



AMBITION
P R E P

Student and Family Handbook

Our Mission

*Through high-quality instruction, intensive academic supports, and hard work,
Ambition Preparatory Charter School
ensures that all students in kindergarten through grade eight have the
academic skills and self-discipline for high school, college, and life success.*

Notes:

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Dear Ambition Prep Families,

We are excited and pleased to welcome you to Ambition Preparatory Charter School! The Ambition Prep Team is delighted that you chose to partner with us to educate your child. To better guarantee an excellent school year, we have created this handbook to serve as a guide for all logistics concerning Ambition Prep's policies and procedures which all tie into our mission and vision to provide all students with the academic skills and self-discipline for college and life success.

When reading the handbook, please identify any sections you may have questions about and feel free to contact me directly to address any concerns you may have. You are responsible for reading the document and familiarizing yourself with the contents as they are outlined. Please hold and keep the handbook in a memorable area that will be accessible throughout the school year for reference purposes.

I am truly honored to serve as your Executive Director. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help you prepare for this road to college.

Ambitiously in education,

DeArchie Scott

DeArchie Scott

Founder & Executive Director



MISSION & PRINCIPLES

OUR MISSION

*Through high-quality instruction, intensive academic supports, and hard work,
Ambition Preparatory Charter School ensures that
all students in kindergarten through grade eight
have the academic skills and self-discipline for high school, college, and life success.*

CORE BELIEFS

Ambition Preparatory Charter School (“Ambition Prep”) is founded in and firmly committed to core beliefs that drive us towards our ultimate goal of academic success for every student.

High-quality instruction is the key to academic achievement. For students to succeed in high school and college, they must be provided with a rigorous curriculum and engaging lessons that prepare them for success in academically robust high school programs.

A structured, supportive, and joyful school culture is foundational. Ambition Prep believes that school culture is the foundation upon which all else rests. When students are in a structured environment with efficient systems, they can focus on academics and perform at high levels.

Language is power. It is our responsibility to intentionally teach students language skills enabling them to develop thorough arguments, take initiative in academic discussions, professional conversations, and display leadership skills in college and life.

Data drives decisions. To close the achievement gap, Ambition Prep will use data to monitor our progress and provide the highest-quality lessons to our students. Data drives every decision made by Ambition Prep.

Confident communication skills prepare our students for life. Ambition Prep supports our students to build the necessary confidence to approach any academic, social, or emotional challenge encountered. Ambition Prep has carefully chosen core values that our students need to gain a calm disposition in any situation and to be successful citizens.

OUR CORE VALUES

The students, parents, and staff at Ambition Prep shall uphold and commit the following values:

Value	Description	Action Examples
Community	Supporting others and placing the good of the group over the good of the individual. <i>We support one another and hold one another to high expectations.</i>	Staff: We provide the opportunity to celebrate student success and for students to interact with their peers throughout the school day. Student: I invest in my school and greater community. We support and celebrate our communities. Parent: We communicate regularly with the school and attend parent nights.
Self-Discipline	The motivation for us to take initiative. <i>We never give up.</i>	Staff: We, as educators, accept full responsibility for the academic success of our students and provide high quality instruction. Student: I control my own actions even when placed in challenging situations. Parent: We remain positive, even in the toughest situations and show our positivity, because it gives our children strength.
Ambition	The drive to meet high expectations and achieve rigorous goals. <i>We believe success is the result of hard work.</i>	Staff: We are reflective learners to ensure we become better teachers and leaders for all students. Student: I am always seeking improvement, by setting and achieving academic goals. Parent: We do whatever it takes to support our child's journey to college.
Professionalism	The key to quality and leadership. <i>We are always fiercely positive, and it shows.</i>	Staff: We model the values and character that we expect from students Student: I always do my best work and complete classwork and homework on time. Parent: We ensure that our child adheres to the dress code daily.
Integrity	We take responsibility for actions, efforts, and our words. <i>We assume the best of others.</i>	Staff: We are honest with one another and approach our differences with respect and a solutions-based approach. Student: I treat others the way I want to be treated. Parent: We make sure our child is present and on time to school daily.
Urgency	We conduct ourselves in a way that is respectful of others' time. <i>We get things done in a timely and effective manner.</i>	Staff: We will communicate with students and parents in a timely manner. Student: We will complete requested documents on time. Parents: We will return phone calls within 24 hours and submit all requested documents by the due date.

AMBITION PREP STUDENT AND FAMILY COVENANT

For Parents/Guardians

I commit to ensuring that my child is present and on time to school daily. If my child will be unable to come to school or will be late, I will notify the school that my child will be absent or tardy.

I commit to supporting Ambition Prep's rigorous academic program, high expectations of conduct, and extended school day.

I commit to ensuring my child adheres to the dress code daily.

I commit to support my child in reading and completing homework every night.

I commit to maintaining an environment at home where my child can do his/her homework, with a clean desk or table and necessary materials.

I commit to monitoring my child's schoolwork and grades regularly. I will always encourage him or her to work hard and produce the best possible work.

I commit to reading and understanding the Code of Conduct upon receipt.

I commit to making my best effort to do these things to provide my child with the opportunities they deserve.

