



School Handbook General Portion

2016-2017

Welcome to your Connections Academy virtual school!

Your school is designed for students to learn at the highest levels possible. Our rigorous curriculum, personalized learning approach, and engaging virtual classroom sessions make learning challenging and relevant. Our student-centered approach means that each child receives the educational support he or she needs to succeed. Whether it's one-on-one discussions with our highly-trained team of professionals who are focused on your student's well-being; virtual sessions using LiveLesson® session technology; supplementary educational opportunities; clubs and activities; or our rigorous, standards-based curriculum, everything your school provides revolves around ensuring student success.

Your school's dedicated teachers and administration are focused on your student's well-being and fulfilling the Connections Academy mission: *to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program.*

Parents/guardians (Caretakers), your role in a Connections Academy school is unique in public education. You are a true partner in your student's education and have unprecedented access to your student's teachers and other school personnel. You must also ensure that you and your student comply with all school policies outlined in this Handbook and in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement. Sections in this Handbook marked with an asterisk (*) have additional information in the Supplement. Please read both of these documents carefully and contact your school or Connections Academy Customer Care with any questions you have. To reach your Connections Academy school, visit www.connectionsacademy.com, enter your zip code, then select Visit School Site. Learning Coaches and Caretakers can see detailed school contact information from their Connexus login page. Your School-Specific Handbook Supplement, found in the Virtual Library in Connexus®, also contains complete school information. To contact the Connections Academy central office, call 800-382-6010 or send an email to support@connectionseducation.com.

Congratulations on joining the Connections Academy family. Together, we can ensure your student has a safe and successful experience at your Connections Academy school.

We look forward to working with you and wish you a successful 2016-2017 academic year!

Getting Ready: Quick Tips

Get to Know Connections Academy's Policies

Please take some time before the school year starts to understand the policies in this General Handbook and your School-Specific Handbook Supplement. You and your student are bound by the policies in these documents, so please refer to these handbooks throughout the year to ensure you and your student are in compliance with Connections Academy policies and procedures.

Getting Ready for the School Year

Learning Coaches and students should check their To Do list on their home page in Connexus® every school day. **Be sure to complete the assigned orientations and trainings** you find there – this will help ensure that you and your student get off to a great start for the school year.

Set up your student's "learning area."

- Dedicate a space for keeping school materials and supplies organized
- Place your student's "classroom" in a quiet area that is free of distractions
- Create a filing system for portfolio assessments, student work, and important papers
- Create a showcase area to display your student's work
- Review your calendar, set a schedule, and post the daily routine

If you're waiting for a computer delivery from Connections Academy, review the set up requirements and make sure everything you need is in place, including Internet service, so when your computer arrives, you are ready to go. Please note that you can access assignments and complete work in Connexus without receiving your materials first. If you are using your own computer, take time to review the system requirements in Connexus Help (accessed via the **MORE** tab on the ToolBar) to ensure you are set up properly. As soon as you are enrolled and set up with your internet access, you can get started with your schoolwork!

Learning Coaches can also prepare for their role by exploring the many family support resources Connections Academy offers. From the Homepage, select the Links tab, then select Learning Coach Central, where you'll find a "Getting Started Checklist," a link to the "Prepare for Success" website, and much more!

Need help?

Our Connexus Help has a lot of the answers! Select the **MORE** tab on your toolbar in Connexus and then select the Help button. You can also call Connections Academy at 800-382-6010 or send a WebMail message to Technical Support if you have any issues with your computer, Connexus, or accessing the Internet.

If you want to get to know your teacher(s) check out the Teacher Communication Data View. To access this Data View, select your student's name from your homepage. From there, you will see the courses your student is taking. Select the  icon beside the teacher's name and then select and view the teacher's Teacher Communication information. Review the teacher's prior experience and qualifications; courses taught; contact information, and more!

Welcome to Connections Academy! We hope you have a great year.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been approved by each of the Connections Academy schools' governing school boards or other authorizers as required. The most current version of this General Handbook, and its companion document, the School-Specific Handbook Supplement, is available online in the School Handbooks section of the Virtual Library in Connexus.

Sections of the General Handbook that have additional information in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement are denoted by an asterisk (*) in the table of contents. Please be sure to refer to your School-Specific Supplement for additional, school-specific information on these topics. All policies in this General Handbook apply to grades K–12 unless otherwise noted. However, as high school programs vary from state to state, information related to high school is found in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

2 SCHOOL MISSION AND OVERVIEW

2.1 *Mission Statement**

Connections Academy schools help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. Check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for your school's individual mission statement.

2.2 *Program Overview*

Connections Academy's high-tech, high-touch, virtual "school without walls," combines the best in virtual education with very real connections among students, families, teachers, and the community. The program combines a first-class curriculum, high-quality teachers, state-of-the-art technology, community connections, and a personalized learning process that work together to maximize student learning.

2.3 *Nondiscrimination Statement*

Practices that exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of ethnic group identification/ethnicity, marital status, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, physical or mental disability, athletic performance, language proficiency in English or another language, prior academic achievement, or age in the admission to, participation in, or receipt of the services under any of the Connections Academy and its affiliated entities educational programs and activities, or in employment practices are strictly prohibited. Age limitations may only be imposed in response to mandatory state-specific requirements established by the laws of the state under which that particular Connections Academy school operates.

The non-discrimination statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Educational Amendment of 1972* (Title 9), Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504), the *Age Discrimination Act of 1975*, and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)*. Individuals who are designated to coordinate Connections' compliance with these laws are detailed in the [Nondiscrimination Policy](#).

Schools are required to adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of any complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by state and federal law. See the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.

2.4 The Connections Academy Commitments*

Each Connections Academy school has high expectations for its students and their families and requires them to commit to the rigorous educational program that has been implemented. In return, each Connections Academy school holds itself to high standards and makes the following commitments:

- The school will contact the student and his or her Caretaker on a regular basis and treat them as valued and respected partners in the common goal of student academic success
- The school will partner with the student and family to provide a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) to meet the student's individual learning needs
- The school will provide a quality instructional program, including curriculum, instructional materials, and a certified, well-trained teaching staff.
- The school will support the student and family with the training needed to learn how to use Connexus and provide encouragement needed to fulfill their responsibilities

- The school will make a strong effort to incorporate all stakeholders' feedback for the continued improvement of the program.
- The school will encourage the student's social interaction with other school students and families by supporting community coordinators and school staff in their efforts to organize various field trips and community events. The school's Get Connected! program helps facilitate these opportunities to connect, and at some schools, provides private Facebook groups where Caretakers and Learning Coaches can "meet" to arrange study groups and other informal gatherings.
- For students with disabilities, the school will follow Individualized Education Program (IEPs) to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The school will also follow students' Section 504 plan requirements for services and modifications to address each eligible student's unique needs as required by law or regulation. See your school's Handbook Supplement for details.
- The school will support Caretakers in providing school records or other required information when seeking to transfer their student to another educational program where proper procedure is followed in accordance with state and federal law.
- The school will comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). (See Appendix 2 for the Connections Academy FERPA policy.)
- The school will provide approved Caretakers access to student records and related school information through Connexus in accordance with applicable state law.
- The school will always operate with the best interests of the student in mind.

3 SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND ROLES

This section provides information about how your school is organized and on the various roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in the school.

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Caretaker (Parent or Legal Guardian)

Connections Academy schools apply the term “Caretaker” to the student’s parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) who enrolls the student and satisfies the student’s enrollment requirements. All Caretakers are automatically given “Learning Coach” (see below) access in Connexus so they are able to perform the Learning Coach duties. Caretakers must agree to and sign the Parent/ Learning Coach Acknowledgement (PLCA) as part of the enrollment process. While Caretakers automatically have the Learning Coach access, they may also designate another adult or adults as Learning Coaches either *in addition to or in place of* the Caretaker. Even if the Caretaker designates another adult or adults as Learning Coach, the Caretaker will continue to have the Learning Coach access in Connexus. The Caretaker always has full and final responsibility for the child’s education and educational decision-making with the school, and therefore must be available to the school staff as needed for discussions related to the student’s educational and other school-related needs.

Learning Coach

The Learning Coach is the adult who performs tasks such as recording attendance, reviewing lessons, providing supervision, and communicating with teachers. Each student will have at least one Learning Coach who is generally the student’s Caretaker. However, Caretakers may designate another adult or adults as the student’s Learning Coach(es), either in addition to or in place of the Caretaker, for daily oversight of the student’s school work and school-related activities, by completing the Designated Learning Coach form. As noted above in the definition of Caretaker, the Caretaker always has full and final responsibility for the child’s education and educational decision-making with the school, and therefore must be available in a timely manner to the school staff as needed for discussions related to the student’s educational and other school-related needs.

The duties and responsibilities of the Learning Coach are detailed in this Handbook and in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement, so it is important that both Caretakers and Learning Coaches read both documents carefully.

The Get Coaching! Program is designed to assist Learning Coaches and Caretakers in understanding and fulfilling their role in their student’s education at a Connections Academy school. Through the Get Coaching! Program, we hope to provide Learning Coaches and Caretakers with ongoing support, provide access to resources and facilitate connections with other Learning Coaches. The Get Coaching! Program resources are available under Links on the Learning Coach and Caretaker homepage.

Under certain circumstances, a student who is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor may request to be his /her own Learning Coach. To discuss this option, the student should contact either the Connections Academy Enrollment Team during the enrollment process, or the school leader once enrolled.

Student

The student's role in a Connections Academy school is to learn to the best of his or her abilities. Therefore, students should expect to take age-appropriate individual responsibility for their own learning. This is accomplished by applying themselves to their studies in a focused and serious manner, working hard, becoming engaged in the lessons and activities, asking questions, exploring their personal interests, improving areas of academic weaknesses, and capitalizing on strengths. Students at all times are expected to complete their own work and uphold the principles of the Connections Academy Honor Code (Appendix 1).

Eligible Student

"Eligible student" at Connections refers to students over eighteen (18) years of age and emancipated minors. Other uses of 'eligible student' will be qualified with what they are eligible for – for example, "504-eligible students."

School Leader

This individual is responsible for the administration of the school and ensuring students are provided with the support and assistance they need. The school leader's title may vary from school to school such as principal or executive director. Check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for your school leader's contact information.

Homeroom Teacher (Elementary Students)

Unless a participating Connections Academy school has chosen to provide Family Connections Coordinators (FCC) to families, each elementary student is assigned a homeroom teacher. The homeroom teacher serves as the family's central point of contact with the school and works with the student and his or her Learning Coach to develop and implement the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). Generally, the homeroom teacher will also be the teacher for most or all of the student's subjects. The homeroom teacher is responsible for making instructional decisions such as providing instructional interventions; interacting synchronously with students for instructional purposes; verifying the student's course work; providing timely feedback to students on their academic work; issuing final course grades, reviewing and approving adjustments to students' schedules (such as vacations and/or field trips), and making recommendations regarding promotion and retention to the school leadership. Homeroom teachers or Family Connections Coordinators may assist with things such as confirming and arranging standardized testing plans (dates, times, locations, etc.) working with Learning Coaches to run the Scheduler (adjusting the student's Planner within Connexus), addressing basic technical concerns, and assisting with the process for marking and/or changing student attendance. The name of the teacher for each of the student's courses is listed next to the course name on the Connexus home page and in the Grade Book so that students and Learning Coaches can easily identify and contact teachers as needed.

School Counselor, Homeroom Teachers, and Advisory Teacher (Middle and High School Students)

Unless a participating Connections Academy school has chosen to provide Family Connections Coordinators to families, each middle and high school student has an Advisory Teacher, Homeroom Teacher, and/or School Counselor (titles may vary by school). The Advisory Teacher, Homeroom Teacher or School Counselor assists students and Learning Coaches with course selection, student transfers, graduation requirements, college and career planning, interpersonal counseling, course placement changes as needed, and general academic guidance. A School Counselor or other qualified staff member is available to assist with high school credit or college/career questions or to help with post-high-school plans including career, college/university, the military, or the workforce.

Note: Some Connections Academy schools have chosen to provide Family Connections Coordinators (FCC) in lieu of Homeroom or Advisory teachers. Please review the description of a Family Connections Coordinator below, which describes how the FCC provides many supports of a Homeroom or Advisory teacher.

Subject-Specific Teacher

The subject-specific teacher is the primary contact for students and Learning Coaches for subject-specific questions. These teachers are responsible for handling the following instructional issues:

- providing timely and relevant feedback on student work including grading and updating progress reports
- facilitating instruction using research-based strategies and resources to address skill gaps with a particular assessment or concept
- managing the course scope, pacing and sequence to ensure a student's academic success
- personalizing the curriculum, including modifying lessons and assessments
- proctoring state and/or federally mandated tests

Subject-specific teachers proactively monitor each student's progress using Connexus and through regular contact via phone, streaming audio and video (LiveLesson sessions), and WebMail messages (our Connexus-based email system). Subject-specific teachers provide small and large group instruction to their students on key concepts and skills; add, expand, or modify assessments based on the student's demonstrated mastery of the material; assign and score assessments and portfolio items, and provide feedback on the student's performance to the student, Learning Coach, and Family Connections Coordinator, or homeroom/advisory teacher. Teacher feedback is provided through the use of rubrics, assessment grades, as well as phone conferences, WebMail messages, and LiveLesson sessions. Depending on a student's needs and grade level, subject-specific teachers provide instruction in a variety of ways to address the needs of each student. Subject-specific teachers evaluate students in their corresponding subject area(s), provide instructional resources based on the student's learning needs, prepare student progress reports (at those schools that issue them), verify the student's course work, issue final course grades, and make promotion or retention recommendations (for students in grades K–8).

Generally, middle and high school students will have a different subject-specific teacher for each course. Elementary students will have the same subject-specific teacher for most subjects; these teachers may also be the student's homeroom teacher.

Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers are teachers who meet the state requirements for being substitute teachers in their state. They serve as homeroom and/or subject-specific teachers when the regular Connections Academy teacher is not available for an extended period of time (e.g., on military or medical leave, etc.). Substitute teachers perform all of the duties of a teacher or subject-specific teacher.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants may perform many of the duties of a homeroom teacher or subject-specific teacher, as defined above. However, teaching assistants are not permitted to issue final course grades and work under the supervision of a certified teacher.

Family Connections Coordinators (FCC)

The Family Connections Coordinator (FCC) is a new role being introduced in Connections Academy to some schools starting with the 2016-17 enrollment season. The FCC's role is to serve as a single point of contact between the family and the Connections Academy school to provide support to families and students for non-teaching tasks. The FCC's primary focus is on building a lasting relationship with the families they serve, guiding them through processes and holding regular check-ins from the time a family expresses an interest in the school through to the student's graduation.

Community Coordinators (Caretaker Volunteers)

Community Coordinators are typically Caretakers of students in the school, though in some states they may also be teachers at the school and are known as School Event Representatives. Community Coordinators and/or School Event Representatives help create opportunities for community projects, field trips, and group meetings with other students and parents. They also serve as a clearinghouse for information about local extracurricular activities and events. Schools provide information to families at the start of the school year about how to become a Community Coordinator and will distribute to families the Community Coordinator's contact information. If you have a question or a suggestion related to a local activity or opportunity, you should contact your assigned Community Coordinator or the School Event Representatives.

Student Support Teams

The Student Support team (SST) is comprised of several teachers and/or staff members and one or more administrators at the school. This team may also go by another name, such as Response to Intervention (RTI) or Student Assistance Team (SAT). The Student Support team meets regularly to discuss student progress, focusing on students who appear to be struggling in one or more subjects. Students are identified as struggling based on universal screening assessments conducted with all students, teacher and/or Learning Coach observation and knowledge of the student and/or a review of the student's academic performance, participation, and/or attendance levels documented in Connexus.

The Student Support team shares information among its members about a struggling student's academic and/or other challenges, and makes recommendations for instructional interventions that may be implemented. SST members also perform regular data collection on progress of these interventions, and other relevant information. The team develops and recommends additional instructional strategies and resources for the student's teacher(s), Caretaker, and Learning Coach, and then follows up to ensure that these strategies are indeed helping the student make adequate progress and show academic improvement. Caretakers are kept informed regarding interventions and student progress.

3.2 Required Student Safety Trainings for School Staff *

Connections Academy takes student safety and well-being very seriously, and believes that students should be able to learn in a safe and comfortable environment. Therefore, in addition to the comprehensive set of required courses and trainings for school staff that focus on educational practices, teachers are required to take two courses that focus specifically on student safety:

- **Internet Safety** - This course provides valuable information about practicing safe behaviors online.
- **Students in Distress: Recognizing and Responding** - This course is designed to ensure teachers and other school staff are familiar with the signs of student distress and know how to respond promptly and professionally when they observe such signs or behaviors.

All members of school staff must complete the trainings at the beginning of the school year, and refer to the trainings throughout the year as needed. The school leadership tracks staff completion of these trainings to ensure all staff members have completed the trainings in the required time frame. Caretakers and Learning Coaches are asked to communicate and collaborate with teachers and other school staff as the school staff members work to fulfill their professional roles in supporting student safety and well-being. They are asked to involve additional parties as appropriate to address concerns, and to always keep student safety and well-being at the center of the conversation.

3.3 School Information*

Contact information for your school is found in the School Specific Handbook Supplement.

3.4 School Schedule

Connections Academy students and/or their Learning Coaches may develop their own schedule to fit their specific needs, both in how they structure each school day and their overall schedule, as long as no state or local regulations are violated. However, students must still attend school regularly, meet their school's specific attendance and/or instructional hour requirements, correspond with their teachers, and complete lessons and assessments as expected. (See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for specific requirements.)

Students must also be available during regular school hours for any required phone conferences or participation in LiveLesson sessions, unless school-approved alternate arrangements can be made. Most teachers are available only during regular school business hours. Students will be informed of these hours and any individual variations in teacher schedules at the beginning of each course and through the Teacher Communication Data View.

3.4.1 The 2016-2017 School Calendar*

Your school's calendar is in the School Specific Handbook Supplement.

3.4.2 Required Instructional Hours*

This information is in the School Specific Handbook Supplement.

3.4.3 Emergency Closure Plans*

Note that some schools may have a separate Emergency Closure Plan.

If a school's office(s) closes due to an emergency such as hazardous weather conditions, the school will send Caretakers a "must read" WebMail message explaining the details of the office closure. The school will also record a voice mail message announcing the details of the office closure and the availability, or lack of availability, of teachers and other school services.

Please note that Connections Academy Centralized Support Services and some teachers are located in different areas of the country where conditions may be different from those in the local school office location. Such services may be occasionally interrupted even when school operations are running as usual, or vice versa.

