



UNIVERSAL ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
Family Handbook
2022-2023 School Year

Dear Students & Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to UNIVERSAL ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL!

Universal Academy administrators and faculty are looking forward to the new 2022-2023 school year. We have worked hard to make sure that this year, our 9th year, is better than the all the years that have come before. If you are a returning family, we hope that you like some changes that we have made and hope that you continue to join us on this new journey! If you are a new family to UACS we welcome you, and we are so happy that you are here!

The policies and procedures detailed within this handbook demonstrate the hard work and dedication that all Universal administration and faculty have put in to making sure that every student that walks in our doors is successful! We believe in taking care of the *whole child*. We know that it just doesn't start and end with academics but that all children deserve a safe place to learn and grow. With all that in mind, this ***Policies and Procedures Family Handbook*** was carefully prepared. We hope it ensures that every child gets a *whole* education and that (if adhered to) it will be of great value to you and your family.

After reading this handbook or after seeing a presentation, we encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

UACS Administration

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be **in school and on time** every day! Excessive absences will be a factor to consider in any retention decision. If a student has more than 8 unexcused absences, they will automatically be reported to the state.

Excused vs Unexcused Absence

An **excused absence** is when a parent or guardian contacts the school with a valid reason for their child/ren's absence.

It is Universal Academy's policy that all excused absences be given in either the form of a note (upon child/ren returning to school) or a phone call (the day of child/ren absence). All excused absence phone calls must be received by 9:00 am. ***The attendance line is (651) 340-5994.***

An **unexcused absence** is when a parent or guardian does not contact the school with a valid reason for their child/ren's absence.

It is Universal Academy's policy that ALL absences will be reported as ***unexcused*** unless the school receives the following documentation:

- Doctor's note
- Court documents mandating a court appearance
- Parent note indicating family emergency
- Parent note indicating religious holiday
- Phone call (by 9:00 am)

Tardiness

Tardy is when a student arrives to school late. A student is considered tardy if they arrive AFTER 7:45 am. After 3 tardies a student will receive an unexcused absence (3 tardies = 1 unexcused absence). Students must check-in with the front office (preferably accompanied by a parent/guardian) upon arrival to receive a tardy slip. *If a student arrives after 7:45 am in class, they will be sent to the office for a tardy slip!*

Under Minnesota Law, children must attend school 95% of the time until they are 17 years-old. This means that a child should have no more than 8 unexcused absences in a school year. Parents will be notified in writing if there is not strict adherence to the tardiness policy.

Long Term Absences

If it is necessary to remove students from school for more than 5 consecutive school days, a written request should be submitted to the school office detailing the nature of the removal. Classroom work must be requested from the classroom teacher as students will still be responsible for all work completion and their grades while enrolled.

UNIFORM POLICY

Students are required to come to school in uniforms that are clean, well kept, and in good condition. All clothing must be within Universal Academy's uniform guidelines detailed below:

Girls (K-4)	Girls (5-8)
Navy Blue Jumper	Plain Navy Blue Skirt
Plain Light Blue Polo Shirt (long sleeve; without logo)	Plain Light Blue Polo Shirt (long sleeve; with logo)
Navy Blue Leggings	Navy Blue Leggings
White Socks	White socks
Black Dress Shoes	Black dress shoes

Boys (K-5)	Boys (6-8)
Navy Blue Pants	Navy Blue Pants
Plain Light Blue Polo Shirt (long sleeve; with logo)	Plain Light Blue Polo Shirt (long sleeve; with logo)
Black Dress Shoes	Black dress shoes
Black or Navy Blue Belt (if needed)	Black or Navy Blue belt (if needed)
**Girls sweater with logo, long sleeve or vest optional	**Boys sweater with logo, long sleeve or vest optional
Boys (9-12)	Girls (9-12)
Black Pants	Black Skirts + Black Leggings
Maroon Polo (With Logo)	Maroon Polo (With Logo)
Black Crewneck Sweatshirt	Black Crewneck Sweatshirt
White Socks	White Socks
Black Dress Shoes	Black Dress Shoes

If a parent/guardian has any difficulty finding an item listed above, please contact the school.
 If a parent/guardian has any difficulty buying any item listed above, please contact the school.
 If a student is out of uniform, a parent/guardian will be contacted and a change of clothes will be requested.

Jewelry

Girls may wear earrings less than one inch in length. No other facial or visual body piercings are allowed. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.

