***IWA PELE (Sankofa Freedom Academy Code of Good Conduct)***

The goal of the administration and faculty is to help each scholar achieve success both in his/her studies and in his/her growth and development as a person. This means that we always expect our scholars to operate in the “Sankofa Freedom Way”.

Each scholar has responsibilities toward reaching these goals. To help clarify these responsibilities, the following Code of Conduct is offered:

All scholars shall be responsible for their learning experiences, including responsiveness to lessons and completion of assignments.

Respect for adults, fellow scholars, school regulations and property, and personal belongings shall be observed.

All scholars are expected to be cooperative, polite and demonstrate fair play while in school and attending school-related activities.

Self-control and good citizenship are expected from all scholars (see Maatic Development).

Proper and appropriate language shall be used at all times.

Appropriate grooming and personal appearance is the responsibility of the scholar and parent (as it applies to younger scholars). Outdoor and play clothing are not to be worn in school.

All scholars are expected to be prepared for class and arrive on time according to the schedules set by the school.

Good table manners and appropriate cafeteria behavior are expected of all scholars.

All scholars are requested to walk (not run) while in the school building and on their way to and from the school playground.

Absolute obedience for fire drills and other emergencies is required of all scholars.

All scholars are expected to keep the school building and grounds clean and neat. Dispose of waste papers and trash in the proper receptacles.

All scholars are expected to observe acceptable audience behavior while participating in large group activities both on campus as well as during field trips.

All scholars are to follow routine lines of communication. Scholars’ concerns should be directed to the person (teacher or aide) who is on duty or responsible for the group or activity. If a teacher or aide is not available, report concerns to the office.

Dress and grooming are important factors in determining children’s attitudes toward school. A child, who comes to school neat and clean and dressed comfortably, but in good taste, helps to set a good school climate.

Scholars are not permitted to use cell phones, beepers or other such electronic devices during school. Cell phones should be turned off during school hours but may be used once the scholar has left campus for the day. Scholars are not allowed to bring toys or electronic games to school. Failure to obey this rule may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscating the item.

**MA’ATIC DEVELOPMENT/RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE**

Ma’atic Development (MD) utilizes an African Centered approach to discipline to address the socialization challenges in various school communities. The primary mission of MD is to formally initiate youth into discovering and overstanding the importance of who they are, why they are here and the purpose and meaning for their existence. Secondly, MD seeks to connect this discovery and overstanding to positive life sustaining and community building attitudes and behaviors by grounding participants in the African principles of Ma’at and Nguzo Nane. MD operates on the premise that “Kinship Love” is the motivating force of the universe. Simply said, Kinship Love speaks to belonging, i.e. having a sense of connectedness (Kinship) with family, community and school and concern for others (Love), particularly those one feels connected to. Kinship Love is the foundation of Iwa Pele/Good Character.

Therefore, it is essential to make youth and their families feel they belong, to make them feel that no matter how it is at home or wherever they reside, it feels good to come here. “Our” school will be a place where youth and their family are loved, respected, valued and listened to and where they will be expected to love, respect, value and listen to others. Here, youth and their family will have another “family” and be part of a “community”. Everyone in the community is expected to embrace and practice Iwa Pele (Good Character) and Kinship Love.

Although many schools choose to use punishment as their primary approach to discipline, the tone of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School’s MD environment is one of introspection, cooperation and restoration. At Sankofa it has been our experience that when an existing relationship is out of balance/harmony, something must be done to restore it. Therefore, scholars are assigned to MD in an effort to re-center themselves through self reflection in a spirit of cooperation with the MD staff. There, they are engaged in academic, cultural and holistic socialization interventions, focusing on character, culture and community/citizenship. This process is accomplished by allowing participants to learn how values influence and determine their thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, speech and spirit: to look at “ourstory” in order to see how the past helps to shape and maintain the present; to learn how to use other value systems (e.g. Ma’at and Nguzo Nane) that will address the quality of their life; to use the creative arts (visual, music, drama, movement, etc.) as methods of expressions; and, finally, to explore and utilize communication and relationship building skills in an effort to improve communication and foster righteous relationships.