Even if a school's office(s) or Centralized Support Services closes due to hazardous weather or other emergencies, students should still plan to complete lessons and mark their attendance for the day if they are able to work either online or offline, unless otherwise notified by their school.

3.5 Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Transfers

Specific state requirements for enrollment eligibility are available on your school's page on the Connections Academy website. To find these requirements, select the Enrollment tab at the top of the page, and then select Eligibility Requirements.

All Connections Academy schools abide by all federal, state, and local policies and guidelines for student admission and do not impose admission requirements that are inconsistent with these policies and guidelines. These policies and guidelines include compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act regarding homeless students, including but not limited to, enrolling homeless students in a timely manner even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (e.g. proof of residency or previous academic records), and providing those students with services comparable to services offered to students not experiencing homelessness. The school leader or his/her designee shall serve as the liaison for homeless students.

At various times during the school year, to comply with mandated enrollment caps, state regulations and reporting, and/or testing processes and requirements, some schools may temporarily “pause” enrollment by holding students on a wait list for a defined period of time those students who are in Stage 2 of the enrollment process. After the temporary “pause” of enrollment is over, students will again be able to move forward with completing the enrollment process. The school board or authorizer has delegated to the school leader the authority to define and implement these temporary “pauses” of enrollment periods. These temporary “pause” dates will be posted on the school’s website where information about enrollment can be found.

Some schools also have enrollment caps and therefore may implement a lottery system. Schools may also close enrollment at some point in the year, as permitted by state or local regulations. Check your school’s website for more information.

3.5.1 Returning Students

Currently enrolled students whose Caretakers plan for them to continue with Connections Academy for the next academic year must indicate their intent to have their student continue with Connections by completing a data view in a Connexus. The Intent to Return form and updated student information should be submitted prior to the end of the school year. Caretakers will be provided with detailed information on how to complete these tasks, **which should be completed as soon as the Caretaker knows that the student intends to return the following year (but no later than the end of the current school year).**

Caretakers of students who have withdrawn from a Connections Academy school but wish to return to the **same** school for a different school year, or whose students are enrolled in a Connections Academy school but wish to enroll in a **different** Connections Academy school for the next year, should call the Enrollment department at 800-382-6010 for detailed enrollment instructions that are appropriate to their situation. Note that these students should **not** complete a new online registration.

3.5.2 Kindergarten and First Grade Admissions*

This information is found in your School- Specific Handbook Supplement.

3.5.3 Enrollment after the Start of the School Year or Semester*

Students may generally enroll after the start of the school year if (1) space is available, subject to any other local limitations, and (2) the open enrollment period for the school year has not passed. Students who enroll after the start of the school year or semester will be placed at the appropriate starting point in the curriculum based on work already completed, the school's specific enrollment policy, and discussions between the family and the school's teachers and/or school counselor. Students will also participate in a special orientation course for students who enroll after the start of the school year.

3.5.4 Dual Enrollment in Another K–12 Program*

This information is in the School Specific Handbook Supplement

3.5.5 Dual Enrollment in a College or University

Interested students who are academically and socially ready may wish to consider supplementing their Connections Academy curriculum with college-level courses in schools where dual enrollment in a college or university is available. While this option will apply primarily to high school students, some advanced middle school students may also wish to consider this option where permitted. All students should consult with their school counselor or advisory teacher *prior to enrolling in college courses* to be sure they are fully informed about specific state requirements as well as the benefits and responsibilities of adding one or more college course(s) to their workload.

3.5.6 Withdrawing from School*

Students may withdraw from the school at any time, provided that the Caretaker provides Connections Academy with either evidence of homeschool registration consistent with state requirements or the name and location of another public or private school that the student will attend.

Prior to withdrawing, the Caretaker and/or Eligible student (in the case of an emancipated minor) should discuss with a school staff member the student's reason(s) for withdrawing as it may be possible to address issues so that the student does not need to withdraw. If a student or Caretaker is experiencing a problem with a teacher, he or she should contact the school leader, Director, or Vice President of Schools to discuss possible solutions other than withdrawal.

The student's Caretaker and/or Eligible student generally may begin the withdrawal process in either of two ways; however, please note that some states may only offer one option.

- 1) From the Caretaker home page in Connexus, select the student's  and go to the *Initiate Student Withdrawal* Data View. Complete the requested Next Schooling information and select Save and Finish to submit the form.

Please note that this method should not be used to indicate that a student does not intend to return for the following year (i.e., Intent to Return). Use of the Initiate Student Withdrawal Data View will result in the immediate withdrawal of the student for the current year.

- 2) Contact your teacher by phone or WebMail message and inform your teacher of your intent to withdraw your student(s). If you use the WebMail system, be sure to include the date of the student's expected exit from the school and the name of the qualified educational program that your child will be using instead. You will then be contacted by the school to acknowledge your intent to withdraw your student.

See the Educational Materials Provided by the School and Technology sections for information concerning the return of school equipment and materials as part of the withdrawal process.

3.5.7 Location Change*

Connections Academy defines four types of “Location Change” and has specific policies related to each type. Any time a student engages in a Location Change, the Caretaker *must* contact the school leader to discuss the change and ensure the student remains compliant with all Connections Academy, state, local, and other applicable regulations and policies. The four types of Location Change, and the related policies, are listed below:

1. **Permanent In-Area Location Change: change of residence within the school’s service area.** *Example: The family purchases a new home during the school year.* For this type of location change, the Caretaker **must**
 - a. contact the Connections Academy Enrollment team to notify them of the location change as soon as possible but **no later than 30 days after the move**. The Caretaker must provide *new* proof of residency documentation and updated student contact information to the Connections Academy Enrollment department within thirty (30) days of the move. Failure to provide an updated proof of residency may result in withdrawal from the school, as permitted or required by federal, state, or local policies and guidelines for enrollment.
 - b. inform the student’s homeroom, or advisory teacher, or Family Connections Coordinator.
 - c. continue to meet the school’s eligibility requirements as long as the student moves within the school’s service area
2. **Temporary Location Change: Travel or relocation away from student’s residence for longer than three (3) weeks.** *Example: The family stays with a relative in another state for two (2) months.* For this type of location change, the Caretaker **must** contact the school leader **prior to the Location Change** for permission to make the Location Change. The school leader will make a determination per state requirements if the student can make this Location Change and remain eligible to stay enrolled in the school.

If the school leader grants permission for the Location Change, the Caretaker will be required to complete a *Location Transfer Request Form* available in the Virtual Library and submit it to the school. The school leader will sign the form and provide the Caretaker with a copy of the form. This copy will serve as formal written approval from the school leader for the student to remain enrolled during the temporary Location Change.

Note: Stationary computer equipment (desktop computers and monitors) may **never** be taken out of the state for Temporary Location Changes. Laptops, where provided may move temporarily with the student, **as long as the student remains actively enrolled in the school and updated address and contact information for temporary location has been received by Connections Academy.**

- 3. Alternate Learning Location(s) Change: Student learning regularly occurs in an alternate location but there is no change in the student's residence.** *Example: The student's Learning Coach is a neighbor, and the student regularly works at the Learning Coach's home.* For this type of location change, the Caretaker **must** contact the school leader **prior to the location change** to confirm that this Location Change will not affect the student's enrollment eligibility.

If the school leader grants permission for the Location Change, the Caretaker will be required to complete a *Location Transfer Request Form* and submit it to the school. The school leader will sign the form and provide the Caretaker with a copy of the form. This copy will serve as formal written approval from the school leader for the student to have an alternate learning location or locations. **Note:** Caretakers are always responsible for Connections-provided equipment and materials, regardless of where the materials/equipment are located. See Section 10, Educational Materials Provided by the School, for more information.

In any of the above types of Location Change, the student must continue learning activities and must still comply with all state testing and other state and school requirements.

- 4. Permanent Out-of-Area Location Change: Move to another state.**

If a student moves out of state, **all** computer equipment and curriculum materials must be returned to Connections Academy, even if there is another Connections Academy school that operates in the state where the student is moving.

The following actions related to Location Change may cause the student to be immediately withdrawn from the school:

- engaging in any type of Location Change without notifying the school leader and/or the Connections Academy Enrollment Team

- failure to complete and submit any required Location Change forms
- failure to provide the Connections Academy Enrollment Team and/or the school with any additional required documentation
- failure to receive specific written permission to remain enrolled when engaging in any form of Location Change

If a family moves to another state where there is a Connections Academy school and the family would like to enroll in that school, the Caretaker should contact the Connections Academy Enrollment Team as soon as the Caretaker knows when and where the family is moving. The student will need to be withdrawn from the current school and then enrolled in the new school, *if eligible for enrollment in the new school*. Eligibility requirements may differ between the schools, and some states provide different rules for members of the military, so **it is important that the family contacts the Connections Academy Enrollment Team as soon as possible to determine if the student is eligible to enroll in the new Connections Academy school**. The Caretaker should also notify the school leader that the student is moving.

While Connections Academy will do its best to accommodate students wishing to enroll in another Connections Academy school, this enrollment cannot be guaranteed. Each school is governed by state-specific enrollment rules and procedures, and Connections Academy must comply with these rules and procedures (e.g., the school in the new state may have an enrollment cap that has already been met and/or may have a waiting list.)

Note: For students with IEPs, the family is encouraged to contact the Special Education Director in the new Connections Academy school *prior to enrollment* to discuss the special education services provided in the new school.

3.5.8 Learning Environments and Working with Multiple Students

It is essential that the Learning Coach designated to support students in the Connections Academy virtual school environment fully understand their responsibilities and is able to perform them as required. Therefore, one Learning Coach may **not** support more than four (4) students without special permission from the school. Additionally, if the group learning environment requires the transfer of Connections Academy equipment or materials, Caretakers must complete the *Location Transfer Request Form* (as described in the Location Change section in this handbook) and be granted permission to move materials/equipment.

3.6 Assessment

It is essential that student performance is regularly assessed. Your school uses the following types of assessments to determine students' skill levels, to evaluate performance, assign educational plans, and to develop a permanent school record.

3.6.1 Pretesting, Midtesting, and Posttesting to Measure Academic Progress

At the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year, the school may administer the Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress™ (LEAP) or other evaluation tools as pre-, mid-, and post-assessments to students in grades K–12. These assessments provide instructional guidance for teachers and Learning Coaches, help teachers to construct and implement the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), and measure the student's academic gains over the year.

Exempting Alternate Assessment Students from LEAP Participation

Students who have an IEP who have been designated as participating in alternate state testing are exempt from mandatory pretesting, midtesting, and post testing. However, at the Learning Coach's request, the student may still complete the testing and receive scores.

3.6.2 Assessments Within the Curriculum

As they progress through their courses, students will engage in many different types of formal and informal assessments. . All assessment types are listed below, though not all courses or grade levels will have all of these assessment types. Note also that some assessment types count more heavily towards the student's final course grade than others. For example, the grade a student earns on a Unit Test or Portfolio has a bigger impact on the student's final grade than a Quiz does. (Assessments are listed in alphabetical order).

Graded Assessments

Discussion: Discussion assessments are found in grades 3–12, and allow students in the same section to communicate with each other during a semester; each student's contribution to the discussion is graded by the teacher based on the discussion rubric. The discussion window remains open throughout the semester. After the semester closes, students have to send WebMail messages directly to their teachers to reply to discussion posts. **Final exams** test students on the course knowledge they acquired during a semester. Final exams contain multiple question types and are embedded with lesson content.

Participation: Typically, participation accounts for five percent (5%) of a student’s overall grade. Some courses may contain participation assessments in which students document their participation in an activity, such as Time to Talk or a LiveLesson session; in these instances participation accounts for ten percent (10%). Whether to include participation in the student’s grade, and the requirements to earn full participation credit for a course, are determined by each Connections Academy school.

Portfolio Item: A portfolio is an assessment type that requires students to submit documentation (e.g., essays, presentations, reports, graphic organizers) to their teachers electronically through the Drop Box or via physical mail. Students in grades 9–12 are expected to submit their portfolios through the Drop Box. Portfolio items are reviewed and graded by the teacher.

Most portfolios include a rubric designed to help the student understand the expectations for this lesson. For portfolios in English courses, students have approximately five (5) days between submitting their rough drafts and final drafts. Note: Not all courses use these conventions.

Pretest*: Pretests assess students’ prior knowledge of a subject and are customized based on the skills addressed. The questions are automatically scored, so they cannot contain any type of question that requires teacher review or grading. Pretests align to the unit objectives, and they assess the major skills and concepts for that unit. Pretests are similar in length to a quiz (usually 10–15 multiple choice questions) and are embedded in lessons.

Quick Check*: Quick checks are non-cumulative assessments added to the end of some lessons in grades 1–12. Quick checks for all elementary courses are graded but not weighted. Quick checks for most middle and high school courses are graded and weighted, and they account for five percent of a student’s overall grade.

Quick checks are brief (usually 3–5 multiple choice questions), and the questions are automatically scored, so they cannot contain any type of question that would be graded or reviewed by a teacher. Quick checks are embedded in lessons.

Quiz*: Quizzes, which typically contain 5–10 questions, are longer than quick checks and cover material from more than one lesson. Though some questions may require teacher grading, most quiz questions are automatically scored. Quizzes are embedded in lessons.

Unit Test*: Unit tests cover material from all lessons in a specific unit. Unit tests are longer than quizzes, contain a variety of question types, and are weighted more heavily than quizzes toward a student's final grade. Some questions on a unit test may require teacher grading.

**This assessment type must be completed in one sitting. Students cannot answer some questions, save their work, and return to complete the remaining portion of the assessment at a later time.*

Non-Graded Assessments

The following assessment types are also found in the curriculum, but do not have an impact on the student's grade.

Course Survey: Course surveys are non-graded assessments that ask students for their opinions regarding a course and the student's teacher. Surveys are usually placed at the end of a course, and may be linked through the student Data View.

Online Practice*: Online practice assessments allow students to answer practice questions for a particular lesson or unit so they can measure their own grasp of a subject or concept. The questions are automatically scored, so they cannot contain any type of question that requires teacher review or grading. These assessments are not graded, may occur several times in a lesson, and may be embedded or linked within a lesson.

Reflection: Reflection assessments are used in math courses to get students thinking about their relationship with mathematical concepts from a unit (or preceding units) and about themselves as learners and mathematicians. These assessments contain mainly multiple-choice questions, but they may also contain short answer questions. Reflections are scored but do not impact students' final grades.

Skills Check: These are brief assessments used to gauge students' learning in kindergarten through second grade. The Learning Coach completes these diagnostic assessments to keep the teacher updated on the student's progress. Skills Checks are also used in many high school math courses as a diagnostic assessment completed by the student prior to embarking on a new lesson. Skills checks are scored but do not impact a student's final grade.

**This assessment type must be completed in one sitting. Students cannot answer some questions, save their work, and return to complete the remaining portion of the assessment at a later time.*

Informal Evaluations

Informal evaluations are tools used to gauge the student's level of mastery of the material. These evaluations are not included in the student's grade, but provide valuable feedback to teachers and Learning Coaches about the student's areas of strength and areas needing additional support or intervention.

- **Check for Understanding:** Questions provided by the school to the Learning Coaches to ask the students to gauge the development of certain skills.
- **Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBAs)** —Synchronous, or real-time, communications between the student and the teacher used to gather formative information on students' understanding of concepts. Students are required to participate in a minimum of eight CBA's a year but teachers often administer many more. Teachers conduct two types of CBAs: verified curriculum-based assessment (VCBA) and diagnostic curriculum-based assessment (DCBA).
 - VCBA's are used to confirm student comprehension of concepts previously assessed and graded as successfully completed with scores of B or higher.
 - VCBA's are informal phone conversations or individual LiveLesson sessions with the student in which the teacher asks a variety of questions about recently completed assignments to verify that the student has done the work independently and that the student has grasped the key components of the lesson(s). The content to be covered is not specified ahead of time, other than being part of "recently completed assignments" such as a reading passage or solving a set of mathematics problems.
 - DCBA's are used to identify specific skill or concept issues students are having, develop strategies for remediation, and determine future instructional support that may be necessary to help underperforming students achieve success. These contacts occur during the regularly scheduled phone calls and are targeted toward students who receive a C or lower on an assessment or have an overall GPA of less than B.

3.6.3 Mandatory Testing*

Public schools are required by state and federal law to administer state standardized tests to students in specific grades. Additionally, Connections Academy schools require all students to participate in at least one proctored test each year, which will usually be the state-mandated test. Therefore, all students enrolled in a Connections Academy virtual public school will be required to participate in the state standardized testing program, consistent with state law.

The school will work closely with Caretakers, Learning Coaches, and students as they prepare for required testing. If a student is not able to participate in testing, the Caretaker will be required to document the reason(s) for nonparticipation, and the student may be required by the school to take a makeup test.

There are serious consequences for both the school and the student when students do not participate in state testing. Therefore, students who fail to participate in required testing may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with state law.

3.7 Personalized Learning*

3.7.1 The Personalized Learning Process

Connections Academy teachers work with Learning Coaches and students to customize student learning experiences based on specific academic needs, learning pace, learning styles, and personal interests. This program personalization is an ongoing process that also includes the creation of a written plan (the Personalized Learning Plan, or PLP) that all members of the learning team follow.

The personalization process includes the following components: initial academic placement and course selection, performance testing, interest inventories, review of student work samples, detailed phone conferences, goal-setting, adjustment of student schedules and lesson pacing, lesson modifications and/or enrollment in instructional intervention programs, attendance in LiveLesson sessions, enrollment in elective courses, and strategies for families to implement throughout the year. The process also includes several goal-review and adjustment sessions including a final conference at the end of the school year to review progress.

3.7.2 Adding Elective Courses (Elementary and Middle School)*

Before requesting to register for electives, students in grades K through 8 must generally meet the following criteria:+

- be enrolled in school for at least 30 days
- have completed their initial assessments (e.g., LEAP or other pretesting, and/or state testing)
- be in good academic standing (overall grade of 70% or higher)
- maintain acceptable attendance (i.e., be “On Track”)
- have all start-up tasks complete, including completion of student orientation courses and Welcome Call (start of school year call with teacher).

Schools may define additional criteria for permitting students to enroll in electives. After these criteria are met, teachers will work with families to select appropriate electives, approve the student’s selection, and enroll the student in the elective course(s).

+Some states permit electives to be selected at other times. All criteria noted above are subject to state laws and/or regulations. Please see the School Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.

3.7.3 How Families Can Personalize Instruction

Students and Learning Coaches work closely with their teachers to personalize student programs, but families can also personalize their learning programs in several different ways.