X

For Students

I commit to follow Ambition Prep's school-wide rules.

I commit to following Ambition Prep's uniform dress code.

I commit to attending school every day unless I am sick and giving my full respect and my full attention to every task.

I commit to doing my homework every night and bringing it neatly to school and turning it in at the appropriate time.

I commit to knowing and understanding the Ambition Prep core values.

I commit to speaking regularly with my parents and guardians about my progress at school, my grades, my assignments, and my behavior.

I always commit to following the expectations especially when on the bus, playing on the playground or when on a field lesson.

I commit to making my best effort to do these things to provide myself and my community with the opportunities we deserve.

X



GENERAL INFORMATION



Ambition Prep 2021-22 Academic Calendar

July 2021 (0)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January 2022 (18)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August 2021 (22)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February 2022 (19)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

September 2021 (20)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

March 2022 (17)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

October 2021 (16)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

April 2022 (19)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

November 2021 (16)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May 2022 (20)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

December 2021 (13)						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Dates to Remember

August 2, 2021 First Day of School
Sept. 6, 2021 Labor Day, No School
Sept. 7, 2021 Staff PD, No students
Oct. 11-12, 2021 Staff PD, No students
Oct. 13-15, 2021 Fall Break, No school
Nov. 11, 2021 Staff PD, No students
Nov. 22-26, 2021 Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 20, 2021-Jan. 2, 2022 Winter Break
Jan. 3-4, 2022 Staff PD, No students
Jan. 17, 2022 Martin Luther King Holiday
Feb. 21, 2022 Staff PD, No students
March 14-18, 2022 Spring Break
March 21, 2022 Staff PD, No students
April 15, 2022 Easter Holiday
April 18, 2022 Staff PD, No students
May 27, 2022 Last Day of School

Staff PD Days/No students

Students' First Day of School
No school for staff and students
Students' Last Day of School

Student

	Days	Teacher Days
Semester 1	87	
Semester 2	93	
Total	180	207

*Executive Director reserves the right to modify the 2021-22 Academic Calendar as needed.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Monday - Thursday

7:20 AM - 7:45 AM - Students arrive for breakfast

7:45 AM - Students are considered late

3:15 PM - Students are dismissed

Friday

1:15 PM - Students are dismissed

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Closings

Ambition Prep will post school closings on the school website and social media. Announcements related to school closings may also be broadcast on the radio or television. In the event that weather conditions make travel to school hazardous and unsafe and Ambition Prep does not close, it is recommended that parents exercise caution when bringing their children to school.

Lunch

Ambition Prep students will be provided lunch free of charge.

Students are welcome to bring breakfast and lunch from home. They will not have access to a microwave to heat any lunches. Soda, candy, and “hot chips” are never permitted at school, even in lunches brought from home. We also strongly encourage a healthy snack list for students. Examples of healthy snacks include fruit bars, granola bars, celery, carrots, strawberries, grapes, apples and 100% fruit, dried fruit snacks. Examples of unhealthy snacks include potato chips, Cheetos, cookies, fruit roll-ups, and cupcakes.

School Supplies

Parents will be provided with a supply list prior to the start of school. Parents should also purchase backpacks for students and any general supplies they will need for use at home.

Birthday Celebrations

Please contact the Front Office to make arrangements for any birthday celebration. Birthday celebrations cannot interrupt the academic day; therefore, the Front Office will inform parents of the most convenient time for these celebrations. Parents will be informed if there is a food allergy in the class. If such an allergy exists, we ask parents to be considerate and avoid that food product in birthday snacks. We do not allow home baked goods to be served to students so all cakes, cupcakes, brownies, etc., must be store bought. The birthday treat also needs to be easily consumed so we recommend easy-to-eat treats such as cupcakes, ice cream, yogurt and granola cups, or fruit salads. There are around 25 to 27 students in each primary class, so please make sure that enough treats are provided. Please limit the number of guests to four, as classroom space is limited.

Health

If a child becomes ill or injured during the school day and is not well enough to stay in class, the parent/guardian will be called to pick the child up. It is necessary to have updated emergency contact numbers on file in the school office in case no one can be contacted at home. If a child needs to take any prescribed medicine, please obtain the appropriate documentation from your doctor giving the nursing or office staff permission to administer it to your child.

Please be sure that the school has up to date contact and health information. If your child has needs we do not know about, we cannot provide for those needs. If your child has an emergency, we must be able to reach you. If your child is hurt and requires medical attention, and we are unable to reach you, the school will seek medical attention for your child.

If a health-related absence is necessary, the parent/guardian must call the school to inform them of the reason for the absence. Upon the student's return to school, a doctor's note must be brought to the main office in order for the absence to be considered excused.

