned until the last day of school.**
- Dangerous items/weapons are not permitted in school such as: razors, pen knives, hunting knives, matches, pointed objects, guns, aerosol sprays, etc. (Knives should not be sent in school lunch containers.)
- Students may not bring items to school for the purpose of selling to students or teachers. Playing cards or the trading of Baseball, Basketball, Pokemon, Digimon, YuGiOh Cards or similar materials on school property is not permitted.

FIELDWORK TRIPS

The mission of the Universal Institute Charter School is to connect what students learn in the classroom to the real world and we accomplish this through field trips. Field trips are planned to enrich and enhance the programs in the classroom **and are not optional. All students required to participate with absolute responsibility, respect and dignity and are assessed each marking period.** Parents will be notified in advance and may be asked to contribute towards admission. A signed permission slip for each child is necessary before each trip. The classroom teacher will recruit the

specified number of parent chaperones. Each chaperone is needed to accompany the class on the bus and to fulfill specific responsibilities to help facilitate student safety and focus students on the event. Only designated parent chaperones, without younger or older siblings, are expected to attend the event.

Chaperones are not permitted to use corporal punishment or profanity and should bring all disciplinary concerns to the attention of a UICS staff member. Students with behavioral issues or concerns will be required to have a parent/guardian accompany them on the trip. (When participation is denied, pre-payment or deposit, if any, for the trip is non-refundable)

RECESS

Students will have approximately 15 minutes of recess daily (i.e. grade appropriate games and exercise). Most often this will be outside; therefore, students should dress in accordance with the weather. Please remind your child to respect the adults in charge during recess duty. During inclement weather, recess will be held in the classroom. Appropriate indoor activities will be arranged. Parent volunteers may be needed to assist with classroom supervision, especially during the cold winter months.

TELEPHONE USE

The school telephones are not available for children's use unless there is an emergency as determined by the school. Cell phones **are not** permitted in the buildings. Forgetting books, notes or assignments are not emergencies. Our goal is to help students develop more responsibility for gathering the necessary materials required daily for school prior to coming to school. **Students will not be interrupted in their classrooms to receive telephone calls.** In the event of a family emergency, please call the school office.

CHANGES OF PERTINENT INFORMATION

Please notify the school office if you have a change of address, home or work telephone numbers, or any other pertinent information. It is important to have current parental information, should an emergency arise.

VISITORS AND GUESTS

We love visitors and guests to enter our buildings. We have an open door policy and welcome any and all parents/ guardians and/or family members to our school. **To ensure the safety of our students, we ask that all visitors and guests report to the front office to sign in and receive a Universal Visitor's Badge.** Thank you in advance and we look forward to your visits during the year.

SCHOOL SAFETY

In order to maintain a safe and secure environment for all children to protect valuable instructional time, all visitors must report directly to the office. No one is permitted in the halls, in the lunchroom, in the classrooms, or in the playground without authorization from the office. Parents/Visitors of Universal Institute Charter School are expected to abide by the rules and regulations that govern a safe and secure environment. **Anyone found to be in violation of this policy can be refused admission to the school and/or can be escorted from the building by the appropriate legal authorities.**

PARENT AND VISITOR LOG

Parents participating as volunteers in the classroom or who have made arrangements with the teacher to work in the classroom must first have the approval of the Principal. Parents will sign the Parents/visitors Log in the main office each time they visit prior to going to the classroom. **A visitor's pass must be obtained from the office before a parent or visitor enters a classroom. A child abuse and criminal background check is needed for any one who volunteers on a consistent basis. Every volunteer should complete and keep on file a Volunteer Information Form that is kept in the administrative assistant's office.**

PARENTAL CONDUCT

All parents/guardians are expected to follow the school's general rules of conduct as they are designed to ensure the safety of our students and staff. When conversing with school personnel, (teachers, principal, office staff, etc.) parents are expected not to use profanity or engage in any form of behavior that is threatening to students and/or staff. Such misconduct will not be tolerated and legal consequences will be pursued including but not limited to being barred from the school's premises.

