

# **ROCKETSHIP**

## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **Rocketship United Academy**

**Student/Parent Handbook**

2021-2022 School Year

Tennessee

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*Please note that Rocketship may enact additional, supplemental, or alternative policies or procedures to accommodate developing circumstances related to COVID-19, to be separately distributed as needed. Families will be expected to comply with any such policies or procedures in the same manner as any policies and procedures contained in this handbook.*

*The policies provided in this handbook are subject to ongoing review and board approval. Rocketship will notify families if there are material changes to any of the policies contained here.*

## ABOUT ROCKETSHIP

Rocketship United Academy is part of Rocketship Public Schools, a network of public elementary charter schools serving students in under-resourced neighborhoods where access to excellent schools is limited. We believe that truly transformative schools do more than educate students; they empower teachers, engage parents, and inspire communities. Rocketship strives to meet the unique needs of each and every student through a blend of traditional instruction, adaptive technology, targeted tutoring, and enrichment opportunities. Together, we can eliminate the achievement gap in our lifetime.

## OUR STORY

In 1999, Father Mateo Sheedy, Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, created the Juan Diego Scholarship for Santa Clara University. He was surprised to discover that, of the hundreds of children in his parish, none of them met the basic academic requirements that would qualify them to attend their hometown college, or any other top-tier university.

Father Mateo Sheedy reached out to his community and started creating a plan to improve high-quality educational options in Washington Guadalupe, a neighborhood within greater San Jose.

Unfortunately, Father Mateo Sheedy passed away too soon, but his movement lived on. In 2006, his parishioners approached John Danner and Preston Smith—two educational entrepreneurs who were developing a new model for schools in under-resourced neighborhoods. John Danner, a former software engineer, was interested in the ways technology could help personalize education. Preston Smith was a young principal at a promising elementary school in San Jose who recognized the impact that empowered teachers and engaged parents can have on student success.

Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary opened soon after and our students quickly showed strong results in academic achievement. As more families joined the waiting list, we realized the need for even more high quality schools in the San Jose community, and beyond. Parent demand and parent organizing has played a strong role in opening new Rocketship schools all across the country.

Today, Rocketship Public Schools is a non-profit organization that operates all Rocketship schools and is governed by a Board of Directors. There are thirteen Rocketship schools in California, including San Jose, Redwood City, Antioch, and Concord; two in Nashville; two in Milwaukee; and three in Washington, DC.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission at Rocketship Public Schools is to eliminate the achievement gap by graduating all students at or above grade level in reading and math. Rocketeers will learn to take initiative, be respectful, be responsible, show empathy, and be persistent in attaining excellence.

The purpose of schooling is for all students to learn to use their minds and hearts well. Students learn best in schools where they are known well, where expectations are high, support is strong, and where their voices and their parents' voices are valued. The mission of Rocketship is to recognize all of these values and ensure that the students are empowered to learn, lead, and be positive and productive members of their community.

At Rocketship, our goals include the following:

- Students will develop a deep love of learning.
- Rocketship will provide parents with a path for their children to take in order to have the best chance to attend a four-year college.
- Rocketship will encourage our alumni to become leaders in their community.

## OUR MODEL

Our model is based on the following three core pillars:

1. **Excellent teachers and leaders create transformational schools.** Rocketship invests deeply in training and development to ensure teachers and leaders have a profound impact on students and communities.
2. **Every child has a unique set of needs.** Rocketship meets these needs by customizing each child's schedule with a combination of traditional instruction, technology and tutoring.
3. **Engaged parents are essential in eliminating the achievement gap.** Rocketship develops parent leaders in our schools and communities to become powerful advocates for their children.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### SCHOOL SITES

SCHOOL ADDRESS:

Rocketship United Academy  
320 Plus Park BLVD  
Nashville TN, 32711

Phone: 615-7127499

Fax: 615-250-9848

School Leaders Contact Info:

- Ms. Steele -Principal- [tsteele@rsed.org](mailto:tsteele@rsed.org)
- Mr. Harp - Assistant Principal - [bharp@rsed.org](mailto:bharp@rsed.org)
- Ms. Schultz - Assistant Principal - [tschultz@rsed.org](mailto:tschultz@rsed.org)
- Mr. Rice - Business Operations Manager - [jrice@rsed.org](mailto:jrice@rsed.org)
- Ms. Claire - Office Manager - [csallstrom@rsed.org](mailto:csallstrom@rsed.org)

*If your call is sent to voicemail, please leave a message and we will return your call within 24 hours.*

## WEBSITES

Rocketship Public Schools' website is [rsed.org](http://rsed.org). Here, you can find general information about Rocketship, including our educational model, our management team, and other schools in our network.

Rocketship United Academy's website is:

<https://www.rocketshipschools.org/schools/united-academy/>. Here you can find school staff contact information; parent resources, including an electronic version of this Handbook; school calendars; and other informational materials about the school.

## ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Rocketship schools are charter schools. Charter schools run independently of local school districts, but they must be approved by a local school board to open.

Charter schools are public schools that are tuition-free and open to any student who wishes to attend. They allow parents, organizations, and communities to restore, reinvent, and re-energize our public school system.

Rocketship will not administer any test or assessment to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into Rocketship. Rocketship will not limit enrollment on the basis of a student's race, color, religion, national origin, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Admissions and Enrollment Policy.

## CALENDAR AND ATTENDANCE

### SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Regular Day Schedule: 7:45 AM - 4:00 PM

All Thursdays are on a minimum day schedule with dismissal at 2:00 p.m.

After-school programming may be available for some students. Information on afterschool opportunities will be shared with families over the summer and at the beginning of the school year.

### LAUNCH

Each Rocketship campus begins the school day with Launch, which is a period of time for the whole school to come together and talk about a school-wide focus. During Launch, the school may also promote a particular successful student habit, teach a new school management system, discuss progress toward achievement goals, and foster school culture and pride. The whole school, including the staff, may also learn a song or a dance together or celebrate a particular student or classroom's recent accomplishment.

### OFFICE HOURS

Our front office opens 30 minutes before the start of school and closes 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

**Regular Day:** 7:15 am – 4:30 pm

**Minimum Day:** 7:15 am – 2:30 pm

Please note that in-person services at the front office are subject to ongoing restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

Tardiness and absences can be detrimental to a student's academic and social progress. Rocketship makes every effort to ensure that students are on time and present every school day. This policy addresses excused and unexcused absences, late arrivals and early departures, and the

definitions and consequences of truancy. The policy applies to Rocketship schools in all regions, with the exception of the definitions and consequences of truancy, which are written in accordance with applicable state laws.

**I. Excused and Unexcused Absences**

All students are expected to be on time and present in school every day. In Tennessee, students must attend at least 3.5 hours of the instructional school day to be considered present. Proper notification and/or documentation is required for a student’s absence from school to be marked as excused on the student’s attendance record. Rocketship must receive proper documentation within three days of the student’s return or the absence will be considered unexcused.

Excused Absences

The charts below explain the type of notification and/or documentation required to excuse absences. Notification must be provided within three days of returning to school.

Reason for Absence	Documentation Needed	Other Notes
Illness.	Written notice from parent/guardian. A physician’s note is required for three or more consecutive sick days.	
Death in the family.	Written notice from parent/guardian.	
Religious holiday/ceremony.	Written notice from child’s parent/guardian.	
Exclusion due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other conditional requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons.	As directed by local health department.	
Parent/guardian serving in the armed forces.	Written notice from parent/guardian. For longer absences, additional documentation may be required.	One day for deployment; one day for return; up to 10 days when a service member is granted temporary rest/recuperation leave.



Lawful suspension.	Documentation of suspension pursuant to Rocketship Suspension & Expulsion Policy.	
Court appearances.	Documentation from Court.	
Other reasons (i.e. doctor's appointment, emergencies, extra-curricular activities)	Written notice from parent/guardian. These requests will be approved at the Principal's discretion.	

### Unexcused Absences

Some kinds of absences may not be considered excused, even with proper documentation. These include, but are not limited to, the following: non-documented appointments, sick days with no parent notification of the school, oversleeping, car problems, cutting classes, errands, babysitting, and vacationing outside of scheduled school breaks. The Principal, in consultation with his/her supervisor when necessary, has the discretion to determine whether an absence should be excused or unexcused.

### Notifying Parents of Unexcused Absences

Rocketship will make reasonable and diligent attempts to make personal contact with a student's parent/guardian on the same day and each time a student has an unexcused absence, with daily follow-ups as necessary.

### **II. Missed Assignments**

Students are responsible for completing all classroom assignments that they missed while absent. Students are expected to get their make-up work from their teachers.

### **III. Leaving School During the Day**

Under no circumstances may a student go home without the permission of a parent or guardian. We expect that parents/guardians will make every effort to schedule appointments after school. However, if an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, the student must bring a signed note from his/her parent/guardian at the beginning of the day that includes the reason for the partial absence, the time of departure from school, and the estimated time of the student's return to school. If the student has a doctor's appointment, the student must bring a note from the doctor upon return. Whenever possible, students are expected to return to school after the appointment.

Early departures for reasons that do not directly involve the student (i.e. appointment for another family member) are generally not allowed but may be approved at the discretion of the Principal.

Students who become ill at school must check in at the office and remain at school until the child's parent/guardian arrives or gives permission for the student to leave campus in accordance with Rocketship's Student Release Policy.

#### **IV. Vacations**

Rocketship builds vacations into its school calendar. Family vacations should be planned around these dates. Students who take additional vacation time are not assured make-up work or credit.

