The Liberty School

WHERE DYSLEXIC & GIFTED STUDENTS SOAR

Parent/Guardian & Student Handbook

2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR • DURANGO, COLORADO

The Liberty School provides individualized, dynamic education for dyslexic, academically gifted, and twice-exceptional students.

Founding Purpose

A place of exciting discovery; a place where children are taught in ways that support success; a place where each child feels safe, valued, and confident; a place for students to reach their fullest potential academically, emotionally, and creatively.

Updated August 2026

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook describes the shared expectations, practices, and policies that support student learning and a healthy school community. It is designed to be durable: current staff names, detailed role assignments, annual calendars, and other items that may change during the year are maintained separately by the school.

The Liberty School is a small, relationship-centered independent school. Close relationships work best when they are supported by clear roles, direct communication, appropriate boundaries, consistent expectations, and a shared commitment to student growth.

If this handbook conflicts with a Board-approved policy, the signed enrollment agreement, or the law, those sources control. This handbook explains the school's current expectations and procedures. It does not promise a specific service, staffing assignment, placement, consequence, or outcome unless the enrollment agreement or the law requires it. The school may adjust a procedure when needed for student safety, student needs, legal requirements, or school operations. We will tell families about important changes.

Student-Created Values

Liberty's student-created values remain a touchstone for how we learn and live together:

- We are kind and compassionate to ourselves and others.
- We take quiet pride in our strengths.
- We act respectfully.
- We learn from our mistakes.
- We make things right when we hurt someone.
- We encourage each other.
- We are family and do not leave others out.

Core Values and the Liberty Way

These five core values, distilled from Liberty's student-created values, will be used alongside the Liberty Way as shared language for fostering a positive school culture:

1. Belonging
Everyone has a place here. We include, welcome, and stand up for one another.

2. Respect
We treat ourselves, others, and our environment with care and dignity.

3. Kindness
We choose empathy in our words and actions.

4. Responsibility
We own our choices and their impact.

5. Integrity
We do what is right, even when it is difficult or unseen.

Community Commitments

Adults and students put those values into practice through the following commitments:

- Kindness with accountability: care and high expectations belong together.
- Direct, respectful communication: we address concerns with the people best positioned to help.
- Curiosity before conclusions: we seek context, ask questions, and avoid assumptions.
- Repair after harm: mistakes are expected; responsibility and meaningful repair matter.
- Belonging without exclusion: each person is treated with dignity and given a fair opportunity to participate.
- Growth through support and effort: students are challenged appropriately and taught the tools they need to become increasingly independent.
- Healthy boundaries and shared responsibility: staff, students, and families each have distinct roles in supporting the school community.

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1. LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, AND SCHOOL ROLES

1.1 School Leadership

The Executive Director/Head of School leads The Liberty School. This role is responsible for educational quality, staff leadership, admissions, student experience, operations, finances, community engagement, and carrying out school policy. The Executive Director/Head of School reports to the Board of Trustees.

Other school responsibilities are assigned through Liberty's current staff structure. Because roles may change, this handbook does not list individual staff members. The school keeps a current contact list and will help families reach the right person.

1.2 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees oversees Liberty's mission, finances, and long-term direction. The Board hires, supports, and evaluates the Executive Director/Head of School. The Board does not supervise individual teachers or staff, manage routine student matters, or serve as the first step for academic, scheduling, discipline, or relationship concerns.

Families should follow the Parent/Guardian Communication and Concern Resolution process in Section 5. A concern about the Executive Director/Head of School may go to the Board Chair when the Executive Director/Head of School cannot fairly address it because of a conflict, a safety concern, or a serious legal or ethical issue.

2. NONDISCRIMINATION AND BELONGING

The Liberty School treats people with dignity and respect. The school does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, marital or family status, veteran or military status, or any other status protected by law.

This commitment applies to admissions, classes and programs, scholarships and financial aid, employment, school activities, and school opportunities. Because Liberty is a specialized independent school, admissions and continued enrollment may also depend on whether Liberty can safely and effectively meet a student's educational needs.

2.1 Reporting Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation

Students and parents/guardians should report discrimination, identity-based harassment, sexual harassment, or retaliation to a trusted staff member or directly to the Executive Director/Head of School. A person making a report does not have to confront the person involved before contacting school leadership.