PARTIES/CELEBRATIONS

There are opportunities during the school year for celebrations within classrooms. They may include but are not limited to the following events:

- Special events and holidays may be celebrated (grades K-3 only) with the approval of the CAO. Religious observances are not permitted in deference to the varied religious beliefs of our students.
- Birthdays of children (grades K-3) are always acknowledged in classrooms. If you wish to send in a treat for the entire class for the child's birthday, this is permissible. Teachers must be notified in advance. **To avoid hurt feelings, invitations to private parties are not permitted to be given out in school.** As an alternative to honor a child's birthday, we suggest donating a new children's book to the UICS library. Contact the principal for suggestions.
- Families who do not wish to have their children participate in such events should notify the teacher.

CONTACTING YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER(S)

Teachers are anxious to meet with you to discuss your child's progress or concerns you may have about class procedures. To request a meeting, please send a note with your child or leave a message for the teacher at 215-732-7988. Please include your telephone number and the time of day when you can be reached and the teacher will contact you as soon as possible.

Parent/teacher communication is vital to the educational success and experience of your child. Together we form a team that focuses on your child's needs, concerns, and growth. We invite you to participate in the process by your inquiries. We will also communicate with the parents through the following:

- Scheduled parent/teacher conferences
- Progress reports for students
- Report Cards Conferences
- Newsletters
- Monthly School Calendars
- Open House/ Get Acquainted Night
- Monthly notices from teachers
- Email
- Web Page/email (www.uics.org)
- Parent Association Meetings (monthly)
- Notes or telephone calls to parents

Please do not hesitate to contact the school or classroom teacher with questions you may have. Parents are welcome to observe in their child's classrooms. Arrangements for visits must be made in advance with the classroom teacher.

Any parent who would like to request information regarding their child's teacher(s) and or paraprofessional instructor qualifications, please contact the school administrative office with a written request.

PARENT LOCATION/EMERGENCY CONTACT/PARENTAL CUSTODY

Parent location forms are collected at the beginning of the school year. These forms are a source of emergency information about family contact. For the well being of the students, it is important that the forms are completed and returned to the school. Please notify the school office if you have changed your address, home or work telephone numbers, emergency contact persons or any other pertinent information. It is important to have current information should an emergency arise. Please be sure to inform the person(s) you have selected as your emergency contact(s).

In addition, a copy of any Court order or agreement affecting the custodial rights of a parent should be filed with the school.

Failure to keep your child's school informed about your current address and telephone number may result in the schools' inability to reach you in an emergency, not receiving notices of important academic, disciplinary and/or health information, and can result in the loss of your right to participate in important decisions.

PARENT ASSOCIATION

You will be invited to join the Universal Institute Charter School Parent Association to enhance the educational opportunities for our children, and to provide another means through which parents can gain information about UICS and its programs. Parent Association membership is \$1.00 and we need active participation will provide an opportunity for you to become involved in your child's school experience.

PRESS RELEASE

Throughout the school year, students are involved in activities or projects that may be newsworthy. We enjoy publicizing the good things that happen at our school. In these cases the children's pictures and names may be published in one of the local papers.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this procedure, please contact the school. If you would prefer, we will make every effort to make sure that your child/children and/or work is not included in the media.

*It takes an entire village to raise a child.
... An African Proverb*

UNIVERSAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

To accomplish the Universal Institute Charter School mission, the Charter School will be driven by: The adoption of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and PSSA Assessment Anchors, and adaptation of the School District of Philadelphia Core Curriculum.

Universal Institute's Educational Program includes high expectations and a performance driven approach which is emphasized by:

- Rigorous lessons in Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
- A diversity of curricular text resources: Harcourt, Elements of Literature, Holt Science & Technology, Junior Great Books, 100 Book Challenge
- Project-based Learning
- School-To-Career model of instruction
- Art, Technology & Music Classes

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Student Evaluation: Student progress will be evaluated through the use of formal and informal assessments.