Contagious Diseases

If your child catches one of the following infectious diseases at any time during the school year, please seek medical attention and avoid bringing them to school. If a student is brought to school with one of these diseases, a parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to immediately pick up their child. The list includes, but is not limited to:

- Flu
- Chickenpox
- Pink eye
- Strep throat
- Lice
- Stomach flu/virus
- a coronavirus
- Ringworm

COVID-19 Safety

For the safety of all our students and staff, we will be performing random COVID-19 screenings onsite. If you are not comfortable with your child participating in these health screenings, please complete and return the COVID-19 Screening Opt Out form found in the main office. If your child is showing symptoms and you have opted your child out of a screening, they may not be able to attend school that day. Please see the School Safety Reopening Plan for more details.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Ambition Prep believes in keeping high levels of respect among all members of the community. If there are problems that need to be addressed, they must be done so with the appropriate time, tone, and place. In addition to the duties listed in the signed contract, parents are expected to participate in their children's learning in the following ways:

Parent/Teacher Conferences and Parent University

Parents/guardians must attend a Parent-Teacher conference if their child is not making sufficient academic gains or experiencing behavioral issues in the classroom. During this time, parents/guardians will meet with individual teachers regarding the necessary steps to take in order to enhance their child's educational experience. If a parent/guardian is unable to attend, they must make arrangements to meet with teachers on a different date. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to attend Parent University events.

Community Involvement

Ambition Prep consistently seeks ways to engage our students in their community. These activities include field lessons (field trips), community service activities, and parent/guardian school activities (e.g. University Nights, Black History Month Celebrations, Grandparents Day, etc.

Parent/Guardian Concerns:

Academic Issues

For academic issues, the first call should be to the student's teacher. The teacher will collaborate with the necessary staff to address any parent/guardian concerns. If there is not a resolution to the problem, the parent/guardian should then contact the Director of Academics. All issues will be mediated at this level and the appropriate decisions will be made.

Discipline Issues

Discipline problems should first be discussed with the student's teacher. The teacher will collaborate with the parent to address any parent/guardian concerns. If there is no resolution to the problem, the parent/guardian should then contact the Dean of Students & Families. All issues will be mediated at this level and the appropriate decisions will be made.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance

Ambition Prep students arrive by 7:45 A.M. every day (Mon. – Fri.), and remain at school until 3:15 P.M. (Fridays 1:15). If a student is going to be absent, their parents/guardians must contact the office by phone. If a student will be out sick, the parent must contact the office by 7:40 A.M. Students can miss up to 2 consecutive days without a doctor's note, however, upon the 3rd day a doctor's note must be provided. Upon the student's return to school, whether it is the next day or on some day after, the student is expected to bring a signed doctor's excuse, which includes the date or time and a reason for the absence. For your child's safety, there will be early checkouts one hour prior to your child's dismissal.

Since missing class affects academic achievement, repeated absences may be reflected in the student's grades. If a student is repeatedly absent, the school administration, teacher(s), student, and parent or guardian will meet to address the issue.

Absences

Excessive absences will not be tolerated. If a student is absent with or without excuse for more than 10 days of the school year, unless in extreme situations, that student may be retained and unable to proceed to the next grade level. Parents and guardians are expected to call the school as early as possible but no later than 8:00 AM if their student will not be attending school for any reason. We welcome and appreciate early, written permission. Calls should be made as far in advance as possible. If a student is not in class, and the school has not been notified that he/she will be absent, his/her parents or guardian will be called at home and/or work. In phone calls, voicemails, and notes, please leave or list your student's name, your relationship to the student, and the reason for and date(s) of the student's absence. All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school's Office Manager.

A student is considered absent with a legitimate excuse when the student's family has contacted the school regarding student illnesses, family emergencies or religious observances at least one-half hour ahead of the absence and the school receives a written note from a doctor or appropriate official when the student returns to school. All other absences will be considered unexcused, including but not limited to, family vacation, participation at sports tournaments, attendance at entertainment events, or when the family has not contacted the school with a satisfactory reason.

If prior notification had not already been provided, upon the student's return to school from an absence, whether it is the next day or on some day after, the student is required to bring a signed note from his/her parent or guardian explaining in detail the reason for the absence. If a student made a medical visit, a note from his/her doctor is required in lieu of the parent note. Since repeated absences means missing class, and missing class affects academic achievement, excessive absences will result in lower class grades since part of a student's grade is based on his/her performance in class. Therefore, it is imperative that students are at school, on time, every day.

If a student is absent for at least 10 consecutive days during the school year without successful contact between the family and the school to explain his/her absences, that student will be considered to have withdrawn from Ambition Prep and will be considered un-enrolled from the school. Students who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any school events occurring on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the School Director.

Excused absences shall include the following with proper documentation:

- Personal illness or hospitalization of the student.
- Illness or incapacitating condition of a family member that requires the temporary help of a student (Limited);
- Death in the immediate family;
- Validated court appearances of the student;
- Religious observances;
- One-day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian is deployed for military service and one-day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian returns from military service; or
- Circumstances, which in the judgment of the Director of Academics, create emergencies over which the student has no control.

A student who does not receive prior approval from their teacher or school administrator for an excused absence must submit documentation from a parent or guardian or other appropriate person describing the excused absence immediately upon the student's return to school, but, in any event, no later than three (3) school days after the absence was recorded. If no documentation justifying the absences as excusable is submitted within the three-day period, the absence will become an unexcused absence.

Tardiness

Students who arrive at school after 7:45 AM sharp are considered late. This means that students who have not walked through the doors at 7:44 AM are considered late. Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated, as it reduces instructional time for the student and disrupts the learning environment for other students. Families and guardians of students who are consistently tardy will be subject to a mandatory meeting with appropriate teachers and leadership team members.