- **Pacing and Scheduling**—Subject to requirements including, but not limited to, the required days of attendance and/or hours of instruction required and other applicable state or local regulations, the school allows students and their Learning Coaches to structure the school day to best meet the student’s learning needs. The online Scheduler allows students in grades K–8 and their Learning Coaches to select which days of the week they would like to schedule certain courses and how many lessons of each subject per day they plan to complete. This flexibility accommodates different learning styles and needs; however, the personalization of pacing and scheduling must not impact the overall amount of work that is required of each student, which is determined exclusively by state requirements and is overseen by the school’s leadership.

Most high school students have significantly decreased flexibility in the schedule so they can learn and work together (e.g., in discussions and on collaborative projects). High school students who may benefit from a more flexible schedule should speak with their advisory teacher, Family Connections Coordinator or school counselor to make appropriate adjustments.

- **Limits to Program Flexibility**—Every student is expected to master the essential skills and standards covered by the school's rigorous curriculum, which is designed to meet or exceed each state's standards. Families may work with teachers to adjust pacing and assigned lessons for each student; however, it is imperative that students participate fully in the school's standards-based curriculum and complete the lessons and assessments assigned by the teacher(s).

3.7.4 Placement Changes During the School Year (Elementary and Middle School)*

Counselors, administrators, teachers, school leaders, and the Connections Academy staff work together to make sure that each student's initial course placement is accurate and appropriate. Although it is possible to request a change in placement after the student is enrolled, Connections Academy recommends that *before* requesting a placement change, students work in their assigned courses, look ahead in the curriculum for the year, and discuss with the school any specific challenges the student is having with the course work and/or grade level placement. The student's teacher may also be able to tailor the current curriculum to better meet the student's individual needs.

To request a placement change, the Learning Coach should contact the student's teacher. The school leader or their designee will have final say in approving or disapproving placement changes.

Please see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for information on the High School Add/Drop process.

3.8 Course Completion*

Course completion definitions may vary by state but are critically important when requesting either midyear course completion or late course completion options (below).

3.8.1 Midyear Course Completion (Elementary and Middle School)

Before requesting to move on to the next course or level, students should work with their Learning Coaches and teachers to make sure they have learned as much as possible from the course. Teachers can provide enrichment and extension activities for students who have the ability to reach greater depth and absorb greater detail in their studies. Electives may also be available for students who have completed a required or core course prior to the end of the school year.

The decision to advance to a new level of a subject or subjects mid-semester or midyear will be made collaboratively by the Caretaker, Learning Coach, teacher, school counselor (if applicable) and school leader. Students may be eligible for a mid-semester or midyear placement change if they can demonstrate the following outcomes:

- mastery of current-course content
- exploration of enrichment and extension opportunities offered throughout the curriculum
- sufficient in-depth involvement with the course material as determined by the teacher

The teacher will review these criteria to determine the student's eligibility for a placement change. If the student is deemed eligible, the teacher will request the placement change on behalf of the student. Generally, if a midyear curriculum promotion occurs, the student's final grade level will remain the same. As with other placement changes, the school leader will have final say in approving or disapproving placement changes.

Note: All schools have a deadline for shipping materials that occurs in the spring semester. After that date has passed, curriculum changes that require shipped materials are no longer available to students. Teachers will notify Caretakers if placement change requests cannot be completed for this reason.

3.8.2 Late Course Completion

Students who require extended time to complete assessments after the school year has ended should check with their school to see if the school or state permits students to complete courses beyond the end of the school year. Students **may** be granted an extension allowing them to turn in work **up to two weeks** after their school's last official day of classes, but there is no guarantee an extension will be granted, and extensions beyond two weeks will not be provided. Students are not permitted to use this extension for the purpose of accelerating their studies over the summer. Unless a school or state provides additional funds to operate an official summer school program (or the student qualifies for extended year services through special education), no additional services or materials will be provided for learning activities over the summer. For students with an IEP, Extended School Year (ESY) services are determined by the student's IEP teams.

4 ATTENDANCE*

Students in this virtual public school program have no physical classrooms but still must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public schools in the state. These requirements are documented in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement, but they generally include attending school for a required number of days and/or completing a required number of hours of learning. Caretakers and students are jointly responsible for ensuring that students meet their school's attendance requirements, and that the student's attendance is properly documented as required by the school (see the Attendance section of your School-Specific Handbook Supplement). School authorities are responsible for enforcing attendance laws. Students not attending school as mandated by law will be considered truant.

Although there is more flexibility in the Connections Academy program than in a traditional school setting, with regard to instructional time, students are still expected to follow the school calendar. Specific school calendars and the required days and hours of instruction are posted in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

4.1 Caretaker and Learning Coach Responsibilities for Attendance

All Grade Levels: State law requires that Caretakers take responsibility for ensuring that their student(s) attends school. Most Connections Academy programs require that the Caretaker or designated Learning Coach record attendance daily. (Refer to your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for details on attendance recording requirements.) The Learning Coach Orientation includes information on how to record attendance. In addition, all students must complete assigned lessons and submit specified assessments to their teachers. Attendance should be equated to work completion. If the student does not complete assigned lessons, then attendance hours should not be marked by the Caretaker or designated Learning Coach. Students and/or their Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches must also participate in/respond to regular telephone, WebMail message, and/or Web conferencing (LiveLesson presentations) contacts, as well as in-person contacts (if required) with a teacher during the school's regularly scheduled school hours.

Elementary and Middle School: Grades K-8 (not all grades may be available at every school): To meet attendance requirements and successfully complete their lessons, students in elementary and middle school will need assistance from a Learning Coach. The student's need for assistance will range from fairly substantial assistance to relatively minor assistance and will vary depending on the student's age, ability to be self-directed, and to comprehend the materials. In addition, students must be in a safe and secure environment, which generally requires that the student have adult supervision during the entire school day to meet health and safety regulations. Check your state's laws to determine the age when a child can be left unattended.

High School (Grades 9–12; may not be available at all schools): Students are expected to perform their school work independently. However, where attendance is required to be reported, the Learning Coach must still report daily attendance in Connexus and verify that the student has completed the assigned lessons and assessments. The Learning Coach is also expected to be available for regular teacher conferences. While students may not need adult supervision during the school day, they must still be in a safe and secure environment. Check your state's laws to determine the age when a student can be left unattended.

4.2 Marking and Verifying Attendance*

Recording, Verifying, and Changing Attendance Records in Connexus

Learning Coaches are expected to record attendance in Connexus at least weekly; at some schools, Learning Coaches are required to record attendance daily. Be sure to follow your school's requirements for recording attendance to avoid the risk of having your student in Alarm status and/or in danger of being considered truant.

After the Learning Coach has entered *and saved* hours of attendance in Connexus, he or she is not able to edit the student's attendance. If the Learning Coach makes an error marking attendance, the Learning Coach must contact the student's teacher if he/she wishes to have the attendance record changed. Before the school can change the attendance record in response to a Learning Coach request, the Learning Coach may be required to demonstrate that the original entry was an error, and provide documentation to support the change. Because attendance is subject to "lockdown" (see below) at certain intervals, Learning Coaches should contact their student's teacher as soon as they discover they have made an error in recording attendance.

Learning Coach-recorded attendance alone is not sufficient to properly verify student attendance. Teachers also verify attendance records on a regular basis and may change a student's attendance status if there is insufficient evidence to verify attendance, and/or if they are unable to determine if a student was participating in learning. In reviewing attendance documentation, teachers must determine that each student has met or exceeded the required amount of instructional time stipulated by each state's regulations. The School-Specific Handbook Supplement outlines how many learning hours or minutes must be demonstrated within a specific time frame.

Teachers may make changes to attendance records for the following reasons:

- **Upon request by a Learning Coach to record attendance**—If requested to do so by the Learning Coach, teachers may enter the appropriate attendance code in a blank attendance field *because the Learning Coach is not able to access a computer or does not have Internet access*, but the student has been able to continue his or her studies using offline materials. Teachers will note in the student's log the reason for the Learning Coach's request and may request additional documentation that the student was engaged in learning. This method of recording attendance should only be done in exceptional circumstances.

- **Upon request by a Learning Coach to correct an error**—If a Learning Coach makes an error entering the attendance code, he/she may request that the teacher enter the correct code. Teachers will note the basis for the request in the student’s log and may request additional documentation.
- **Upon review by a teacher or other authorized school staff to validate attendance**—A teacher or authorized school staff member will change the number of hours worked to a “0,” or the “present” code may be changed to an excused or unexcused absence code, if, after communication with the Learning Coach and/or a review of the student’s activity in Connexus, the teacher or staff member believes there is insufficient evidence to support that the student was in attendance (e.g., insufficient lesson completion, teacher contact, and/or assessment completion, including state test attendance).

In all cases, a teacher or another school staff member will discuss with the Learning Coach any perceived differences between the student’s recorded attendance and his or her documented lessons completed and assessments submitted. If the teacher or other school staff member makes any changes to the student’s attendance record in Connexus, he or she will promptly inform the Learning Coach and document the change in the student’s log. Learning Coaches who have disputes related to attendance should follow the dispute resolution procedures in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

Attendance Lockdown

Schools are required to regularly report attendance records to their respective state education agencies. To ensure that reports are accurate, at set intervals, student attendance records are “locked down;” that is, they can no longer be edited by anyone other than a small number of authorized school personnel. Lockdown generally occurs every two weeks (meaning that any dates that are 15 or more days in the past can only be edited by authorized school personnel), but some schools have defined dates.

After attendance records have been locked down, teachers are **not** able to make changes to attendance records. Therefore, Learning Coaches should make requests to update attendance records **as soon as they realize they have made an error**. To request alterations to the attendance record for days that are far enough in the past that they are “locked down,” Learning Coaches should still contact their student’s teacher, but they should be aware that their student’s teacher must then discuss the attendance alterations with the appropriate authorized school personnel.

The School Day

Students must complete a certain number of instructional hours per day as required by local law and regulations. In most states, instructional hours can be distributed differently each day as long as the total required number of instructional hours is met weekly; however, Learning Coaches should check their School-Specific Handbook Supplement’s Attendance section for specific information about the school’s required daily and weekly hours of attendance. The school day is not limited to certain hours for start and end times; however, the school’s teaching staff is only available during the school’s hours of operation. Learning Coaches must also be available for their scheduled phone conferences during these times.

The School Calendar

Each school operates according to a set school calendar, which includes days when teachers will not be available due to professional development (all other Support Services are available during these days), and days when the school is completely closed (no Support Services are available during these days). Student learning may continue during any days when the school is closed. (Refer to the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for information on how to record attendance per specific state rules.) All work must be completed as of the last day of school, except as provided in the Late Course Completion section of this handbook. School work that is not completed as of the last day will receive an incomplete or failing grade.

Types of Absences

Specific attendance rules and regulations regarding different types of absences vary by school. Reasons for excused absences may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Health problems**—Students are unable to participate in school work due to physical or mental health problems. If a student misses more than three (3) consecutive school days, the Learning Coach or Caretaker must send a written note or WebMail message to the student’s teacher(s) documenting the health issue. The school may also require a doctor’s note for absences of more than three (3) consecutive days.
- **Other excused absences**—Examples of other reasons for excused absences include a family illness that requires the absence of the student, a death in the immediate family, religious holidays, family trips that can be taken only during the normal school calendar year (see the section below on extended absences), court appearances requiring the student’s attendance, attendance at special events of educational value that have been approved by a teacher, and other special circumstances that show good cause, have been approved in advance by the school’s leader, and for which the family provides appropriate documentation if required by the school.

If a student misses school for an excused absence, the student is still responsible for completing all required lessons and assessments for the school term.

If a family is requesting an “excused absence” for any reason, the family may be required to submit a doctor’s note or other documentation supporting the request.

- **Unexcused absences**—Absences that are not approved by the school will be considered unexcused. In some states, students may be withdrawn from school for truancy if they have excessive unexcused absences. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement Attendance section for details.

Extended Absences

If a Learning Coach is aware that a student is going to be unable to complete his or her learning activities for more than three (3) consecutive school days, the Learning Coach should contact the teacher as soon as possible to inform the school of the planned absence. Students will still be expected to complete all the required work by the end of the school year. The school may also request documentation of the reason(s) for the planned absence.

Varying the School Holiday Schedule

If families wish to work during the school's designated holiday period(s) and then take an equivalent number of vacation days at another time, they should contact their teachers for approval at least one (1) week prior to the requested change. Teachers and school administrators will consider factors such as mandatory school events (testing, etc.) and the school's attendance regulations when reviewing such requests, and they will notify Caretakers if the request can be granted. If the request is allowed, teachers will help the family adjust learning schedules, as appropriate, to ensure proper attendance and compliance with state regulations. *Please note that some states do not allow school hours to be recorded on weekends or school holidays. Please check with your teacher and be sure to read your School-Specific Handbook Supplement's attendance section before considering this option.*

4.3 Attendance Status and Escalation Systems*

Connections Academy Learning Coaches are required to use Connexus to regularly mark hours or days of attendance and/or document lesson completion. Attendance in Connections Academy schools goes beyond daily hours spent on schoolwork and includes other criteria such as contact with the teacher and the student's rate of lesson and/or assessment completion. These criteria, which may vary from state to state to ensure compliance with state-specific requirements, are combined to constitute "attendance" at a Connections Academy school. If any one (or more) of the attendance metrics is not being met, Connexus will trigger what Connections calls "escalation." Escalation is an indicator to the student, Learning Coach, Caretaker, and teacher that the student is at risk of non-compliance for attendance. Every student is therefore always assigned one of four status levels in Connexus:

1. On Track
2. Approaching Alarm
3. Alarm
4. Exempt*

Students *meeting or exceeding* the minimum requirements for their state will show “On Track” status. Students *not meeting* the minimum requirements for their state are placed in “Approaching Alarm” status or “Alarm” status. When students are in “Approaching Alarm” or “Alarm” status, teachers will notify the Learning Coach and Caretaker of their concerns, help the family understand why the student is in that status, and make every effort to work with the student and Caretaker to ensure the student returns to “On Track” status as soon as possible. Learning Coaches can, at any time, select the Approaching Alarm or Alarm status link, located in the Attendance column on the Learning Coach home page, for details about the student’s attendance status.

Students who are in “Alarm” status for extended periods of time may face disciplinary actions as permitted and/or required by state law, including referral to appropriate agencies for truancy. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for details on attendance requirements, truancy, and escalation.

**Exempt status is rarely used and generally only for students with serious illnesses or other major but temporary circumstances that prevent them from completing work in a timely manner, who are expected to be able to catch up and return to “On Track” status prior to the end of the school year. Some students may also have modifications specified in an approved IEP or Section 504 plan that dictate exempt status.*

4.4 Truancy*

Students who fail to meet legal attendance requirements, which may include reported attendance, required contact with teachers, submission of assessments, and documentation of lesson completion may be considered truant, and the school may institute truancy proceedings, or otherwise report the student to the appropriate authorities, as is consistent with state law. Please check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for truancy policies.

5 GRADING AND STUDENT EVALUATION*

Students are evaluated based on several types of assessments, such as quizzes, tests, portfolio items, and discussions as described in *Section 3.6.2 Assessments within the Curriculum*. Teachers and substitute teachers are responsible for grading students’ work. Only the teacher or substitute teacher is allowed to issue the final grade for the course.

The Grade Book and Progress Reports

The Grade Book allows all Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches and upper-level students (students in grades three and above) to view grades from both electronic assessments (immediate and automatic postings) and written work (posted by teachers after work is evaluated). The Connexus Grade Book is available to Learning Coaches and these students 24 hours a day, seven days a week (excluding regularly scheduled maintenance as noted in *Section 10.2.1 Use of Connexus*) and always reflects the student's current status in each course in which s/he is enrolled (overall grade, grade in each course, grades on assessments within each course, and the number and percentage of lessons the student has completed).

Some schools provide Progress Reports that are snapshots of students' Grade Book during a certain time period (e.g. the first quarter of the school year) which may include teacher feedback and comments. For those schools, Progress Reports are created and posted at certain times per year based on a schedule set by those schools which use them.

Grading Time Lines

Most assessments, other than portfolio assessments, should be graded by the teacher within two (2) school days. Portfolio assessments will generally be graded by the teacher within five (5) school days of receipt and the grade posted to the Grade Book. Specific grading schedules and portfolio expectations are initially explained in the Welcome Call and then are posted on teachers' Message Boards and in student planners.

5.1 Placement, Promotion, and Retention (Elementary and Middle School)*

Placement

During the Connections Academy enrollment process, the student's Caretaker is asked to submit academic documentation for the student that includes the student's most recent academic progress. This information is reviewed and verified by the Academic Placement Services team, the school counselor, the manager of special education, and/or the school leader, who then collaborate to determine the most appropriate course placement for the student. Students may also be requested to complete a skills assessment that will help determine mastery of previously completed coursework and readiness for Connections Academy curriculum. Caretakers will review and confirm they agree to the course placement prior to the student starting their coursework. Please note that through this process, Connections Academy may make a decision regarding placement that may differ from the student's prior placement; however, for students with an IEP, placement will be in accordance with the student's IEP.

Promotion/Retention of Returning Students

Near the end of the school year, teachers make a recommendation to their school leader regarding promotion or retention for each of their students in grades K through 8. These recommendations are based on the following student performance information:

- successful completion of language arts and math courses (based on school's grading scale)
- performance across all courses
- lesson completion across all courses
- attendance
- proficiency levels on assessments, including state testing

For third grade students to be promoted to fourth grade, they must also demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Based on state regulations or authorizer requirements, additional promotion criteria may be established for certain grade levels. Please see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for more information.

Decisions about retaining students due to inadequate progress or lack of proficiency will be made on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with applicable state regulations, by the school leader. The school staff will contact the Caretaker of students who are in danger of retention in early spring and will discuss what options are available and best suited to the individual student's needs. It is possible that a student not apparently in danger of retention in early spring may need to be retained at the end of the school year; the school will make every effort to ensure that the Caretaker is aware of this as soon as possible.

Teachers, school administrators, and school leaders review and discuss the recommendation and work together to make a final decision about promotion/retention for each student. ***Some states may have state specific regulations regarding the promotion and retention of students. Therefore, if there are any discrepancies between the above-listed criteria and state regulations, state regulations will be followed.*** Please see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for more information.

*High School Coursework Completed in Middle School**

Students not yet in high school who are academically ready to take high school courses may do so with appropriate approval, but should be aware that issuing high school credit is determined by local and/or state regulations. Furthermore, some states may require students to pass End of Course exams to receive credit for the course and/or to graduate. Please see your School-Specific Handbook Supplement – High School Programs and Policies section, and/or contact your school if you are interested in this option.

6 HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM AND POLICIES*

Please refer to your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for complete high school policies.