#### **V. Chronic Absences/Late Arrivals and Truancy**

##### Recurrent Late Arrivals

Recurrent late arrivals may subject families to interventions. After a student accumulates five late arrivals (excused or unexcused), the family will be asked to participate in an Attendance Expectations Meeting at the school. After a student accumulates ten late arrivals (excused or unexcused), the family will be asked to attend a meeting with a School Leader and to sign an attendance contract. The Principal has the discretion to waive the intervention requirement in rare cases, depending on the circumstances. If a parent/legal guardian does not show up or refuses to attend an attendance meeting when ample time has been provided, an intervention plan may still be enacted. A copy of the contract will be sent or delivered to the student's home on file.

##### Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism may also subject families to interventions, at the discretion of the Principal in consultation with other members of the School Leadership team. Students who are chronically absent may also be subject to other consequences, such as missing out on field trip privileges.

##### "No Shows"

If a student misses 10+ consecutive school days without notifying the school of the reason for the absence, and Rocketship is unable to get in touch with the student's parent/guardian after reasonable and good faith efforts, Rocketship will drop the student from the school's roster and his/her space will be given to a student on the waitlist. For extended absences, [Independent Studies] may be available and arranged by the principal.

##### Truancy Procedures

<b>1-3 unexcused absences</b>	The school will provide intervention to determine the reason for the unexcused absences. The school should document efforts to make personal contact with the student's parents.
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<p><b>5 unexcused absences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocketship will send home a written notice of compulsory attendance. The Principal will also set up a meeting with the student’s parent/guardian to discuss why the student has been absent and get a verbal agreement to improve attendance.</li> <li>• Principals are required to report the names of all truant students to an attendance officer. Each accumulation of five absences must be reported. (T.C.A. § 49-6-3007(e))</li> </ul> <p>If, within three days after receipt of notice, the child continues to be absent from school without excuse, Rocketship may report the unlawful attendance to the Metro Nashville Public Schools Court Liaison, who may take legal action. (T.C.A. § 49-6-3007(e))</p>
<p><b>10+ unexcused absences</b></p>	<p>Rocketship will report the unlawful attendance to the Metro Nashville Public Schools Court Liaison or to the Achievement School District (ASD), who may take legal action. (T.C.A. § 49-6-3007(e)). Each successive accumulation of five unexcused absences shall also be reported to the ASD.</p>

All intervention efforts will be documented.

**COMMUNICATION**

This year, all Rocketship schools will be using a system called Alert Solutions to send messages to families. These messages may include information about upcoming school events, emergency notifications, attendance issues, or other things that the school feels are important for families to be aware of. The messages will be sent via text message, email, or phone calls using the contact information that you provide upon registration. Please contact your child's school if you wish to opt out of receiving such communications.

**SCHOOL CANCELLATION, LATE START, AND EARLY DISMISSAL**

On rare occasions, Rocketship may decide to alter the regular schedule of the school day by closing school for a day, starting the school day late, or releasing students early at one or several campuses due to snow, rain, severe weather, natural disasters, or other emergency conditions.

Please see the Policy Manual for a full copy of the Rocketship’s School Closure Policy.

## CAMPUS OPERATIONS AND SECURITY

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

#### Transportation

All parents/guardians are responsible for securing the transportation of their child to and from school. In addition, parents must provide contact information for any person authorized to pick up their student. Parents/guardians must inform the front office if a child has permission to walk home.

Students will be offered the option to obtain bus service to and from the school. Please contact the Business Operations Manager if you have questions about bus transportation. Our bus protocol is included below.

#### Drop-Off

Students may be dropped off as early as **7:30 AM**.

If your child is dropped off late, after **8:00 AM**, they **MUST** go to the front office first and get a pass from the Office Manager or staff member before heading to class. Students will be marked late in our records if he/she arrives after **8:00 AM**.

If your child arrives 30 minutes after the start of school, **8:30 AM**, your child will be marked tardy. If your child is marked tardy, you may be subject to disciplinary procedures for tardy students. Please see the Attendance and Truancy Policy in this document for more details.

#### Pick-Up

If you need to pick up your child before dismissal for an appointment or any other reason, you will need to report to the school 2 hours before dismissal. If you would like to change your child from a bus rider to a car rider, you must inform the front office by 2:00 pm on regular days and by 12:00 pm on minimal days. Please note: If a child is changing from car rider to bus rider, there is a 24 hour turnaround. This gives the bus company the opportunity to check availability before approving the change. Not all changes will be granted.

#### Dismissal Cards

At the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians are given a Dismissal Card with the student's PikMyKid code. During dismissal, the child's parent/guardian (or other authorized individual) must present this card, state the number, or use their PikMyKid app to pick up the child. If you lose your Dismissal Card, and can't remember your student's PikMyKid number then

authorized individuals will be required to show ID in the front office to obtain a temporary pick pass.

### **Reminders to Parents/Guardians for Arrival and Dismissal**

- Treat all other Rocketship families, students, and staff members with courtesy and respect at all times. Do not take any actions that may endanger the health or safety of anyone on campus. Disruptive, disrespectful and/or unsafe behavior during arrival and dismissal may result in parents/guardians losing privileges to be on the school campus.
- Do not conference with teachers or school leaders during arrival and dismissal time; make an appointment instead.
- Do not let your child out on the sidewalk outside or near our campus. YOU MUST enter our campus and let your child out in the designated drop-off zone.
- With very limited exceptions, animals are not allowed on campus during drop-off or pick-up. If you have an animal in your car, it must remain completely inside the vehicle at all times while on campus.
- Students may only exit cars on the passenger's side.
- Display your Dismissal card or have your PikMyKid numbers ready to give to a staff member when picking up your child.
- Please remember to leave adequate space between cars to avoid collision
- Please DO NOT talk or text on your phone during this time. We need to be able to communicate with you for the safety of the children

Please note that throughout the year, the school will determine the protocol for masking at arrival and dismissal for students and families.

Parents who violate school rules or otherwise endanger the health or safety of Rocketship students, staff, or other families during drop-off or pick-up may lose the right to be on campus.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

It is important for all families and bus riders to accept and acknowledge that transportation services are a privilege which will continue only if the student's behavior on the school bus is reasonable and safe. Our number one transportation priority is to get students to and from school safe and on time. Rocketeers who choose to engage in unacceptable behaviors on a school bus create an unacceptable risk for themselves as well as other students, the bus driver, the motoring public, and pedestrians. The bus driver and monitor, working with the Rocketship teachers and Business Operations Manager, is responsible for the safety and discipline of bus riders. The school leaders, teachers, and Business Operations Manager will be available to assist the bus driver to maintain discipline and good order on bus routes through the use of appropriate discipline measures which can include the suspension or permanent removal of bus privileges.

Please note that throughout the year, the school will determine the protocol for masking on buses and for families waiting at bus stops.

Rocketship asks all parents/guardians to review this protocol, discuss it with your child, and sign a Bus Rider Behavior Contract prior to participating in bus transportation.

### **Bus Stops**

All parents must be at the bus stop at the beginning of the scheduled block for both **AM** and **PM**. This information is located on the route sheet for each bus. For AM pick-up, students are to be out of their cars, standing at the bus stop when the bus arrives. This means that students must be ready to walk onto the bus when the door opens (except during extreme weather). It is imperative that students load on time so that buses arrive at school on time to allow adequate time to participate in launch, and to eat breakfast before instruction begins. In the afternoon, parents are expected to be standing at the bus stop waiting for their students to arrive. Parents should stand in a line, and have their student's dismissal tag with them. When the door opens, parents should show the bus monitor their student's dismissal tag. This is how we know your child is allowed to be dismissed to you. This safety protocol allows for a quick and safe departure from the bus. If you do not have your tag, you may give the monitor your student's PikMyKid ID number. If you do not have the tag, or the number, your child will not be dismissed to you, and you will need to come to the school to pick them up.

### **Alternate Bus Stops**

Bus drivers are not permitted to drop students at places which are not on their scheduled bus routes. Please do not request that they do so, as it creates an unsafe environment for all student's when the bus goes somewhere that we are unaware of. If you have an issue with your stop, please call the school directly and ask to speak to the Business Operations Manager.

### **Route Assignment**

Bus routes are carefully created to maximize ridership. Based on this, students are allowed to ride only the route to which they are assigned. Students are not allowed to transfer from one bus to another due to scheduling issues. Schools will not allow a student to occasionally ride a different route. Students who purposely try to sneak onto another bus may lose their riding privileges. All changes in routes must be made by submitting a change on PikMyKid app or through the Main Office.

### **Parent Bus Protocol for Students**

While the purpose of this protocol is not for school discipline but rather for the safety of all students while riding a bus to and from school, nothing in this protocol shall prohibit Rocketship from instituting school discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and the Student Handbook.

### **Bus Rules for Students**

- Stay seat in assigned seats
- Use positive language
- Follow directions the first time given
- Hands, feet, and objects to yourself at all times
- Keep space clean-no eating on the bus
- Please note that throughout the year, the school will determine the protocol for masking on buses.

### **School Bus Offenses (non-exhaustive)**

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Spitting	Hanging out of the windows with any part of the body	Fighting
Excessive noise	Throwing any object in or out of the bus	Anything that seriously jeopardizes the safety of the student, other students, the bus driver, the public, or pedestrians.
Horseplay Leaving one's seat/standing without permission of the driver	Bully, threatening, or harassment of any person on the bus	Possession of an illegal substance or weapon.
Profanity or inappropriate gestures	Vandalism to the bus or any bus related equipment (restitution will be required as well).	
Refusing to properly identify oneself to the bus driver	Unauthorized entering or leaving the bus through an emergency exit or window	
Eating/drinking/littering on the bus		

### **Consequences for School Bus Offenses**

Offense Level	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Class 1	Written warning, signed student reflection, and student apology	1-3 day bus suspension, and required parent conference	3-5 day bus suspension student, and required parent conference	Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year
Class 2	1-3 days suspension off bus and required parent conference	3-5 days bus suspension, and require parent conference	Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.	