If the concern involves the Executive Director/Head of School, or another conflict would make a fair review difficult, the concern may go to the Board Chair. Report immediate safety concerns to school leadership right away. Emergency services or other authorities may also need to be contacted.

The school will review reports promptly and fairly. The school may speak with the people involved, review records, use an outside investigator when needed, and put temporary safety or support steps in place while the review is underway.

No one may punish, threaten, or treat someone unfairly for making a good-faith report or taking part in a review. The school will protect privacy as much as possible, but it cannot promise complete confidentiality when information must be shared to investigate, protect safety, follow the law, or respond to the concern.

3. ENROLLMENT, REGISTRATION, AND RECORDS

3.1 Annual Registration

Before a student begins school, families must complete all required enrollment and registration materials. The specific annual checklist may change, but typically includes:

- signed enrollment and tuition agreements;
- emergency contacts and authorization for emergency care;
- current health and immunization documentation or valid exemption documentation;
- medication or individualized health forms when applicable;
- liability, field trip, technology, and media-related permissions as required;
- custody, guardianship, or court documents that affect school communication or release of the student; and
- any educational or diagnostic records reasonably needed to plan the student's program.

Families are responsible for promptly updating contact, health, custody, and emergency information when circumstances change.

3.2 Student Records and Confidentiality

The school keeps student and school records in ways that protect student and family privacy. Families may ask to see their child's records as allowed by school policy and law. The school will not share another student's private information, discipline, health information, or school records with other families.

4. SCHOOL DAY, ATTENDANCE, AND ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

4.1 Annual Calendar and School Hours

The current school calendar and schedule are the official source for school hours and dates. Unless the calendar says otherwise, school begins at 8:15 a.m. Monday dismissal is 12:40 p.m. Tuesday through Friday dismissal is 3:15 p.m. Drop-off is generally from 7:45 to 8:15 a.m.

Calendar dates and special schedules may change when circumstances require. The school will communicate changes through its designated communication channels.

4.2 Arrival and Dismissal

- Follow the school's current arrival and dismissal route and staff directions.
- Do not park in the roundabout during arrival or dismissal. Use designated parking when entering the building.
- Drive slowly and respectfully on Hocker, Sunnyside, Pleasant, and other neighborhood access streets, and follow any assigned traffic pattern.
- Families must notify the school at least 60 minutes in advance if someone other than an authorized parent/guardian will pick up a student.
- Students may not leave campus during the school day without school authorization and appropriate parent/guardian permission.

4.3 Attendance and Punctuality

Consistent attendance is especially important at Liberty because instruction is highly individualized and difficult to recreate outside the school day. At the same time, physical and mental health, family emergencies, religious observance, and necessary appointments may require absence.

Families should notify the school no later than 7:45 a.m. if a student will be absent, late, or leave early that day. If an unexpected change arises after 7:45 a.m., notify the school as soon as the need is known. If an attendance pattern begins to interfere with progress, the school will work with the family to understand the circumstances and develop an appropriate plan.

When work is missed, teachers will identify reasonable expectations and timelines. Older students will be supported in practicing self-advocacy, planning, and communication about missed work.

Repeated absences, tardiness, early departures, or missed attendance notices may lead to a family conference and a written attendance plan. If attendance keeps a student from taking part in Liberty's individualized program or repeatedly disrupts specialized scheduling and instruction, attendance may affect whether Liberty can continue to serve the student.

5. PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION AND CONCERN RESOLUTION

Strong family-school partnerships depend on timely, direct, and respectful communication focused on the student. This process helps families and staff solve concerns with the person best able to help while protecting student privacy and staff time.

5.1 Routine Communication

- The school uses its current official channels for newsletters, calendar updates, reminders, emergency notices, and individual communication. Platforms may change from year to year.
- Email or the school's designated platform is appropriate for non-urgent questions. Urgent same-day operational matters should be directed to the school office.
- Families should schedule a conversation when an issue is complex, sensitive, or likely to require more than a brief exchange.
- Staff generally aim to acknowledge messages that need a response within two school days. Complex concerns may take longer to review and answer.
- Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to routine messages during evenings, weekends, holidays, or school breaks.
- Students should not be placed in the role of carrying adult concerns, negotiating disputes between adults, or serving as the primary messenger for sensitive matters.