Scholars who accumulate behavior/discipline violations are subject to increasingly progressive interventions. These interventions may include:

• Recentering (Saturday, after school and other scheduled times)

• Mandatory Parent Conference

• Ma’atic Development (MD) (In School Suspension)

• Out of School Suspension

• Scholar Disciplinary Review Committee (SDRC) Hearing

• Behavior Contract & Probation

Recentering/MD is a place and time where and when scholars are asked to look inside to restore balance and/or order. More often than not, when scholars are disciplined, they are perceived as being out of order/balance with their community/environment. For example, profanity, not following adult instruction, or verbal fighting/sparring would be examples of behaviors that may result in Recentering/MD. The greatest challenge for scholars and teachers, once a scholar has been through Recentering/MD, is to restore the teacher/scholar relationship. The MD team is committed to assisting facilitators and teachers in that process. Nonetheless, in order for the process to work, all parties have to be willing to be a part of the restoration process. Since each person is different, the approach and strategy used to restore the relationship will often be unique to the specific person and situation.

A Mandatory Parent Conference (MPC) is scheduled to inform parents of our need to provide increased interventions and supports for their children, and to discuss our collective efforts to make that happen. When these conferences are scheduled, scholars will not be allowed to return to Sankofa Freedom Academy without a parent/guardian. After review and when appropriate, scholars may receive a Behavior Contract and be placed on probation.

Sankofa Freedom Academy Community Code:

The Sankofa Freedom Academy Way

The Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School is founded on life-affirming

principles that are designed to build and maintain a peaceful productive community where everyone is valued and everyone is expected to contribute something valuable to the collective. Thus, we the members of the Sankofa community affirm that the freedom we seek is the freedom to be our best selves, so that we can build strong relationships, healthy families, and a peaceful world characterized by justice and harmony.

To accomplish this, Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School must be a place where everyone is physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually –safe. Subsequently, it is imperative that each member (scholars, servant leaders, facilitators, elders) commit themselves as individuals to reflecting the virtues of Maat and Djehuty:

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| --- | --- |
| Scholarship | Order |
| Balance | Harmony |
| Justice | Truth |
| Righteousness | Reciprocity |

In addition, each individual is compelled to work communally to reflect the principles of the Nguzo Nane (Eight Principles):

* Heshima (Respect)
* Umoja (Unity)
* Kujichaglia (Self-Determination)
* Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)
* Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)
* Nia (Purpose)
* Kumba (Creativity)
* Imani (Faith)

**Consequences for Violations of Community Code**

 The Director of Operations and the Dean of Students shall collaborate with the COO, facilitators and other adult in the community at large to be responsible for the Maatic Development (discipline) of scholars and servant leaders. His or her office will be called the Maatic Development Office. The Maatic Development room will be conducive to reflection, introspection and behavioral reassessment.

Although Sankofa Freedom Academy has its own philosophy and approach with regard to discipline, it will still operate with guidelines established by the School District of Philadelphia. As a result we have established a hierarchy of offenses in much the same way as the School District code of conduct and will insure that due process is followed in the Maatic Development process.

**Level 1:** A first violation that may impact the atmosphere of balance and order within the community:

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| --- | --- |
| Violations of Uniform Policy | Obscene/Abusive/Inappropriate Language |
| Inappropriate Classroom Conduct (Repeated Offense) | Horseplay |
| Failing to carry out a direct order of an adult | Being in hall without a pass |
| Possession of Electronic Device |  |

**Level 1: Interventions-** Interventions will be in proportion to the severity of the offense and the record of the offender. (i.e. repeat offenses would be deemed more serious).