Class 3	Up to and including permanent loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.			
Student Returned to School	Written Warning	1 day bus suspension	5 day bus suspension	Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year

Students who violate bus rules and Rocketship protocol may also be subject to Rocketship’s Student Discipline policy.

Please also see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship’s Transportation Policy.

**STUDENT RELEASE**

Rocketship will make every effort to ensure that all students get home safely when they leave school each day. At the beginning of the year, parents/guardians must pick up their student’s PikMyKid Car Tag which they must display when picking up their child (described above). Parents/guardians must also complete an Emergency Contact Card that includes the names of individuals to be contacted in case of an emergency if attempts to contact the parent/guardian fail. Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship’s **Student Release Policy**.

**LATE PICK-UP**

Rocketship’s goal is to dismiss our students safely, efficiently, and responsibly. We understand that occasional family emergencies may cause a child to be picked up late from school, but families that consistently fail to pick up students on time may be subject to interventions and consequences.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship’s **Late Pick-Up Policy**.

**CAMPUS ACCESS AND VISITORS**

Rocketship strives to create campuses that are welcoming to families, volunteers, and community members while maintaining a safe and secure environment for students and staff. This policy addresses management of the campus access points; prohibitions against loitering; procedures for visitor registration; procedures to follow when arranging for a campus visit; and barring an individual from campus. “Campus” in this policy is defined as the entire indoor and outdoor premises, including the school building(s), sidewalks, parking lots, driveways, playgrounds, and courtyards.

Please note that in-person visits to campus are subject to ongoing restrictions throughout the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



### I. Campus Access Points

At all times whenever students are in the building, the front office and all controlled access points to each Rocketship campus will be supervised by a Rocketship staff member. Visitors will also be required to undergo an ID check, a registered sex offender check, and adhere to any other security measures (i.e. sign-in/sign-out sheets) that the school has implemented. The school will inform visitors of any specific follow-up that may be required for visitors who are not able to provide proper identification or who are flagged with a sex offender offense.

Ensuring that the front office is manned at all times is a primary responsibility of the school's Office Manager. If the Office Manager is unable to be at the front desk for some reason, he/she is responsible for finding another Rocketship staff member to be present. Individuals who are not Rocketship staff members should NOT be asked to cover the front desk.

All doors leading into school buildings should remain closed and locked at all times and only opened by authorized staff members.

### II. Loitering

Parents/guardians and other visitors, including children who are not students at the school, shall not loiter on the school premises, including in the parking lot and outside school buildings. This includes children of staff members who are students at another school. The parking lot shall be used for picking up and dropping off students, and while conducting business.

Parents/guardians and other visitors are expected to leave the campus premises upon the conclusion of any business matters or after dropping their student off at school. If a parent or guardian wishes to visit the school to view the educational program, the visitor must adhere to the following procedures, which have been developed to ensure the safety of students and staff as well as to minimize interruption of the instructional program.

### III. Visitor Registration and Passes/Badges

All visitors (including Rocketship Public Schools regional and national staff members) are required to scan their government issued ID at the kiosk upon entering any school building or grounds at any time that students are in the building. Schools will be required to provide a sign-in sheet for any event held on campus.

The Principal, or designee, may refuse to register an outsider if he or she has a reasonable basis for concluding that the visitor's presence or acts would disrupt the school, its students, its teachers, or its other employees; would result in damage to property; or would result in the distribution or use of unlawful or controlled substance.

Visitors in disguise or costume will not be allowed entrance onto campus without prior agreement with the school administration.

After registering in the front office, visitors who are not Rocketship employees will be issued a Visitor's Pass that they must display at all times while on campus. Rocketship regional/national staff ("Network Support") will receive personal identification badges from the Rocketship Human Resources department. Network Support staff must display their badge on their persons at all time while at a school site. If a Network Support staff member forgets his/her badge, he/ she will need to obtain a Visitor's Pass from the front office.

All visitors must also sign out when leaving the campus.

The Principal or designee may withdraw consent for an individual to be on campus, even if the visitor has a right to be on campus, whenever there is reasonable basis for concluding that the visitor presence on school grounds would interfere or is interfering with the peaceful conduct of the activities of the school, or would disrupt or is disrupting the school, its students, its teachers, or its other employees.

The Principal or designee may request that a visitor who has failed to register, or whose registration privileges have been denied or revoked, promptly leave school grounds. When a visitor is directed to leave, the Principal or designee shall inform the visitor that if he/she reenters the school without following the posted requirements, law enforcement may be notified and he/she may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

#### IV. Arranging for a Campus Visit

Visits during school hours by non-Network Support or other Rocketship staff members should be arranged with the teacher and Principal (or designee) in advance. Teacher conferences should be arranged by appointment in advance and must be scheduled to take place during non-instructional time. Parent/guardians who want to visit a classroom during school hours should first obtain approval from the classroom teacher and the Principal or designee. Classroom observations should be requested in advance and are approved at the Principal or designee's discretion.

No electronic listening or recording device may be used by students or visitors in a classroom without the teacher's and Principal's written permission. Failure to abide by this is a violation of this Policy and may subject a visitor to losing his/her privilege to be on campus in accordance with Section III above.

#### V. Visitor Conduct

All visitors, regardless of their reason for being on campus, are expected to act in accordance with all Rocketship rules and policies while on the school premises. Visitors are strictly prohibited from

having any physical contact with any student for any reason, including touching, grabbing, or holding a student. Visitors are also strictly prohibited from scolding, disciplining, or yelling at any student. If a visitor has a concern about a student's conduct, the visitor should promptly alert a Rocketship staff member.

This policy also applies to conduct during virtual programming (i.e. virtual instruction, events, etc.). Individuals who appear at a virtual event with a Rocketship student and whose conduct violates this policy will receive consequences in accordance with Sections III and VI herein.

#### VI. Barring Individuals From Campus

Rocketship recognizes that situations could arise where it may become necessary for the Principal and/or the Principal's supervisor to prohibit an individual from entering or remaining on a Rocketship campus. Such situations may include an individual engaging in violence, threats of violence, harassment, or any other behavior that the Principal deems to be disruptive of the learning environment. Such actions will comply with any relevant state law requirements.

Barring is specific to each individual Rocketship campus and its related activities. Principals generally have the authority to bar a disruptive individual, but they must follow Rocketship's internal protocol and comply with all applicable state laws. Principals may not bar an individual beyond his/her particular campus, unless specific authorization is granted by the Director of Schools or the legal department. It is the responsibility of the Business Operations Manager, Office Manager, and school security to:

- Enforce photo identification verification 100% of the time to ensure no barred individuals enter the building.
- Document and maintain procedures for pick-up, drop-off and any documentation related to the barring notice at the front desk.
- Determine, at the time of the incident and in collaboration with the Principals, whether the local police must be contacted.
- Maintain an accurate and current list of individuals who have been issued a barring notice.
- Enforce the barring notice by escorting individuals out of the building and off school grounds in a peaceful, quiet, and orderly fashion.
- Not engage any barred individual off school grounds using combative language, tone, or action.
- Contact the local police department in the event that an individual becomes physically confrontational or refuses to comply with the barring notice.

#### VII. Refusal to Leave Campus

Anyone who refuses to leave after being asked by the Principal, or who enters the premises (including parking lots, playground, sidewalks, and school building) without proper authorization in accordance with this policy, may become subject to the local criminal laws regarding trespass and unlawful entry.

Further conduct of this nature by the visitor may lead to the School's pursuit of a restraining order against such visitor which would prohibit him/her from coming onto school grounds or attending School activities for any purpose for a statutorily prescribed period.

The Principal or designee may seek the assistance of the police in dealing with or reporting any visitor in violation of this policy.

## **ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE**

Electronic surveillance may be used at Rocketship campuses where deemed necessary. The use of electronic surveillance at our schools is solely for the purposes of controlling theft, ensuring the safety of Rocketship students and staff, and facilitating the identification of individuals who behave in a disruptive manner or commit a crime. Rocketship will abide by all state laws regarding electronic recording.

Rocketship requests that other than during designated school events (such as school plays, graduation, and other events open to the Rocketship community) parents and other visitors to campus refrain from taking photographs and or making audio/video recording of students and staff without first obtaining written consent from the parent of the student. In the event that a parent or campus visitor does capture an image of a student, Rocketship requests that the individual refrain from posting any such image to a personal social media account. Such photography and audio recording is intrusive and may be in violation of state privacy laws.

## **FAMILY CUSTODY**

Rocketship will make every effort to ensure compliance, on the part of school staff as well as parents/guardians, with legal custody arrangements. This policy addresses custody records; student release to custodial parents; the rights of non-custodial parents; and Rocketship's role in custody disputes.

### **I. Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, Rocketship will adhere to the following definitions:

“Court Order”: An order issued by a court following a judicial proceeding to determine the custody rights of the parties. A court order will typically state the legal and/or physical custodial rights that the court has granted to each parent.

“Joint Custody”: Both parents have legal and physical custodial rights.

“Legal Custody”: The parent with Legal Custody has the right to make decisions about a child’s upbringing. These types of decisions typically involve the child’s education, religion, and medical care.

“Noncustodial Parent”: The Noncustodial Parent does not have legal or physical custody of a child.

“Physical Custody”: The right to have physical control of where the child lives and who may care for the child.

## **II. Custody Records**

Rocketship seeks to maintain accurate and updated custody records for all students. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of a student to provide the Rocketship Office Manager with accurate and updated court orders involving the custody rights of their children. Updated Court Orders should be provided to the Office Manager as soon as possible. All documentation provided to the school will be kept confidential and will only be accessed by members of the staff when necessary.

