

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026-2027



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I. HANDBOOK PURPOSE

This handbook is intended to promote consistent and fair treatment of all students in an atmosphere of open communication, self-discipline, and clearly understood rules and regulations. To the extent that there is any conflict between this handbook and an official policy adopted by the Rochester Beacon Academy Board of Directors ("Board"), the Board's policies control and will be followed. Additional information about the policies adopted by the Board are available online at www.rochesterbeaconacademy.org.

II. SCHOOL HISTORY, MISSION, AND VISION

Rochester Beacon Academy ("RBA" or "School") was **founded** by a group of parents and educators who wanted another option for children in the Rochester area; one that honored different ways of learning and diverse minds. They also wanted the school to be one where their children could feel welcomed and safe. They were awarded Charter School status in January of 2014, and opened their doors to students in August of 2015.

MISSION: RBA equitably meets the unique needs of students by inspiring integrity, cultivating compassion, and practicing perseverance.

VISION: RBA will welcome all students with open arms, transforming them into confident, resilient adults and preparing them to be leaders in their community.

III. SCHOOL REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

A. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

It is important that each student does their own assignments and tests to maximize learning and to get true evaluations of their potential. If academic dishonesty occurs, the school and teachers must take disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes copying answers off another's work, claiming someone else's work as your own, using AI technology to complete your assignment, and having someone else complete your work for you (does not include accommodations written into an IEP). Teachers will award no credit for assignments and/or tests where dishonesty is indicated. Repeated cheating offenses will be referred to the Executive Director or designee. Parents will be contacted when this occurs.

B. ADMISSIONS

RBA is a Minnesota Public Charter School whose authorizer is The Minnesota Guild. Any student who lives in the State of Minnesota may enroll, consistent with applicable policies and law. The Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.11(b) read: A charter school must enroll an eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils must be accepted by lottery (Policy #509). A charter school may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability. For more information on RBA's Equal Education Opportunity

policy, please see Policy #102 on our website. RBA provides a free public education, compliant with all Federal and State Education Standards.

C. ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND TOBACCO

RBA is a safe and drug free school zone. No RBA student shall knowingly possess, handle, use, transport, or be under the influence of any controlled substance on or off school property, including at school functions and events. This includes having a controlled substance in their vehicle. RBA is a tobacco free environment. No person shall at any time smoke, chew, vape, or otherwise ingest tobacco or a tobacco product on RBA property, while on a field trip, or at a school sponsored activity away from the school. E-cigarettes and/or vapes of any kind are also prohibited. NOTE: If school administration (or designee) has a reasonable, individualized suspicion that evidence of a violation of the law or a school rule will be found, a search of a student or a student's possessions that is reasonable in scope may be undertaken.

It shall be a violation of policy #502 for students to use lockers and desks for unauthorized purposes or to store contraband. It shall be a violation for students to carry contraband on their person or in their personal possessions.

Refer to Appendix C for the complete text of Policy #419: Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices, and Electronic Delivery Devices; Vaping Awareness and Prevention Instruction.

D. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

RBA is committed to inclusive education and providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. RBA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or other characteristics protected by state and federal law, including pregnancy and related conditions, as defined in applicable law. RBA prohibits discrimination and discrimination in the form of harassment of any individual for any of the categories listed above. For more information regarding RBA's anti-discrimination practices, please see Policy #521.

E. ARRIVAL OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOL

The school day is from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, unless otherwise noted on our school calendar. Students may arrive at school no earlier than 9:00 A.M. and must be picked up by 4:00 P.M. Students who arrive before 9:00 must wait in the vestibule area, including students of staff. RBA does provide transportation, via Kids on the Go and Rochester Public Schools, to families who live within the Rochester Public School District boundary. Students who display unsafe riding behaviors or conduct may be subject to van suspensions. For more information about transportation, please see Policy #707.

F. ATTENDANCE POLICY

RBA expects and requires full-time attendance from its students. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.22, every child between seven and 17 years of age must receive instruction unless the child has graduated or, for 17-year-old students, lawfully withdrawn. In addition, a student under the age of 7 enrolled in kindergarten or a higher grade is subject to the compulsory attendance provisions. For more information regarding attendance, please see Policy #503.

1. Truancy

A continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements and is absent from instruction in a school without valid excuse within a single school year for: three days if the child is in elementary school; or three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school. When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, the school attendance officer or other designated school official will notify the student's parent or legal guardian.

An habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school, or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school. Anyone under 18 years of age who is habitually truant will be referred to the County Department of Social Services or other appropriate agency, after parent notification and be required to attend PIM meetings.