Truancy

Ambition Prep will follow Mississippi State Law § 37-13-91 regarding student attendance. Compulsory school attendance requirements generally; enforcement of law, when reporting truanies. The following ramifications will take place upon each number of accumulated unexcused absences.

3 unexcused absences - a documented phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to discuss truancy issues and importance of school attendance.

5 unexcused Absences - Ambition Prep will send written communication to the parent/guardian requesting a school-level meeting to develop a plan to support the student's regular attendance.

7 unexcused absences - Ambition Prep will send written communication to the parent/guardian to encourage compliance with the student's plan. The letter will also state non-compliance may result in Juvenile Court being notified of truanies and dis-enrollment of students will occur.

10 unexcused absences - Truancy may be reported to various agencies including the Department of Children Services, Juvenile Court and the District Attorney's office.

Late Student Pick-Up

Parents/guardians of students are expected to make arrangements to pick up their children on-time after school. If late pick-up becomes habitual, the school may notify Child Protective Services and the school's Social Worker of the parent/guardian's habitual failure to arrive on-time. In any instance that a parent/guardian is going to be late to pick up their student, the parent/guardian is required to notify the school as soon as possible. Late pick ups are prohibited in most situations 1 hour prior to check out.



III.

ACADEMIC POLICY

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The curriculum is driven by clear performance standards for what students should know and be able to do. For each grade level, standards are based on national and state curriculum frameworks. Teachers will use regular assessments to measure how well students are mastering the standards.

Parents will receive ongoing progress reports on student academic progress to provide ongoing feedback about student performance. Parents are expected to sign their child's weekly progress report and return it to school. Teachers may also contact parents/guardians if they see a significant slip in academic performance or a special skill that needs extra practice at school and home. Report cards will be provided at the end of each quarter. After report cards are shared, parents/guardians may schedule a parent-teacher conference if they desire. All students who are not meeting grade-level expectations must attend a parent-teacher conference. Parents/guardians may also get informal feedback about student performance throughout the year by calling the school and scheduling a time to meet with their child's teacher.

Inclusion

Ambition Prep is participating in a full inclusion special education model, which means that all students with current Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) will receive services within the context of the regular classroom with the assistance of the special education teacher as outlined in the IEP.

Lifework/Homework Policy

Ambition Prep takes lifework very seriously. It is the school's policy to assign lifework (homework) every night, including weekends and breaks. The purpose of the lifework is to reinforce skills taught in class. Students can expect to have up to two hours of lifework each night. In addition to lifework, students are expected to read every night for at least 20 minutes. It is expected that students and parents will work together to tackle literacy skills necessary for positive academic growth throughout the year. As students are still developing literacy skills, we encourage parents to read to their children for the full 20 minutes during the first quarter, so that students will learn what fluent reading sounds like. Over time, the expectation is that students will take on more independent reading, while the parent monitors the student's reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension.

Students are responsible for bringing their lifework folder home every night, completing that day's lifework, and then returning to school with their lifework folder. **Parents are responsible for checking and signing their child's lifework and checking their child's conduct color each night.** Teachers are responsible for ensuring that lifework folders are updated each day with daily conduct colors and lifework. The school will provide lifework folders. Preparation is an important part of the Ambition Prep's curriculum and no student is excused from any assignment.

Students will receive a homework packet each Monday. In the packet, homework that is to be completed each night is labeled. Homework is checked each morning for completion and collected the following Monday. It is the parent's responsibility to check and sign their child's homework each night.

Standardized Testing

Ambition Prep administers the Northwestern Education Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic

Progress (MAP) assessment in reading and math three times throughout the school year beginning in August. It is given to all students as a means to determine where each child's areas of strengths and areas of need lie for the upcoming school year, as well as growth throughout the year. We follow up by giving the MAP assessment during the spring of each subsequent year in an effort to measure the academic gains for each student. At Ambition Prep, we will also administer the STEP assessment each quarter to determine each student's reading level. All information for standardized assessments will be shared with parents/guardians.

Ambition Prep students are also required to take the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Scholars in the third grade will take all tests required by the Mississippi Department of Education.

Holiday Projects

Students will be given academic projects to complete over each extended holiday (i.e. fall, winter, spring, and summer break). These packets are not designed to eliminate free/family time but to keep students on track academically and avoid the "amnesia" period that typically follows a holiday. Please make sure that your child completes all projects and does not use academic shortcuts.

Academic Celebrations

Ambition Prep will host academic celebrations throughout the school year to recognize our students' hard work. These celebrations will recognize students who make exemplary academic achievement, achieve significant academic growth, and consistently demonstrate our School's Core Values.

Academic Grading and Promotion

The Ambition Prep Instructional Program has sequential, planned instructions for all subject/grade levels. Minimum proficiency requirements are necessary for students to progress to the next higher level/grade.