In the absence of a Court Order, Rocketship will assume that separated or divorced parents of a child have Joint Custody.

In Tennessee, pursuant to T.C.A. 36-2-303, the mother of a child born out of wedlock has default custody (both legal and physical) when the parents remain unmarried, absent a Court Order signed by a judge.

Without a Court Order or proof of adoption that affirmatively grants custodial rights, step-parents will not be considered to have Physical or Legal Custody of a child. Absent similar evidence, Rocketship will also assume that siblings, aunts/uncles, grandparents, cousins and others do not have Legal or Physical Custody of a child.

## **III. Student Release**

Any parent or guardian who has Physical Custody of a child, or retains specific custody rights granted via a Court Order that extends to after-school hours, may pick the student up from school as well as authorize Rocketship to release the student to any other person; provided that, such arrangements are consistent with the terms of the Court Order. At the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians will be asked to complete an Authorization to Release form. Please see Rocketship’s Student Release Policy for more information. At any time, either parent/guardian that has Physical Custody has the ability to add individuals to the Authorization to Release form.

Rocketship does not have the right to limit the rights of a parent of a Rocketship student without a Court Order. If one parent does not wish to allow the other parent/guardian the right to remove

the child from school or visit the child in school, Rocketship must be provided with a Court Order limiting the other parent's rights.

#### **IV. Rights of Non-Custodial Parents**

##### Inspection of Records

All parents, regardless of custodial rights, have the right to inspect, though not make changes to, copies of their child's educational records, unless a Court Order specifically limits the parent's rights in this regard. (Any inspection of records must be in accordance with Rocketship's FERPA regional Student Records policies.)

##### School Visitation

Parents without Physical Custody may not remove their children from class or visit them in school without the consent of the parent with the custodial rights or a Court Order.

#### **V. Rocketship's Role in Custody Disputes**

It is the policy of Rocketship schools to remain impartial during custody disputes between family members of a Rocketship student. For this reason, Rocketship teachers, administrators, and school staff will refrain from taking any action which may be considered adverse to one parent or family member. These actions include, but are not limited to, writing letters of support for any adversarial proceeding and serving any person with court documents.

Furthermore, Rocketship shall not be responsible for, nor participate in, the monitoring or enforcement of any parental obligations or duties under a court order (i.e. sending a message to remind a parent of his/her designated pick-up days).

The previous paragraph notwithstanding, Rocketship will comply with requirements imposed by the State and local jurisdictions thereof. Rocketship will enforce any certified Court Orders presented to the school. When presented with a court subpoena or request for information by a public agency, Rocketship teachers, administrators and staff will comply and respond with information of which they have personal knowledge.

Rocketship will not deny a parent of any of their parental rights without being provided a Court Order indicating the State's desire to limit that parent's rights.

## **VOLUNTEER CLEARANCE**

Because Rocketship is deeply committed to ensuring the safety of all students, any parent, guardian, or family member who chooses to volunteer on-or off-campus at Rocketship-sponsored events must apply to become a volunteer and undergo any necessary background check procedures required for the volunteer position. In Tennessee, all prospective volunteers who may

interact with students in an unsupervised capacity must undergo a criminal background check in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. This includes individuals who plan to volunteer in classrooms on a regular basis and individuals who wish to chaperone a field trip.

Please note that in-person volunteer opportunities throughout the school year are subject to ongoing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's **Volunteer Clearance Policy**.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are off-campus excursions designed by Rocketship staff to supplement the curriculum and to provide enrichment experiences for students. We value these enrichment opportunities and strive to ensure that these experiences are safe, organized, and efficient from beginning to end. When applicable, parents who wish to chaperone a field trip must comply with all of Rocketship's volunteer clearance and transportation requirements.

Please note that field trip opportunities throughout the school year are subject to ongoing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's **Field Trip Policy**.

## SCHOOL MEALS

### **Free and Reduced Lunch Forms**

Since the school participates in the Universal Lunch Program, all children will be allowed to eat lunch at no cost.

### **Breakfast**

Our school participates in universal breakfast, meaning that every student present at school will be offered a meal. Studies have shown that students who eat breakfast have more energy, do better in school, and eat healthier throughout the day. Students are *not* required to eat the breakfast provided by the school.

Please see the Appendix for a full copy of Rocketship's Meal Policy. If you have questions or concerns about lunch billing at your child's school, reach out to the Business Operations Manager.

### **Food Allergies**

If your child has a known food allergy or dietary restriction, parents/guardians should let school staff know. In some cases, it may be possible to accommodate a child's dietary needs in Rocketship

lunch orders, but a doctor's note will be required. Parents/guardians should work with the school's Business Operations Manager to make arrangements.

### **Food Brought From Home**

Rocketship partners with our local food vendor to provide our Rocketeers a healthy lunch every day. Students are allowed to bring their own food from home for lunch or snack, but junk food is not allowed on campus.

Foods that are NOT ALLOWED (and may be confiscated):

- Chips (unless included in a complete lunch, i.e. along with a sandwich, fruits, vegetables, etc.)
- Cookies
- Gum
- Candy
- Fast Food
- Soda
- Takis

Foods that are encouraged:

- Salads
- Carrots & Celery Sticks
- Apple slices and peanut butter
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole Grains
- Healthy snack packs

Birthday Parties:

- Birthday Parties are allowed in the school. Please notify your child's teachers 48 hrs in advance.
- At this time we are not allowed to have family members attend celebrations on campus due to covid restrictions. We will notify the school community with any changes.
- Only store bought treats are allowed.
- Parties not allowed on Thursday for reasons of minimum days.
- All parties will occur in the last 30 minutes of the school day.
- No pork products are allowed for whole class celebrations.

## **ACADEMICS**

## **CURRICULUM**



Students will be exposed to a well-rounded curriculum that includes reading, writing, English language development, mathematics, science and technology, and social studies. Students will also take Physical Education and enrichment courses in areas such as art, music, theater, or gardening.

The Rocketship curriculum follows all required state performance standards for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. This includes the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts, English Language Development, and Mathematics. Teachers will use regular assessments to measure how well students are progressing toward mastery. Rocketship shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades. We use knowledge about student skills to shape whole class instruction, small group work, and small group tutoring. Using individual student data, instruction can be targeted to better meet individual student needs.

Teachers will give students and parents ongoing feedback about student performance. Teachers will often send work home for parents/guardians to sign, and teachers will contact parents/guardians if they see a significant slip in academic performance or a special skill that needs extra practice at school and home. Parents/guardians will also regularly receive progress reports and report cards. You should feel free to contact any of your child's teachers regarding his/her progress at any time.

## **HOMEWORK**

Using time outside of class as a scholar is a college-readiness skill, therefore, parents and students should expect homework each weekday evening. Students who do not complete HW will do so during Lunch Bunch. Parents must acknowledge and sign homework on a nightly basis and on a weekly basis. Reading at least 20 minutes a night is the expectation.

## **RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND ACCELERATION**

Rocketship's instructional model is organized so that each student's learning plan is individualized in order to account for individual differences and promote academic and social growth. Upon a student's enrollment at Rocketship, schools will typically not make decisions to allow a new Rocketship student to repeat or skip a grade. Schools are expected to enroll all students in the next consecutive grade level and then assess students objectively as needed. Furthermore, we believe that retention should only be used in rare and exceptional circumstances, when the student's family is given notice well in advance and is fully in support of the retention decision.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Retention and Acceleration Policy.

## CHILD FIND ACTIVITIES

Rocketship provides a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible for special education services, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following disabilities as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (the federal law which outlines legal responsibilities related to special education):

- Autistic-like Behaviors
- Blindness/Visual Impairment
- Deaf Blindness
- Deafness/Hearing Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Physical Disability
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury

Rocketship has systems in place that assist the school in determining whether a student may have a disability. These include a specific “Child Find” form that is completed by parents upon enrollment in a Rocketship school. This also includes a Student Study Team (SST), or pre-referral, process in which school teams analyze data to identify students who are struggling academically, socially, or behaviorally and develop interventions to support the student. Rocketship has additional evidence-based interventions that are made available to students who require it; these include both differentiated instruction in the classroom and supplemental interventions in the learning lab and classroom. School teams monitor the progress of every child who receives intervention services in order to be able to identify any student who is not responding to interventions. Students who don’t respond adequately to pre-referral interventions are referred for a more intensive level of support, which may include a formal evaluation to determine if the student is eligible to receive special education services as a child with a disability.

If you have a concern regarding your child’s academic or social functioning, contact his or her classroom teacher, or a school leader at your school site.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

## ROCKETEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Safety, order, and student discipline are fundamental to learning at Rocketship. Rocketship expects all students to behave in a way that fosters a safe and welcoming environment for other students, Rocketship staff, and community members.

The Rocketship Code of Conduct includes the following non-negotiable expectations for our Rocketeers:

- Adherence to the Rocketship Commitment to Excellence
- Adherence to the Rocketship Five **Core Values**: Respect, Responsibility, Persistence, Empathy, and **LOVE**
- Adherence to the **Rocketship Creed**:

I am a Rocketship Rocketeer  
At home, at school, and in my community  
I am respectful of myself, my neighbors, and the environment  
I am responsible for my learning and actions  
I celebrate our similarities and differences  
I have empathy and gratitude for our world and  
I am persistent in attaining excellence  
Together, we are all Rocketship  
Rocketeers

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Rocketship promotes positive behavior at school and aims to create learning environments that are more consistent, predictable, positive and safe. We clearly define behavioral expectations and consequences, create systems for recognizing and reinforcing positive behaviors, and provide our students with social-emotional learning.