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| Scholar conferences | Re-centering session |
| Service to the community | Mandatory Parent Conference |
| Saturday Inconvenience | Daily Report |
| Loss of Participation in Family Activities | Maatic Development (In School Suspension from class) |

**Level 2:** Violations of this type threaten the peace and tranquility of the community

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| --- | --- |
| Threats, Intimidation, Bullying and Pre-fighting | Cheating, Plagiarism |
| Harassment | Insubordination |
| Repeated violations of Level One | Sexual Harassment |
| Gambling | Damaging School Property |

**Level 2: Interventions**

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| --- | --- |
| Mandatory mediation | Scholar Contract |
| Re-centering | Saturday Re-centering |
| Mandatory Parent Conference | Mandatory Village Circle |
| Suspension |  |

**Level 3:** Violations which involve actions that are very serious violations of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School and/or are criminal violations of Pennsylvania law.

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| --- | --- |
| Possession of firearm | Terrorist threats or arts |
| Drug Possession, use, or Illicit activity | Threat / Larceny |
| Arson | Disorderly contact |
| Sexual misconduct | Disorderly conduct |
| Assault of staff members, vendors, guests | Conspiracy to have someone do violence |
| Violence, fighting and fighting with a weapon |  |

**Level 3: Interventions**

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| --- | --- |
| Notification of Intent to Expel | Out of school suspension |
| Loss of participation in School Event upon return from suspension | Board Hearing |

(If there is a recommendation to expel, expulsion is confirmed by Board of Directors)

**Search and Seizure**

The Board of Directors reserves the right to authorize its employees to inspect a scholar’s book bag and lockers when such employee has reason to believe that the school bag is improperly used for the storage of contraband, a substance or object the possession of which is illegal, or any material which poses a hazard to the safety, sanitation and good order of the school. In the presence of another faculty or staff person, a scholar’s person and possessions may be searched by the Principal or his/her representative. School bags and lockers can be inspected randomly without due cause.

**Nuisance Device Policy**

Nuisance devices are defined as any radio, recorder or tape player, electronic game, CD

player, pager, beeper, game, toy puzzle, cellular phone, laser pointer, or any object which has no legitimate educational purpose. Possession of such items interferes with the orderly conduct of school business. Scholars are not permitted to have these devices during the school day. Electronics shall be confiscated and given to parents.

**Drug / Illegal Substance policy**

Drug/ illegal substance policy, use, or illicit activity (sell, store, production, or purchase) on school grounds, or at school-sponsored events is absolutely prohibited. School activities will result in notification to the police department, immediate suspension and expulsion hearing before the Board of Trustees.

**Procedures for Special Education Discipline**

**Suspensions for Special Education Scholars Identified as Mentally Retarded**

Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School can only suspend scholars identified as Mentally Retarded with either (a) written agreement of the parent or (b) in an emergency where the scholar represents a danger to him/herself or others and the written approval of the Office of Special Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**Suspensions, Expulsion and Transfer for All Other Disabled Scholars**

Sankofa Freedom Academy may suspend scholars with disabilities and cease educational services for up to five (5) consecutive school days or fifteen (15) cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education procedural safeguards.

Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School will provide the following safeguards for scholars referred for expulsion, or suspension for more than five (5) days, or for more than fifteen (15) cumulative days:

Written notice to the parent/guardian of the recommended disciplinary action and the date of an Individualized Education Program meeting;

A team shall convene a Manifestation Determination meeting within 24 hours of the misconduct with the parents having been invited;

During the IEP meeting, the IEP team shall review the scholar’s most current

evaluation and the scholar's IEP and placement to determine whether the scholar’s misconduct is related to the scholar's disability. The misconduct is not related to the scholar's disability if (i) the current IEP was appropriate and implemented; and (ii) the disability does not impair the scholar’s ability to understand the consequences of his or her behavior and control his or her behavior.

If the scholar's behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, school officials may apply the Uniform Discipline Code, taking into consideration the scholar's special education and disciplinary records. In no event, however, may the scholar be suspended without providing appropriate educational services for more than five (5) consecutive or fifteen (15) cumulative school days in a school year. A NOREP must be issued with the results of this determination.

The IEP team shall review and revise, if necessary, the behavior intervention plan or, as necessary, complete a functional behavior assessment and intervention plan to address the misconduct;

The IEP team shall determine the appropriateness of an interim alternative

educational setting and, as indicated, include in the IEP those services and modifications that will enable the scholar to continue to participate in the general curriculum and address the behavior so that it will not recur.