5.2 How to Raise a Concern

1. Start with the person closest to the issue. Academic, tutoring, classroom, homework, scheduling, or other day-to-day concerns should usually start with the staff member directly involved. Explain the concern, share the facts you know, and describe what you hope to understand or resolve.

2. Give the person time to respond and try to solve the issue. Many concerns can be resolved with more information, a small change, or a clear follow-up plan.

3. If the concern is not resolved, contact the Executive Director/Head of School or the administrator responsible for that area. School leadership may review the facts, speak with the people involved, hold a meeting, and decide next steps.

4. School leadership makes final routine school decisions. After reviewing the concern, the Executive Director/Head of School makes final administrative decisions about routine academics, staffing, scheduling, student support, and discipline, within the enrollment agreement, Board policy, and law.

5.3 When Direct Contact Is Not Appropriate

A family may go directly to school leadership when the concern involves immediate safety, suspected abuse or neglect, discrimination or harassment, a serious threat, a major privacy or legal concern, or another situation where direct contact with the person involved would not be appropriate.

This step-by-step concern process does not replace the school's required reporting or safety procedures for suspected abuse or neglect, discrimination or harassment, threats, or other immediate safety concerns.

A concern about the Executive Director/Head of School may go to the Board Chair when it involves a serious safety, legal, or ethical issue, or when the Executive Director/Head of School cannot fairly review it. The Board does not handle routine complaints about staff or students.

5.4 Communication Standards

- Address the issue with the person or role positioned to solve it rather than through other families, students, group texts, or social media.
- Use specific observations and questions rather than assumptions about intent.
- Respect confidentiality. The school may be unable to share details about another student, family, or employee even when those details are relevant to the school's response.
- Keep communication professional. Harassing, threatening, discriminatory, or abusive conduct toward students, staff, families, or volunteers is inconsistent with school expectations.
- No student or family will be punished or treated unfairly for raising a good-faith concern. The concern process may not be used to threaten, harass, or avoid normal school procedures.
- When helpful, the school may use a meeting led by a neutral school leader, a written follow-up plan, or a clear communication plan.

5.5 Shared Responsibility for a Workable Partnership

Families are important partners in student success. Parents/guardians are expected to support regular attendance, read school messages, share important information that affects the student's school experience, respect staff roles and boundaries, and use this concern process when problems arise. If an adult's conduct seriously disrupts school operations or safety, the school may limit how or when that person communicates with staff or comes on campus.

6. HEALTH, MEDICATION, ILLNESS, AND SAFETY

6.1 Health and Emergency Information

Families must provide accurate emergency contacts and share health information the school needs to support a student safely. If a student has a significant allergy, chronic health condition, seizure disorder, asthma, diabetes, or another condition that may require action at school, the family should work with the school to complete the needed health or emergency plan.

6.2 Medication at School

Prescription and over-the-counter medicine given at school must follow current Colorado requirements and school procedures. In general:

- the school must have written authorization from the parent/guardian and a written order from an authorized health care provider;
- medication must be in the original, properly labeled container and delivered to the school by a parent/guardian or other authorized adult unless an approved self-carry plan applies;
- medicine will be stored and given by authorized staff according to the written order; and
- a student may carry or take medicine on their own only when current law and the student's written school health plan allow it.

Families should never send loose or unlabeled medication to school.

6.3 Illness and Communicable Disease

Students should stay home when they are too sick to take part comfortably in school or when school or public-health guidance requires them to stay home. A student with a fever must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine before returning, unless current public-health guidance requires a longer time.

A student must stay home until at least 24 hours have passed since the most recent episode of vomiting or diarrhea. This 24-hour clock starts after the most recent episode, whether it happened at school, at home, or somewhere else. A new episode restarts the 24-hour period. Significant respiratory symptoms, a diagnosed communicable disease, or other symptoms may require a longer absence. The school may ask a parent/guardian to pick up a student who becomes ill during the day.

6.4 Immunization Documentation

Families must provide the immunization records or exemption forms required by current Colorado law and school procedures. State requirements may change from year to year, so the school will provide or point families to the current annual notice. A student with a valid exemption may still have to stay home during certain outbreaks or when public-health officials direct it.

6.5 Accidents and Emergency Response

The school has emergency procedures and trains designated staff in first aid and CPR. Staff may treat minor injuries at school. Families will be contacted promptly for a serious injury or illness. When needed, the school may call 911 or arrange emergency transportation based on the situation and the family's emergency authorization.