Placement

During the Connections Academy enrollment process, the student's Caretaker is asked to submit academic documentation, that documents the student's record of high school credits earned and attempted, and any courses in progress, during his/her high school career. This documentation is used to assist the Academic Placement Services department and the school counselor with determining what courses are needed for the student. Initial course placement will be based on high school credit earned and in line with graduation requirements, typical course sequences, and post-secondary goals established by the student during the enrollment process.

Caretakers review and confirm they agree to the course placement prior to the student starting their coursework. Please note that through this process, Connections Academy may make a decision regarding placement that may differ from the student's prior placement; however, for students with an IEP, placement will be in accordance with the student's IEP.

High School Credit

Only high school-level classes provide high school credit toward graduation (unless required by a student's IEP team in states where permitted). A student in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 who is taking courses from the K–8 curriculum can meet attendance requirements but will not receive credits toward graduation for K–8 courses. In some cases, students who are dually enrolled with a college or university may also earn high school credits for those courses. Check with the school counselor or the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for state-specific information.

7 SERVICES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)-Eligible Students*

Subject to any specific state limitations, the school complies with the requirements described in the IDEA as well as state special education statutes as provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students requiring special education services. In general, this includes (but is not limited to) identifying and evaluating the needs of students with disabilities under the IDEA, developing Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), determining appropriate placements for students with IEPs, and implementing IEPs in the educational placement determined necessary by the IEP team. To comply with state-specific standards and requirements, special education policies may vary from school to school. When a student initially enrolls in Connections Academy with an existing IEP, the school either implements the IEP as written or provides the student with comparable services until a new IEP is developed by the IEP Team. Specially designed instruction for students with IEPs is most often delivered in LiveLesson sessions. It is important for students receiving special education services to attend these sessions designed to address their IEP goals.

Connections Education complies with the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS). As of August 2006, federal law requires publishers of K-12 curriculum to provide a digital version of textbooks and other related materials. The IDEA established the format of these digital versions as the NIMAS. The NIMAS applies to printed textbooks and related printed core materials that are written and published primarily for use in elementary and secondary schools and are required by Connections Education for use by students. Students eligible to receive specialized formats produced by NIMAS files include students who are (a) blind (a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction or fields less than 20 degrees), (b) visually impaired (a visual impairment with corrections and regardless of optical measurement that prevents the student from reading standard print), (c) physically disabled (a physical limitation that prevents the student from reading standard print), and (d) print disabled (having a reading disability resulting from an organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity that it prevents the student from reading printed materials).

The IEP team determines the instructional program, modifications, and accommodations needed for students with disabilities, including the need for accessible instructional materials and assistive technology. Connections Education assumes responsibility for providing accessible formats and assistive technology to students who need alternative access with these accommodations documented in an IEP or Section 504 plan.

7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students*

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the “Act”), commonly referred to as §504, is a statute designed to prohibit discrimination and to ensure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits comparable to those of non-disabled students. A “§504-Eligible Student” is a student who either (a) has, (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and performing manual tasks. Section 504 plans are typically written for students who are disabled as defined in § 504 of the Act, and who require accommodations and modifications to their instructional program(which may include services and/or assistive technology) but who do not require specialized instruction in order to benefit from their educational program. When a student enters Connections Academy with a § 504 plan developed by his or her previous school, Connections Academy will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with § 504 of the Act. Connections Academy requires staff members to be cognizant of the needs of § 504 students and to ensure that students receive appropriate accommodations and modifications.

7.3 English Language Learners (ELL)*

Federal and state regulations require that schools determine students' "primary or home language" and take "appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by [their] students in [their] instructional programs." To meet this requirement, Connections Academy asks Caretakers to complete a primary home language survey based on the regulations of the state in which they reside. Responses are then reviewed to identify all students whose primary or home language is not English. Connections Academy schools then administer English Language Proficiency assessments to determine students' language acquisition levels in compliance with Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act and to determine students' language acquisition levels. Children receive a planned instructional program of English as a second language (ESL) instruction at their developmental and instructional level to facilitate the acquisition of English language skills. This instruction is provided by each school's highly qualified ELL teacher. This may include consultation with the Learning Coach, teacher modification of content lessons and/or assessments, and direct instruction via LiveLesson sessions pursuant to state requirements. Services that promote language acquisition include instructional support to help ELL students attain proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students with limited English proficiency receive individualized attention that facilitates fluency in English and is based on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) framework. The proficiency of ELL students is assessed annually using state-specific instruments. Students who are exited from ELL programming enter into a monitoring phase.

7.4 Gifted Students*

Students may be identified as gifted during a student's initial placement process or after the student has been enrolled. Students are identified as gifted based on past performance and additional evidence as requested by the school's gifted program staff. Course placement and recommendation is completed through consultation with the Learning Coach.

Gifted students may be placed in special gifted math, science, and language arts courses in grades 3–8 and in Honors or Advanced Placement courses in high school. Students may also be assigned above grade level course or accelerated course work. In some states, gifted students may also receive a Gifted IEP or other regulatory designation that may have specific requirements. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.

Note: Gifted Language Study (for grades 3-8 as part of the English/Language Arts gifted program) uses a shared inquiry model taught through LiveLesson sessions. Students in this program may be required to attend LiveLessons at certain times on certain dates. Please check with your child's school for details before enrolling in this program.

8 COMMUNITY EVENTS, TRIPS, AND ACTIVITIES*

Connections Academy strongly encourages families to get together for events, trips, study sessions, and other activities. The activities may have educational and/or socialization benefits for students and are generally organized by parent volunteers. Parent volunteers organizing events may have different titles by school, including Community Coordinators, Family Involvement Coordinators, or School Event Representatives.

Sanctioned Events vs. Non-sanctioned Events—Some field trips are sanctioned events, sponsored by the school; others are non-sanctioned events that do not involve the school.

Information Sharing —parent volunteers gather and share information (i.e., school's community message board, Facebook group messages, invitations sent via WebMail, or other communications channels) about events, activities, services, performances, and other opportunities that might benefit students and families. This information is strictly the personal opinion of the parent volunteer or other families, and the school bears no responsibility or liability for its accuracy or usefulness. Furthermore, any use of this information, or participation in an Event or activity, is solely at the discretion of each individual Caretaker.

Caretaker Responsibility for Students at Events - The Caretaker assumes responsibility for his/her safety and the safety of his/her student(s). The Caretaker also agrees to supervise his or her student(s) and any other minor children in his/her charge in attendance. The school assumes no liability for anyone who attends an event based on information included on the school's community message board. When school staff is present, they will be responsible, in conjunction with the Caretaker, for general supervision of students, and will prioritize student safety.

Special Arrangements—parent volunteers may work to develop relationships with local schools, districts, and other providers of activities (e.g., the YMCA), as appropriate, to arrange opportunities for student participation and access to activities.

Sanctioned Events

Sanctioned events must have educational and/or social value and must be preapproved by the school leader or designee. The parent volunteer will have all adults in attendance sign the Connections Academy Sanctioned Waiver, Release, and Event Permission Form at the official event. Caretakers should complete the Media Consent and Release Data View for each student who attends an event prior to attending the event. If the adult supervising the student at a sanctioned event is not the Caretaker, s/he must provide the community coordinator or school event representative with a signed, written note from the Caretaker confirming that the designated adult has permission to supervise the student at the sanctioned event and is authorized to execute the Connections Academy Waiver, Release, and Event Permission Form as an agent of the Caretaker.

In most states, and in accordance with state or local policies, a sanctioned event may be counted as a school day upon receiving approval from the school leader or his/her designee. After this approval is granted, Caretakers may record as attendance the number of hours spent at the sanctioned event. It is not necessary for students to complete lessons on days when they attend sanctioned events, though families should plan ahead to ensure the student completes enough lessons in the day or days before and/or after the event to remain on track. Any school work scheduled on an “event” day must still be completed, though it does not have to be completed on the event day.

Sanctioned events are posted on the school’s message board as “sticky” threads, which are those threads noted in green on the Message Boards. Overnight official events require special approval, and background checks on all adults and chaperones may be conducted as allowable or required by state law. Many schools require that Caretakers RSVP in advance for sanctioned events. This allows the school to send an adequate number of staff to the event, and for the school to know who planned on attending in case the event must be cancelled due to weather, etc.

Note: There may be additional fees charged in order to attend these activities, as permitted by state law.

Non-sanctioned Events

Non-sanctioned events have not been approved by the school and will *not* be counted as a school day. Non-sanctioned events may be posted on the school's message board but not as "sticky" threads.

Families participating in both sanctioned and non-sanctioned events do so voluntarily and assume and accept all risks associated with their participation. Families participating in these events agree to release and hold harmless the school, its affiliates, directors, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from any and all liability in the event of an accident or incident in route to, during, and returning from, which is related to, arises out of, or is in any way connected with the non-sanctioned event. The school will not accept financial responsibility for any necessary emergency care and/or transportation for anyone attending a non-sanctioned event.

9 CONDUCT, DUE PROCESS, AND COMMUNICATION*

Connections Academy strictly prohibits any form of bullying/cyber bullying, harassment, hazing, or any other similarly destructive behaviors toward any member of the school community, by any member of the school community, in any school environment or at any school activity.

Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches who believe they or their student(s) may have been subjected to inappropriate behavior by anyone affiliated with their school should immediately contact the school leadership or the Connections Academy main support line at 800-382-6010 to report any concerns. See also Sections 9.2 and 9.5 of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

Caretakers and Learning Coaches, as well as students, are expected to abide by the Prohibited Behaviors policy in Section 9.2 of the School- Specific Handbook Supplement, and any other sections covering appropriate conduct and communication. Caretakers or Learning Coaches who engage in any prohibited behaviors, directed toward any member of the school community, may, as disciplinary action, have their access to Connexus suspended or terminated at the discretion of the school leader. Suspension or termination of Connexus access is the Connections equivalent of being banned from the school premises and all school activities. Therefore, Caretakers or Learning Coaches whose Connexus access has been suspended or terminated will not be permitted to contact the school staff at school, home, or other locations; to visit school premises; contact any Connections staff; or attend field trips or other school activities, until the disciplinary issue has been resolved and their Connexus access is restored. All communications with the school must therefore be conducted through the student, or through another Caretaker or Learning Coach responsible for that student.

The suspension or termination of a Caretaker or Learning Coach's access to Connexus may or may not impact the student's ability to continue to remain enrolled in and learning at his or her Connections school. The student's ability to continue will depend on the student's age, level of independence, and/or the availability of another Caretaker or Learning Coach for the student. If needed, the Caretaker or Learning Coach whose Connexus access is suspended or terminated may appoint another adult as the student's Designated Learning Coach by contacting the Board in writing to request the Designated Learning Coach form. If the school does not have a board, the Caretaker or Learning Coach should contact the School Leader, Director of Schools, or Authorizer (see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for grievance policy). Prior to the termination of the account, the Learning Coach or Caretaker will be notified via WebMail of the impending suspension or termination of their account, and will be given till the end of the next school day to complete the Designated Learning Coach Form, if needed.

The Caretaker whose Connexus access has been suspended or terminated may appeal this suspension to the school's Board in writing by sending an email or letter to the school Board president. Only written appeals will be considered. Board contact information can be found on the school's website. If the school does not have a board, the Caretaker or Learning Coach should contact the Director of Schools in writing (see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for grievance policy).

The school community includes but is not limited to teachers, administration, staff, Caretakers/Learning Coaches, students, volunteers, and school vendors.

9.1 Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco-Free School

Connections Academy is a drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free environment. The use of controlled substances, alcohol, and/or tobacco is prohibited at all face-to-face school events and activities such as but not limited to field trips, testing, and graduation ceremonies. This applies to all members of the school community including students and their families, teachers, staff, and visitors.

The use of tobacco, including smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, or snuff, or the possession of or use of any of the following by any member of the school community while on school premises or at a school event or activity as described above, will be considered a violation of this policy:

1. alcoholic beverage(s)
2. Illegal, controlled, and/or dangerous substances and/or narcotics (unless prescribed by a physician for medical purposes, and properly documented as such), or substances purported to be such. Illegal, dangerous or controlled substances and substances purported to be such include, but are not limited to, narcotics, amphetamines, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, barbiturates, prescription or non-prescription drugs of any nature and medications such as diet pills, caffeine pills, bath salts, and others.
3. drug paraphernalia

It shall also be a violation of this policy for any member of the school community to sell or distribute, or attempt to sell or distribute, tobacco products; e-cigarettes; drugs or drug paraphernalia; illegal, dangerous or controlled substances, or any substances purported to be such, while on school property or at school events or activities.

If a Connections student attends a school event or activity under the influence of or in possession of an illegal, dangerous, or controlled substance or alcohol, the student's Caretakers and local authorities will be notified. The student's Caretakers will be notified if a student is found to be in possession of or using tobacco products or e-cigarettes. Caretakers will be required to make arrangements for immediately removing the student from the school event or activity in such event.

Any non-student member of the school community who attends a school event or activity under the influence of or in possession of alcohol or illegal, dangerous, or controlled substances or substance purported to be such will be asked to remove themselves from the school event or activity. Local authorities may be notified at the discretion of the school leader depending on the nature of the violation. Any non-student member of the school community who attends a school event or activity and uses tobacco products or e-cigarettes will be informed of the school's tobacco-free policy for a first violation. If more than one violation occurs, further action may be taken by the school.

If a student is found to be engaged in communications arranging for the sale or exchange of alcohol or illegal, dangerous, or controlled substances or any substances purported to be such at a school event or activity, the student will be removed from the school event or activity and the school will contact both the student's Caretaker and local authorities to report this behavior. Any other member of the school community found to be engaged in communications arranging for the sale or exchange of alcohol or illegal, dangerous, or controlled substances or any substances purported to be such at a school event or activity will be removed from the school event or activity and the school will contact local authorities.

Students who fail to comply with this drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the School-Specific Handbook Supplement disciplinary policies. All other school community members in violation of this policy will be asked to leave the event or activity and/or will be reported to local authorities.

In all cases, this policy will be implemented in accordance with any applicable state laws. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.

9.2 Bullying and other Prohibited Behaviors*

Please refer to your School- Specific Handbook Supplement for your school's policy.

9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students*

Appropriate conduct is expected of all students at the school. Students are guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

9.4 Academic Honesty*

The school regards academic honesty as key to its mission and essential in the virtual environment. Students in all grade levels (K through 12) and their Caretakers are required to review the Honor Code at the beginning of each school year and indicate their agreement to abide by it. Teachers will discuss the Honor Code and its meaning with their students and the students' Caretaker(s) at the beginning of the year. It is expected that all students will adhere to the Honor Code throughout the year and all schoolwork submitted to meet course or class requirements represents the original work of the student.

In addition, students are expected to be proactive in ensuring they are adhering to the principles of academic honesty by:

- completing, and reviewing as needed, the Academic Honesty section of their Orientation
- agreeing to, and referring to as needed, the Connections Academy Honor Code
- using, in accordance with their school policy, tools provided in Connexus to 'self-check' for academic honesty (e.g. plagiarism-checking software).

Any form of academic dishonesty will cause a student to be subject to disciplinary action. The following principles are critical to maintaining academic honesty:

- Students must not submit work of any kind that is not their own work.
- Students must not plagiarize in any work (written, multimedia, oral, creative, etc.).
- Students must not solicit answers or post assessments, assignments, answers to assessments or assignments, or any other Connections Academy curricular materials on any media including social media or social sharing websites that can be seen by other students or other third parties, *unless specifically instructed do so as part of the curriculum (e.g. a discussion assessment)*.
- Students must not give or receive unauthorized assistance on assessments.
- Learning Coaches must not give assistance on assessments.
- Students must not present any forged document or signature to the school.
- Learning Coaches must not present any forged document or signature to the school.

Completing School Assessments

When completing assessments on the computer or on paper, students and Learning Coaches should follow these simple guidelines to ensure that assessments are meaningful, worthwhile, and completed in accordance with the principles of academic honesty:

- Students should complete all assessments **independently**, and without assistance from their Learning Coach, any other persons, or any external resources. If any support is required of the Learning Coach, the assessment instructions will clearly indicate this.
- Assessments are “closed-book.” They should be completed without the support of any outside resources such as textbooks, workbooks, lesson plans, dictionaries, the Internet, or the student’s Learning Coach or any other individuals. In the rare instances where assessments are not closed-book, the instructions will clearly specify that the student may use supporting materials. If you have any questions about what may or may not be appropriate for use during an assessment, contact your teacher.
- Skills Checks (in the lower grades) should be completed by the Learning Coach. These short assessments provide an opportunity for the Learning Coach to share with the teacher his or her observations about the student’s progress.
- **It is never appropriate for students or Learning Coaches to share with anyone, in any format, the contents of any Connections Academy assessments.**

9.5 Grievance Procedures for Caretakers*

Please see your School- Specific Handbook Supplement for your school Grievance policy.

9.6 Communication

9.6.1 Communication Systems

Connexus contains several unique and efficient mechanisms for families and school staff members to communicate with one other. Because Connexus is a closed system, no communication can be made to or from anybody outside of the system. Caretakers can control what, if any, of their student’s information is posted and accessible to others in the School Directory. To set or modify these options, Caretakers should go to their student’s SIF (Student Information Form) – School Directory Data View to adjust their student’s permissions at any time.

The following communications systems are described in detail in Connexus Help.

- School Directory
- WebMail
- Message Boards

- Virtual Library
- Teacher feedback on assessments
- Home Page Announcements
- LiveLesson Sessions
- Connexus “Feedback” link
- StarTrack Rating System

Note that the Directory includes names of students enrolled in other Connections Academy schools (in other states and locations), and therefore the student’s information would be available in the Directory to students and Learning Coaches in other Connections Academy schools. Caretakers may restrict access to Directory Information during the enrollment process. See the Third Party Access to Student Information section, below, for more details.

In situations where a student, Caretaker, and/or Learning Coach is deaf and/or hard of hearing, that individual may request an additional method or methods for communicating with teachers and other Connections staff outside of Connexus (e.g., instant messaging). Connections will determine **annually** what messaging tool(s) are approved for use in these situations. Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches should contact the school to discuss their situation and request approval to use an authorized additional communication tool(s). Connections will then assist families with the installation of the Connections-authorized additional communication tool(s). When so authorized by Connections, and when used in accordance with the terms agreed upon by the school and the Caretaker/Learning Coach, the use of the additional communication device(s) will not be considered a violation of the Connections Terms of Use policy. Connections Academy reserves the right to disallow and/or disable the use of the authorized alternative communication tool at any time if Connections deems that the tool(s) is being used inappropriately and/or not in accordance with the agreement between the Caretaker/Learning Coach and the school.

Learning Coaches, teachers, and students are advised that all messaging communication is archived and available for review by Connections at any time.