1. Formal:
 - Teacher-created assessments, projects
 - Teacher-created academic report cards (4 per year)
 - Terra Nova Test, administered to all 1st and 2nd graders at the end of the school year.
 - PSSA Mathematics & Reading Tests administered to all 3rd – 8th grade students
 - PSSA Science & Writing Tests administered to grades 4 and 8
 - 4Sight Tests
2. Informal:
 - Rubrics for special projects, writing assignments, daily class work, and weekly tests in all subjects
 - Daily Progress reports for students

Universal Special Education Services

The Universal Institute Charter School provides special education and related services to all children with disabilities who are between the ages of five to fourteen, or students who are in the Kindergarten through the Eighth grade. The purpose of this service is to describe (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for the program, (2) the special education programs are to screen and evaluate such students to determine eligibility, and (3) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents and legal guardians. If you feel your child is in need of Special Education Services, please notify the for information and to begin the process. To receive more details regarding our Child Find procedures by contacting us at 215-732-7988.

Students with disabilities will be promoted if they have made measurable progress on their IEP in the areas of core subjects. Progress is to be determined by a review of the IEP goal pages and the corresponding progress reporting section. Students in grades 6-8 are required to meet the Community Service project mandate for graduation. Students with disabilities will be promoted or will graduate if they complete satisfactorily a special education program developed by an Individualized Education Program Team.

FUNDRAISING

Raising monies to support the instructional program of the Universal Institute Charter School is a necessary responsibility of the entire educational community. Monies are used to also support classroom trips, chaperones, student uniforms, student emergencies, etc. Therefore, parents are expected to commit to supporting all of the fund raising efforts of the school to its greatest extent. Please feel free to offer any suggestions that would help us to meet the financial goals of the school. Personal, private and corporate donations or contributions are accepted and always encouraged.

UNIVERSAL TEXTBOOKS

Each student at Universal Institute Charter School will have access to his or her own textbooks and resource materials in all subject areas. The students are expected to take extreme care of the resources provided to them. Students will be held responsible for any or all materials lost or damaged before the end of each school year. Parents are financially responsible for any damage, loss or theft.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Students will be held accountable for complying with the following standards which include:

- Not sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Not using obscene language
- Not giving personal information, such as complete name, phone number, address or identifiable photo, without permission from teacher and parent or guardian
- Not harassing or insulting or attacking others
- Not damaging or modifying computer systems or computer networks
- Not violating copyright laws
- Not using other's passwords
- Not trespassing in others folders, work or files
- Not intentionally wasting limited resources
- Not employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain, or fraud

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

The following procedure is to be followed for any student whose enrollment is terminated for any of the following reasons.

Expulsion: A student is involuntarily withdrawn due to non-compliance of the school's code of conduct as listed in the student parent handbook.

Transfer: A student voluntarily withdrawn to public school within the Philadelphia School District. In this case, the family notifies the school as to what school the student will be transferring to and the records are released by the main **office**.

Withdrawal: A student voluntarily withdraws from Universal Institute Charter School to any other educational in or out of the Philadelphia area. Also, students who are no shows for 10 or more days without notification may be withdrawn administratively.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

Parent's Responsibility: It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of their intent to withdraw a student. A withdrawal form must be completed. Parent or guardian will be asked to complete an exit interview. All financial obligations must be satisfied and all books and or other school property must be returned before withdrawal will be completed at which time clearance will be granted.

School's Responsibility: Pending clearance, the school will complete withdrawal process within 48 hours of written notification. Records will be forwarded to the receiving school immediately. In case of expulsion or administrative withdrawals, parents will be notified in writing and all records will be forwarded to the feeder school.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation for all eligible students in grades one to six will be provided by the School District of Philadelphia as required by Pennsylvania law. The School District contacts families directly indicating pick-up and drop-off locations and times.