6.6 Security, Visitors, and Emergency Drills

School safety is a shared responsibility. The school building remains locked during the school day, and visitors must be admitted and follow current check-in procedures. The school conducts emergency drills and coordinates procedures with appropriate local responders. Families will receive instructions through the school's designated communication system when an emergency affects normal arrival, dismissal, or campus access.

6.7 Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting

Colorado law requires employees of public and private schools to report suspected child abuse or neglect. This is called mandatory reporting.

If a school employee knows or reasonably suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, that employee must report it to the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline or law enforcement within the time required by Colorado law, currently within 24 hours. Telling a supervisor or another school employee does not replace this duty.

The school will cooperate with child-protection and law-enforcement agencies as required. To protect a student or an investigation, the school may not always be able to notify a parent/guardian before or right after a report. The school's normal communication process does not change this reporting duty.

7. STUDENT LIFE: FOOD, DRESS, DEVICES, AND PRIVACY

7.1 Food and Water

Students should bring enough food and water to support learning throughout the day. Please send a labeled water bottle, a hearty morning snack, and lunch. Think of food as "brain fuel": aim for a balance of carbohydrates and protein and keep added sugar low. Energy drinks and sugary sodas are not allowed. Water is the preferred drink. Families must tell the school in writing about significant food allergies or dietary restrictions.

In addition to lunch, families are welcome to send breakfast for students to eat between 7:45 a.m. and the start of first period at 8:15 a.m. Because Liberty's lunch period is relatively late, families are encouraged to send a substantial snack for morning recess/snack time. Food sharing is discouraged because of allergies, health needs, and illness prevention. Event- or classroom-specific food restrictions may be communicated during the year.

7.2 Birthdays and Social Gatherings

Liberty is a small community, and social invitations can have an outsized impact. If a private party does not include the entire relevant student group, invitations, transportation coordination, and party discussion should take place outside school channels and away from campus dismissal. Families wishing to provide a school birthday treat should coordinate with the school in advance so allergies and other needs can be considered.

7.3 School Appropriate and Professional Dress

We value self-expression and have developed our dress code with the belief that it helps us create a professional, safe, and respectful learning environment. The dress code applies to students and staff and is in effect during school hours on campus, field trips, site visits, and other school-related activities. Appropriate attire for academic internships varies by workplace.

- No pictures or messages promoting discrimination, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual activity, profanity, violence, or gang-related themes.
- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses can be worn, but teachers may ask students to remove them during class.
- Teachers will let students know ahead of time when they will need to wear closed-toed shoes; otherwise, open-toed shoes are acceptable. Closed-toed shoes are required in the MakerSpace.

Students who are not meeting dress code expectations will be asked to remove or cover the item, change into clothing provided by the school, or have a parent/guardian bring something more appropriate from home.

Dress expectations will be addressed privately and respectfully whenever possible, with the goal of correcting the issue while minimizing unnecessary disruption to learning.

Professional Dress for Presentations, etc.: In addition to the guidelines above, students must wear a button-down shirt and tie, a shirt with a finished neck, sweater, or blouse; a nice pair of pants that are not in disrepair, a skirt, or a dress; and dress shoes (no sneakers and no excessively high heels). A useful question is: Would you wear this to a job interview?

Please tell an adult at school if paying for Professional Dress clothing is a hardship. We will find a way to help.

7.4 Personal Smart Devices

Personal devices can distract from learning and peer connection. Cell phones must be turned off and checked into the school's designated storage location for the school day unless a staff member gives permission to use one. Smartwatches and similar devices must have communication features turned off during the school day unless the school has approved an exception.

Parents/guardians who need to reach a student during the school day should contact the school office. In an emergency, students will be given access to appropriate communication. Personal laptops, tablets, gaming devices, or similar technology should not be brought to school unless specifically approved.

7.5 Images, Audio, Video, and Digital Sharing

Protecting privacy is everyone's responsibility. Students, parents/guardians, visitors, volunteers, and staff may not publicly post, share, or distribute photos, video, or audio taken at school or at school events when students or staff can be identified, unless the school has clearly approved the sharing.

A family's permission for the school to use an image does not automatically authorize other families or students to post that image. Event-specific guidance may be provided when photography or public sharing is permitted.

7.6 Bathrooms and Privacy

Student bathrooms are single-user, all-gender spaces. Students and adults are expected to respect privacy, use facilities appropriately, and return to learning promptly.