9.6.2 Communication Requirements

Both students and Learning Coaches are required to have regular synchronous communications with their teachers. Acceptable types of communication—and whether the contact is more often with the student or the Learning Coach—vary among the grade levels and by school.

Student and Teacher Communication

Connections Academy expects that most students will have daily contact with their teachers through a combination of phone calls, WebMail messages, LiveLesson sessions, face-to-face interaction, and the daily review of assessments via the electronic Grade Book. At a minimum, all students will interact synchronously (e.g., via phone, LiveLesson session, or face-to-face) with a teacher every two weeks so the teacher is able to monitor academic progress and verify student learning. Note that some schools require additional contact; check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for details.

9.7 Student Information Access

9.7.1 Collection and Release of Student Information by the School (FERPA)*

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) is a federal law that gives parents/legal guardians (referred to as “Caretakers by Connections Academy”) and students over eighteen (18) years of age, attending a post-secondary institution, and/or emancipated minors (Eligible Students) certain rights regarding the student’s educational records. These rights include the ability to review and correct educational records and the protection of a student’s educational records and “personally identifiable information” from unauthorized disclosure. For complete FERPA information, see Appendix 2, FERPA notification. See also the Release of Student Information and Educational Records to Third Parties below.

FERPA rights are extended to both the Caretaker and non-custodial parent/guardian unless the school is provided with a judicial court order (custody order, protective order etc.), state statute, or legally binding document that specifically revokes or restricts a non-custodial parent’s/guardian’s FERPA rights. If a state law and/or enforceable court order provides the noncustodial parent/guardian’s greater or more restrictive access than provided for by FERPA, that state law and/or court order will be followed.

Other statutes protecting students include the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (see Appendix 6, Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment Policy) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (“COPPA”) (See Appendix 4, Privacy Policy), as well as state law in the state in which the student is enrolled.

9.7.2 Parental Access to Teacher Qualification Information*

Families have access to basic background information about the school's teachers. This information, found in Connexus through the teacher's Teacher Profile Data View, includes teacher qualifications, experience, and photos.

9.7.3 Third Party Access to Student Information

FERPA provisions allow the school to disclose certain student information to third parties, such as other schools, *without the prior written consent of the Caretaker or Eligible Student*. This occurs in two situations. Directory Information and situations in which FERPA permits the school to release educational records without consent (see below). All other disclosure of student information to third parties requires the written consent of the Caretaker or Eligible Student.

Release of Educational Records without Consent: Directory Information

The school may release Directory Information (defined by Connections Academy as *student name, student WebMail address, state of residence, student telephone number, and student grade level*) to third parties as permitted by FERPA.

If the Caretaker or Eligible Student does **not** wish to have Directory Information released to third parties, s/he may prevent the release of this information by indicating so in the FERPA Directory Information section of the Student Information Form. If families do not make a selection, then the school may, without additional permission, disclose the Directory Information to third parties as permitted by FERPA.

Release of Educational Records without Consent: Legitimate Educational Interest

The school may provide a student's educational records to third parties in certain situations listed under FERPA. Examples include the transfer of educational records to the student's new school upon request from the new school, and the provision of educational records to school officials who possess a 'legitimate educational interest' in the student's records, and the provision of educational records to contracted parties providing special education related services. For more information on exceptions to the prior written consent rule, see Appendix 2, FERPA Notification.

Release of Student Records with Consent

With the exception of that information which FERPA and/or applicable state law or court order allows the school to release without consent, as noted above, the school *must* obtain written consent from the Caretaker or Eligible Student prior to releasing any educational record or personally identifiable information to any third party. Consent to release this information must be made in writing, be signed by the Caretaker or Eligible Student, and include the following information:

- A specific description of the information or record(s) to be released.
- The party or agency to which the information will be released and their address.
- The signature of the requestor, and the date of the request.

For more detailed information on FERPA, please see Appendix 2, [FERPA Notification](#).

9.7.4 School or Connections Use of Student Images, Recordings, and School Work

To help illustrate the school program and to celebrate student successes, Connections and/or the school may want to film, interview, and/or photograph students and their work (all collectively referred to as “Student Property”) to duplicate, broadcast, distribute, and/or display.

In order for Connections/the school to use Student Property, proper consent must be obtained through the *Media Consent and Release CA- Student Data View* in Connexus. This Data View is completed by the Caretaker/Learning Coach (or by the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor). Student Property may be used for the purposes and time frame stated in the Data View.

If the Caretaker or student prefers not to have Student Property used by Connections/the school for purposes other than the student’s academic program, this should be indicated in the *Media Consent and Release CA –Student Data View*.

The election on the Media Consent and Release Data View can be changed at any time. From the Connexus Caretaker Home Page, select the student’s  and go to the *Media Consent and Release CA- Student Data View*.

Clubs and Activities/Talent Networks: This *Media Consent and Release Data View* also applies to Student Property pertaining to Clubs and Activities (such as *The Monitor* School Newspaper, *Pens and Lens*, and others) and /or to the Talent Networks (Sports Talent Network, Visual and Performing Arts Talent Network, and Science and Technology Talent Network). An election (Yes or No), must be made in the *Media Consent and Release Data View* in order to participate in Clubs and Activities and/or the Talent Networks.

9.7.5 School or Connections Use of Learning Coach/Caretaker Images and Recordings

To help illustrate the school program and to celebrate successes, Connections and/or the school may want to film, interview, and/or photograph a Learning Coach/Caretaker (all collectively referred to as “Depiction”) to duplicate, broadcast, distribute, and/or display.

In order for Connections/the school to use any Depiction, proper consent must be obtained through the *Media Consent and Release CA- Learning Coach/CT Data View* in Connexus. This Data View is completed by the Caretaker/Learning Coach. Any Depiction may be used for the purposes and time frame stated in the Data View.

If the Caretaker/Learning Coach prefers **not** to have any Depiction used by Connections/the school, this should be indicated in the *Media Consent and Release CA- Learning Coach/CT Data View*.

The election on the *Media Consent and Release Data View* can be changed at any time. From the Caretaker Connexus home page, select the Learning Coach/Caretaker  and go to the *Media Consent and Release CA- Learning Coach/CT Data View*.

10 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

10.1 Use of School Educational Materials

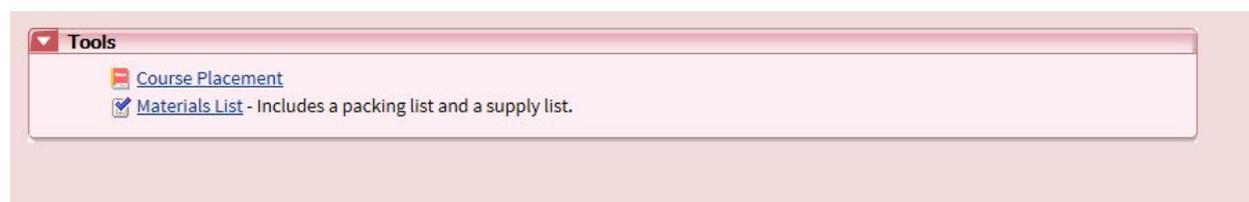
The school provides each student with the temporary use and possession of various educational materials. These materials are shipped to the verified home address of the student, and a Packing List (in the box of curriculum materials) lists all the items the student should have received. Families should check the contents of the curriculum box against the Packing List and **call Connections Academy Support Services at 800-382-6010 within seven (7) school days** of receipt if anything is missing or damaged. Caretakers are encouraged to keep the original packaging that materials were shipped in to facilitate their return at the end of the school year.

Note: The school may provide textbooks and/or materials which are in useable rather than new condition.

In addition to the Packing List, an online Materials List, customized to your student's courses, lists both the items included in the box and the additional materials you will be responsible for providing. To access the Materials List, select your student's name under My Household in Connexus. From the Tools area of the My Student page, select the Materials List link. Use the Materials List to see what materials are supplied to you and which materials you need to supply.

Purchase General Supplies

Though many of the items you need for school are supplied by your school, you may need to provide some general school supplies such as pens and pencils, highlighters, note cards, file folders, notebooks, a ruler, disposable items for science projects, etc. A Learning Coach may see this list by logging into Connexus and selecting their student's name. To the right under Tools there is a link to a Materials List that provides a list of materials for each course.



You will also need to be sure you have printer paper, a printer, and printer ink cartridges. Check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement to see exactly what supplies and equipment your school supplies as this varies from school to school.

Authorized Locations for School-Provided Materials

The only authorized location for any school-provided materials is the address to which the materials were shipped by the school. Any movement of materials to any other location must be specifically authorized by the school using the Location Transfer Request Form (contact the school leader for this form). Failure to obtain authorization may result in the repossession of, or invoicing for, the materials. Caretakers are responsible for providing the school with updated contact information (physical address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc.), including any validation for that contact information as required by the school, and keeping the information updated on the Student Information Form in Connexus. Note that because Connections may need to ship materials to the student, a P.O. box alone is not a sufficient mailing address; Caretakers must provide a physical address to which materials can be shipped.

Ownership of School-Provided Materials

All school educational materials remain the property of the school and/or the school's vendor partners. Further restrictions to the use of school educational materials are as follows:

- The resale or attempted resale of any educational materials constitutes theft and may subject the seller to invoicing and/or legal action.
- Refusal to return any educational materials constitutes theft and may result in invoicing and/or legal action.
- Any attempt to copy, reproduce, republish, download, post, broadcast, transmit, make available to the public, or otherwise use the educational materials in any way except as specifically directed by the school is not permitted.
- The adaptation, alteration, or creation of a derivative work from any school material is a violation of Connection Academy's Intellectual Property rights and is not permitted. Any use of school material except as specifically directed by the school requires prior written permission from the school or the owner of the materials.

All school educational materials, including WebMail messages, computers, and other technology, remain the property of the school and/or the school's vendor partners. The school or its vendor partner (as the case may be) reserves the right to, at any time and for any reason, either directly or through law enforcement, inspect educational materials and review any content or activity conducted on or through the use of school-provided educational materials, including WebMail, computers, and other technology.

Note: The use of the computer by anyone except the student for a purpose other than to support the student in his/her education program is strictly prohibited. Any violation of this policy may result in loss of the student's privilege to use school-provided technology. Any unauthorized use of a school-provided computer is subject to search without notice by the school, its vendor or law enforcement.

10.2 Returning School Educational Materials and Equipment

All school-provided **non-consumable** (identified as such on the packing and materials lists) materials and equipment must be returned to Connections Academy or to a location designated by Connections Academy for any of the following reasons:

- The school year has ended. Note: The school leader may permit the family to retain the materials for the summer in special cases, but under no circumstances can non-consumable materials be kept past August 1. If the family has indicated intent to return for the following school year, Connections Academy may not require the family to return equipment.
- The student is no longer enrolled in the school (for any reason).
- The student has an extended absence away from his or her residence as defined in the Attendance section.
- The materials are being repossessed due to a violation of the Parent/Legal Guardian (Caretaker) Acknowledgment or of the policies outlined in this Handbook.
- The student has completed the related courses and is being assigned to new courses requiring different materials.
- The school is upgrading or replacing the equipment.
- The student has had an approved placement change for a course.
- Equipment and/or materials were sent in error or do not match the packing list.

Note: If the student withdraws from the school after being enrolled in the school for less than 120 calendar days and/or has used less than 10 percent of the consumable materials, then **all materials** (both consumable and non-consumable) must be returned to the school.

Except when materials were sent in error, or in cases of missing or damaged equipment, Connections Academy will contact the Caretaker by phone or by mail to make arrangements for the return of equipment or materials. The Caretaker has seven (7) days from the receipt of the return instructions to return all requested materials and/or equipment. Caretakers should NOT initiate a return shipment until they have been contacted by Connections Academy and provided with instructions. Families who arrange return shipping on their own prior to being contacted by Connections Academy will not be reimbursed for shipping costs.

Except in the case of repossession, Connections Academy is responsible for the cost of return shipping as long as the Caretaker follows the return instructions and coordinates the return with Connections Academy. The Caretaker is responsible for being at home during the required period for a United Parcel Service (UPS) or Federal Express (FedEx) pickup or for transporting the equipment to an authorized UPS or FedEx center. The Caretaker will be responsible for the shipping cost of any items that were forgotten in a return shipment and/or were not properly packed and returned. To find a local, authorized UPS or FedEx shipping outlet, refer to the following websites:

- [UPS](https://www.ups.com/dropoff?loc=en_US) (https://www.ups.com/dropoff?loc=en_US)
- [FedEx](http://www.fedex.com/locate/index.html?locale=en_US#start) (http://www.fedex.com/locate/index.html?locale=en_US#start)

In all cases, Caretakers must maintain a copy of the UPS or FedEx return receipt. All non-consumable materials shall be returned in the same condition as delivered with the exception of normal wear and tear. Caretakers will be responsible for, and may be invoiced for, any damage to the materials.

Caretakers shall be responsible for keeping all packing materials provided by Connections Academy and returning all equipment in its original packaging. If the original packaging is not available, Caretakers must purchase replacement packaging at an authorized UPS or FedEx center at their own expense. Caretakers will be invoiced for any damages resulting from improper packaging and/or shipping procedures. If materials and/or equipment are not received by Connections Academy and the UPS or FedEx receipt bearing a valid tracking ID is not available, the Caretaker will be responsible for the cost of replacing any missing materials and/or equipment.

The failure to complete a timely return of any equipment or materials upon request shall constitute a theft and may result in invoicing or legal action as outlined in the Caretaker Due Process section of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

Important: Any computer files that need to be kept by the family should be extracted and any CD/DVD materials must be removed from computers before they are returned to Connections Academy. Neither Connections Academy nor the school has any responsibility for returning any CD/DVD materials returned in the computer, nor to maintain or restore any files.

Connections Academy equipment is **not** available for purchase.

Technology

A virtual school requires the use of technology to promote and support student learning. All school participants, including Caretakers, students, and staff, will use Connexus and the Internet to communicate and share information. In addition, the student, Caretaker and Learning Coach(es) must all be reachable by phone for required communications with teachers and other school staff.

The school's hardware and software requirements for accessing Connexus can be met by using the equipment provided by the school according to your school's specific agreement. If the school does not provide this equipment, families may use a personal computer, a computer in a public institution, or any other computer as long as the equipment used meets the Connections Academy specifications (see the Use of Personal Equipment section) and permits the student and/or Learning Coach to have access for a period of time adequate for completing the required lessons each day and throughout the year. Due to certain licensing restrictions, some of the additional software provided with the school computer may not be available for use on personal computers. Families with computers provided by Connections Academy may contact Technical Support if they have specific questions about the computer's software or hardware.

10.2.1 Use of Connexus

Regular use of Connexus is required in order to participate in the school. The school provides training on using Connexus, and users are required to complete this training. Anyone using Connexus must also comply with the [Terms of Use Policy](#) (Appendix 3). By using Connexus, users agree that they have read, understood, and will comply with these terms.

Connexus is generally available 24 hours a day, except for a regularly scheduled weekly maintenance window from 4:00–7:00 a.m. Eastern Time on Sunday. There may be other scheduled maintenance times when Connexus will not be available; these scheduled maintenance times will generally occur in the early morning or on weekends. Users will be notified in advance of any maintenance that is anticipated to disrupt service for an extended period of time.

Security and Privacy

Security and privacy are very important to maintaining the integrity of the information stored in Connexus and are taken very seriously at Connections Academy schools. Each Connexus user is responsible for keeping his or her user name and password confidential; this responsibility includes frequently changing the password to prevent unauthorized use. User names and passwords should not be provided to anyone at any time. Additionally, Learning Coaches are responsible for taking reasonable precautionary measures to ensure that students never obtain or use their Learning Coach’s passwords. Everyone using Connexus should be aware of the Privacy Policy, which is included as Appendix 4 of this Handbook, as well as on the log in page of Connexus. Connections Academy agrees that it will comply with the terms of this Privacy Policy.

Caretakers and students having difficulty using Connexus should be sure they have completed all available trainings and accessed the help resources available from their home pages. If, after completing the training and accessing the help resources, Caretakers and/or students are still unable to resolve their problems, they should consult their teachers for questions relating to the educational program or contact Support Services for any technical questions.

10.2.2 Technology Provided by Connections Academy*

Please see the Technology section of your school’s website or your School- Specific Handbook Supplement.

10.2.3 Use of Connections Academy Equipment and Installed Software

At some schools, households are provided with temporary use (during administration of state assessments, etc.) and possession of equipment and software provided by Connections Academy. All equipment and software provided to households shall at all times remain the property of Connections Academy.

School Equipment

Caretaker are responsible for confirming that any equipment provided by Connections Academy matches the Packing List. They must notify Connections Academy Support Services within seven (7) school days of receipt of equipment of any discrepancies between the Packing List and what was actually received, or if any equipment does not arrive in good working condition.

Though Connections Academy may provide used equipment for student use, any equipment provided will be in good working condition and should function in accordance with the requirements of the school's educational program. Used equipment is supplied with only Connections Academy-authorized software installed. All computer hard drives are reimaged and reconfigured prior to being shipped to the next user.

The only authorized location for any materials is the address to which the materials were shipped by Connections Academy. Any movement of materials to any other location within the state must be specifically authorized by Connections Academy, and stationary computer equipment (desktop computer and monitor) can never be taken out of the state. Laptops, where provided, may move temporarily with the student ***as long as the student has completed the Location Change Request Form, has been approved for the Location Change by the school leader, and the student remains actively enrolled in the school.*** Please contact your school leader to obtain a Location Transfer Request form if you expect to move (see section 2.5.7, Location Change).

Failure to obtain authorization can result in the repossession of, or invoicing for, the materials. Caretakers are responsible for providing the school with up-to-date contact information (address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc.), including any validation for that contact information as required by the school, and keeping the information updated on the Student Information Form in Connexus.

Any equipment provided by Connections Academy is to be used only for school purposes, although limited access to personal email using a personal ISP and web-based email account is permitted. However, the use of Microsoft® Outlook®, Microsoft Outlook® Express, or any other email program that is installed directly onto the computer ("unauthorized email") is not permitted.

The use of unauthorized email programs risks contaminating the Connections Academy computer with a virus, which could result in charges for repairs to the computer and additional penalties. Anyone using any unauthorized email programs risks permanently losing any email if the Connections Academy computer has to be restored, reimaged, or returned for repair. Connections Academy will not be responsible for loss of any such emails.

Software

All software settings, default configurations, and administrative privileges will be maintained at the original settings unless a change is authorized by Technical Support.

Connections Academy equipment may contain software that permits remote access to the equipment, permits its use to be monitored, or enables it to be shut down remotely. Personal information is not collected or maintained by Connections Academy, and any access is only for the purpose of making repairs, verifying acceptable use, or disabling equipment.