Students will be subject to disciplinary action if they engage in prohibited conduct while on school property, when attending any school-sponsored activity or while in transit going to or coming from a Rocketship campus. Students may also be subject to disciplinary action for off-campus behavior if it creates a substantial disruption to the school environment or interferes with another student's ability to participate in the school program.

Rocketship classrooms also use a variety of management systems to address behavioral issues. These may include color-coded card chart systems and other tiered consequences.

If students do not respond to our positive behavior supports or classroom management systems, Rocketship may take alternative in-school disciplinary action. Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's **Student Discipline Policy**.

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

We believe that our students are best served when they are present at school every day. However, we recognize that situations may occur when a student commits a behavioral offense that is so severe that the student may become subject to suspension or expulsion.

A student may be disciplined, suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at a Rocketship school or at any other school or a school-sponsored event at any time.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Suspension and Expulsion Policy.

## **DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING**

Bullying has a harmful social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, victims and bystanders. Bullying at Rocketship is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. "Bullying" includes discrimination; harassment; intimidation; and bullying based on disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, or perceived characteristics. In addition, Rocketship prohibits retaliation against people who report incidents of bullying. Rocketship will conduct an investigation into any alleged incidents of bullying.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Bullying Prevention Policy.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

Student uniforms help minimize disruption during the school day, promote respect for oneself and others, and foster school/community spirit.

All students are expected to wear the Rocketship uniform to school every day. The Rocketship uniform consists of a khaki bottom (pants, shorts, dress, skirt, or skorts) and a purple collared shirt. All articles of clothing must be clean and without tears or rips.

For shoes, Rocketship United requires students to wear either white, purple, or black shoes. No lights, wheels or other adornments are allowed.

Students will not wear items that are a distraction to the learning environment.

Students who repeatedly do not come to school in uniform may lose privileges. In addition, Rocketship may contact the student's parent/guardian to discuss the dress code violation.

## PROHIBITED PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- Gum
- Soda
- Cell Phones
- Weapons and toy weapons
- Gameboys or any other electronic toys
- Playing cards
- Balls and other equipment
- Spinners
- Personal electronic devices (i.e. iPad, iPods, mp3 player)
- Chips, candy or other junk food
- Hats
- Any illegal substance
- Toys, stuffed animals or dolls
- Matches or any flammable items

Students are not allowed to have these items at school.

## TELEPHONE USE

Students may not use cell phones or other personal electronic devices during school. Students may not use any school phone without permission from a teacher. Students will only be allowed to use the school phone in case of emergency or to inform a parent/ guardian regarding a specific need. A teacher must dial the number for students. Students who use a phone without permission from a teacher will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Rocketship is committed to supporting the health of its students and meeting the needs of students with medical conditions, in compliance with state laws and regulations.

Before medication can be kept or administered at Rocketship, a student's parent/guardian must complete and submit a medication authorization form. Parents/guardians should contact the Office Manager for a copy of this form. Any medication that will be stored at Rocketship must be in the original manufacturer packaging and appropriately labeled.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Medication Administration Policy.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

To ensure a safe learning environment for all students, Rocketship follows and abides by the health standards set forth by the State of Tennessee. Students will not attend school until all required records have been received. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Those students who do not meet Tennessee's guidelines may be excluded from school until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of the School.

The Tennessee Department of Health requires that all students enrolling in Kindergarten, and new enrollees in a Tennessee school in grades other than Kindergarten, receive the following immunizations:

- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Poliomyelitis: final dose on or after 4<sup>th</sup> birthday required
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Hepatitis A: total of two doses, spaced at least six months apart
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (two doses of each, usually given together as MMR)
- Varicella (two doses, or history of disease)

Under Tennessee law, a Rocketship student may be exempted from the certification of immunization requirements in Tennessee if:

- An authorized physician indicates that specific vaccines are medically exempt because of risk of harm. Other vaccines remain required. The medical reason for the exemption does not need to be provided.
- The student's parent/guardian provides a signed statement, affirmed under the penalties of perjury, that vaccination conflicts with the family's religious tenets or practices.

## HEALTH EXAMINATIONS AND SCREENINGS

Under Tennessee laws, students in grades K, 2 and 4 are required to undergo the following screenings at school at least once during the school year:

- Vision
- Hearing

- Blood pressure
- Body Mass Index

Parents/guardians who do not want their children screened for any health concerns have the right to decline a screening. All student health records will be confidential in accordance with federal and state student records laws.

## HEAD LICE

If student is suspected of having head lice (i.e. constant itching or tickling feeling in the hair), the school nurse or other trained school employee may examine the hair of the suspected student for lice or nits (lice eggs). In certain circumstances, the employee may also examine other members of that student's household. If a student is positive for live head lice, the student is to be sent home at the end of the school day with information to the parents regarding treatment and control measures.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Head Lice Policy.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT CARDS

Over the summer, parent/guardians complete and submit an Emergency Contact/Authorization to Pick-Up form as part of the enrollment process. This form is kept on file at the school in the Front Office. This card contains the names and phone numbers of individuals who can be contacted if a child has an emergency and the child's parent/guardian cannot be reached.

## SAFETY PLANS

Safety is our first priority. To make sure our staff and students know what to do in case of an emergency, we follow a rigorous calendar of staff trainings, safety team meetings, campus walkthroughs, and safety drills. Every school is equipped with a detailed Health and Safety Plan that contains our emergency response plans, including plans for earthquakes, fire, severe weather, and lockdowns.

### **Primary and Secondary Evacuation Sites**

Our school has two evacuation sites. Our primary evacuation site is our parking lot. We will use this evacuation site when it is safe to remain on campus. .

Our secondary evacuation site is located off campus, it is our sister school Rocketship Nashville Northeast. If there is a disaster at the school site or the campus is unsafe for some reason, we will evacuate to this site. *During an emergency dismissal, we may ask parents to meet us at this secondary evacuation site. Please be familiar with this location so you know where to go in case of an emergency dismissal.*

## **Emergencies**

In order for us to keep our campus safe during an emergency, we need our families to understand the following:

- In the event of an emergency, we will share information with families via our automated calling system. Please make sure your updated contact information is in our system.
- If there is an incident on or near our campus, please stay at home and wait for instructions from our school leaders. We need the public to stay away while we secure our campus and account for all students. When it is safe to come to the school, you will be contacted.
- After an emergency incident, we may need to change the way we dismiss students. You may be asked to present a photo ID in addition to your child's Walker/Rider card. Please wait for instructions from school leaders before coming to campus.
- If the school campus is not safe, we may need to dismiss students from our secondary (off-campus) evacuation sites. It is important that you know where this secondary evacuation site is located (see above).

## **WEAPONS AND FIREARMS**

Rocketship Public Schools prohibits any weapons, imitation firearms or dangerous objects of any kind in school buildings, on school grounds or buses, or at off campus school-related or school sponsored activities.

## **DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO**

Rocketship Public Schools is committed to maintaining campuses free of alcohol, smoke, and illegal drugs. Do not smoke on campus and do not bring alcohol or illegal substances of any kind to our school. If a student is found in possession of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products, he/she will be subject to discipline and possible suspension or expulsion under Rocketship's discipline policies.

## **INTERNET SAFETY**

Rocketship uses advanced education technology to support personalized instruction for all students. Rocketship adheres to the federal requirements and guidelines set forth in the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Rocketship's Internet system is limited to educational purposes. Acceptable activities include classroom activities and high-quality research. Rocketship computers are not to be used for entertainment purposes unless specifically authorized by a staff member in accordance with this policy.



Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's **Internet Safety Policy**.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child who is 17 years of age or younger and known to them in a professional or official capacity has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed – physically, sexually, or through neglect – and that a caregiver either committed the harm or should have taken steps to prevent the child from harm.

No one in the workplace, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect is subject to punishment under Tennessee law.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

### ROCKETSHIP'S COMMITMENT

***Rocketship Commitment*** – At Rocketship, we fully commit to our families and students in the following ways:

- We will create a safe place to learn.
- We will respect the background, culture, and individuality of each child.
- We will communicate regularly with you about your child's progress and special needs.
- We will hold high expectations for all students.
- We will work hard to help your child feel successful and increase their sense of self-worth.
- We will provide your child with the academic base and moral compass they need to be successful through college and the rest of their lives.
- We will provide support to you and your child as you determine the best educational path upon graduating from Rocketship.

### PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' COMMITMENT

***Parents'/Guardians' Commitment***- We fully commit to Rocketship in the following ways:

- We will always help our child in the best way we know how, and we will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn and prepare for college and life by supporting him/her and encouraging him/her to adhere to his/her "commitment to excellence."
- We will make sure our child arrives at school on time every school day.
- We will make arrangements so our child can remain at school until the end of the school day each day and be picked up when school ends.

- We will follow all arrival and dismissal regulations and parking and busing procedures.
- We will make sure our child follows the Rocketship dress code.
- We will ensure that our child is reading or being read to every night.
- We will check our child's homework every night, sign his/her agenda, and we will carefully read and sign (if requested) all the papers our school sends home to us.
- We will meet regularly with teachers to discuss our child's progress and support their work to help our child excel.
- We will participate in as many school activities including parent/family meetings, exhibition nights, community meetings, open house nights, conferences, etc. as reasonably possible.
- We will strive to contribute as many partnership hours to the school community as reasonably possible.
- We, not the school, are responsible for the behavior of our child.
- We will care for school library books and return them within a week for others to use. We will pay for any lost book.

## PARENT PARTNERSHIP

Engaged parents are a core pillar of Rocketship's model and critical to our Rocketeers and their long-term success. By actively being included and involved in our schools and their Rocketeers' learning, parents become integrated into the fabric of the school community. An active partnership between families and Rocketship faculty and staff benefits our Rocketeers as they see their parents on campus, and families as they gain a deeper understanding of Rocketship's model and are positioned to reinforce Rocketship's core values at home.