Consideration for promotion is based on the following:

- A minimum passing average in current subject/grade level;
- Potential for doing work in the next higher-grade level;
- Attendance;
- Willingness to complete work;
- Each student has achieved mastery of minimum academic skills as measured by assessments developed and administered by the State Board of Education and/or other options as adopted by State Board of Education, when appropriate, in addition to the following:

Kindergarten: Promotion of any child from kindergarten to first grade is contingent on mastering readiness skills and instructional objectives as stated in the kindergarten curriculum as established by Ambition Prep. Decisions on promotion of kindergarten children rest with the classroom teacher, with final approval being the authority of the Director of Academics.

Grades one through three (1-3): Promotion in grades 1-3 requires passing grades in reading and math, mastery of skills prescribed by the standards and frameworks adopted by the Mississippi Department of Education, and mastery of grade-level objectives as established by the Ambition Prep. In addition,

third-grade students must successfully complete and pass the Third Grade Reading Summative Assessment as outlined in Senate Bill 2347 and the Literacy Based Promotion Act.

Special Education Academics

The decision to retain a student with a disability is approached with great caution and is determined by the Director of Academics. Information provided by the Individualized Education Team will be taken into consideration when making this decision. A student with a disability may not be retained based on their disability but may be retained for other factors. The parent of a student with a disability may appeal the decision or may choose to have the student leave the school. If a parent appeals the Administration's decision, the school's special education supervisor must be contacted for consultation and guidance.



IV. CODE OF CONDUCT

SCHOOL CULTURE

This portion of the handbook will showcase the school culture that we strive for at Ambition Prep. We believe that scholars thrive in consistent and structured environments and gradually develop the intrinsic motivation to behave well and the ability to self-regulate. By providing a clear set of behavioral expectations and procedures to both staff and scholars, we allow teachers to dedicate their energy and talents to high-quality instruction.

School Culture and Environment

Our goal is to graduate students with the self-discipline and qualities of an ambitious learner for them to be successful in high school, college, and life. To accomplish our goals, Ambition Prep provides a structured, supportive, and safe environment that holds students to high expectations behaviorally and academically through intentional staff practices, systems, and routines. We celebrate student successes and hold them accountable for their own actions. We believe when students are provided with a safe, joyful, and structured learning environment, they are able to thrive academically.

We view parents and guardians as partners, and work to ensure they know they are an integral part of our school and their child's success. We expect parents/guardians to work just as hard as teachers to further their child's development and learning. Just as parents/guardians might coach us on the best ways to interact with and ensure the behavioral success of their child, we will coach them on how to best support their children academically and behaviorally.

The Outcomes of Our School Culture

We come to work every day with the goal of educating our students. Ultimately, we want to open doors and opportunities for them that would not be present if they did not receive an exceptional education. Every one of our students deserves the opportunity to attend and graduate from college and, as such, we are an unapologetically college-preparatory elementary school. We pursue a school culture that reinforces this concept and creates transparency for what the road to college will look like. We know that over the course of their lifetime, on average, a college graduate earns over a million dollars more than someone without a high school diploma. We want our scholars to reap the benefits of "opportunity" by holding the highest expectations for them every day within the doors of Ambition Prep so that they are equipped, excited, and empowered to take on the world as college graduates.

The following is a list of outcomes that we see as evidence of a strong school culture. These outcomes will help us define what success looks like, and measure the effectiveness of our culture program.

General Outcomes

- Students have developed the academic and character skills they need to graduate from college and succeed in life.
- Students demonstrate excellent character inside and outside of school. They do the right thing even when no one is looking.
- Students are in class, on-task, and learning 100% of instructional time.
- Students have high levels of attendance and lifework completion.

- Parents report high levels of satisfaction.

Physical Space

- The school environment shows close attention to detail. It is clear that great thought has gone into how to use every inch of the physical environment to reinforce core values.
- The school environment is bright, inviting and reflects student ownership.
- The school environment purposefully reinforces the school's core values and mission. There are posted examples of outstanding teacher and student academics and character.

Interactions and Relationships

- All students know they can achieve by working hard ("I can...") and that they will benefit from their achievement ("I want...").
- There are genuine, unscripted gestures of kindness and helpfulness. Students are genuinely happy and proud to be part of the school community.
- Teachers develop meaningful personal relationships with students. Students feel acknowledged and affirmed as worthwhile, important and cared-for as individuals by teachers.
- Classroom climates are strong. Students are encouraged to take intellectual risks.
- Students praise and support each other in a genuine and mutual way.
- Visible and audible genuine listening between students, teachers, families and each other.
- Students receive regular, detailed, individualized feedback on their academic learning.
- Students receive regular, detailed, individualized feedback on their behavior and character development.
- There is systematic, regular, proactive parent communication.

SCHOOL RELATED DISCIPLINARY OFFENCES

In-class Behavior Management System

Ambition Prep students will adhere to the Ambition Prep Community Contract and Code of Conduct as a guideline for in-class positive behavior, disciplinary action, suspension, or expulsion of students. Each day, students will begin on “green” according to the classroom behavior chart used to track student behavior. Students may move up and down the color chart throughout the day. The following list defines each of the colors and the respective behaviors associated with them.