Each software application provided by Connections Academy must be used in accordance with the license and/or use agreement that accompanies that software application. Breaking a license agreement is an illegal act and is punishable by law. Under no circumstances can Caretakers or students redistribute any software provided to them by Connections Academy.

Modification of any equipment or software without Connections Academy's consent is strictly prohibited and may result in financial charges to the household for any required repairs.

The Technical Support representatives must retain an administrative account on each computer. Under no circumstance will Connections Academy provide administrator rights over the system configuration. Users who tamper with the administrative account access will forfeit their rights to the assistance provided by Support Services and may be required to return all Connections Academy computer equipment.

Software installation may also be required when adding approved external hardware. Approved external hardware includes, but is not limited to, printers, keyboards, mice, and USB devices. When purchasing these external hardware devices, families may contact Technical Support representatives, who may assist with installation if staff resources are available. The maintenance of such additional devices is solely the responsibility of the purchaser. In no case may any hardware be installed that requires the computer to be opened.

Educational software not provided by Connections Academy may be installed only if specifically authorized by Technical Support. The decision to permit the installation is solely determined by Technical Support. Caretakers will be responsible for the costs of any repairs required as a result of unauthorized software installation.

10.2.4 Use of Personal Equipment and Software*

Caretakers may use their own equipment and software as long as they meet the requirements detailed in this section. Connections Academy has no responsibility for providing any support for equipment or software that is not provided by Connections Academy.

If Caretakers do not have access to equipment and software necessary and the school does not provide it, their student(s) may be eligible to apply for a hardship scholarship.

Users can log into Connexus from different devices, such as a mobile phone, tablet, or desktop computer. Most devices are regularly tested to ensure accessibility and functionality.

For the best experience, Connections recommends that users update software and Internet browsers regularly on each device. The following desktop browsers are recommended to access Connexus:

- Internet Explorer
- Google Chrome
- Apple Safari

Headsets with microphones are provided where two-way audio use is required by Connections Academy.

Many of the courses available in Connexus require the use of Adobe® Flash® Player. Some courses also require the use of productivity software compatible with Microsoft® Word®, Excel®, and PowerPoint®. Some courses may have requirements in addition to what is indicated above; these requirements can be found in each course's Course Directions and Tips.

10.2.5 Use of the Internet*

Refer to your School- Specific Handbook Supplement for your school's internet policy.

Internet Safety

Users should be aware that **some material accessible through the Internet may contain items that are illegal, obscene, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. Some of this material may be harmful if accessed by minors.** In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet, which could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's Caretaker would be liable. Connections Academy believes that the benefits to Users from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for Users' collaboration, exceed the disadvantages. However, all Users must understand and practice acceptable and ethical use.

To help all users understand acceptable and ethical use, Connections Academy offers an *Internet Safety* course, which all Connections staff members are required to take. Connections strongly recommends that all Caretakers and Learning Coaches also take this course, which is available in the To Do section of the Caretaker and Learning Coach's Home Page. Caretakers and Learning Coaches may also review all Internet sites that their student(s) may visit in each course by selecting the "backpack" icon in each course. While Connections Academy has carefully screened these sites and believes they are appropriate for students, this tool makes it easy to review all links. Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches who are uncomfortable with any of the linked sites should contact their child's teacher to discuss alternatives.

Connections Academy also strongly recommends that Caretakers and Learning Coaches monitor their minor student's Internet time. To that end, Connections Academy will support and respect each family's right to decide how to manage access. To assist Caretakers in ensuring safe and appropriate use of the Internet, Connections Academy provides the following:

- An Internet Safety Course, which all Learning Coaches are urged to complete. A link to the course is provided on the Learning Coach Home Page at the beginning of the school year (or when the student first enrolls) and is always available to Learning Coaches through the Virtual Library.
- All computers provided by Connections Academy are configured with default security settings for their Internet browser. There are additional levels of security that can be added which will further help block offensive content. For more information please call Technical Support at 800-382-6010.

- All computers provided by Connections Academy have Internet filtering software installed. This software can be activated (or deactivated, once activated) upon request. **If you wish to activate the filtering software, call Technical Support at 800-382 6010.** Please be aware that Internet filtering software, while potentially very helpful, is imperfect and may block some educational or other appropriate content in addition to blocking potentially inappropriate or offensive content. .

Internet Requirements

Use of the Internet is a requirement for the Connections Academy program. Caretakers are responsible for arranging for Internet service to be available during the school year. Internet service must meet minimum standards for speed, availability, and compatibility to meet Connexus requirements. These minimum standards include the following:

- high-speed Internet service
- the use of a firewall that will permit access to Connexus.

Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

. Contact Support Services for any questions concerning the selection of ISPs. Connections Academy is not responsible for problems with or maintenance of Internet service accounts. The ISP should be contacted directly for help with these issues.

Use of the Internet may also result in the installation of malware if proper procedures are not followed. Caretakers may contact Support Services for assistance with configuring a computer to limit malware, which can include pop-up ads, spyware, and other inappropriate material. (See Appendix 5 for additional information concerning malware.)

*Internet Subsidy**

In some schools, Connections Academy provides payment of an Internet subsidy, but there must be at least one student enrolled in the school at the time of the payment. The Internet subsidy will be paid according to a payment schedule determined by Connections Academy. If a student enrolls after the start of the school year, the Internet subsidy will be prorated; however, due to the high cost of processing small payments, no prorated payments will be made for amounts less than \$5.00. Some students may be allowed a higher reimbursement for high-speed service if it is required by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or if they are receiving additional remediation services that require high-speed service. The school will notify any Caretakers who are eligible for additional reimbursement.

The Internet subsidy may be terminated by Connections Academy if the Caretaker(s) are in breach of the provisions of the Parent/Legal Guardian (Caretaker) Acknowledgment and/or the School Handbooks. As permitted by State law and/or regulation, if Connections Academy has invoiced a household for damage to or theft of a school-provided computer or any other school asset(s), Connections Academy may withhold payment of the Internet subsidy until the invoice is fully satisfied, and/or may apply the Internet subsidy towards payment of the outstanding invoice.

10.2.6 Compliance with Connexus Terms of Use

Any use of Connexus, Connections Academy equipment, or Internet using Connections Academy equipment must be in compliance with Connexus [Terms of Use](#), which is included in Appendix 3. Any violation of the Connexus Terms of Use while using Connections Academy computer equipment may result in warnings, usage restrictions, the loss of a computer or Internet subsidy (where provided by Connections Academy), confiscation of the equipment, expulsion from the school, as well as other disciplinary actions or legal proceedings. The determination as to whether a use is in violation of this policy and the penalties imposed are at the sole discretion of the school and are subject to the guidelines of the Caretaker Due Process section of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

10.2.7 Malfunction/Damage/Loss/Theft of School Equipment and/or Installed Software

Caretakers are solely liable for any loss, damage, or misuse of computer equipment provided by Connections Academy while in their possession or the possession of students or Learning Coaches.

Accidental Damage to Equipment

Where damage to the equipment and/or software is not intentional (accidental) but is caused by user negligence or carelessness, the school will limit Caretaker liability for repairs for the first instance to a maximum of \$250 plus the cost of shipping. The school will cover the portion of the cost over \$250 for the first incident.

For all subsequent accidental damage, the school will invoice the Caretakers for the full cost of the repair or replacement plus the cost of shipping.

Accidental damage to equipment includes *but is not limited to* damage caused by carelessness or negligence such as leaving equipment in an area where it is exposed to excessive heat or cold, damage to equipment caused by spills or liquid, dropping equipment, etc.

Non- Accidental Damage to Equipment

Where damage to the equipment and/or software is caused by a user and is not accidental or is the result of repeated failures to follow the school's policies and directions, the Caretakers will be invoiced for the full cost of the repair or replacement plus shipping.

Examples of such damage include, but are not limited to, vandalism or malicious destruction, opening the computer casing, installation/removal of internal hardware components, installation/removal of software without the school's permission, and/or manipulation of system BIOS settings. Caretakers may appeal a determination of damage as not being accidental by following the procedures in the Caretaker Grievance section.

Loss or Theft of Equipment

On the first occurrence, where there has been a loss or theft of Connections Academy equipment, Caretakers will be responsible for a maximum replacement charge of \$400, plus the cost of shipping a replacement, provided that the following information is submitted to the school:

- a copy of a filed police report or insurance loss report; and
- documentation from the insurance carrier confirming that no reimbursement is available under homeowner's or renter's policies or a notarized letter from the Caretaker indicating that they are not insured.

If this documentation is not provided—or if there are any subsequent incidents of loss or, theft—Caretakers will be responsible for the full replacement cost of any equipment and software.

Removal of Malware

Connections Academy will charge Caretakers for requests to remove malware that they have installed accidentally or intentionally on Connections Academy's equipment according to the following schedule:

- First incident: no charge.
- Second incident: twenty-five dollars (\$25).

- Third incident: fifty dollars (\$50).

Further offenses may provide grounds for repossession of the affected equipment, including any charges for return shipping. Refer to Appendix 5 in this Handbook for further information.

Notice to School

Caretakers must notify Connections Academy (via WebMail message or by calling Support Services) of any malfunction, loss, or damage to computer equipment from any cause whatsoever within seven (7) school days of the loss or occurrence of the damage. Caretakers must contact Technical Support for any and all repairs and must follow all instructions for repair as directed by the Technical Support representatives. Caretakers must not contact the manufacturer or a third party to repair the computer equipment unless instructed to do so by a Technical Support representative. If Caretakers do not comply with this policy and if there is any evidence of manufacturer or third party involvement, the school may void the damage limitation it offers for accidents and may invoice the Caretakers for the full cost of repair or replacement.

Payment of School Invoices

In the event Caretakers are invoiced for any repair by the school, payment will be due within five (5) days from the date of receipt of an invoice from Connections Academy. All outstanding invoices must be paid before additional repair services or a replacement computer can be provided. Failure to pay any outstanding invoice will be handled as provided for in the Grievance Policy for Caretakers section of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

10.2.8 Contacting Support Services

Support Services can be reached by calling 800-382-6010 and then selecting the appropriate menu selection for Support Services, by emailing support@connectionseducation.com, or by using the WebMail message feature in Connexus and sending a message to Support Services (included in the WebMail address book under Parent and Student Services).

The Support Services Team is available during the school's calendar year from 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Voicemail messages can be left for Support Services at any time.

The Support Services Team should be called for the following reasons:

- Equipment or materials supplied by Connections Academy do not match the items listed on the Packing List.

- A user cannot log in to Connexus.
- Equipment, software, or materials supplied by Connections Academy do not function or have been damaged or lost (be sure to check any training resources or the Online Help section of Connexus first).
- A request needs to be made to authorize the installation of hardware or software on equipment supplied by the school.
- More information is needed about obtaining an ISP or assistance is needed with creating ISP accounts for providers preinstalled on school equipment.

When contacting Support Services via email, WebMail message, or voicemail message, please clearly describe the issue and provide specific contact information for a Support Services representative to respond to your issue. When submitting a service request, families should provide the following information:

- Caretaker and student name
- phone number (including extension), email address, and state or school
- brief description of the problem (If contacting Support Services via email, include this information in the email subject line.)
- Issue Aware tracking ticket number if the issue is a continuation of an existing request (If contacting Support Services via email, include this information in the email subject line, in the voicemail message, or to the Support Services representative.)
- level of severity
- detailed description of the problem, including any steps required to reproduce the problem

The Support Services representatives' response times depend on the severity of the issue. Support Services strives to respond to all issues within 24 hours, though the response could be that more time is needed, depending on the complexity of the issue identified.

APPENDIX 1 – HONOR CODE

Connections Academy, a virtual school dedicated to student achievement at the highest level, expects academic honesty to be a core value for all its students, Caretakers, and staff. By making the choice to enroll in an alternative, study-at-home program, our students (and/or their Caretakers) have taken charge of their education and demonstrated a genuine desire to fulfill their academic potential.

Cheating, plagiarizing, or other acts of academic dishonesty are directly counter to the principles of academic excellence and harm most those students who engage in such activities—they cheat themselves of the opportunity to fully develop their intellectual abilities. Our Honor Code serves to reinforce our students' commitment to academic excellence, and all students in grades six and above must sign this Honor Code as part of the Connections Academy enrollment process.

As a Connections Academy student, I know that academic honesty is critical to my own success, as well as to the mission of my School. I also understand that an Honor Code is, by its nature, limited not only to those situations spelled out in the code, but includes the spirit of honesty and ethics implied by the written code. I agree that I will uphold not only the letter of this code but also its implied intent of ongoing commitment to full academic honesty.

I agree that I will ...

- never submit work of any kind that is not my own, nor ever give my work to other students to submit as their own.
- never post exam or quiz answers on the Internet or in other public places, nor use answers from posted exams or quizzes.
- never provide a forged document or signature to the School.
- never plagiarize in written, oral, or creative work.
- be well-informed about plagiarism and not use “lack of knowledge” as a reason for engaging in plagiarism.
- take assessments only after I have completed the lessons leading up to that test or quiz.
- never give or receive unauthorized assistance on assessments. I understand that all assessments are “closed-book” and that my Learning Coach shall not provide assistance in determining answers on assessments.

- read and understand the contents of both the *Student Handbook: General Portion* and my school's *Handbook Supplement*.
- adhere to all Connections Academy Student Conduct guidelines for proper use of the Internet and of all Connections Academy's equipment or materials provided to me.
- accept the consequences, including disciplinary action, of breaking this Honor Code. (More information on Discipline and Due Process for Students can be found in the *Handbook Supplement*).

My signature below confirms that I have read, and agree to abide by, the Connections Academy Honor Code.

Student Signature & Date

APPENDIX 2 – FERPA ANNUAL NOTIFICATION AND POLICY

Last Reviewed and Updated: October 12, 2015

This FERPA Annual Notification and Policy may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.

Connections Academy® schools (collectively referred to as “the School”) comply fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”).

Overview

FERPA is a Federal law that is administered by the Family Policy Compliance Office (Office) in the U.S. Department of Education (Department). 20 U.S.C. section 1232g; CFR Part 99. FERPA applies to educational agencies and institutions (e.g., schools) that receive funding under any program administered by the Department.

FERPA gives custodial and noncustodial parents alike certain rights with respect to their children's education records, unless a school is provided with evidence that there is a court order or State law that specifically provides to the contrary. Otherwise, both custodial and noncustodial parents have the right to:

1. Access and inspect their children's education records;

2. Consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain circumstances specified in the FERPA regulations, some of which are discussed below);
3. Seek to have the records amended; and
4. File a complaint with the Department.

When a student reaches 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, he or she becomes an “eligible student”, and all rights under FERPA transfer from the parent to the student. The term “education records” is defined as those records that contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

FERPA generally prohibits the improper disclosure of personally identifiable information derived from education records. Thus, information that an official obtained through personal knowledge or observation, or has heard orally from others, is not protected under FERPA. This remains applicable even if education records exist which contain that information, unless the official had an official role in making a determination that generated a protected education record.

Right To Inspect And Amend Educational Records

Under FERPA, a school must provide a parent, legal guardian or Eligible Student with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her child’s education records within 45 days following its receipt of a request. A school is required to provide a parent with copies of education records, or make other arrangements, if a failure to do so would effectively prevent the parent from obtaining access to the records.

Parents, legal guardians, and Eligible Students possess the right to request and receive from the School the following: (1) an explanation of information in the student’s education records; (2) a copy of all or part of the student’s education record; and (3) a list of the types and locations of the student’s education records collected, maintained, or utilized by the School.

A written request identifying the records to be inspected must be provided to the School. The school official will arrange for access and will notify the parent or Eligible Student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If copies are requested, the School may charge the requesting party reasonable copying costs.

Parents or Eligible Students requesting an amendment should complete the *FERPA Request to Amend Educational Record Form* available in the Virtual Library and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading and submit this to the School Principal. If the School decides not to amend the record, the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student shall be notified in writing and shall be required to file a Request for *FERPA Formal Hearing Form*, found in the Virtual Library under Forms to request and receive a records hearing review. At this time, additional information shall be provided to the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student regarding the hearing process procedures.

FERPA was intended to require only that schools conform to fair recordkeeping practices and not to override the accepted standards and procedures for making academic assessments, disciplinary ruling, or placement determinations. Thus, while FERPA affords parent the right to seek to amend education records which contain inaccurate information, this right cannot be used to challenge a grade, an opinion, or a substantive decision made by a school about a student.

Additionally, if FERPA's amendment procedures are not applicable to a parent, legal guardian or Eligible Student's request for amendment of education records, the school is not required under FERPA to hold a hearing in the matter.

Disclosure Without Consent

Parents or Eligible Students possess the right to prevent disclosure of educational records to third parties except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The following are examples, including but not limited to, instances that do not require the School to obtain prior written consent. A school may release education records to/for:

- School officials with legitimate educational interests. School officials include the following: persons employed by the School, whether paid or unpaid, administrator, supervisor, instructor, support staff or school Board of Directors members; authorizing bodies or districts, vendors employed by or under contract with the school, such as an attorney, auditor, consultant, etc.; or a parent, student or volunteer serving in an official school capacity. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the school.

- Other schools when a student graduates or transfers. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Upon receipt of the request, the school will make reasonable attempts to notify the parent or the Eligible Student of the request and the date the records were forwarded.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid
- Accrediting institutions.
- Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in the case of a health or safety emergency.
- Charter school authorizers and/or state and local authorities within a juvenile system pursuant to applicable state law.

Directory Information

FERPA permits the School to designate certain information contained in student educational records as Directory Information. Directory Information is generally defined as information not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released.

FERPA permits a School to disclose Directory Information for any purpose to third parties, unless the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student has exercised the right to opt-out of the release of their Directory Information. A parent, legal guardian or Eligible Student may opt-out of having his/her Directory Information released by completing the Authorization to Withhold Directory Information Form found in the Permissions Manager section of the Student Information Form (SIF). If refusal is requested, the Directory Information will not be disclosed except with the consent of the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student or as otherwise allowed by FERPA. This is an annual election.

The following information regarding students is considered Directory Information by the Connections Education LLC and its affiliated schools:

- student name
- student city of residency
- student webmail address
- student telephone number
- student grade level

If an opt-out form is not received, the School will assume that there is no objection to the release of the designated Directory Information.

Federal law requires schools receiving federal monies to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following three categories of Directory Information for high school students:

- student name
- student address
- student telephone number

However, the law affords parents/legal guardians the option to refuse disclosure of such information by completing the *Authorization to Withhold Directory Information Form*.

Disclosure With Consent

Written consent or a subpoena must be obtained prior to the release of personally identifiable information to any party not in the Disclosure without consent list or not categorized as Directory Information.

Prior to requesting consent, the School shall provide the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student a written request form that requires the following information:

- A specific description of the information or record to be released.
- The party or agency to which the information will be released and their address.
- The written request must be signed and dated by the requestor.