Rocketship asks that families participate in 20 Parent Partnership Hours each year per family by supporting or participating in various school activities. Participating in Parent Partnership Hours is encouraged, but NOT required. If families do not realize 20 Parent Partnership Hours annually, there is no consequence or penalty.

At this time due to covid restrictions, parent opportunities on campus are limited. Parents are currently only allowed in our Lobby and Front Office. We will notify our school community with any updates to our covid policy.

Please see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Parent Partnership Policy.

## HOME VISITS

Studies have shown that meaningful parental involvement in the education of their children can have dramatic effects on student achievement. Home visits help parents and teachers come

together as equal partners to form a trusting relationship centered on student learning, establish goals for the individual child and the parent-teacher relationship, and invest families in the Rocketship community.

Each Rocketship student will receive a home visit from their core classroom teachers during the beginning of each school year. Teachers will reach out to families to schedule the home visit in advance. Home visits typically last for about one hour.

What happens during home visits may vary according to both parent and teacher preference, but typically home visits include:

- Collaborative academic and personal goal-setting for the student
- Discussion of the student's (and the family's) hopes and dreams
- Discussion of the student's interests both inside and outside of the classroom
- Discussion about communication preferences during the school year
- Explanation about Rocketship's policies and procedures that parents have questions about
- Talking about the history of Rocketship and the mission of the network and school
- Conversations about why the family chose Rocketship, how long they have lived in their community, etc.
- Invitation to an upcoming event at the school (i.e. Back to School Night, community meeting)
- Conversation about the teacher's background

Home visits may also include a tour of the house, including the space where the child will do homework; a performance by the student; a shared meal; and show-and-tell of an artifact that is important to the student (i.e. a photo, trophy, favorite shirt).

## PARENT OPPORTUNITIES ON CAMPUS

We provide many different opportunities for you to stay involved with your child's education.

These include (but are not limited to):

- **Orientation.** Before school begins each year, parents will receive an invitation to an orientation. All parents must attend this event.
- **Conferences.** A parent/guardian must attend conferences to meet with teachers to go over a student's progress report and/or report card.
- **Exhibition Nights.** All parents/guardians should attend the scheduled Exhibition Nights. If you cannot attend, a family representative can attend in your place. During these meetings, parents have the opportunity to see student presentations and discover what their child has learned for the past 9-12 weeks.
- **Community Meetings.** All parents/guardians are invited and strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled Community Meetings. These meetings will help you stay informed

regarding your school procedures and policies and become actively involved in further developing the school's mission.

- **Parent/Family Meetings.** All parents/guardians are invited and strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled Parent/Family Meetings to maintain an active role in their child's learning. These meetings are open to the entire family and typically take place on the weekends or on a weeknight.
- **Leadership groups at the school.** This may include a Parent Leadership group, a School Site Council, or other parent groups organized at the school.

## AUTOMATED MESSAGES TO PARENTS

Once your child is enrolled at Rocketship, you may be contacted by your child's school and/or the Rocketship Public Schools network via automated messaging service (i.e. "One Call" or "Alert Solutions"). These messages typically contain important information about school-related activities, events, or schedule changes. The messaging service should offer you the option to opt out of receiving future messaging. However, you are also free to contact your child's school at any time to ask to be removed from the automated messaging system.

## NOTIFICATIONS OF RIGHTS AND ASSURANCES

### PUPIL RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 5 business days after the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal or designee a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal or designee, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. If the School decides to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Principal must order the correction or the removal and destruction of the information and inform the parent or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the School discloses personally identifiable information ("PII") from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the School board. A School official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the School who performs an institutional service of function for which the School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another School official in performing his or her tasks. A School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

Note that Rocketship will not release information to third parties for immigration-enforcement purposes,

except as required by law or court order.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:  

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202
5. The right to request that Rocketship not release student names, addresses and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from student's education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to School officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the School to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A School may disclose PII from the education records of a student to the following parties without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student:

1. Rocketship officials who have a legitimate educational interest as defined by 34 C.F.R. Part 99;
2. Other schools to which a student seeks or intends to enroll so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. When a student transfers schools, the Rocketship will mail the original or a copy of a student's cumulative file to the receiving district or private school within ten (10) school days following the date the request is received from the public school or private school where the student intends to enroll. Rocketship will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the request for records at his/her last known address, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student. Additionally, Rocketship will give the parent or eligible student, upon request, a copy of the record that was disclosed and give the parent or eligible student, upon request, an opportunity for hearing pursuant to Section (IV)(3) above;
3. Certain government officials listed in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1) in order to carry out lawful functions;
4. Appropriate parties in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid if it is necessary to determine eligibility, amount of aid, conditions for aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of the aid;
5. Organizations conducting certain studies for Rocketship in accordance with 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(F);
6. Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
7. Parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
8. Individuals or entities, in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. Subject to the exceptions found in 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(9)(i), reasonable effort must be made to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance, so that the parent or eligible student may seek a protective order;
9. Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies;
10. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law;
11. A foster family agency with jurisdiction over a currently enrolled or former student, a short-term residential treatment program staff responsible for the education or case management of a student,

and a caregiver (regardless of whether the caregiver has been appointed as the student's educational rights holder) who has direct responsibility for the care of the student, including a certified or licensed foster parent, an approved relative or non-related extended family member, or a resource family, may access the current or most recent records of grades, transcripts, attendance, discipline, and online communication on platforms established by Rocketship for student and parents, and any individualized education program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan that may have been developed or maintained by Rocketship; and/or

12. A victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense. The disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceedings conducted by Rocketship with respect to that alleged crime or offense. Rocketship discloses the final results of the disciplinary proceeding regardless of whether Rocketship concluded a violation was committed.

### **NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that the School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the School to the contrary in accordance with the School's procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production
- The annual yearbook
- Honor roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

"Directory Information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Rocketship may disclose the PII that it has designated as directory information without a parent's prior written consent. "Directory information," which is defined as set forth below, may be released to requestors in limited circumstances by Rocketship Public Schools, without additional notice to parents/guardians, unless the parent/guardian timely "opts out of such disclosures, in writing.

The School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Student's address
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees, honors, and awards received

If you do not want Rocketship to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify Rocketship in writing using the form below at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment.

A copy of the complete Educational Records and Student Information Policy is available upon request at the main office.

If you do not want the School to disclose directory information without your prior written consent, you must submit the completed opt-out form below to the School.

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FERPA DIRECTORY INFORMATION OPT-OUT FORM

Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTICE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION OPT OUT

In accordance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a student's education records are maintained as confidential and, except for a limited number of special circumstances listed in that law, will not be released to a third party without the parent/student's prior written consent. The law, however, does allow schools to release student "directory information" without obtaining the prior consent of the parent/student. If you do not want the release of certain types of directory information without your prior consent, you may choose to "opt-out" of this FERPA exception by signing this Form. Directory information of a student who has opted-out from the release of directory information, in accordance with this policy/procedure for opting out, will remain flagged until the parent/guardian requests that the flag be removed by completing and submitting a revocation of the opt out to the School.

TO: [School Name] \_\_\_\_\_ I request the withholding of personally-identifiable information identified as Directory Information under FERPA. I understand that upon submission of this Form, my information cannot be released to third parties without my written consent or unless the School is required by law or permitted under FERPA to release such information without my prior written consent; and that the directory information will not otherwise be released from the time the School receives my Form until my opt out request is rescinded. I further understand that if directory information is released prior to the School receiving my opt out request, the School may not be able to stop the disclosure of my directory information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (“the McKinney-Vento Act”) is a federal law that ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) This policy is written in compliance with the requirements under the McKinney-Vento Act. It addresses relevant definitions; Rocketship’s Designated Homeless Liaison; general assurances regarding the education of homeless children and youth; procedures for identification and reporting; school selection; enrollment and records; transportation rights; and the enrollment dispute resolution process.

### I. Definitions

“Homeless children and youth” means children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:

- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings or substandard housing (for example, condemned buildings or garages), bus or train stations, or other similar settings. In determining whether a housing arrangement may be deemed “substandard, the school may consider whether the setting lacks one of the fundamental utilities such as water, electricity, or heat; is infested with vermin or mold; lacks a basic functional part such as a working kitchen or toilet; presents unreasonable dangers to adults, children, or persons with disabilities. or is otherwise defined as “substandard” under local housing codes.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (does not include trailers or mobile homes in a mobile home park), or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.
- Unaccompanied youth includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- A child or unaccompanied youth shall be considered homeless for as long as he/she is in a living situation described above.

## II. Designated Homeless Liaisons

The Rocketship Public Schools Homeless Liaison serves Rocketship students in the designated region(s) below.

Leydi Contrill  
350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 109  
Redwood City, CA 94065  
[lcontrill@rsed.org](mailto:lcontrill@rsed.org)  
1-877-806-0920 ext. 300

The Homeless Liaison is required to:

- Ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Ensure that homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, Rocketship schools.
- Ensure that homeless families, children, and youth have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible.
- Ensure that homeless families, children, and youth receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
- Ensure that parents and guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated where children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions.
- Ensure that the parent/guardian of a homeless child or youth, or any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services and is assisted in accessing transportation services, if available and feasible.
- Ensure that school personnel receive professional development and other support.
- Assist unaccompanied youth in placement/enrollment decisions.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement.
- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records
- Collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators and community and school personnel
- responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

## III. General Assurances

Rocketship provides the following general assurances:

- Homeless children and youth shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless and shall not be stigmatized in any way.
- Homeless children and youth shall be provided services comparable to those received by other students in the school, including transportation services, and education programs for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title 1 or similar state and local programs; programs for students with disabilities; programs for students with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; and school nutrition programs.
- Homeless children and youth will have access to district administrative level reservation of funds (set-asides) for serving homeless students.