UNIVERSAL HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is assigned Monday to Thursday to students to practice what they have been introduced to in the classroom, as preparation for class discussion, or as an extension of a classroom assignment. We anticipate that students should be able to complete homework assignments in a reasonable amount of time:

Helpful Procedures for Parents

Provide children with a place of their own in which to study. There should be proper lighting, a table or a desk, and a comfortable chair.

Setting a time for homework to be done; be available to help keep your child on task

Encouraging your child to use reference books, computers and the library

Set high standards for neatness, form and accuracy.

Give your child praise for his/her work.

Ensure that your child reads for at least twenty minutes every night. Parents should read or share reading with kindergarten and first grade students.

Helping your child avoid distractions such as television, video games, loud radio music

Assignments as well as projects are directly associated to the core curriculum. Weekly Homelinks provide skills in reading & math on grade level. Your child/children upon returning the completed assignments will have small group instruction by the teacher to support those skills for mastery. Parents and guardians will receive notification about their child's individual homework routine at the beginning of the school year.

Notify the classroom teacher if your child is having problems completing assignments.

UNIVERSAL INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

Address:	801 S. 15 th Street Philadelphia, PA 19146	or	1415 Catherine Street Philadelphia, PA 19146
Phone:	215-732-7988	or	215-732-2876
Fax:	215-732-8066		
Website:	www.uics.org		

It is the policy of the Universal Institute Charter School's Board of directors to promote diversity and equal access to educational opportunity and all categories of employment without regard to age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, social or economic status, parenthood, marital status, handicap or any other protected class.

**UNIVERSAL INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOL
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE**

As the parent of _____ a student at Universal Institute Charter School, I understand the Code of Student Conduct, including the consequences of unacceptable behavior by students. I have reviewed the Code of Student Conduct with my child/children and I also understand that the teacher and my child/children share in the responsibility for ensuring a safe, secure school for learning.

Parent Responsibilities

We, as parents, will support our children’s learning in the following ways:

Describe the ways in which parents will support their children’s learning, such as:

- Monitoring attendance.
- Ensuring that homework is completed.
- Monitoring amount of television children watch.
- Volunteering in child’s classroom.
- Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my child’s education.
- Promoting positive use of my child’s extracurricular time.
- Staying informed about my child’s education and communicating with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school or the school district either received by my child or by mail and responding, as appropriate.
- Serving, to the extent possible, on policy advisory groups, such as being the Title I, Part A parent representative on the school’s School Improvement Team, the Title I Policy Advisory Committee, the District-wide Policy Advisory Council, the State’s Committee of Practitioners, the School Support Team or other school advisory or policy groups.

I have received the Child Find letter providing notification of Special Education Services and I would like to receive more information regarding Child Find procedures and special education programs.

Parent’s
Signature _____

Date _____

School

Date

**UNIVERSAL INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOL
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE**

Student Responsibilities

I am _____ a student at Universal Institute Charter School and I understand the Code of Student Conduct, including the consequences of unacceptable behavior by students. I have reviewed the Code of Student Conduct with my parents and my teacher and I also share in the responsibility for ensuring a safe, secure school for learning.

We, as students, will share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement and achieve the state's high standards. Specifically, we will:

The ways in which students will support their academic achievement, such as:

- Do my homework every day and ask for help when I need it.
- Read at least 30 minutes every day outside of school time.
- Give my parents or the adult who is responsible for my welfare all notices and information received by me from my school every day.