Hair

Boys' hair must be worn neatly and cut to a length above the collar. No ponytails, shaved designs, mohawks, faux hawks, or other distracting styles may not be worn.

Natural hair colors are ONLY acceptable.

The schools Executive Administrative team reserve the right to determine all final decisions regarding hair requirements.

Appearance & Hygiene

Students are required to arrive to school neat and clean. No nail polish or makeup are allowed. Uniforms should be washed on a regular basis, be well kept and maintained and have no holes.

Students are not allowed to wear non-school sweaters or jackets in school.

BUS & TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Building Hours & Use

The school building is open Monday-Friday 7:00 am – 5:00 pm. There are no set business hours on the weekends, although staff and other personnel may be in the building on occasion. On normal school days students are allowed in the building no earlier than 7:00 am and no later than 2:30 pm. If students are in the building before or after the allowed time periods, they must be under the direct supervision of a teacher or staff member, **with special permission**.

Bus Procedures

Riding the bus is a privilege, NOT a right! All school rules, and behavior expectations still apply while on the school bus. School bus safety rules are posted on every bus and will be discussed monthly with your students at our Monday Morning Meetings.

Students must follow the rules and guidelines that apply at school when they are on the bus. If the bus driver sees your students' behavior as unsafe they will be written up and be suspended from the bus. It is important that everyone remains safe while on the bus so that they can arrive to their location on time and safely. If your student gets suspended 3 times from the bus, they will no longer be allowed on the bus for the rest of the school year. In addition to the bus driver there will also be 2 bus managers on each bus that will be taking notes of incidents that happen and will be reporting it to Administration every day to ensure everyone's safety.

Parent Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures

School hours are 7:15-2:30. The earliest a student can be dropped off at school is 7:00 am in the morning. The latest a child can be picked up is 2:30 pm in the afternoon. Parents must accompany their child when dropping them off and picking them up. If the parent is not present at the time of dismissal (2:30 pm) the student will take their available bus home.

If a child has a change in his/her mode of transportation and the parent/guardian wishes to pick up the child, either a note must be dropped off at the front office in advance or a phone call must be made to the front office by 11:00 am. After 11:00 am, no transportation change calls will be accepted.

If a parent/guardian visits the school to pick-up a student, he/she must sign in with the front office and receive a visitor's badge.

BEHAVIOR & SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

We believe that all students are responsible for their behavior and their own actions. Students come to Universal Academy to learn and receive a *whole* education. Therefore, any students that are following our procedures and policies correctly and consistently will be recognized within the classroom. Students who do well and go above and beyond in their behavior or actions will receive points, at the discretion of the teacher.

Universal Academy Charter School uses a system of NIA points. NIA means PURPOSE in Swahili.

Method: Students start off the day with zero (0) NIA points. A student's objective is to follow all school and classroom behavior rules and earn points. A student is expected to earn 12 points each day. If a student goes above and beyond in their behavior or actions, she/he can earn up to 3 extra bonus NIA points for a daily max of 15 NIA points.

What happens if a student keeps all his/her NIA points and exhibits amazing behavior in school? They earn special privileges such as choice time and FUN Friday! Special privileges vary by class and grade level.

We expect all students to participate positively in the classroom. In the event that a student misbehaves he/she will have a consequence according to the level of their offense.

Taking a break	Conference with	Direct to an
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	teacher and possible phone call home	Administrator for Counseling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calling out ▪ Failure to say “excuse me” ▪ Uniform violation ▪ Failure to show SLANT (when requested) ▪ Unprepared for class ▪ Failure to follow directions ▪ Off-task ▪ Talking during a lesson ▪ Refusal to work ▪ Failure to follow hallway procedures ▪ Interrupting the speaker ▪ Out of seat w/o permission ▪ Arguing with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chewing gum ▪ Eating candy* (w/o permission) ▪ Intentional failure to follow directions ▪ Inappropriate response ▪ Laughing at peer or adult ▪ Hurtful language or actions ▪ Misuse of materials ▪ Zero participation or effort ▪ Back talk ▪ Lying ▪ Running in the hallway or stairway ▪ Play fighting, pushing, and/or kicking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cheating/Copying ▪ Stealing ▪ Refusal to follow consequences ▪ Failure to follow safety protocol during an emergency (ex. <i>fire drill</i>) ▪ Bullying (on bus or in school) ▪ Foul language ▪ Temper tantrum ▪ Destruction of school property ▪ Cell phone** in class

*Pop, candy, gum and food snacks are NOT allowed in school

**Cell phones are not allowed in school or on the bus. Universal Academy Charter School is not responsible for the theft or loss of a cell phone or

any form of technology the like thereof, brought to school by students. Cell phones and any other prohibited items will be confiscated and returned

to parent/guardian after meeting with Administrators.