- Rocketship shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for these students to meet the same challenging academic standards as other students.
- Rocketship shall provide and post notices of the educational rights of homeless children and youth.

#### **IV. Identification and Reporting**

Rocketship will include the identification of homeless students and their unique educational needs in its targeted work to raise achievement for all students. Homeless children and youth will be identified through:

- The application process for enrollment (self-identification)
- School personnel recommendations
- Coordinated activities with other entities and agencies

Rocketship will comply with all federal, state, county, and other data collections and reporting requirements regarding homeless children and youth. Materials will be provided for students and parents in a language easily understood by families and students. If students or families are unable to read, additional support should be provided to explain student rights.

#### **V. School Selection**

Homeless students have a right to select from the following schools:

- The school he/she attended when permanently housed (School of Origin)
- The school in which he/she was last enrolled (School of Origin)
- The school in the attendance area in which the student currently resides (School of Residency)

A homeless child or youth's right to attend their school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness. If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he/she is entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.

#### **VI. Enrollment and Records**

Homeless students may be identified at the time of enrollment (through self-reports). As all Rocketship schools are independent charter schools, and therefore schools of choice rather than assigned district schools, placement decisions are based solely on parent request through the application process. In order to provide equal access to its schools, the Rocketship annual student recruitment plan shall include efforts to reach homeless families, children, and youth via free public events, community centers, and local homeless service providers.

Homeless youth will not be discriminated against in the application process. Homeless children and youth will be allowed to apply for enrollment in accordance with current Rocketship enrollment policies even if the parent/guardian is unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, birth certificate, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The Rocketship designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the homeless liaison. The liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student.

In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Designated Homeless Liaison shall assist in the enrollment process. Unaccompanied youth shall be immediately enrolled if space is available even if unable to provide the school with the

records normally required for enrollment (as above), and despite lack of parent or legal guardian's supervision or permissions, or "power of attorney" by supervising adult.

In accordance with current Rocketship enrollment policies and state regulations regarding charter schools, if the grade level for which a homeless child or youth has applied has more applicants than spaces available, a random public lottery will take place in order to determine enrollment for the following school year. An "in-district" or "in-county" (depending on the type of school the student has applied to) priority will apply during the lottery to homeless youth who self-identify as homeless during the application process so as to not discriminate against homeless children or youth due to lack of permanent housing. If a homeless child or youth applies for admission after the annual random public lottery, he or she will be placed on the wait list in the order in which the application was received, even if the application is incomplete at the time of submission.

Any confidential record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, of each homeless child or youth will be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district.

Information about a student's living situation that is maintained by Rocketship is part of the student's record, subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In general, FERPA prohibits a school from disclosing personally identifiable information ("PII") from students' educational records without parental consent. One exception to this general consent rule is for information that the school has designated as "directory information," which is information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. However, information regarding a student's living situation is not considered directory information and must be provided the same protections as other non-directory PII.

## **VII. Transportation**

Per the McKinney-Vento Act, Rocketship must provide services to homeless children and youth that are comparable to those received by other students in the school selected, including transportation. In addition, schools must provide transportation for homeless students to and from their school of origin, if feasible.

Rocketship, where feasible, at the request of the parent/guardian and/or in the best interest of the homeless child or youth, shall provide transportation to students experiencing homelessness to ensure the students are able to stay at the Rocketship school of their choice for the duration of their homelessness. Rocketship may work with the youth's district of residence or other agencies to provide transportation services.

## **VIII. Enrollment Dispute Resolution Process**

As required by 42 USC § 11432(g)(1)(C), schools must develop and implement written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law with regards to enrollment and school placement as covered by the McKinney-Vento Act.. The State Coordinator for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program will provide technical assistance to interested parties as requested and as necessary.

If a dispute arises over enrollment or school placement:

1. the child or youth must be immediately enrolled in the school requested by the individual or organization submitting the complaint;

2. the parent/guardian of the affected student(s) must be provided a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision;
3. the child, youth, parent, or guardian must be referred to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison for the corporation, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
4. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Education Liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

### Rocketship Dispute Resolution Process

Disputes may arise between a Rocketship school and a homeless student or homeless parent/guardian regarding, among other things, enrollment or transportation. At such a time, the Homeless Education Liaison immediately becomes involved, and Rocketship must follow a procedure that includes these steps:

1. A student must be allowed to attend or enroll in the school that is challenging the student's right to attend until a final decision is made regarding the dispute. The challenging school must provide transportation and other school services as needed to the student until the dispute is resolved.
2. The dispute resolution process begins at the time a school challenges the right of either a parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, to enroll a child or youth in school, to continue enrollment in school, or to receive services such as transportation assistance.
3. When Rocketship challenges the enrollment or services of the child or unaccompanied youth, Rocketship must:
  - Provide notice of the challenge to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, through the Homeless Education, on the day of the challenge.
  - Provide notice of the right to appeal the challenge to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. This notice must include a form to be completed by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth should he or she decide to appeal Rocketship's decision.
4. The Homeless Education Liaison will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with written notice in clear, easy-to-understand language detailing the dispute resolution process.
5. Rocketship will have three working days to review its initial decision and make a final decision as to the position taken ( i.e. whether it will continue to challenge the right of the student to be enrolled). The decision must state all factual information upon which it is based and the legal basis in support thereof.

## **COMPLAINT PROCESS**

Rocketship values the concerns of our parents, staff, students, and community and takes all concerns and complaints seriously. The following complaint procedure should be employed to ensure that complaints receive full consideration.

### **I. Use of Complaint Process**

Rocketship's complaint process should be used as follows:

1. to deal with complaints and concerns pertaining to the educational environment or interpersonal conflicts, in accordance with Section II below.

2. to allege violations of federal or state law, or of the school's charter;

Please note that any complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying or violations under Title IX should refer to Policy #403.3.

## **II. Who May File a Complaint**

The procedures set forth below may be used by complainants who are students, parents, or visitors. Employees and contractors should refer to the Employee Handbook to follow procedures for filing complaints.

## **III. Confidentiality**

All documentation and information related to an investigation conducted as a result of a complaint is considered confidential and is not to be revealed or discussed by any participant with persons not involved with the complaint or decision-making process.

## **IV. Informal Complaints**

Because most difficulties can be resolved by communicating a concern to someone, complainants are encouraged to discuss their concern or complaint promptly and candidly with their immediate supervisor, student's teacher, or the school principal. The complainant is not required to discuss his/her complaint with the alleged harasser or perpetrator in any manner or for any reason prior to initiating a formal complaint.

## **V. Complaint Process Regarding School Site Procedures, Practices, and Policies**

Complaints should follow the process outlined below when they wish to file a formal complaint described in Section I above. This process is available to complaints against employees, students, parents, or visitors.

1. Fill out a Complaint Form, available at the school's front office. In the Complaint Form, complainants should describe the nature of the complaint and any steps taken so far to resolve the issue. The Complaint Form should be submitted to the school Principal. Complaint Forms must be submitted within 90 days of encountering the issue that is the subject of the complaint.
2. The Principal will timely initiate an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of the complaint. This will include interviewing witnesses, obtaining any relevant documents, and allowing parties to present evidence. All documentation related to the investigation is considered highly confidential and is not to be revealed or discussed by any participant with persons not directly involved with the complaint or decision-making process.

The investigation will be concluded within 15 school days of receiving the complaint unless "exceptional circumstances" justify a more expedited response. The amount of time granted for an exceptional circumstance will be determined on an individual case basis.

Upon receiving a complaint, the Principal shall also promptly notify the designated Rocketship Regional Director.

3. The Principal will prepare a final report with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The final report will give the name of the party bringing the complaint, the nature of the complaint, a summary of the investigation, the recommended resolution, and the reasons for recommendation. The Principal should report any incident found to be discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based on membership in a protected class, along with the results of the investigation, to [compliance@rsed.org](mailto:compliance@rsed.org) within 24 hours of the

conclusion of the investigation.

4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Principal's response, he/she may appeal to the Principal's direct supervisor. All appeals must be in writing and include the reason for appeal. Appeals must be submitted to the appropriate party within 10 school days of receiving the response.
5. The Principal's supervisor will conduct an investigation upon receiving the appeal. This process may include an interview with the decision-maker to discuss the rationale. The supervisor will issue a written resolution within 15 school days of receiving the appeal.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the supervisor's resolution, he/she may file a final appeal with the Chief Schools Officer or his/her designee. The Chief Schools Officer or designee will conduct an investigation upon receiving the appeal. This process may include an interview with the decision-maker to discuss the rationale. The Chief Schools Officer or designee will issue a written resolution within 15 school days of receiving the appeal.

If the original complaint pertains to the school Principal, complainants should begin by filing their complaint with the Principal's direct supervisor as described in Steps 4-5 above. Appeals will go to the Chief Schools Officer or designee as described in Step 6.

7. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the Chief Schools Officer, the complainant may appeal to the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) Office of Charter and Private Schools (OCPS), as the Chartering Authority. Note that appeals to MNPS are limited to alleged violations of applicable laws or the charter agreement between MNPS and Rocketship and that it is at the discretion of OCPS whether it entertains the appeal.

## **VI. Prohibition Against Retaliation**

Rocketship will not retaliate against any person who files a complaint in accordance with this policy, or any person who participates in proceedings related to this policy.

In addition, Rocketship will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any person who makes a good faith report or complaint about perceived acts of harassment, discrimination, or concern, or who cooperates in an investigation of harassment, discrimination, or a concern. Any person who is found to be engaging in any kind of retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## **VII. Modification**

Rocketship may approve modification of the foregoing procedures in a particular case if the modification is for good cause and does not violate the due process rights or the complainant or any policies of Rocketship.