8. ACADEMIC PROGRAM, TUTORING, HOMEWORK, AND ASSESSMENT

8.1 Individualized Instruction

Liberty individualizes instruction. Students may be grouped by skill, readiness, and learning need rather than by age or grade alone. The school uses teaching methods supported by research, Colorado academic standards as useful reference points, and specialized curriculum chosen to be accessible, challenging, and engaging.

8.2 Orton-Gillingham Language Tutoring

One-on-one Orton-Gillingham language tutoring is a central part of Liberty's dyslexia program. The school assigns tutors after considering the student's instructional needs, student-tutor fit, staffing, scheduling, and the full academic program. Families may share useful information or preferences, but Liberty cannot guarantee a specific tutor or the same tutor from year to year.

8.3 Student Work Expectations

The expectations in this section apply across Liberty's full school program, including core academic classes, Orton-Gillingham tutoring, specials, electives, projects, and other instructional activities.

Specials and electives are important parts of a student's school program and carry the same basic expectations for participation, reasonable effort, respectful conduct, and completion of work assigned during those classes.

Liberty individualizes instruction and provides students with supports appropriate to their learning profiles, but individualized instruction does not mean that assigned work is optional. Students are expected to engage in learning, put forth reasonable effort, attempt assigned work, accept appropriate teacher support and redirection, and use available strategies and assistive tools.

Teachers will consider each student's ability, readiness, learning needs, and the demands of the assignment when setting expectations. Staff may provide extra structure, alternate formats, added explanation, breaks, or other supports so students can do meaningful work. These supports do not remove the student's responsibility to participate.

If a student repeatedly refuses to work or does not engage after support and intervention, the school may contact the family, require missed work to be completed outside the school day, remove the student from a class or activity for a period of time, or create a more formal academic or behavior support plan. Persistent work refusal or avoidance may affect continued enrollment if it prevents Liberty from delivering its program.

8.4 Homework and Missed Work

Homework is an important part of Liberty's academic program, but there is no fixed schoolwide formula for the type, frequency, or amount of homework that every student will receive. Because Liberty serves students across a broad range of ages, grade levels, abilities, and learning profiles, teachers determine homework expectations for their classes and students. Electives do not assign homework. Specials may occasionally include work outside the school day when the teacher determines that it is appropriate for the class or student.

When deciding the type and amount of homework, teachers will consider the purpose of the assignment, the student's ability and grade level, readiness and independence, the subject, current classwork, and the student's overall workload. Homework may include skill practice, reading, studying, unfinished or revised classwork, projects, preparation for upcoming lessons, or work that builds organization, time management, and independence.

Homework expectations may therefore vary by class and by student. Teachers will communicate recurring expectations, due dates, and significant changes. As students progress toward Junior High and high school, homework may become more frequent, complex, and independent in order to build the habits needed for a successful transition.

Students are expected to complete assigned homework by the due date and to contact the teacher when they are confused, significantly overwhelmed, or need clarification. Repeatedly missing homework may lead to added support, a family conference, or an academic or work-habits plan.

When a student is absent, the student will generally be expected to make up missed academic work. Teachers will decide which missed lessons and assignments are essential and will set a reasonable completion timeline based on the length and reason for the absence, the student's age and ability, and the type of work. An absence does not automatically remove responsibility for assigned or missed work.

As part of preparing students for high school, Junior High students are expected to take increasing responsibility for finding missed assignments, communicating with teachers, managing deadlines, and

completing make-up work. Students should practice asking for clarification or more time when they need it.

8.5 Junior High and High School Preparation

For school programming purposes, students who begin the school year in seventh or eighth grade are considered Junior High students. All other students are considered elementary students.

In Junior High, Liberty places increasing emphasis on preparing students for high school while continuing needed remediation and support. Junior High students may receive letter grades, rubrics, more detailed feedback, longer-term assignments, and more independent homework. They are also expected to practice self-advocacy, manage projects and presentations, use assistive technology well, meet deadlines, and take more responsibility for their schoolwork.

8.6 Assessment and Progress Monitoring

Liberty checks student learning throughout the year. Formal tests that compare student performance with national norms are given twice each school year to measure growth in language and mathematics. Language testing may include decoding, word recognition, reading fluency and comprehension, and spelling. Math testing may include concepts and communication, computation, and problem solving.