Nothing in this section shall prevent RBA from notifying a truant child's parent or legal guardian of the child's truancy or otherwise addressing a child's attendance problems prior to the child becoming a continuing truant.

2. Reasonable efforts will be made by RBA to accommodate any student who wishes to be excused from a curricular activity for a religious observance.

G. BULLYING AND HAZING

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate students in a safe environment. The school cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the school and

the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of the school in its normal operations, it is the school's intent to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior. Additionally, "hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other school-related purpose. Policy #514: Bullying Prohibition Policy is located on our website or is available from the main office. Policy #526: Hazing Prohibition is located on our website or is available from the main office. Any bullying and/or hazing incidents must be reported to administration immediately.

H. CALENDAR

The Board of Directors and staff of RBA shall develop an annual school and board calendar. The calendars shall conform to the statutes and regulations of the State of Minnesota and any other agencies affecting public schools and their programs. The RBA School Board approves each calendar before it is submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The school and board calendars can be found on our website.

I. CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ("PEDs")

1. Students are encouraged not to bring cell phones or other personal electronic devices ("PEDs") to school. Personal electronic devices include but are not limited to smart watches, tablets, gaming devices, personal laptops, speakers, walkie talkies, and earbuds/air pods. If students choose to bring a cell phone or PED to school, the expectations are as follows:
 - a. Cell phones and PEDs will be powered off and remain in student backpacks/ lockers during the academic school day, including lunch.
 - b. Students who need to be in contact with their family during the academic day are to ask permission to use one of our school phones. Parents are welcome and encouraged to contact the office if there is a message that needs to be relayed to a student during the academic day.
 - c. Students assume the risk of damage, theft, or loss when choosing to bring a phone to school.
 - d. Students may use their cell phones and PEDs in a school-appropriate manner before and after the academic school day. This includes:
 - i. Checking in or responding to family members.

- ii. Sending and receiving appropriate communication with friends.
 - iii. Sharing school-appropriate material with friends.
- e. The following uses of cell phones and PEDs are strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action:
 - i. Any use of a cell phone in bathrooms;
 - ii. Any use of a cell phone or PED during an emergency or emergency drill;
 - iii. Any use of a cell phone or PED to record or take photos of staff members or other students;
 - iv. Any use of a cell phone or PED to record or take photos of classmates with the intent to bully or harass;
 - v. Any use of social media, apps, or any other function of a cell phone or PED to spread rumors, bully, make fun of, exclude, or create a disruption in school or outside of school; and
 - vi. Any use of a cell phone or PED to share or ask classmates for inappropriate content.
- 2. Extenuating circumstances:
 - a. Students who use their cell phones to monitor a medical condition (i.e. diabetes, epilepsy) may have their cell phones with them at all times, but must adhere to all other guidelines listed above. Parents or guardians must contact school administration for pre-approval if there is an essential need for a phone.
 - b. Students who participate in RBA's SOAR program may keep their cell phones and PEDs with them at all times, but must adhere to all other guidelines listed above. SOAR students may use their cell phones and PEDs in the SOAR classroom and during off-campus activities for educational purposes only.
- 3. Cell phone and PED guidelines for off-campus school activities (i.e. extracurricular activities, outdoor and service trips, school field trips) will be individualized depending on the specific trip and activities.

These expectations will be addressed at pre-trip meetings and/or on trip-specific permission slips.

J. DATA PRIVACY

1. RBA administration shall be responsible for maintaining and securing private and confidential student records pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practice Act. See Minn. Stat. § 13.32. Likewise, all records regarding students created, collected, or maintained by any RBA employee because the student is or was a student at RBA are "education records" subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").
2. The school district may release, on an individual basis, what is termed student "Directory Information" which includes the following student information: student's name, date and place of birth, sex, major field of study, participation in officially organized activities and sports, weight and height, dates of attendance, grade levels completed, awards received, and previous educational institutions attended.
3. If any parent, guardian, or student (18 years of age or older) does not want this information to be released without prior written consent, they must notify the administrator in writing. The following information must be included: (1) Name of student (2) Home address (3) School presently attended by student (4) Parent's legal relationship to student (5) Specific categories of directory information that will not be made public without the parent's prior written consent.

For more information about data privacy, please see Policy #515.