Prior to complying with a subpoena requesting the release of student education records, the school will notify the parent, guardian, or Eligible Student and provide seven (7) to ten (10) calendar days, depending on the situation, to quash such a subpoena.

Custody, Dependency And Post Secondary Course Records

FERPA rights are extended to both the custodial and noncustodial parent unless the School is provided with a judicial court order, state statute, or legally binding document that specifically revokes a noncustodial parent's FERPA rights.

In order for a parent or guardian to continue to have access to an Eligible Student's educational records, the parent or guardian has to demonstrate dependency as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code by producing the most recent tax return or completing the forms at the Family Compliance Office website (this does not apply to emancipated minors), or the student has to execute an *Authorization to Release Educational Records of Eligible Students to Parents/Legal Guardians Form*.

If a student takes a course at a postsecondary institution, the FERPA rights are accorded to the student for any such course. In order for Connections Education LLC, parents, or any third parties to get access to such educational records, the student is required to complete an *Authorization to Release Post-Secondary School Records Form*.

Right To File A Complaint

Parents, legal guardians, or Eligible Students who have concerns or questions should e-mail to legal@connectionseducation.com. Additionally, parents, legal guardians, or Eligible Students may file a complaint with the following:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901
Phone: 202-260-3887

APPENDIX 3 – CONNEXUS TERMS OF USE

These Terms of Use may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.

Last **Reviewed and Updated**: December 2, 2015.

Applicable To All Users

Acceptance of Terms

By using this Education Management System (“Connexus”), you (hereinafter referred to as the “User” or “Users”) agree to all terms, conditions, and notices contained or referenced in these Terms of Use (“Terms”). These Terms apply to your use of Connexus and all materials, information, software, content, products, and services that are owned or licensed by Connections Education LLC (“Connections”) and included in, or available through, Connexus, (“Connections Content”) as well as any content owned or licensed by a 3rd party content provider that is included in, or available through Connexus with that 3rd party’s permission (“3rd Party Content”) (Connections Content and 3rd Party Content collectively, “the Content”). If the User is a minor, he or she shall be the responsibility of his or her parent/guardian, who shall ensure that the User adheres to the Terms.

Any 3rd Party Content uploaded or otherwise made available by a 3rd Party is and remains the sole property of the 3rd Party or the 3rd Party licensors. By uploading or otherwise making available any 3rd Party Content, you automatically grant and/or warrant that the owner has granted Connections, the perpetual royalty-free, non-exclusive right and license to use, reproduce, publish, distribute, display, and transmit the 3rd Party Content through the channel into which you have uploaded or authorized Connections to upload the 3rd Party Content. You also permit any User of Connexus with access to that channel, subject to your restrictions, to access, view, store, and reproduce the 3rd Party Content to the same extent permitted herein. To the extent provided for in the specific terms of the governing agreement between Connections and 3rd Party, 3rd Party Content may be removed, obscured, altered or modified by the 3rd Party, subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein with respect to the use of Connexus.

Connections reserves the right to change these Terms at any time, effective upon posting the updated Terms on the Connexus log-in page. The most current version is always available by clicking on the Terms of Use link located at the bottom of the log-in page of Connexus.

Permitted Use

Connexus is to be used for the purpose of accessing the education program licensed by or for the benefit of the User(s). Connections grants the User the non-exclusive, non-transferable, limited license to access, visit, use, view, and print the Content, solely for the User’s own personal non-commercial use in connection with such education program, provided the User keeps intact all copyright and other proprietary notices. Use of the Content or materials for any purpose not expressly permitted in these Terms is prohibited.

Users may not (1) remove, obscure, or alter the Content in any way except as agreed to in writing by Connections, (2) use Connexus in any manner that could damage, disable, overburden, or impair any Connections server or the network(s) connected to any Connections server, or interfere with any other party's use and enjoyment of Connexus, 3) gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to any accounts, computer systems, or networks connected to any Connections server through hacking, password mining, or any other means, or 4) obtain or attempt to obtain any materials or information through any means not intentionally made available through Connexus.

Any use of Connexus for the following purposes is strictly prohibited. By using Connexus, you agree that you will NOT

- send, receive, or display pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit material, or any material harmful to minors
- impersonate any person or entity (through the use of their password or other means), including any employee or representative of Connections
- copy or distribute content included in Connexus (including postings on the Message Boards, WebMail messages, or curriculum materials, including answer keys) without the owner's permission
- solicit or collect information about the Users or members of this site, especially for the purpose of transmitting, or facilitating transmission of, unsolicited or bulk electronic email or communications
- use the school-provided communication services in connection with surveys, contests, pyramid schemes, chain letters, junk e-mail, spamming, or any duplicative or unsolicited messages (commercial or otherwise)
- upload files that contain viruses, Trojan horses, worms, time bombs, cancelbots, corrupted files, or any other similar software or programs that may damage the operation of another's computer or property
- solicit or collect personal information (including name, address, and phone number) from anyone under eighteen (18) years of age without verified parental consent
- display threatening or offensive material, including using swear words, offensive, vulgar, or obscene language
- display racist, prejudiced, or discriminatory messages or pictures
- violate any state or federal law

- reveal another User’s or a minor’s personal address, phone number, or similar information to others without their consent or verified parental consent.
- violate any copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other intellectual property laws or otherwise use intellectual property of another individual or entity without the owner’s permission—this includes providing links to and including other copyrighted or trademarked material from third parties in Connexus (including posting on the Message Boards or in WebMail messages) without permission as well as using any trademarks, service marks, or other marks in social media or other websites without the owner’s permission
- trespass in another’s folders, work, or files
- promote commercial activities except as agreed to in writing by Connections
- advertise products or services or engage in political lobbying
- defame, harass, insult, abuse, stalk, threaten, attack, or otherwise violate the legal rights (such as privacy and publicity) of another person or interfere with another person’s work, including, but not limited to, sending unwanted WebMail messages or e-mail
- provide material support or resources to (or conceal the nature, location, source, or ownership of material support or resources of) any organization(s) designated by the United States government as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Each User will have a user name and password (the “Log-in Information”) for the purpose of accessing Connexus and the Content. Users must keep all Log-in Information strictly confidential, and all Log-in Information may be used only by the assigned User. Users are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of all Log-in Information and for preventing access to Connexus and/or the Content by unauthorized persons using a User’s Log-in Information. Users are responsible for any and all activities that occur under their account. Users must notify Connections immediately of any unauthorized use of their account or any other breach of security. Notwithstanding the foregoing, certain employees of Connections will be permitted to “log in as” someone other than themselves, after receiving the approval of their supervisor and undergoing specific training.

Proprietary Rights

The User acknowledges and agrees that certain of the information available in Connexus is protected by various copyrights, trademarks, service marks, patents, trade secrets, or other intellectual property rights and laws and may only be used as permitted by law and with the permission of the owner. Except as expressly authorized by Connections, Users may not sell, license, rent, modify, distribute, copy, reproduce, transmit, publicly display, publicly perform, publish, adapt, edit, or create derivative works from or otherwise exploit the Content or features in Connexus in any form or medium. Users are fully responsible for their own use and for ensuring such use does not infringe on the rights of Connections or third parties. In addition to potential legal action, any unauthorized use including copying or reposting of Connections or third-party intellectual property may result in one or more of the following: termination of access to Connexus, school-based disciplinary action, and/or removal from the school, course offering or program of study.

Copyright Infringement

Content is owned or controlled by Connections or the third party credited as the provider of the Content, and its contents may not be copied, reproduced, distributed or modified in any way without the express written consent of Connections. If you have any copyright concerns about any materials posted on Connexus by others, please let us know. We comply with the provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act applicable to Internet service providers (17 U.S.C. 512). Unless otherwise stated in any specific DMCA designation provided by Connections, please provide us with written notice ("Notice") by contacting our Designated Agent at legal@connectionseducation.com.

To be effective, the Notice must include the following:

- A physical or electronic signature of the owner, or a person authorized to act on behalf of the owner, ("Complaining Party") of an exclusive right that is allegedly being infringed upon;
- Information reasonably sufficient to permit Connections to contact the Complaining Party, such as an address, telephone number, and if available, an electronic mail address;
- Identification of the allegedly infringing material on Connexus ("Infringing Material"), and information reasonably sufficient to permit Connections to locate such material on Connexus;

- Identification of the copyrighted work claimed to have been infringed upon ("Infringed Material"), or if multiple copyrighted works on Connexus are covered by a single Notice, a list of each copyrighted work claimed to have been infringed (please be specific as to which Infringing Material is infringing on which Infringed Material);
- A statement that the Complaining Party has a good faith belief that use of Infringing Material in the manner complained of is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law; and
- A statement that the information in the Notice is accurate, and under penalty of perjury, that the Complaining Party is the owner or is authorized to act on behalf of the owner of an exclusive right that is allegedly infringed.

Trademarks

Connexus contains trademarks and service marks of Connections and of third parties. These marks may only be used in accordance with Connections' [Trademark Usage Guidelines](#) within the Website Terms of Use on the public website. For permission to use the Connections name or logo or any Connections marks outside of the Trademark Usage Guidelines, contact legal@connectionseducation.com. Any use of any Connections marks that does not comply with the Trademark Usage Guidelines is strictly prohibited.

Links

Connexus may contain links to other websites or other resources that are provided for the User's convenience. Unless otherwise noted, these linked sites are not under the control of Connections and Connections is not responsible for the content available on third-party-linked sites. Connections makes no representations, warranties, or other commitments whatsoever about any third-party websites or third-party resources that may be referenced, accessible from, or linked to Connexus. A link to a website does not mean that Connections endorses the content, the website owner or use of such website. In addition, Connections is not a party to or responsible for any transactions the User may enter into with third parties, even if the User learns of such parties (or uses a link to such parties) from Connexus. Accordingly, the User acknowledges and agrees that Connections is not responsible for the availability of such external websites or resources, except where specifically contracted for, and is not responsible or liable for any content, services, products, or other materials on or available from those websites or resources.

Privacy

You agree that your use of Connexus is also subject to the [Privacy Policy](#), which is part of these Terms.

Export Control

Connections controls and operates Connexus from its headquarters in the United States and makes no representation that the Content is appropriate or available for use in other locations. If you use Connexus from other locations, you are responsible for compliance with applicable state and federal laws, including, but not limited to, export and import control laws and regulations of the United States. No software from this site may be downloaded or otherwise exported or re-exported (i) into (or to a national or resident of) any country to which the U.S. has embargoed goods; or (ii) to anyone on the U.S. Treasury Department's list of Specially Designated Nationals or the U.S. Commerce Department's Table of Deny Orders. By downloading or connecting to Connexus, you represent and warrant that you are not located in, under the control of, or a national or resident of any such country or on any such list

Warranty and Other Disclaimers

Connections is committed to ensuring the accuracy of all information included in Connexus, subject to the following limitations:

- Connections will use reasonable efforts to keep the information current and to ensure the accuracy or completeness of materials available through Connexus. However, materials available through Connexus are not promised or guaranteed to be correct, current, or complete, and may contain inaccuracies or typographical errors.
- The User acknowledges that Connections is not liable for the conduct of any party using Connexus or for any defamatory, offensive, infringing, or illegal materials contained on Connexus or in any Communication Service, and Connections reserves the right to correct any errors or omissions and remove any materials from Connexus at its sole discretion and without liability of any kind.

Disclaimer of Warranty

USE OF CONNEXUS OR ANY COMMUNICATION SERVICE IS AT THE USER'S SOLE RISK. ALL MATERIALS, INFORMATION, PRODUCTS, SOFTWARE, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED "AS IS," WITH NO WARRANTIES OR GUARANTEES WHATSOEVER. CONNECTIONS EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW ALL EXPRESS, IMPLIED, STATUTORY, AND OTHER WARRANTIES, GUARANTEES, OR REPRESENTATIONS, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT OF PROPRIETARY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS. WITHOUT LIMITATION, CONNECTIONS MAKES NO WARRANTIES OR GUARANTEES THAT CONNEXUS® WILL BE UNINTERRUPTED, TIMELY, SECURE, OR ERROR-FREE. THE USER UNDERSTANDS AND AGREES THAT IF THE USER DOWNLOADS OR OTHERWISE OBTAINS MATERIALS, INFORMATION, PRODUCTS, SOFTWARE, PROGRAMS, OR SERVICES, THE USER DOES SO AT THE USER'S OWN DISCRETION AND RISK AND THAT USER WILL BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGES THAT MAY RESULT, INCLUDING LOSS OF DATA OR DAMAGE TO THE USER'S COMPUTER SYSTEM. SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT ALLOW THE EXCLUSION OF WARRANTIES, SO THE ABOVE EXCLUSIONS MAY NOT APPLY TO THE USER.

Limitation of Liability

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL CONNECTIONS BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, PUNITIVE, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES THAT RESULT FROM THE USE OF OR INABILITY TO USE CONNEXUS OR ANY COMMUNICATION SERVICE. THIS LIMITATION APPLIES WHETHER THE ALLEGED LIABILITY IS BASED ON CONTRACT, TORT, NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, OR ANY OTHER BASIS, EVEN IF CONNECTIONS HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE. BECAUSE SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT ALLOW THE EXCLUSION OR LIMITATION OF INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, CONNECTIONS' LIABILITY IN SUCH JURISDICTIONS SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.

Release

THE USER HEREBY RELEASES AND FOREVER DISCHARGES CONNECTIONS, ITS AFFILIATES, EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, AGENTS, SUCCESSORS, AND ASSIGNS ("RELEASED PARTIES"), FROM ALL ACTIONS, CAUSES OF ACTION, INJURIES, CLAIMS, DAMAGES, COSTS, OR EXPENSES OF ANY KIND GROWING OUT OF OR RELATED TO THE USER OR USER'S MINOR CHILD(REN)'S USE OF CONNEXUS® OR ANY COMMUNICATION SERVICE. THE USER UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS IS A FULL AND COMPLETE RELEASE TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW OF ALL CLAIMS AND DAMAGES TO WHICH YOU OR YOUR MINOR CHILD(REN) MAY HAVE AS A RESULT OF HIS OR HER USE OF CONNEXUS® REGARDLESS OF THE SPECIFIC CAUSE THEREOF.

Indemnification

Upon request by Connections, the User agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Connections and its affiliates, employees, contractors, officers, directors, third-party content providers and licensors from all liabilities, claims, and expenses, including attorney's fees, which arise from the User's use or misuse of Connexus, Content, or any Communication Services. Connections reserves the right, at its own expense, to assume the exclusive defense and control of any matter otherwise subject to indemnification by the User, in which event the User will cooperate with Connections in asserting any available defenses.

Governing Law, Choice of Law, and Forum

The use of Connexus shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Maryland, excluding its conflicts of law rules. The User expressly agrees that the exclusive jurisdiction for any claim or action arising out of or relating to the User's use of Connexus shall be filed only in the state or federal courts located in the State of Maryland, and the User further agrees and submits to the exercise of personal jurisdiction of such courts for the purpose of litigating any such claim or action.

Severability and Integration

Except for other agreements signed by the User with Connections, these Terms constitute the entire agreement between the User and Connections with respect to use of Connexus. If any part of these Terms is held invalid or unenforceable, that portion shall be construed in a manner consistent with applicable law to reflect, as nearly as possible, the original intentions of the parties, and the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect.

Termination of Use

If the User violates these Terms, the User may be barred from future use of Connexus and/or subject to legal action. Cause for such suspension, termination and/or deletion shall include, but not be limited to, (a) breaches or violations of the Terms, or of other incorporated agreements or guidelines, (b) requests by law enforcement or other government agencies, (c) a request by you (self-initiated account deletions), (d) discontinuance or material modification of Connexus (or any part thereof), (e) unexpected technical or security issues or problems, (f) extended periods of inactivity, and/or (g) engagement by you in fraudulent or illegal activities. Termination of your account may include (x) removal of access to all offerings within Connexus, (y) deletion of your password and all related information, files and content associated with or inside your account (or any part thereof), and (z) barring of further use of Connexus. Further, you agree that all terminations for cause shall be made in Connection's sole discretion and that Connections shall not be liable to you or any third party for any termination of your account, or access to Connexus.

Additional Terms Applicable to the Connections Community of Schools, Including All Nexus Schools, Only

WebMail, Message Boards, and Other Communication Services

Connections offers an internal email system, Connections WebMail, through Connexus, as a service to certain Users in connection with those education programs that provide for webmail service. Webmail allows those Users to interact with other Webmail Users. Connections cannot guarantee the security of any information that such Users disclose in WebMail messages, and the Users do so at their own risk. Sent WebMail messages are accessible only to the author and recipients, as well as other authorized personnel for the purpose of maintaining system integrity and to ensure that Users are acting responsibly and legally as required by these Terms.

WebMail messages are also not guaranteed to be private and may be monitored. Messages relating to or in support of illegal or obscene activities or that otherwise violate these Terms may be reported to the appropriate authorities and may result in the loss of privileges, removal from the User's respective education programs, and/or legal action.

Connections also operates academic Message Boards located within Connexus to facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, and opinions between Users whose respective education program provides access to Message Boards. These Users may only use the Message Boards for structured clubs, activities, and other educational uses as specified by each school department and as described on each Message Board. The Message Boards contain contributions that represent only the opinions of their respective authors and do not express the opinions of Connections. Use of the Message Boards is subject to the rules governing their use as provided when accessing them (see also the Links section below).

In addition to the WebMail system and the Message Boards, Connections may from time to time offer chat areas and/or other message or communication functionality designed to enable Users to communicate with others (each a "Communication Service" and collectively "Communication Services"). The User agrees to use Communication Services only in compliance with these Terms and as described on each Communication Service to post, send, and receive messages and materials that are proper and, when applicable, related to the particular Communication Service.

Any information that you submit to be posted to a Message Board or other Communication Service will be disclosed and available to all Users of that Communication Service and is, therefore, no longer private. We cannot guarantee the security of such information that you disclose or communicate online in public areas, and you do so at your own risk. Connections does not control or endorse the content, messages, or information found in any Communication Service; therefore, Connections specifically disclaims any liability with regard to the Communication Services and any actions resulting from a User's participation in any Communication Services. All participants acknowledge that any reliance upon such content shall be at the sole risk of the person so relying.

Although Connections has no obligation to do so, Connections reserves the right (i) to monitor anything posted to a Message Board or other Communication Services or anything sent via Connections WebMail, and (ii) to remove anything which Connections considers offensive or otherwise in breach of these Terms or for any other reason as Connections deems necessary in its sole and absolute discretion. Connections also reserves the right at all times to disclose any information as Connections deems necessary to satisfy any disciplinary investigation, applicable law, regulation, legal process, or governmental request, or to edit, refuse to post, or to remove any information or materials, in whole or in part, at Connections' sole discretion.