Student's
Signature _____

Date _____

School

Date

Universal Institute Charter
School Family Handbook
and
School – Parent Involvement
Policy
2010-2011

PART I. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Universal Institute Charter School (UICS) agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- UICS will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents/caregivers, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I, Part A programs. Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents/caregivers of participating children.
- Consistent with section 1118, UICS will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent engagement policies meet the requirements of section 1118(b) of the ESEA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1118(d) of the ESEA.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, UICS will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/caregivers with limited English proficiency, parents/caregivers with disabilities, and parents/caregivers of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents/caregivers understand.
- UICS will involve the parents/caregivers of children served in Title I. Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent engagement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the school for parent-related activities or other school-related activity as agreed upon between the parents and the school administration.
- The UICS will be governed by the following statutory definition of parent engagement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parent involvement means the participation of parents/caregivers in regular two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including ensuring-

(A) that parent's/caregivers play an integral role in assisting their child's learning:

(B) that parent's/caregivers are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school

(C) that parents/caregivers are full partners in their child's education and are included as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child:

(D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA.

PART II. DESCRIPTION OF HOW UICS WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

I. UICS will take the following actions to involve parents/caregivers in the joint development of its parent engagement plan under section 1112 of the ESEA:

- Involve the Title I school-wide Parent Advisory Committee in discussions of the School parent engagement plan.

- Invite all parents to participate in discussions of the UICS parent engagement plan.

2. UICS will take the following actions to involve parents/caregivers in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA:

- Title I representatives will be available to work collaboratively with parent leaders and the Parent Liaison to provide school level trainings on various aspects of Title I
- Schools will develop means to obtain parent input and signatures by UICS personnel on the School Action (Improvement) Plan.
- Provide adequate advance notice to parents of meetings and cancellation of meetings through newsletters, through Home and School Association, on bulletin boards (includes electronic), phone calls, and in notices sent home.
- Provide language access services for parents/caregivers whose first language is other than English, including summaries of major School Action (Improvement)

3. UICS will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I. Part A in planning and implementing effective parental engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:

- In collaboration the Parent Liaison and other parent groups, will provide workshops to UICS on parent engagement.
- Provide professional development by parents/caregivers for new and existing principals and other administrators on how to involve parents/caregivers effectively.
- Train new and existing staff with parental engagement duties (e.g., Parent Ombudsmen, School-Community Liaisons, School Community Coordinators. and Bilingual Assistants) to assist school in implementing parental engagement.
- Title I funds will be used to provide technical assistance to UICS and the parent organization.
- Provide coordination of professional development efforts through Instructional Development.
- Provide workshops to parents on supporting student achievement and parent engagement.
- Provide workshops to parent volunteers on school safety, cultural diversity, conflict resolution, customer service, and other topics, as requested.

4. UICS will coordinate and integrate parental engagement strategies in Title I, Part A with parental engagement strategies under the following other programs: PreK Counts by:

- Participate in meetings with the Office of Early Childhood Education.
- Conduct trainings or presentations for parents; before the new school year begins; about transitioning their child from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten and successful interventions that can be used in the home.

- Involve parent groups from early childhood programs in presentations to families whose first language is other than English.

5. UICS will take the following actions to conduct, with the engagement of parents/caregivers, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent engagement policy in order to assess its impact on family engagement in Title 1, Part A. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents/caregivers in parental engagement activities (with particular attention to parents/caregivers who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). UICS will use the findings of the evaluation about its parental engagement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parental engagement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents/caregivers) its parental engagement policies.

The primary goal of the Parent Engagement Policy is to increase parental engagement within UICS. Within this primary goal, three sub goals have been identified:

- a) inviting parents' input into UICS policies and procedures;
- b) making the school and its educational and physical resources more accessible for parents and;
- c) providing opportunities for parents to gain as much information as possible about their children's academic achievement and how to access resources to support their children's education. Depending upon available resources UICS will employ the following methods to evaluate the status of the goal and sub goal attainment: surveys (including the Survey of administrators, teachers, parents, and students), parent focus groups, record analysis, as well as observation of meetings and training workshops.