Beginning-of-year test results help the school place students in appropriate classes and choose starting points for tutoring and classroom instruction. Teachers and tutors also use regular classroom checks to see what students understand and what should come next.

Test results are only one part of the picture. No single score defines a student's ability, potential, or readiness. The school also considers classroom work, work habits, teacher observations, student reflection, and other information.

8.7 Reports and Parent/Guardian Conferences

Families receive written progress reports twice each school year. The reports summarize student growth, current areas of focus, and relevant test information. Parent/guardian conferences are also scheduled twice each year.

Conferences include the staff members most closely involved in the student's program. Families and staff discuss academic progress, social-emotional growth, assessment results, work habits, homework, strengths, concerns, and next steps. The school may schedule additional meetings when a student needs a coordinated support plan or when a significant concern arises.

8.8 Curriculum Night and Program Information

Each fall, Liberty holds Curriculum Night so families can learn more about their student's core classes and academic program. Teachers share the skills and concepts being taught, instructional approaches and materials, homework expectations, classroom routines, and the ways student assessment is used and interpreted. Time is provided for general questions.

Additional curriculum, program, and assessment information may be shared throughout the year as needed. Specific instructional resources and platforms may change as teachers select materials that best meet student and class needs.

8.9 Academic Integrity and Original Work

Students must submit work that honestly shows their own learning. They must also be truthful about the help, sources, collaboration, technology, and AI they used. Teachers will explain what kinds of collaboration, outside help, reference materials, technology, and AI are allowed for each assignment.

Academic-integrity concerns include, but are not limited to:

- copying another person's work or allowing one's own work to be copied;
- plagiarism: using another person's words, ideas, or work as one's own without giving credit;
- unauthorized collaboration, notes, resources, or outside assistance;
- making up or changing sources, citations, data, whether work was completed, or who created the work;
- cheating on tests, quizzes, or other assessments; and
- using generative AI or other technology in a way the teacher has not authorized.

If it is unclear who created the work, how much a student understands, or what help was used, a teacher may ask the student to explain, revise, reproduce, or recreate the work. The school will consider the student's age and understanding, what happened, how serious it was, and whether there is a pattern.

Possible consequences include a replacement assignment; revising or recreating work; reduced or lost credit when appropriate; family contact; an academic-integrity or work-habits plan; limits on technology or AI use; and stronger consequences for repeated, deliberate, or serious violations. Persistent academic-integrity problems may also affect continued enrollment if they prevent the school from delivering its program.

9. RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

9.1 School Technology

School technology is provided for learning and is a privilege. Students must use devices, accounts, networks, software, and internet access only for approved school purposes. Students must protect passwords and equipment, respect privacy and copyright, and follow staff directions. Misuse may lead to limits on technology access and other appropriate consequences.

The school may monitor, filter, or review activity on school-owned devices, systems, and accounts to support learning and safety.

9.2 Generative Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI can help with accessibility, brainstorming, revision, organization, and learning when a teacher allows it and the student uses it openly. AI can also do thinking that the student is expected to practice. For that reason, Liberty requires teacher permission and expects AI use to match the student's age and learning needs.

- Students may use generative AI only when a teacher explicitly authorizes it for the task.
- Unless the teacher states otherwise, the student's original thinking and work must come first.
- Students must tell the teacher when AI was used in a meaningful way and keep drafts, notes, or version history when asked.

- AI may not be used to avoid assigned reading, writing, problem-solving, reflection, or other learning the student is expected to perform.
- Students may not enter private information into public AI tools. This includes names or other identifying information, health information, diagnostic information, or other sensitive details.
- Students must use school-approved tools and accounts when the school provides them.
- A teacher may require a student to explain, revise, or recreate work when authorship or understanding is unclear.
- AI-detection software may be considered, but it will not be treated as proof by itself.

Using AI without permission, or hiding how AI was used, is an academic-integrity concern. A student may have to explain, revise, or recreate work, complete a replacement assignment, or lose AI access for a period of time. Repeated or deliberate misuse may lead to a family conference, an academic or behavior plan, suspension, or other consequences based on the seriousness and pattern of the behavior. Students are responsible for the accuracy, quality, and authorship of the work they submit.

10. STUDENT CULTURE, BEHAVIOR, AND SUPPORT

Liberty's culture depends on both belonging and accountability. Students come to school with different learning needs, self-regulation needs, experiences, and strengths. Staff work to understand behavior and provide support while keeping clear limits that protect safety, learning, and other people's rights.