Counseling and In School Suspension

Students who are exhibiting any behaviors in the red will be sent to the Dean of Students for an “In School Suspension”. In School Suspensions (ISS) are accompanied by intense counseling from the Dean of Students. This may include but is not limited to discussing the issue, writing about the issue, reading about the issue, and meeting with the parent about the issue. If your student receives 3 in school suspensions he/she will be discussed with the Response to Intervention (RTI) committee for additional support.

Suspension

Universal Academy Charter School DOES NOT tolerate physical fighting in any form. If a student or students are fighting in the classroom on the playground, or on the bus they will be automatically suspended and sent home. All suspensions must be approved by the Executive Director. If a student is suspended 3 times throughout the school year there will be a meeting arranged in order to determine that student’s future at Universal Academy. Universal Academy expects all students to respectfully and calmly use their words if they are disagreeing with another student or teacher.

In the event that a student is suspended an “Intake Meeting” including a school administrator and teacher will be required before the student returns to their class. Plans will be discussed to prevent future incidents.

HARASSMENT & VIOLENCE POLICY

Everyone at Universal Academy Charter School has a right to feel respected and safe. Therefore, we want you to know about our policy to prevent harassment and violence of any kind based upon race, religion, or gender.

A harasser may be a student or an adult. Harassment may include, but is not limited to the following when related to religion, race, or gender:

- Name calling, jokes, or rumors
- Pulling on clothing
- Graffiti
- Notes or cartoons
- Unwelcome touching of a person or clothing
- Offensive or graphic posters or book covers

If any words or actions make you feel uncomfortable or fearful, you need to tell a teacher or the Executive Director. This includes all types of harassment including cyber bullying and cyber harassment.

You may also make a written report. It should be given to a teacher or the Executive Director. Your right to privacy will be respected as much as possible.

We take all reports of harassment or violence based upon religion, race, or gender seriously and will take all appropriate actions based on your report.

Universal Academy Charter School will also take action if anyone tries to intimidate you or take action to harm you because you have reported the situation. Complete policies are available in the Executive Director’s office upon request. All cases will be handled on an individual bases.

Hazing Prohibition

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of Universal Academy Charter School and are prohibited at all times.

“Hazing” means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose.

- No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Universal Academy Charter School shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing.
- No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of Universal Academy Charter School shall permit, condone or tolerate hazing.
- Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

- This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and after school hours.
- A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.
- Universal Academy Charter School will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school who is found to have violated this policy.

This is a summary of the Universal Academy Charter School policy against hazing. Complete policies are available in the Executive Director's office upon request.

Weapons

It is unlawful and against school policy to have a weapon on one's person or in an area subject to one's control on school property or at a school activity.

"Weapon" refers, but is not limited, to firearms or any device that is designed as a weapon or through its use capable of threatening or causing bodily harm.

Possession of a weapon will result in:

1. An initial suspension for five (5) days.
2. Confiscation of the weapon and notification of the Minneapolis Police Department.
3. A recommendation to the Executive Director that the student be expelled for the remainder of the semester or school year may follow.

General School Procedures and Policies

Visitors

Parents/Guardians of Universal Academy Charter School students are invited to visit the school at any time. It is *requested* that parents/guardians notify the school office at least one (1) day in advance of their visit and register in the office upon arrival. All visitors will be required to register in the front office and receive a visitor's badge. Universal Academy Charter School students are not allowed to bring other children or students with them to school as visitors. If you would like to be a UACS Volunteer please contact our Human Resources Department for more information.

Meetings with Administration or Teachers

Parents/Guardians of Universal Academy Charter School students are invited to meet with school staff at any time. A meeting with a school staff member will require an appointment made with the front office to guarantee the school staff member is available.