K. DISCIPLINE

RBA students must know and obey all school rules, regulations, policies, and procedures, as well as federal, state, and local laws. The Student Discipline Policy (#506) is intended to promote consistent and fair treatment of all students. Students are expected to use appropriate language at school and at all school functions. Students are expected to refrain from drug and alcohol use including tobacco, nicotine, and vapes. Students are not to intentionally cause physical injury to any person. This includes, but is not limited to: intimidation, extortion, threatened assault, assault, fighting, harassment of any kind, bomb threats, false fire alarms, possession of a weapon (or look-alikes) or hazing taking place on or off school property or at any school sponsored activity or event. A non-exhaustive list of unacceptable behavior can be located in the following policies:

- Policy #506: Student Discipline
- Policy #413: Harassment and Violence
- Policy #501: Weapons on School Grounds
- Policy #514: Bullying Prohibition
- Policy #526: Hazing Prohibition
- Policy #524: Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety
- Policy #529: Staff Notification of Violent Behavior by Students

This applies to all school buildings, school grounds and school property, school-sponsored activities, events or trips, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school- contracted vehicles or any other vehicles approved for RBA purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school premises or events, and all school-related functions. This also applies to any student whose conduct at any time or in any place has a nexus with school or the student's actions have a direct and immediate effect either on school discipline or on the general safety and welfare of students. While prohibiting unacceptable behavior subject to disciplinary action at these locations and events, RBA does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.

1. Grounds for removal from class shall include any of the following:
 - a. Willful conduct that significantly disrupts the rights of others to an education, including conduct that interferes with a teacher's ability to teach or communicate effectively with students in a class or with the ability of other students to learn;
 - b. Willful conduct that endangers surrounding persons, including charter school employees, the student or other students, or the property of the school;
 - c. Willful violation of any school rules, regulations, policies or procedures, including the Code of Student Conduct in this policy; or
 - d. Other conduct, which in the discretion of the teacher or administration, requires removal of the student from class.

Such removal shall be for at least one (1) activity period or class period of instruction for a given course of study and shall not exceed five (5) such periods.

A student must be removed from class immediately if the student engages in assault or violent behavior. "Assault" is an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death; or the intentional infliction of, or attempt to inflict, bodily harm upon another.

2. **Trespassing:** RBA only leases the following areas within the Church. Any student who goes into areas not described herein will be considered trespassing and will be subject to disciplinary action. The following areas have been leased by RBA:

Office/Classroom #1, Classroom #2, Classroom #3, Classroom #4, Classroom #5, Classroom #12, Classroom #13, Classroom #14, Classroom #15, Classroom #17, Classroom #18, Classroom #19, Storage Closet East Hall, Storage Closet West Hall, Lower Level East Hallway, Main Entrance/Foyer, Commercial Kitchen, Women/Girls Bathroom, Men/Boys Bathroom, Lower-level ADA Bathroom, Elevator,

West Hall Stairway, Upper-level ADA Bathroom, Upper-level West Hallway.

3. If students leave school grounds without permission, staff may follow students for safety purposes. In addition, RBA may call the Non-Emergency Police number for assistance. Parents may be called when this occurs. Discipline could occur as a result of leaving school property.
4. **Dismissal:** "Dismissal" means the denial of the current educational program to any student, including exclusion, expulsion, and suspension. Dismissal does not include removal from class. RBA may dismiss a student as a form of discipline in compliance with Policy #506, which is located on our website.

L. EMERGENCY DRILLS

RBA, in compliance with local and state regulations, maintains an emergency drill calendar. The school will conduct drills as required by law, which includes five lockdown drills, five fire drills, and one tornado drill per academic year. RBA elects to also practice one Emergency Evacuation Drill per year. RBA expects everyone to assume their share of responsibility for the safety of others. Specific directions on how to evacuate and lockdown procedures are posted in each room and all staff members have copies of them in the RBA Crisis Plan.

M. ENROLLMENT PROCESS

RBA welcomes all students in grade 6 through age 22. RBA specializes in students with executive functioning challenges, particularly autism, and is well equipped to handle most students' needs. RBA will look closely at each student's needs if they wish to attend our school. Interested families should contact the office manager to schedule a tour.

1. **Enrollment Lottery:** When RBA has reached its capacity, a lottery will take place. The Admissions and Lottery Policy (Policy #509) can be found on our website.

N. FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") is a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA applies to any public or private elementary, secondary, or post-secondary school. It also applies to any state or local education agency that receives funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education.

Parents or eligible students have the right to take the following actions:

- Inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools do not have to provide copies of records unless it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the original records (e.g., they live far away).

- Request that a school correct records they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to change the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to change the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record that explains his or her view about the contested information.
- Stop the release of personally identifiable information.
- Get a copy of the institution's policy concerning access to educational records.