K-3 Behavior Chart

Colors are reset at lunch for most Tier I behaviors

Color	Behavior	Example Consequences/Rewards
Blue/Purple Excellent	Student has gone above and beyond in their behavior that day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positive note sent home -Positive phone call home -Student receives sticker reward
Green Good	Student had good behavior all day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positive note sent home -Student receives a sticker reward -Positive Praise
Yellow/Orange Mediocre	Student has had three or more warnings regarding their behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student loses 5 minutes or more of recess/choice time. - If student ends the day on yellow/orange they will not receive a sticker reward -Student receives a note home detailing infraction (orange) -Reflection/Detention
Red Unacceptable	Student has received another warning for their behavior while on orange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student is sent to re-set/reflect If the student returns and can re-integrate into class, they can move their color back up to yellow. -Student loses all of their recess time. -Student loses 10 minutes or more of Choice Time. -Student may receive a conference with the Dean or Academy Director and an immediate call home.

Due Process

Parents reserve the right to appeal a suspension of 10 or more days or expulsion decision with the Executive Director in writing. If the appeal is not resolved, the parent reserves the right to appeal to the school's Appeal Committee in writing within 5 days of the suspension or expulsion. The Executive Director has the following policy as a guide for parents and guardians to hear their appeal in the most effective manner. This policy serves as a guideline, but the Executive Director has the final decision in all matters that take place under the management of the school. The following procedure will be followed whenever a parent/guardian has an appeal: (1) The parent/guardian is to set an appointment to meet with the Executive Director or designee within 48 hours of the suspension issuance. (2) The Student Support Coordinator and/or Director/Dean present evidence and data related to incidents that hear the parent concern and appeal of suspension and/or expulsion. The Executive Director, Student Support Coordinator and/or Dean/Director and family discuss the rationale for the decision and come to a resolution to uphold or remove the decision. If the issue is not resolved, the parent/guardian may ask for a grievance process with the Executive Director. (3) If the issue remains unresolved, the parent/guardian is requested to write a letter of grievance addressed to the School's Appeals Committee for final decision. (4) Parents notified about the decision of upholding or removing the suspension or expulsion.

Student Restraint

Ambition Prep maintains a strict Code of Conduct and clear disciplinary procedures. These procedures do not allow for corporal punishment, but they do include a clear set of consequences that include color changes, incentive deductions, detentions, loss of privileges, suspensions and expulsions.

Ambition Prep does not engage in corporal punishment, condone its use, or seek permission from another (including a parent) to administer it. Additionally, Ambition Prep does not allow parents to use corporal punishment to discipline their students while on school property. Some examples of corporal punishment include, but are not limited to:

- Shoving, striking, shaking or hitting a student
- Throwing objects at a student
- Unreasonable restraint of a student
- Directing others to engage in any of the activities listed above.

School personnel can use reasonable force as is necessary to protect pupils, other persons, and themselves from physical harm or situations that could cause harm by a student. All personnel authorized to administer any forms of restraint shall be trained annually in accordance with the Ambition Prep Seclusion and Restraint Policy.

School-Related Disciplinary Offenses

Below is a description of school-related disciplinary offenses for which a student may be subject to detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. A school-related disciplinary offense refers to the violation of this code occurring:

- while the student is on school grounds or school-related transportation;

- during a school-sponsored activity; or
- during events sufficiently linked to school.

The list of offenses that follows is not meant to be comprehensive; there may be other circumstances that warrant disciplinary measures as well. Along with the list of consequences that result from such offenses, students may also earn a loss of privileges, which include but are not limited to:

- sitting in their seat during certain celebration breaks;
- eating lunch in the office;
- missing school events, trips, or activities (including field lessons and assemblies);
- serving suspensions;
- reflecting on their behavior orally and/or in writing;
- apologizing to their peers in small groups or at a community circle;
- performing extra service for the school.

Out of School Suspension

At Ambition Prep, we believe it is important to keep students in school as much as possible. However, some severe behaviors and disruptions to the learning of others will result in a student being suspended from school. Infractions which may merit out-of-school suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated gross disrespect of a fellow student, staff member, visitor, or school property
- Abusive, vulgar or profane language
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation
- Making verbal or physical threats
- Fighting, pushing, shoving, or unwanted physical contact
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing tobacco products or drug paraphernalia
- Gambling
- Lying
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Repeated offenses for which the student has already earned in-school reflections
- Any other conduct that is highly disruptive to the school learning environment

Expulsion

We reserve expulsions for students whose conduct constitutes a continuing danger to the physical wellbeing of other students and/or staff. There will be zero tolerance for bringing a gun or deadly weapon to school or for any assault on school employees or students. A student may also be liable for expulsion for the possession, use, or selling of alcohol or controlled dangerous substances while on school property. A student with frequent suspensions and continued willful disobedience and/or open defiance of authority may also be at risk of expulsion. For a student to be expelled, the process must be initiated by the Dean or Academy Director and must include discussion with the relevant faculty and a hearing with the student's parents/guardians where the Academy Director is present. A student who is expelled will receive due process under Mississippi state law.

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to the discipline of students who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon a disability. A copy of these rights may be obtained from Ambition Prep's Lead Special Education Teacher. In the case

that a suspension or expulsion becomes necessary, Following an incident, the student will be removed from class following an incident and will be sent to the Main Office, Dean's Office, or another designated school location. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident by the Associate Director of Student Services or another representative of the school.