10.1 Core Student Expectations

- Treat students, staff, volunteers, visitors, and property with respect.
- Participate in learning and put forth reasonable effort.
- Accept appropriate help, redirection, and support.
- Follow reasonable safety and instructional directions.
- Use language and behavior that support belonging rather than humiliation or exclusion.
- Take responsibility for mistakes and participate in repair when harm occurs.

10.2 When a Student Is Struggling

Staff first try to understand what is making the situation hard and what support may help. Depending on the situation, staff may use a private conversation, movement or regulation break, a change in task or setting, problem-solving, a conversation focused on repair, temporary removal from an activity, family contact, a written support plan, or a team meeting.

A student who cannot return to safe and productive participation after reasonable supports may need to leave school for the rest of the day. This is a safety and support decision. It is not an automatic consequence for frustration or difficulty related to a disability.

If a student repeatedly refuses to participate, seriously disrupts learning, acts aggressively, or shows serious disrespect, the school will document the pattern and contact the family. The school may create a formal support or behavior plan. If the problem continues, the student may be suspended, placed on leave, or not invited to continue at Liberty. The school will consider what happened, how serious and frequent it was, the student's needs, supports already tried, and whether Liberty can continue to provide a safe and effective program.

10.3 Restorative and Developmental Approach

Consequences are meant to teach, protect, and repair harm, not to shame a student. A student may be asked to reflect, make amends, practice a better response, repair damaged property or trust, complete missed learning, or follow a plan for returning to class or school. Serious behavior may still lead to immediate restrictions, suspension, or dismissal.

11. BULLYING, HARASSMENT, THREATS, DRUGS, AND WEAPONS

11.1 Bullying, Harassment, and Aggression

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, threats, and physical or verbal aggression are not allowed and will be addressed promptly. Not every conflict, disagreement, unkind comment, or peer problem is bullying. The school will look at what happened, whether it is repeated, whether there is a power imbalance, the impact on others, and any safety concerns. Serious or repeated behavior may lead to a support plan, limits on activities, suspension, or dismissal.

Students should report concerns to a trusted adult. Parents/guardians should report serious concerns through the communication process in Section 5. The school will gather the facts, protect privacy as much as possible, and respond based on the needs and safety of the students involved.

11.2 Weapons, Alcohol, Nicotine/Vaping, Drugs, and Unauthorized Substances

Weapons, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, vaping devices or products, cannabis or marijuana, illegal drugs, unauthorized controlled substances, and the misuse or distribution of medicine are not allowed on campus or at school-sponsored activities. Possession, use, or distribution may lead to immediate removal from the activity or campus and may lead to suspension or dismissal. The school may take a prohibited item for safety and may contact a parent/guardian, law enforcement, emergency services, or other authorities when needed.

11.3 Threat Assessment and Immediate Safety

The school will take seriously any statement or behavior that suggests self-harm, harm to others, a weapon, or another serious safety risk. The school will respond using its safety procedures. Families are expected to cooperate with reasonable safety plans and, when needed, an evaluation by an outside professional before the student returns to campus.

12. FIELD TRIPS, VOLUNTEERS, ANIMALS, AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

12.1 Field Trips

Field trips and community-based learning are important parts of Liberty's program. Families must complete required permissions. The school will provide advance notice of significant trips and may request payment for unusual or optional costs.

Students must follow staff directions and safety rules off campus and represent Liberty respectfully. If a student's behavior creates a safety risk that staff cannot manage on a particular outing, the student may not participate and the school will provide an alternate learning plan when possible. Unsafe or

seriously disruptive behavior during an outing may also limit participation in future outings until the school believes the student can participate safely.

Students participating in off-campus Liberty programming will return to school with the group and be picked up from campus unless prior arrangements are made with the school no later than the beginning of the outing.

12.2 Parent/Guardian Volunteering

Liberty asks each family to contribute at least 10 hours of volunteer service during the school year when circumstances allow. Opportunities may include events, property projects, field trips, office support, community outreach, and other school needs. Volunteer roles change throughout the year. Families who are interested in offering additional volunteer time are encouraged to let the school know so we can connect their interests and skills with current needs.