6. UICS will build the schools' and parent's capacity for strong parent engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents/caregivers and to support a partnership among the school, parents/caregivers, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

A.UICS with its Title I, Part A, and Parents, Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships, provide assistance to parents/caregivers of children served by the school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph,

- the State's academic content standards;
- the State's student academic achievement standards;
- the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments;
- the requirements of Title I, Part A;
- how to monitor their child's progress, and
- how to work with educators.

- UICS to collaborate and coordinate with the parent liaison to provide presentations and workshops about Title I under the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Invite parents/caregivers on staff development days when above topics are discussed.
- Add a parent component to staff development.
- Support parent attendance at conferences and workshops such as the PA State Parent Advisory Council, Regional Family Involvement Conferences, Annual Family Involvement Conference (PA

Coalition for Parent Involvement), National Network of Partnership Schools, Good Schools Pennsylvania Conference, Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators' Parent Awareness Training Conference, PA Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and PA Governor's Institutes.

- Utilize parents/caregivers who attend conferences and workshops to do turn around training or write a report as a condition of sponsorship.
- Provide information to parents/caregivers in clear and simple language.
- To the extent practicable, provide workshops in the target language to families whose first language is not English.
- Disseminate materials to the extent feasible, translations to parents/caregivers that will be useful references at home.

B. UICS will provide materials and training to help parents/caregivers work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parent engagement by:

- Implementing Parent Workshops which will include a range of parent education offerings by UICS personnel among other providers, including how to support one's child in school and computer literacy.
- Working with various agencies including, but not limited to: Office of Attendance and Truancy, PA Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) and PA State Parent Advisory Council (SPAC), to establish Parent Resource Centers.
- UICS will encourage *at least* two parents, one representative and one alternate, to voluntarily participate in professional development opportunities about Title I related.
- Supporting the involvement of parents Title I Parent representatives will be required to conduct turnaround trainings at their schools.
- Supporting UICS in planning and implementing school based activities such as family literacy and family math nights and other workshops to help parents/caregivers understand how to support their child's academic.
- Providing the above workshops and materials, where possible, in languages other than English.
- Providing the above workshops at community locations besides schools such as libraries, community organizations, and faith-based organizations, where families may feel more comfortable.

C. UICS will, with the assistance and parents/caregivers, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to communicate with, and work with parents/caregivers as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents/caregivers, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents/caregivers and schools, by:

- Designing and implementing a series of professional development sessions around

the above themes.

- Involving parents/caregivers as trainers in sessions with administrators, teachers, and other staff Instructional Development and the Parent Liaison , Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships.

- Planning regular meetings between the Instructional Development, Parent-Liaison, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships, and Title I Parent Advisory Committee parent representatives.

D. UICS will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parental engagement programs and activities with Prek counts and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents/caregivers in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Conducting inter-office meetings on a quarterly basis as mentioned in Item 4 above.

- Including the parents/caregivers and staff of the above programs in the activities of the Parent Advisory Council.

- Provide language assistance for English language learner (ELL) pre-school children and their families.

E. UICS will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents/caregivers of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents/caregivers can understand:

- To the extent practicable, provide communications in clear and simple language.

- Provide glossaries to explain acronyms or jargon.

- To the extent practicable, provide materials for people with vision disabilities, e.g., large print materials, upon request.

- Provide summaries and introductions to official documents.

- Provide audio or video tape versions of selected documents.

- Provide oral explanations of written documents when requested.

- Provide language access services to families whose first language is other than English through on-site or telephonic interpretation services, as appropriate.

- Post above mentioned communications on the UICS website.

- Provide communications using the auto-dialer, parent link, and websites.

- Develop a systematic way to gather announcements and relevant information.

- Ask community partners, including libraries, recreation centers, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations, to assist in disseminating information.