Students under IDEA (Special Education) or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are entitled to certain additional rights in the area of discipline based upon their qualification for services under these federal laws.

The school will record (by tape or other appropriate means) the hearing and a copy will be made available to the student upon request. Notices and proceedings will be translated into the student's/parent's primary language if necessary, for their understanding of the proceeding.

Out of School Suspension- Unless a student presents a danger or risk of substantial disruption to the educational process, the student shall receive the following prior to suspension of one to ten days:

- An oral or written notice of the charges;
- An oral or written explanation of the evidence against him/her if the student denies the charges;
- An opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts.

In the case of danger or a risk of substantial disruption, the aforementioned process will occur immediately after rather than before the suspension.

Expulsion or Long-Term Suspension- For expulsion or suspension longer than ten days, the student shall receive:

- A written notice of the charges;
- The right to a hearing;
- The right to be represented by a lawyer or advocate (at the student's expense);
- Adequate time to prepare for the hearing;
- The right to present witnesses and to cross examine witnesses presented by the school;
- A reasonably prompt, written decision including specific grounds for the decision.

UNIFORM POLICY AND PROHIBITED ITEMS

In order to improve the school's educational environment, promote a more effective climate for learning, foster school unity and pride, and allow students to focus solely on learning and not on attire, the school has a dress policy for students that applies to all school days and school-sponsored events. The Administration of Ambition Prep reserves the right to address any item of clothing or appearance that detracts from the uniform policy/code. In all cases, Ambition Prep has the right and the responsibility to determine what is appropriate.

Students who do not follow the guidelines appropriately may be given the missing item from his/her uniform, and a billing statement will be mailed to the parent/guardian for the item. Parents/guardians must pay all balances before report cards can be issued to the student. Uniforms can be purchased from the school.

On Monday-Thursday Ambition Prep BOYS shall wear:

- Short sleeve/long sleeve green/gray Ambition Prep polo
- Gray Ambition Prep branded cardigan (Optional)
- Khaki dress pants (or shorts during fall and spring months)
- Black, white, brown, or gray Socks
- Solid black/brown belt (or elastic waist pants for K-1 boys).
- All black or dark brown solid shoes (uninterrupted black shoes including soles, shoestrings, etc.) No boots.

On Monday-Thursday Ambition Prep GIRLS shall wear:

- Short sleeve/long sleeve green/gray Ambition Prep polo
- Gray cardigan or vest (Optional)
- Khaki skirt or pants (or shorts during fall and spring months)
- Black, white, brown, or gray socks or stockings
- All black or dark brown shoes (uninterrupted black shoes including soles, shoestrings, etc) No boots.
- Ambition Prep girls may wear small pieces of jewelry including a watch, stud earrings or hoops no larger than a quarter, a single bracelet and average-sized rings.

Because we want to remind the students constantly of their educational goal of college, Fridays will be utilized as Ambition Prep College T-shirt Day.

On Friday, students may wear:

A College/Ambition Prep t-shirt with the regular uniform pants/skirt and solid black/brown shoes.

When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform; they cannot change into the school uniform upon arrival. Students also may not change out of their uniform before dismissal,

unless they are participants in an after-school elective that requires them to do so. At all times during the school day — including after-school — shirts must be tucked in.

- Khaki dress pants should be straight leg or regular fit, and not made of denim or jean material. They should not be ripped or frayed at the bottom.
- Students must keep their full uniform on, even when school is not in session. They may not unbutton their shirts to expose an undershirt. Only uniform apparel may be worn. Additions such as scarves are not permitted.
- Writing or drawing on the skin is not permitted. Visible tattoos, real or fake, are not permitted.
- Hats, head wraps, bandanas, or nighttime headwear is not permitted unless it is in accordance with religious observation. Hats worn in school will be confiscated.
- Hair colors or shades of hair other than natural black, brown, blond, or red are not permitted. Dyed hair or a hairstyle that serves as a distraction - at the determination of the school - will not be permitted.

Personal Belongings

Students are not allowed to have the following items at school:

- Any illegal substance
- Weapons and toy weapons
- Stuffed animals, dolls, or blankets
- Fidget Spinners
- Cash in excessive amounts
- Jewelry that is a distraction
- PSPs, Nintendo DS or any other electronic gaming devices
- MP3 Players
- Laser pointers
- Cell Phones
- Tablets
- Smart watches
- Any electronic device that causes a distraction from learning

Prohibited Items

Students will not have an opportunity to play with toys during the day so they should be left at home. Students are not permitted to bring toys to recess. Students who bring inappropriate items to school will have those items confiscated. These confiscated items will not be returned to students; a parent or guardian will be required to come to the school to retrieve them.