For information regarding FERPA, refer to cdc.gov.

O. FOOD

Hot lunch is provided by Byron Public Schools. Students who wish to bring their own lunch can do so. Microwaves are available for students to heat up their lunch. Student meals are provided free of charge by the USDA. Any student who wishes to purchase an additional meal or a milk will be required to pay \$2.85 for breakfast, \$5.30 for lunch, and \$0.65 for milk. Money should be given to the Office Manager at the beginning of each day.

Students are allowed to bring snacks to school, but we ask that snacks be free of common allergens. Students who bring snacks containing allergens may be asked to eat them in a designated area. While we hope each student elects healthy snacks, this is not always the case. Please encourage students to make good food choices. Each teacher can designate when snacks are allowed in their classroom. If there are questions about this, please see the individual teacher. Water bottles are always permitted at RBA.

RBA is a closed campus for lunch, meaning students are not allowed to leave for lunch. Parents can pick their child up and take them out to lunch if they so choose as long as they are gone during the designated lunch period. Failure to return to class on time will result in tardiness. Additionally, students MAY NOT order food and have it delivered to RBA due to safety concerns.

P. GRADING

RBA uses a standardized grading scale. All grades are calculated based on student progress towards meeting the standards and/or understanding the content being taught in their courses. It is the goal of RBA that students maintain "satisfactory progress" in all subject areas. We understand that "satisfactory progress" is and should be an individualized benchmark for each student. If performance should drop below this standard, the student will be informed by the classroom teacher and strategies, along with possible modifications when applicable, will be discussed to promote success. If "satisfactory progress" does not result from implementation of these, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss other interventions and/or options.

1. Students with an Individualized Education Program ("IEP"), Section 504 accommodation plan, or limited English proficiency needs may be eligible for testing accommodations, modifications, and/or exemption.

Eligibility will be defined on the student's plan. Contact their case manager.

2. Any assignment not turned in after three weeks past the due date will automatically turn to a zero in the grade book.
3. Late work will not be accepted during the last week of any quarter unless specifically allowed by a student's IEP.
4. Below is RBA's grading scale and cutoffs:

0	1	2	3	4
0-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90+ %
<i>F</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A</i>
No attempt made by the student--in this case staff must attempt to gather the necessary information in an alternative format	Does not meet/ understand content or standard	Can meet or show understanding of content/ standard with support	Meets content or standard independently	Meets content or standard independently and can apply the content

Q. HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

RBA seeks to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from religious, racial or sexual harassment, and violence. Any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment, and violence will not be tolerated by any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel of the school system to inflict, threaten to inflict, or attempt to inflict religious, racial, or sexual violence upon any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel. The school system will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of religious, racial or sexual harassment, or violence, and to discipline to take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy. This is a summary of the policy; the full policy, Policy #413: Harassment & Violence, can be found on the RBA website.

R. HEALTH OFFICE

RBA employs a Licensed School Nurse and a Health Paraprofessional. Students are encouraged to benefit from the health office's services. If at any time you wish to reach the school nurse, please call 507-258-5351 x102. RBA's health office is responsible for the maintenance of health records, including immunizations, health screenings, health related counseling and referrals, health education resources, classroom presentations, medication distribution, as well as community referrals for medical and dental care.

1. Immunizations

Minnesota state law requires all students entering RBA must have proof of immunizations or file a legal exemption with the school. Students are not allowed to attend school without proof of immunizations. A parent/guardian may file a medical exemption signed by a health care provider or conscientious objection signed by a parent/guardian and notarized. Immunizations required are two MMRs (measles, mumps, and rubella), three Hepatitis B shots, three doses of Polio, at least three DTaP/DT/Td (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis), and one Td/DT required after age 7. New and transfer students have 30 days to provide proof of immunizations according to state law. Any questions, please contact RBA's health office. Families will also be asked if they have received the COVID-19 vaccinations and to provide documentation.

2. Student Medications

Administration of student medication is overseen by a Licensed School Nurse (from the Minnesota Visiting Nurses Association) pursuant to state law. Staff assigned to the health office have been properly trained to administer medication with this oversight. A Physician Order for Medication **and** Parent/Guardian Authorization form needs to be completed for any and all medications to be dispensed at school. All medication (prescription or over-the-counter) must be kept in the health office. The only exception, with approval from the Health Office Staff and parents, is for students who have an inhaler or epipen.