The IEP team shall issue a NOREP with the results of the Manifestation

Determination. If the scholar's behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the scholar's placement may be changed to an appropriate interim educational setting, only if the scholar carried a weapon to school or a school function or knowingly possessed or used illegal drugs or sold or solicited the sale of a controlled substance while at school or at a school function. If the parent requests a due process hearing, the Alternative Placement shall be limited to 45 days. The School District may ask for an expedited hearing and request the hearing officer to order a 45 day interim placement if the scholar is substantially likely to cause injury to himself/herself or others. Scholars with disabilities, even if expelled, must be provided with a free and appropriate education (FAPE).

The information regarding the status of the custody of a scholar will be provided to the school CEO/Principal and/or the school counselor, the scholar’s teacher and any essential personnel thus determined by the CEO/Principal.

***Administrative Statements***

**Sankofa Umoja Code Enforcement**:

 In order to insure a safe school environment, parents, scholars, and staff have been asked to sign a contract indicating that a fight will result in either parental withdrawal of the scholar or expulsion from the Sankofa community. In addition, excessive or repeated (10 or more) disciplinary write-ups will result in the commencement of expulsion proceedings.

**Due Process**

In terms of our school, staff and its scholars, due process is the principle of treating all persons equally in accordance with the rules of Sankofa Freedom Academy. Simply stated, every scholar will be given the right to address any allegation brought against them in a forum designated by the school (i.e. meeting with the CEO/Principal or designee). In the event that your child is involved in an incident at school that warrants an investigation, he or she will be:

Afforded an opportunity to present their side of the occurrence.

Given all rights and opportunities to relate their side of the story if they are a victim.

Provided with a copy of the Scholar Handbook for the current school year for their safe keeping and an additional copy will be provided for their parents or guardians prior to the conclusion of the first month of the school year.

Provided with written notice of any actions being considered against them for violation of school rules and regulations.

Allowed to review any evidence and documentation regarding the allegation.

If the evidence and the subsequent investigation of the facts warrant disciplinary action against your child, they will be afforded an appeal of the action. Appeals must be submitted in writing within three (3) school days to the CEO/Principal or a staff member so designated by the CEO/Principal. The CEO/Principal reserves the right to amend all disciplinary actions as needed.

**Zero Tolerance**

Sankofa Freedom Academy employs a zero tolerance for any and all actions that can have a negative impact on its scholars, staff or other personnel. The staff and administration will continue to work to reduce the barriers to learning. At the same time, scholars will work to learn in a safe, disciplined, orderly, and drug free environment.

However, there may be times when a scholar is wrongly disciplined or accused. First and foremost, these cases should be brought to the attention of the CEO. If a parent is still dissatisfied with the decision of the CEO, an appeal can be made to the Sankofa Freedom Academy Board of Trustees. Such an appeal should be made in writing and

placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to Miss Stacy Holland, President of the Board of Trustees. A parent who submits an appeal to the Sankofa Freedom Academy Board of Trustees should expect to be contacted by the Board within five (5) business days.

**Confidentiality / Personal Notes**

Without question, today’s educators find themselves overloaded with information about their scholars. In many cases, they feel that they may be in possession of too much information; and at other times there may not seem to be enough information given. Thus the question becomes, “What do we, as a school, need to know? What information can be shared? What is considered confidential?”

At no time can we, Sankofa Freedom Academy, promise blanket confidentiality.

Scholars that relay information to a teacher, staff person, administrator or other agent of the school can expect that information to be held in confidence. However, if a scholar brings information to a staff member or agent that in our professional certified opinion indicates abuse, danger to that scholar or danger to others, then there can be no such thing as confidentiality.

If confidentiality is broken, we as a school will always try to err on the side of safety first.

The three (3) big areas for basic EXCEPTIONS to confidentiality:

Abuse (reported to child protective services if a family member or to the district attorney’s office if the accused is not a family member).

The scholar poses a danger to himself or herself in the professional certified opinion of the school’s personnel.

The scholar poses a danger to others including staff members, in the certified professional opinion of the school.