## **VII. Contact Information**

The contact information for the school principal can be found on the school's website. The school principal shall assist any complainant in obtaining the proper contact information for the principal's supervisor and/or the Chief Schools Officer/designee, should the complainant wish to pursue an appeal as described in Section V above.

## **IX. Other Remedies**

This complaint process does not bar complainants from filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state and federal law.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

Rocketship does not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic.

Rocketship adheres to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

Rocketship is committed to providing a work and educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX (sex), Title VI (race, color, or national origin), and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA. Rocketship prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. Rocketship does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including bullying, discrimination, or intimidation, by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which the Rocketship does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of position or gender. Rocketship will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted.

## **SECTION 504**

Rocketship recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or engage otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program of Rocketship Public Schools. Any student who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity, including, but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodations by Rocketship. The parent/guardian of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for accommodations under Section 504 may make a referral for an evaluation to the school Principal.

A copy of Rocketship’s Section 504 policies and procedures are available in the Policy Manual.

## **TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parent involvement is one of the three pillars of Rocketship Public Schools. We work directly with parents, helping them become leaders at home, in the school, and in their communities. Our commitment to parent engagement is reinforced through our Title I Parent Involvement Policy and our other school- level parent involvement policies, including our School Site Council and English Language Advisory Committee policies and our Parent Partnership Policy. T

### **I. Development and Review of Policy**

Rocketship will take the following actions to engage parents in the joint development and review of its Title I Parent



#### Involvement Policy:

- Gather and disseminate to parents for review the following materials: the Title I Parental Involvement Policy and the Title I school-parent compact. These materials will be disseminated to parents during one of the school's fall community meetings or at fall parent/teacher conferences.
- Written and oral input from parents will be solicited through regularly-scheduled community meetings, parent/teacher conference feedback and regular written communications with parents.

Schools will distribute the Title I policy through the Parent/Student Handbook and/or at community meetings throughout the school year.

#### **I. Involvement of Parents in the Title I Program**

To involve parents in the Title I program at Rocketship, the following practices have been established:

- All parents are invited to participate in the annual review of the school's Title I programs. All flyers and notices about the meetings are disseminated by classroom and school newsletters, email, calls and posted on the website. Each year the school holds at least two meetings to review, elaborate, edit, and add goals to school programs and plans. The plan may also be discussed at meetings of the School Site Council.
- Rocketship schools provide the necessary coordination, technical assistance, flexibility, and other support to assist Title I schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school Performance. The school will offer monthly community meetings, workshops, and additional activities for parents. The parents will vote at community meetings held either at the end of the school year (for the following year) or at the beginning of the year (for current year) to give input on the content of community meetings and any additional workshops they would like to have. Parents who cannot attend the meetings will be invited to give input through a survey, letter, email or call to their Title I teacher.
- If the schoolwide plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, Rocketship shall submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available.
- Rocketship schools involve parents of Title I students in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Title I programs and the Title I parental involvement policy using the measures described above.
- Rocketship schools provide parents of Title I students with timely information about Title I programs through school and classroom newsletters, parent-teacher home visits, parent- teacher conferences, family events and exhibition nights, and community meetings and leadership training.
- Rocketship schools build the capacity of parent/guardians for strong parent involvement. Each school provides parents of Title I students with an explanation of the curriculum used at the school, the assessments used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. Schools will also provide parent/guardians with assistance on how to monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children. The school shall ensure that this information is communicated to parents/guardians in a format and, to the extent practicable, language that the parent/guardian can understand.
- Rocketship schools provide opportunities for regular meetings that allow the parents to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children. This happens through community meetings, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and school and classroom newsletters.
- If requested by parents, and to the extent not covered by any of the above options, Rocketship will provide opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions

relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

- Rocketship Public Schools, with the assistance of its parents, will educate its teachers, school leaders and other school staff how to reach out to, communicate with and value parents as equal partners in their children's education. The school shall inform parents/guardians of the existence of parent resource centers in the state that provide training, information, and support to parent/guardians.

This policy will be updated periodically to meet changing needs of parents and the school. Rocketship shall conduct, with involvement of parents/guardians, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served by Title I.

## **II. School-Parent Compact**

Rocketship distributes to parents of all students a school-parent compact. The compact, which has been jointly developed with parents, outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. It describes specific ways the school and families will partner to help children achieve the State's high academic standards. It addresses the following legally required items, as well as other items suggested by parents of Title I students.

## **III. Building Capacity for Involvement**

As described above, Rocketship schools engage Title I parents in meaningful interactions with the school. Our schools support a partnership among staff, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement. To help reach these goals, the school has established the following practices which are undertaken during regular community meetings, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, and special school events.

- Rocketship provides Title I parents with assistance in understanding the State's academic content standards, assessments, and how to monitor and improve the achievement of their children.
- Rocketship provides Title I parents with materials and training to help them work with their children to improve their children's achievement.
- Rocketship educates staff members about the value of parent contributions, and in how to work with parents as equal partners. Rocketship Public Schools has a Parent Leadership team, which is tasked with building parental capacity for leadership and parent involvement.
- Rocketship involves parents of all backgrounds, including those with limited English proficiency, those with disabilities, and parents of migratory students.
- Rocketship coordinates and integrates the Title I parental involvement program with other programs, and conducts other activities, such as parent resource centers, to encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.
- Rocketship distributes Information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities to Title I parents in a format and language that the parents understand.
- Rocketship provides support for parental involvement activities requested by Title I parents.

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements of this policy, Rocketship shall provide opportunities

for the informed participation of parents and family members, including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and families who have disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children. This includes providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

## ESSA PARENTS RIGHT TO KNOW

Pursuant to Section 1112(e)(1)(A-B) of the Every Student Succeeds Act, a student's parent may request, and Rocketship will provide the parents upon request (and in a timely manner), information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including at a minimum the following:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualifications for grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other professional status that the State has waived;
- Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher;
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and if so their qualifications.

## COPPA

Rocketship schools use several computer software applications and web-based services, operated not by schools in our network, but by third-party vendors. We use these tools to provide students with the most effective software and web-based services for learning. In accordance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Rocketship consents to the vendors' collection, use, and disclosure of information obtained directly from students. Rocketship gives this consent on behalf of parents.

Under COPPA, each software provider or website operator is bound to maintain the confidentiality of the information collected, and must provide parental notification and obtain parental consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. The law permits schools such as ours to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of all of its students, thereby eliminating the need for individual parental consent given directly to the web site operator. For more information on COPPA, please visit <http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/coppafaqs.shtm>.

A complete list of the software and services used by RSED, with the privacy policy for each, can be found on our network website at: <https://www.rocketshipschools.org/<link to list of programs>>.

Upon request from Rocketship, vendors must provide the school a description of the types of personal information collected; an opportunity to review a child's personal information and/or have the information deleted; and the opportunity to prevent further use or online collection of a child's personal information.

Parents retain the right to request review of their child's personal information and/or have information deleted. Parents also have the right to opt their child out of participating in educational activities that involve the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information collected from their child.

## POLICIES

As referenced throughout this Handbook, Rocketship maintains a robust set of Board-approved policies in its Policy Manual. These policies set forth parameters, requirements, and procedures for Rocketship operations and student services. Each official Rocketship policy is assigned a number upon Board approval, indicated in the parenthesis below. The Policy Manual may be updated throughout the school year as necessary to comply with ongoing legal requirements.

A complete and up-to-date version of the Policy Manual is available to all Rocketship families at [WEBSITE].

Families may also request a hard copy of the Policy Manual, or one or more specific policies contained in it, from the front office of the school at any time.

The list below includes many of the relevant policies that are contained in the Policy Manual.

### **Governance/Management Policies**

General Complaint Policy (#110.3)\*

### **Academic Policies**

Reclassification Policy (#201)

Retention and Acceleration Policy (#202)

Retesting Policy and Assessment Code of Ethics (#203)

### **Schools Operations Policies**

Campus Access and Visitor Policy (#301)\*

Field Trip Policy (#302)

Student Release Policy (#303)

Late Pick-Up Policy (#304)

Staff and Parent Driver Policy (#306)

Electronic Recording Policy (#307)

Volunteer Clearance Policy (#309.3)

School Closure Policy (#310)

Animals on Campus Policy (#311)

Public Solicitation on School Grounds Policy (#312)

School Social Media Policy (#313)

Transportation Policy (#314.3)

### **Student Services Policies**

Admissions and Enrollment Policy (#401.3)

Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, and Title IX Policy (#403.3)

Student Discipline Policy (#404)

Suspension and Expulsion Policy (#405.3)

Student Dress Code (#406)

Attendance and Truancy Policy (#407.3)\*

Family Custody Policy (#408)\*  
Bed Bug Policy (#409)  
Head Lice Policy (#410)  
Internet Safety Policy (#411)  
Local School Wellness Policy (#412.3)  
Medication Administration Policy (#413.3)  
Immunization Policy (#414.3)\*  
Seclusion and Restraint Policy (#415)  
Education for Foster Youth Policy (#416.3)\*  
Education of Homeless Children and Youth Policy (#417)\*  
FERPA Policy (#420)\*  
Educational Records and Student Information Policy (#421.3)  
Home Visit Policy (#423)  
Parent Partnership Policy (#424)  
Student Sexual Harassment Policy (#425)  
Concussion Policy (#428)

**Special Education Policies**

Child Find Policy (#501)  
Section 504 Policy (#508)  
Independent Educational Evaluation Policy (#510)

*\*Copy of policy also included in Handbook.*