Late Arrivals

Universal Academy expects all students to arrive on time to school every day. In the event that a student arrives late parents must accompany the student to the front office reception window. At the reception window parents will need to check in their student with receptionist and the student will receive a "Tardy Slip". The student will then take the tardy slip to their teacher. Parents are not allowed to enter the school after checking in the tardy student unless they have an appointment.

Emergency Drills

Universal Academy Charter School conducts emergency drills throughout the school year. Some emergency drills are announced while others are unannounced. It is important that students, staff

and visitors regard these drills seriously and know the procedure to follow in case of an actual emergency. Administrators as well as selected staff members will cover evacuation procedures in the beginning of the year.

School Closings & Inclement Weather

If it is decided that school will be delayed or closed due to bad weather, the following will happen:

1. The School will make a decision by 6:00 a.m. as to whether or not school will be delayed or cancelled.
2. Parents/Guardians will receive a text message alert in the event that school is cancelled.

Health Services & Medications

All medications, including over-the-counter non-prescription drugs, taken by students during the school day must be dispensed under the direction of the school health office, and in accordance with Minnesota State Law and School Board Policy. All prescription drugs must come in current pharmacy labeled medication bottles.

Over-the-counter medications must come in their original containers. Under no circumstances are students to be carrying prescription drugs of any kind. Cough drops will be allowed at the discretion of the teacher, so long as they do not interfere with the learning environment.

SECTION 504: PARENT/GUARDIAN & STUDENT RIGHTS

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students with handicaps. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

You have the right to:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her handicapping conditions;
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law;
3. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child;
4. Have your child receive a free, appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with non-handicapped students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school related activities;
5. Have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided non-handicapped students;
6. Have your child receive special education and related services if he/she is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act;
7. Have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions made based upon a variety of information sources, and by persons who know the student, the evaluation date, and placement options;

8. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district;
9. Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district;
10. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, and placement;
11. Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records;
12. A response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records;
13. Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school district refuses this request for amendment, it shall notify you within a reasonable time, and advise you of the right to a hearing;
14. Request mediation or an impartial hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you. Hearing requests must be made to the Special Education Teacher.
15. Ask for payment of reasonable attorney fees if you are successful on your claim;
16. File a local grievance.

Student Published Information

Student published information includes (but is not limited to) student executive directories, photos and names of students who have received awards and participated in classroom and extracurricular activities. These may be published in local newspapers, school district publications and appear internally within the school on bulletin boards and other recognition showcases. If you do not want your child's name or photo to be used for these purposes, please contact the school office.

***Universal Academy Charter School High School Requirements for Graduation
Course Category # of Required Credits***

Language Arts-8 credits
Mathematics-8 credits
Science-8 credits
Social Studies-7 credits
Health-3 credits
Business/Careers-2 credits
Fine Arts-2 credits
Physical Education-2 credits
World Language-4 credits
Electives-2 credits

Total Credits needed for Graduation = 46 Credits

- Students can earn 13 credits per year at Universal Academy Charter School
- Every time you pass a class for the quarter, you earn a .5 credit.
(Advisory= .25 credits/quarter)

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance can affect a student's grades and credits! If a student has more than 5 unexcused absences per quarter their grade will decrease by one partial letter grade. (*Ex. An "A" would decrease down to an "A-"*)

College Admission Requirements-Review

University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Universities

The following requirements are generally accepted as universal requirements for college entrance. Please check specific colleges for their detailed requirements.

- Four years of English (8 semester credits) with an emphasis on writing, reading and speaking skills, along with a study of American and World Literature
- Four years of Mathematics (8 semester credits) including one year of the following courses: Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
- Three years of Science (6 semester credits), including one year of biological science and one year of physical science that involves laboratory experience
- Three and a half years of Social Studies (7 semester credits), including Geography, Government, U.S. History, World History, and Economics
- Two years (4 semester credits) of a single second language
- One year (2 semester credits) of visual and/or performing arts including, instruction in the history and interpretation of the art form (e.g. theater arts, music, band, chorus, orchestra, drawing, painting, photography, or graphic design)

ADMISSION TESTS

The two tests that may be required for college admission are the ACT and the SAT, although the ACT is most commonly used.

Students may take the ACT and SAT as juniors or seniors. ACT tests are given in October, April, and June. Juniors should wait until the 2nd semester to take the ACT.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES (2 YEAR COLLEGES)

Community colleges require no tests for admission except for specific fields of study (e.g. Nursing). These colleges generally use a placement test for all incoming freshmen.