Use of School Work, Interviews, Photographs, and Videos

Users may have the opportunity to provide material for inclusion in Connexus. This material may include the submission of work samples; participation in clubs; postings on the Message Boards; text or other submissions for newsletters, newspapers, and yearbooks; writing WebMail messages; etc. Users represent that they own and/or control all of the rights to User's own material and that the public use of such material will not violate or infringe on the rights of Connections or any third party.

For Users enrolled in schools that are managed by Connections, only, by providing this information, Users within the Connections community of schools grant to Connections and to their school, a license to edit, use, reproduce, publish, display, perform, adapt, modify, create derivative works of, distribute, have distributed, and promote the material in any form, anywhere, and for any purpose in perpetuity.

Users may also have the opportunity to participate in a LiveLesson session or view a previously recorded lesson. Connections cannot guarantee the security of any information disclosed by voice or text in a LiveLesson session. Any information that a User submits or is captured in a LiveLesson session may be disclosed and available to all Users and is, therefore, no longer private. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for any information disclosed by their minor children. Each recorded LiveLesson session is either the property of Connections or Connections has been provided permission for its use. Users agree that in exchange for being permitted to participate in a LiveLesson session, the Users have assigned all rights that the Users have in the Users' and the Users' minor child(ren)'s performance in the LiveLesson session to Connections. Some LiveLesson sessions may be recorded, and the User hereby agrees to the recording of LiveLesson sessions in which the User participates and the inclusion of any information, including personally identifiable information (written or verbal), provided by the User during the LiveLesson session.

APPENDIX 4 – PRIVACY POLICY

This Privacy Policy may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.

Last updated: October 13, 2015

Connections Education LLC and its affiliates ("Connections"), a part of the global learning company, Pearson, respects your privacy and has established this privacy policy ("Privacy Policy") to let you know how we collect, use, manage, share, and protect information that we may gather when you visit our website, the websites of our affiliated schools, or the websites for either of our Education Management Systems, Connexus® or ROADS® (collectively, the "Websites"), or contact us by phone or other means. This Privacy Policy applies to the Websites where this Privacy Policy is posted and to information we gather from you over the phone, via conventional mail or in person.

Connections reserves the right to change this Privacy Policy at any time. If we make any material changes to this policy, we will post any revised Privacy Policy on the Websites. The most current version is always available by clicking on the "Privacy Policy" link located at the bottom of the Websites' home page. Any changes to our Privacy Policy will become effective upon posting of the revised Privacy Policy. **By using any of the Websites, you agree to the terms of the Privacy Policy in effect at the time of use. If you do not agree to the terms and conditions of this Privacy Policy, please do not use any of the Websites.**

Information We Collect

We collect two types of information: (1) non-personally identifiable information that is routinely gathered as users navigate through a Website and (2) personally identifiable information voluntarily supplied by you.

Non-U.S. Users

The Websites are hosted and operated in the United States and are subject to United States law. Any personal information that you provide to us is being provided to us in the United States and will be hosted on United States servers. You consent to the transfer of your personal information to the United States in order to receive services from Connections. If you are accessing a Website from outside the United States, please be advised that United States law may not offer the same privacy protections as the law of your jurisdiction.

Non-Personally Identifiable Information

Each time you visit a Website, information is automatically gathered such as your IP address, domain name, the name of the page from which you entered the Website, which pages you view, and for how long you view them. This information is collected in order to improve the Website, remarketing and for trend analysis. As with most websites, we may use "cookies" to track usage, for marketing purposes and to improve your experience. A cookie is a text file that is placed on your hard disk by a Web page server. The cookies do not collect any personally identifiable information. Most web browsers automatically accept cookies, but you can usually modify your browser setting to decline cookies if you prefer. If, however, you choose to decline cookies, you may not be able to fully experience the interactive features of our Websites or have some of our services on the Websites function properly. Further information about cookies is available using the help function of your Internet browser.

We may use third-party cookies as part of remarketing activities we conduct with Google and/or other third-party vendors, to help provide you with relevant messaging as you use the Internet. As part of these remarketing activities, these third-party cookies may record your visits to our Websites and web sites visited prior. Such cookies can then be used to serve targeted messaging to you on other websites. You may choose to be exempt from the use of Google remarketing cookies at the [Google advertising privacy page](#). Alternatively, you may opt-out of remarketing on the Google network and similar networks at the [Network Advertising Initiative opt out page](#). Opting out will not prevent advertisements from being served to you on the Internet; it will only affect advertisements that utilize remarketing cookies to serve messaging on the specified networks. We are not responsible for the activities of other parties that may not comply with your opt-out requests.

Because non-personally identifiable information does not identify you, we reserve the right to use it for any purpose and to share it with third parties for any purpose. Please note that to the extent any non-personally identifiable information is combined with personally identifiable information, the combined information will be treated as personally identifiable information for as long as it is so combined.

Personally Identifiable Information

We may collect personally identifiable information you provide voluntarily when requesting information, catalogs, enrollment, or other materials or to satisfy other requests. This information may include your first and last name, postal address, email address, telephone number and the names, date(s) of birth and grade level(s) of your child(ren). We may also collect credit card information from you.

Connections uses personally identifiable information voluntarily supplied by you to fulfill requests for information, deliver services to you or for your school, or to carry out the transactions you or your school have requested. For example, if you register for a Connections Academy school using a Website, information will be collected about you and your child(ren) in order to process your registration. This information will be included in Connexus®. Enrollment information that is collected in this manner may be provided to school districts or other third parties as required by state law, federal law, and/or school operating procedures. Similarly, if you participate in a virtual learning program through your school and the school has contracted with Connections to utilize ROADS® in connection with the school's virtual learning program, personally identifiable information about you will be input into ROADS® by you and/or your school to facilitate the provision of virtual learning services to you.

Connections may also use personally identifiable information to communicate special messaging, new services, or upcoming events, to provide educational services to students and to otherwise support students, parents, legal guardians, and staff and/or your school with regard to matters such as academic progress, testing, attendance, customer service, or to share information with you related to legislative or regulatory initiatives that could potentially benefit or threaten virtual education in your state, to invite you to share your experience with virtual education, or in the event of an emergency. The information will be treated confidentially within Connections, in the same way that we protect other such confidential information.

We may share personally identifiable information within our affiliated companies and certain service providers. They will use this information to process transactions you have requested, provide customer service and inform you of products or services we offer that you may find useful. Our service providers may include consultants, vendors and companies that perform marketing services on our behalf. We require our service providers to protect your personally identifiable information and to use or disclose it only for the work they are performing for us, or as permitted by law.

Connexus® and ROADS® contain personally identifiable information that is maintained and accessible by third parties (such as service providers, content partners or vendors). These third parties are provided access to the minimum amount of information required to allow them to perform the tasks for which they have been engaged. Such third parties have agreed to maintain the confidentiality of such information and to use or disclose it only for the work they are performing for us, or as permitted by law. Additionally, Connexus® and ROADS® contain "student educational records" that will be protected by Connections in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and applicable state laws, and we will only retain and disclose educational records or provide access to them in compliance with applicable law.

If you do not want to receive information unrelated to your enrollment in the school via email from Connections, you can email us at unsubscribe@connectionseducation.com to be excluded from receiving emails from Connections. If you do not want to receive any further information from Connections you can also call us at 800-382-6010 ext. 5777 and ask to be removed from all of Connections' contact lists.

In the event that all or substantially all of Connections' assets are sold or transferred to another party, your personally identifiable information may be transferred to the acquiring entity. However, Connections will take steps to assure that the personally identifiable information is conveyed lawfully and in a manner consistent with the privacy policy under which it was collected.

Finally, we may disclose your personally identifiable information to third parties if we believe we are required to do so in order to comply with law (including court orders and subpoenas); to comply with lawful requests from law enforcement agencies or other governmental organizations; to enforce our Terms of Use; to protect the rights, privacy, safety, or property of Connections, our affiliated schools, our employees, or other users of the Websites; and/or to permit us to pursue available remedies or limit the damages that we may sustain. We otherwise exercise commercially reasonable care to not otherwise share or disclose the names of users or any other personally-identifying information with third-parties, except with your prior approval.

Message Boards/Discussion Threads

We may offer message boards or discussion threads through Connexus and ROADS®. Please be aware that anyone may read your postings on a message board or discussion thread. Furthermore, any information that you submit to be posted to a message board or discussion thread, including your Connexus or ROADS account information, will be disclosed and available to all users of that message board or discussion thread, and is therefore no longer private. We cannot guarantee the security of such information that you disclose or communicate online in public areas such as message boards and discussion threads, and you do so at your own risk.

Children Under 13

Connections is concerned about the safety and privacy of children online. We take reasonable efforts to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA).

The Websites are not intended to solicit information of any kind from children under the age of 13, and we do not and will not knowingly contact or collect personally identifiable information from children under 13. The only personal information we receive about children under the age of 13 is information provided by the parent or legal guardian or information provided by the child as part of that child's participation in a course or courses as part of that child's K - 12 education program. By enrolling a child in such course or courses, a parent is consenting to the collection of that information. The parent or legal guardian has the option to agree to the collection and use of the student's information without consenting to the disclosure of the information to third parties.

It is possible that by fraud or deception by others we may receive information pertaining to children under the age of 13. If we are notified of the receipt of information under such circumstances, once verified, we will promptly obtain parental or guardian consent, and in the absence of such consent will delete the information. If you want to notify us that we have inadvertently received information for a child under the age of 13, please do so by emailing us at legal@connectionseducation.com.

You can request to review, edit, or prohibit personally identifiable information of a child under the age of 13 from being used by Connections, its affiliates, schools, and vendors acting on behalf of Connections by making a request in writing to legal@connectionseducation.com. Please note that if you make a request to prohibit personally identifiable information being used by Connections, its affiliates, schools, and vendors acting on behalf of Connections, your child may no longer continue to be enrolled in Connections and this may terminate his or her participation in the Connections program.

For information on our use of information covered by COPPA please contact us at the following:

Connections Education LLC

1001 Fleet Street, 5th Floor

Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: 1-800-382-6010

Email: legal@connectionseducation.com

Security

Connections takes reasonable steps to safeguard the personally identifiable information you provide. As effective as our safeguards are, no security system is completely impenetrable, so we cannot guarantee the absolute security of our database and systems, nor can we guarantee that personally identifiable information you supply will not be intercepted while being transmitted to us over the Internet.

Links

The Websites contain links to other websites or other resources that are provided for your convenience. Such links, unless explicitly stated, are not endorsed by Connections. The information practices of those websites are not covered by this Privacy Policy or any other policies or terms applicable to the Websites. We recommend that you review any terms of use and privacy policies of any third party website linked to the Websites before providing any information to those websites or using their products and services.

California Privacy Policy

California's "Shine the Light" law provides California residents with the right to receive disclosures about any sharing of their personally identifiable information with third parties for use by the third party as part of their own marketing, and your choices with respect to such disclosures. Because we do not share your personal information with third parties for their own marketing use except as permitted by the Shine the Light law, we are exempt from having to meet this requirement; provided that in the event we elect to share personal information for such purposes in the future, we will secure your consent as required by the Shine the Light law. If you still wish to learn more about our compliance with this requirement, you may contact legal@connectionseducation.com or Connections Education LLC 1001 Fleet Street, 5th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202 Attn: Legal Department with "Request for California Privacy" in the subject line.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this Privacy Policy, please contact us by email at legal@connectionseducation.com. Please note that email communications will not necessarily be secure. Accordingly, you should not include sensitive information in your email correspondence with us.

APPENDIX 5 – INFORMATION ABOUT MALWARE AND NUISANCE SOFTWARE

There has been a dramatic increase in the existence of malicious and nuisance software that is often inadvertently installed on computer equipment as a result of using the Internet. This software exists as adware, spyware, and freeware—generally classified as “malware”—and can greatly impact the usability of the computer once infected. Malware is prevalent all over the Internet today, but it is still mainly generated from applications or sites that provide software or services that can be categorized as generally one of four types:

- **Peer-to-peer sites:** These sites offer free software that allows a user to connect to other users with the same software and share files.
- **Gaming and freeware sites:** These sites offer free games and tools that easily attract kids and encourage them to install the software.
- **Inappropriate sites:** Most of the malicious applications that get installed on the computer without the knowledge of the end user generally come from sites that are inappropriate in nature, such as pornographic sites.

- **Legitimate applications that have bundled free software:** Most software comes with additional free software that asks if you want to install it at the same time as the desired application. Many people just click “yes” instead of choosing not to install the unneeded bundled software, which often also includes access to pop-up ads.

Installation of malware and other nuisance software causes considerable problems in system speed and can even make a computer completely unusable. Removal takes considerably more time than fixing viruses and worms, which generally can be stopped by the security software already included on school equipment.

It is essential that the Terms and Conditions sections of all software, and particularly any free software, be reviewed closely. Many of them allow for the installation of other software or “tools” that can be a significant source of problems later on. Included below are common sets of terms that are clear warning signs that the User may be exposed to negative consequences. These are used by many of well-known software companies and service providers.

- **Example 1:** “[Company] values your anonymity and privacy. [Software name] does not contain or bundle malicious spyware. By clicking below, you will begin the installation of [Software name/description] software. By clicking below, you agree to the third-party end-user license agreement(s) set out below.”

Comment: This is designed to make the user feel comfortable but may expose the User to a variety of other unexpected consequences as a result of all of the other, often long and confusing license agreements.

- **Example 2:** “By installing the [Service], you understand and agree that the following changes may be made to your Internet Explorer browser and that the following functions may be performed by the [Service]: install a Search Toolbar in your browser that may, 1) block certain pop-up ads and pages; 2) display links to related websites and key words based on the information you view and the websites you visit; 3) store non-personally identifiable statistics of the websites you have visited; 4) redirect certain URLs including your browser default address bar search, DNS error page and Search Button page to or through the Service; and 5) automatically update the Service and install added features or functionality conveniently without your input or interaction unless you have chosen to be notified of such update in advance.”

Comment: This also indicates that they can install additional software without your permission.

- **Example 3:** “The web changes constantly and no technique can ever index all pages accessible on the web. As a result, [Company name] cannot guarantee the completeness or accuracy of the websites or URLs to which [Company name] Service link or refer.”

Comment: By not screening their website, any content, including content from pornographic sites, can be input as links or other forms of referrals.

Fixing problems caused by this type of software is very time-consuming. The time spent dealing with repeat offenders takes time away from responsible users and results in longer delays in helping them.

Please remember that it is essential that the activities of students be supervised. Students must be provided with clear guidelines for proper use of the Internet, including the fact that they should never accept any software download from the Internet without specific authorization from the Connections Academy Support Services team. The Support Services team can also provide assistance with security settings on your computer and can provide you with separate filtering software on request. Note that the hard disk drives of all school computers are completely erased prior to shipment to new families, and as a result, school computers do not come with any preinstalled malware or nuisance software. If any is found on a computer, it is a result of use by a family.

APPENDIX 6 – PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA) NOTIFICATION

Last Reviewed and Updated: May 19, 2013.

This Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notification (“PPRA Notice”) may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus®](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.

Description of Intent

The School follows a philosophy of continuous improvement and honest, objective data analysis. This philosophy requires well-planned and sometimes independent research efforts to determine the effectiveness of the School's programs and strategies. From time to time, the School will collect and analyze student performance data and various measures of effectiveness. In addition, families may be asked to participate in surveys or focus groups. Such research shall always be undertaken ensuring student privacy is protected and in compliance with the PPRA. For example, the names of the student, Learning Coach, and family members will not be revealed, and results will only be reported in the aggregate or by subgroupings of sufficient size so that anonymity of the participants is safeguarded.

Rights Afforded by the PPRA

The PPRA affords parents/legal guardians of minors certain rights regarding the School's conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and conduct of certain physical exams. These rights include the following:

- Requirement of parental consent prior to administering any U.S. Department of Education funded survey, analysis or evaluation that reveals information falling within the below categories ("Protected Information Survey"):
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes
 4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or clergy
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- The right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following:
 1. Any other Protected Information Survey, regardless of funding
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law

3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others
- The right to inspect, upon request and before administration or use, of the following:
 1. Protected Information Surveys of students;
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents or legal guardians to the student if the student is eighteen (18) years old or is an emancipated minor under state law or by court order.

Notification Procedures

The School will work to develop and adopt policies regarding these rights in consultation with parents/legal guardians. The School will also work to make arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of Protected Information Surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

The School will directly notify parents of these policies annually in this PPRA Notice or after any substantive changes. The School will also directly notify by U.S. mail, e-mail, or other reasonably available method parents/legal guardians of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys described in this PPRA Notice and will provide an opportunity for the parent(s) or legal guardians to opt students out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The School will make this notification to parents near the beginning of the school year if it has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents/legal guardians will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys covered by the PPRA and will be provided an opportunity to opt their students out of such activities and surveys. Parents or legal guardians will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. The following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution

- Administration of any Protected Information Survey funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination, or screening as described above in the Rights Afforded by the PPRA.

Reporting a Violation

Parents or legal guardians or students eighteen (18) years or older or emancipated minors who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint to the following:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901
Phone: 202-260-3887

APPENDIX 7 - CENTRALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES

In addition to the staff located at the school, students and Learning Coaches have access to the centralized Connections Academy support center. Connections Help, within Connexus, also provides families with support and guidance outside of the Support Services business hours for live assistance.

Enrollment Services

Call 800-382-6010 or send a WebMail message to your state's "Enrollment team" (Located under Enrollment in the WebMail address book) for questions related to the enrollment process, documents, or forms.

Academic Placement Services

Call 800-382-6010 or send a WebMail message to the appropriate school specific "Academic Placement Advisor" option (located under "Placement" in the WebMail address book) for problems or questions related to student course placement during the enrollment process. Once the student is enrolled and progressing through his or her courses, placement questions should be addressed to school staff.

Technical Support

Call 800-382-6010 and choose Option 5, or send a WebMail message to “Technical Support” for problems related to using Connexus and for hardware and software issues on Connections Academy-provided computer equipment.

General Information

Call 800-382-6010 and choose Option 3, or send a WebMail message to “General Information” (located under Parent and Student Services in the WebMail address book). General Information can be used to inquire about general Connections Academy questions, shipping, and nontechnical issues that are not covered by Enrollment, Placement, or Technical Support.

Parent and Student Services

The WebMail message addresses located under Parent and Student Services in the address book help make the connection between the home and school. They include services for Learning Coaches, as well as students, from addressing the needs of selected groups of students to changing student information.

All other types of questions should be directed to the school staff.