Volunteers must follow staff directions, protect private information, respect student privacy, and complete any screening or training required for the role. Volunteering does not give a parent/guardian authority over staff or students outside the assigned volunteer role.

12.3 Animals on Campus

Animals may be on campus only with school approval. Families and visitors should not bring pets to school without permission. Approved animals must be managed in ways that protect safety, cleanliness, allergies, and learning. The school will allow service animals when required by law.

12.4 Community Events

School expectations for respectful conduct, student privacy, safety, and appropriate supervision apply at school-sponsored events whether they occur on or off campus.

13. TUITION, FINANCIAL AID, AND TAX INFORMATION

13.1 Tuition and Fees

The signed enrollment and tuition agreement sets the rules for tuition, fees, payment schedules, withdrawal, and refunds. Families should review it carefully. If that agreement and this handbook say different things about a financial matter, the signed agreement controls.

Technology, supply, activity, or other fees may be used to support student devices, software, assessments, instructional materials, supplies, trips, or program costs as described in current enrollment materials.

13.2 Financial Aid

Liberty offers need-based financial aid and may also work with outside scholarship programs when funding is available. Families must apply each year. Awards depend on available funds and current school policy. The school keeps family financial information private.

13.3 Potential Medical Expense Tax Treatment

Some families may be able to count certain tuition or tutoring costs as a medical expense under federal tax rules when the student has a qualifying learning disability and the family meets the required conditions. Each family's situation is different, and tax rules can change.

The Liberty School cannot give tax or legal advice and cannot promise that any expense is deductible. Families should review the current IRS Publication 502 and speak with a qualified tax professional. The school can provide factual information about a student's enrollment and Liberty's educational program when reasonably requested.

14. TRANSITION READINESS AND CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

14.1 Transition Readiness

Liberty's goal is not only to strengthen academic skills. We also want students to become more independent and ready to succeed in their next school when the time is right. Transition planning is individualized and uses several kinds of information rather than one score or cutoff.

Factors may include:

- reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics growth relative to the demands of the next setting;
- ability to use assistive technology effectively and appropriately;
- executive-function skills, including planning, organization, sustained attention, getting started on tasks, and time management;
- self-awareness and emerging self-advocacy;
- ability to manage longer or less-supported assignments;
- social-emotional readiness, resilience, and willingness to seek help; and
- student and family goals, next-school expectations, and available supports.

The school will discuss transition planning with families in advance and can help identify information that may be useful to the receiving school.

14.2 Continued Enrollment and Program Fit

Liberty regularly considers whether its program can continue to meet each student's needs. Continued enrollment depends on Liberty's ability to provide a safe and effective program that fits its mission, and on the student and family taking part in a workable school partnership. When concerns arise, the school will usually explain the concern, identify needed supports or expectations, and give a reasonable opportunity for improvement. Serious safety concerns or misconduct may require faster action.

15. HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND ANNUAL UPDATES

Families are expected to review this handbook with their student in a way that fits the student's age and understanding, and to follow the policies and expectations that apply to them. The school may ask families to confirm electronically that they received the handbook.

Some details change from year to year, including staff assignments, communication platforms, calendars, event dates, contact information, fees, health notices, and operating procedures. The

school keeps those details outside this handbook so they can stay current. Families are responsible for reading school messages that update them.

Questions about the handbook should be directed to school leadership through the communication process described in Section 5.

PARENT/GUARDIAN & STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

2026-2027 School Year

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed The Liberty School Parent/Guardian & Student Handbook for the 2026-2027 school year. I understand that the handbook describes the expectations, policies, and procedures that support student learning, safety, and a positive school culture.

I understand the importance of the Liberty School Core Values and the Liberty Way and agree to support the school's expectations for respectful communication, student attendance, behavior, technology use, safety, and family-school partnership.

I understand that some details and procedures may change during the school year and that the school will tell families about important updates. I also understand that if this handbook conflicts with a Board-approved policy, the signed enrollment agreement, or the law, those sources control. The handbook explains current expectations and procedures but does not promise a specific service, staffing assignment, placement, consequence, or outcome unless the enrollment agreement or the law requires it. The school may adjust a procedure when needed for student safety, student needs, legal requirements, or school operations.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the handbook and understand that future questions or concerns should be raised through the Parent/Guardian Communication and Concern Resolution process described in Section 5.

Student Name (print): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Second Parent/Guardian Name (print, if applicable): _____

Second Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____