Telephone Use

Students may not use any school phone without permission from a teacher. Students will only be allowed to use the phone in case of emergency. A teacher or staff member must be present at the time of the call. At times, the teacher will dial the number for students. Students who use a phone without permission will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

Human Rights Policy

Ambition Prep brings together a diverse group of individuals. It is guided by the principle that respect and consideration for all individuals is foremost in all school activities. It is unlawful to discriminate against any individual based on race, color, religion, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, age or handicapped status. Ambition Prep wishes to stress that it is the responsibility of every member of the Ambition Prep community to observe and uphold the principles of equal opportunity as they affect staff, faculty and students in all aspects of school life. It is the responsibility of every member of the Ambition Prep community to actively promote appropriate workplace behavior. Any form of coercion or harassment that insults the dignity of others or impedes their freedom to work and learn will not be tolerated. Any such form of coercion or harassment will result in appropriate discipline, up to and including expulsion.

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, or Cyber-Bullying

Ambition Prep supports and provides for an academic learning environment that is free from any type of harassment, bullying, intimidation, or cyber-bullying.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying as defined by the State, means any act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities or performance that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school provided equipment or transportation at any official school bus stop that it is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

Cyber-bullying means bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, personal digital assistants (PDAs), computers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging and websites.

Any student that is found guilty of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying is subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion. Examples of inappropriate behavior include:

- verbal or physical abuse or threats
- sexual harassment
- obscene or demeaning remarks, jokes, or insults

- uninvited pressure to participate in illegal activities
- public display of explicitly offensive or demeaning materials
- comments or actions demeaning to race, religion, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability
- false accusations of harassment
- retaliation toward someone making a complaint about harassment

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be a form of sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of a person's advancement or participation in school activity.
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person's work or academic performance or intimidating or humiliating a person.

Creating a harassment free environment requires the diligent effort of our community. We must continually improve our practices.

Response to Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying or Cyber-Bullying

Ambition Prep is committed to equitable and swift resolution of harassment issues. Any student or employee experiencing harassment should follow any or all of these measures:

1. Let the offender know you want the behavior to stop. Be clear and direct. Do not apologize.
2. If you are not comfortable confronting the offender alone, ask a friend to accompany you, or write a letter to the offender, keeping a copy.
3. Make a record of when, where, and how you were mistreated; include witnesses (if any), direct quotes, and other evidence.
4. If you are a student, notify the Dean of Students & Families, or if you are uncomfortable doing so, speak with another adult.
5. If you are an adult, notify the Executive Director.

As soon as possible, the adult offender will report to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will notify the authorities, if necessary.

SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIOR PLAN

Hallways

Hallways are shared spaces which carry noise. We ask that all students and adults using the hallway keep in mind that classes are disrupted by hallway noise. Students should transition from one space to another silently, in a single file line, with their hands to their sides. Students are to walk on the colored tape lines while transitioning.

Restroom

In order to ensure that they are present in class to the greatest extent possible, students should make every effort to use the bathroom before school, during bathroom breaks, and after school. When it is necessary for students to use the bathroom during class time, students should follow their individual class's protocol for receiving bathroom permission.

Bathrooms are shared spaces, and students should treat their bathroom space with pride. Students should pick up after themselves, flush the toilets, and ensure that no paper products are left on the floor. Students should not bring anything with them to the bathroom, including writing instruments. Students who behave inappropriately in the bathrooms may receive a demerit, and may not be permitted to use the bathroom without adult escort.

Bathroom Breaks

Students will be allowed two designated bathroom breaks during the day, one before lunch and one after lunch. Students will all receive a bathroom break prior to Morning Meeting. Any additional bathroom breaks for individual students will be left up to the discretion of their teacher. Families of students who need additional bathroom breaks for medical reasons must submit a doctor's note to the main office authorizing the need for additional bathroom breaks. No other documentation will be considered sufficient for additional bathroom breaks.

BUILDING SAFETY AND SECURITY

There are a number of basic procedures the school has in order to ensure the safety and security of its students and staff. Cooperation on everyone's part will go a long way in guaranteeing that the business of the school – teaching and learning – can take place.

The school has procedures on file in the case of various emergencies. Parties requesting information about these policies should contact the Dean of School Operations.

Closed Campus

Under no circumstances are students allowed to leave the school building without permission. A student with permission to leave may only leave under the escort and supervision of an authorized adult. Behavioral expectations inside the building apply while students are outside the building and in the parking lot as well. Once students have entered the school in the morning, they may not leave the building unless a school staff member or other authorized adult escorts them.

Visitor Policy

All visitors are required to report to the Main Office upon entering the building. Any visitor, including parents, who does not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization, will be asked to leave immediately. Visitors should wear visitor stickers at all times to indicate that they have checked-in at the main office. Parents are encouraged to visit the school; parent involvement is highly encouraged. A Photo ID is required each time a student is checked out.

Fire Safety Procedures

If a student or staff member sees fire or smells smoke, they should close the door and pull the fire alarm. Upon hearing the alarm, school staff will assemble students in their rooms and proceed out of the building according to the fire evacuation plan posted in each room. Students should follow the direction of staff, and lead students outside the building to the designated locations.

During the first month of school, and frequently throughout the school year, students and staff will participate in fire drills to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate response in the event of an emergency.

FERPA

Ambition Prep will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99.31). The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords certain rights to parents and eligible students in regards to education records that are maintained by schools and universities. This compliance also includes online educational services as appropriate.

NOTES:



AMBITION PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL
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** The Executive Director reserves the right to make changes to the family handbook with or without notice**

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