PART III. PARENT NOTICE AND PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL REFORMS FOR SCHOOLS IN CORRECTIVE ACTION OR RESTRUCTURING STATUS

A. *Purpose.* UICS recognizes the extent of its responsibility to implement the requirements of the federal NO Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ("NCLB") in the schools concerning parent participation in planning and implementation of reforms, as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(7) and (8) for schools in corrective action and restructuring status under NCLB. This policy sets out procedures for ensuring notice to parents and opportunities for parents and teachers to participate in these key reform actions

B. *Delegation of Responsibility.* Reserving to its senior management team their decision making role as provided pursuant to the Pennsylvania Public School Code, including but not limited to 24 P.S. §§ 5-510, 6-693, and 6-696

1. If UICS is in Corrective Action or Restructuring

a. UICS shall publish and disseminate information regarding any corrective action it takes under subsection 6316(b)(7) of NCLB at UICS

(1) to the public and to the parents of each student enrolled in the school subject to corrective action;

(2) in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parent can understand; and

(3) through such means as the Internet, the media and public agencies, including the UICS Web pages.

(4) if, after one (1) full school year of corrective action under 20 *V.S.c.* § 6316(b)(7), UICS subject to such corrective action continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, then prepare a plan and make necessary arrangements to carry out one or more of the alternative governance options set forth in 20 U.S.c. § 6316(b)(8)(B); provide prompt notice to teachers and parents whenever it becomes subject to restructuring under subsections 6316(b)(8)(A) and (B); and provide the teachers and parents with an adequate opportunity to (a). comment before taking any action under subsections 6316(b)(8)(A) and (B); and (b). participate in developing any plan under subsection 6316(b)(8)(A)(iii) (providing for alternative governance for a school).

2. Duties.

a. UICS shall give necessary notices to parents as required by NCLB and this Policy, and shall organize.

sponsor and carry out the parent participation process required under NCLB and this Policy.

b. Wherever possible, UICS shall integrate the notices, meetings and other requirements mandated by NCLB and this Policy into existing parent notice and participation procedures already implemented pursuant to NCLB, such as school improvement plans and policies.

c. Communications with parents shall comply with 34 C.F.R. § 200.36, with the provision that, as provided in 34 C.F.R. § 200.36(c)(1), due to local circumstances, UICS officials and schools may elect to provide information, including notices, to schools for distribution to parents.

3. Reservations.

a. Final decision making authority in connection with if UICS is in corrective action or restructuring status lies with the School Reform Commission under NCLB and the Pennsylvania Public School Code, *see, e.g.*, 24 P.S. §§ 5-510, 6-693, 6696. In order to carry out its reform mission under the law, the Commission reserves its discretion in regard to all such matters.

b. Subject to the foregoing reservation, UICS shall seek and make available all reasonable opportunities for parents to participate as provided under NCLB in restructuring decisions concerning their child's schools. Parents may participate through their representatives, including community and advocacy groups. The School Reform Commission encourages participation by all stakeholders committed to the improvement of each school, and looks forward to working with parents and our many other stakeholders.

4. Definitions.

a. "Corrective Action" has the meaning specified in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(7)(A)(E) of NCLB.

b. "Restructuring" has the meaning specified in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(8), and "alternative governance" has the meaning specified in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(8)(B).

PART IV. DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL WIDE PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

- involving parents/caregivers in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training;
- providing necessary literacy training for parents/caregivers;
- paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents/caregivers to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions, as budgets allow;
- training parents/caregivers to enhance the involvement of other parents/caregivers;
- arranging school meetings at a variety of times, or conducting in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents/caregivers who are unable to attend those conferences at school; in order to maximize parent engagement and participation in their children's education;
- researching, adopting and implementing model approaches to improving parent engagement;
- establishing a representative and inclusive district-wide parent advisory council to provide input on all matters related to parent engagement in Title I, Part A programs;

- developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parent engagement activities; and
- providing other reasonable support for parent engagement activities under section 1118 as parents/caregivers may request.

For more legislation information on Title I go to the following website listed below:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html>