3. Emergency care plans must be in place for all students with serious illnesses, such as diabetes, asthma, allergies to food or latex, seizures, bee stings, or any life-threatening health condition.
4. Some students require administration of medications or medical procedures to be performed during the regular school day. In those situations, the following procedures will be followed:
- a. Physician Order for Medication **and** Parent/Guardian Authorization form completed and on-file with the school before any medications will be dispensed by RBA staff.
 - b. Prescription medications must be provided in the original pharmacy container with a current label. Prescription medications brought to school in any other container will not be administered. Questions regarding dosage and administration of the medications will be directed to the prescribing physician or the parent/guardian, at the discretion of RBA staff.
 - c. Over-the-counter medications must be provided in the original labeled container. Over-the-counter prescriptions, ex: Aspirin, Ibuprofen or Tylenol, will only be administered to a student according to the label directions, unless contrary written directions from a physician are provided.

- d. When use of a medication has ceased, or is no longer needed by the student, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to collect unused medications from the school. Any unused medications will be disposed of by the school upon the written request of the parent/guardian or at the end of the school year.
5. Students may not share medications with anyone. Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken if necessary, upon a determination by the Executive Director, after an investigation that a violation of this policy has taken place.
6. Occasionally students become ill while at school. If your child needs to go home, the health office staff will contact a parent/guardian. If staff are unable to reach parents and determine that the student must go home, the emergency contacts will then be called. It is important for parents to have the emergency contact list updated and that person is available during the day. Your child will not be allowed to leave school without contacting an adult first.
 - a. If your child texts you to pick them up, please have them talk with the Health Office staff. It is important that staff know when parents have been contacted. When you arrive at school, please come into the building and sign your child out with the Office Manager.
7. When a student is sick, parents often wonder whether or not to keep a child at home from school. If a child stays home and has the care he/she needs when first sick, he/she will often get better faster. Staying home and resting will help the body fight the sickness. Staying at home is also one of the best ways to keep others from becoming ill.
 - a. Reasons why students SHOULD stay at home:
 - i. Severe colds, coughs, or sore throats
 - ii. Eye infections, especially if discharge is present
 - iii. New skin rashes, especially if draining—unless medical opinion states rash is not contagious
 - iv. Temperature of 100° or more ***with or without symptoms of an illness***
 - v. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain
 - vi. Any other signs of acute illness
 - vii. Until results of laboratory tests (i.e., throat culture, nasal swab) are known
 - b. Children may return to school when they are:
 - i. Well enough to participate in normal school activities

- ii. **Free of all symptoms for 24 hours** (i.e. has not vomited, had diarrhea, abdominal pain in 24 hours)
- iii. Temperature remains normal for a 24-hour period ***without the use of fever reducing medications.***
- iv. On an antibiotic for at least 24 hours
- v. Your health care provider states your child can return to school

It is often very difficult to decide whether it is really necessary to keep your child home. There are no sure rules to follow as we are dealing with variables. Hopefully, the above guidelines will be helpful to you in making this decision.

S. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

The following rights will apply to all students and staff at RBA and are in effect the entire school day, including travel to and from school:

1. The right to develop one's personality (so long as it does not interfere with the rights of others) without disrespectful criticism or pressure from cliques;
2. The right to be free from physical abuse and from mental abuse such as name calling, intimidation, or harassment;
3. The right to be treated with respect is of utmost importance;
4. The right to be free from mockery or discrimination because of race, sex, religion, physical strength, size, features, friendship groups, age, culture, handicap, financial status, clothing, classroom performance, etc.;
5. The right to an education – which means that teachers should be free to teach and students free to learn – without being interrupted by inconsiderate or unruly students; and
6. The right to have personal and school property respected. Our school community should be a safe place for people and property.

T. LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS

In order to create a consistent learning environment for all RBA students, appointment times are encouraged outside of school hours. If a student needs to leave RBA for any reason during school hours, notice must be given to the school office at: 507-258-5351 x102 or office@rochesterbeaconacademy.org. Students must be signed out by a parent or guardian unless they are 18 years of age (18-year-old students may sign themselves out).

If students leave school grounds without permission, staff may follow students for safety purposes. In addition, RBA may call the Non-Emergency

Police number to provide assistance. Parents may be called when this occurs. Discipline could occur as a result of leaving school property.

U. RESTORATIVE APPROACH

RBA is a Restorative School Community. The Restorative approach is not punitive in nature and is used to repair harm done by someone within our school community. Participation is required if staff deem a circle to be necessary. Restorative Circles may be used frequently in our school.

V. SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

The decision to close school is never taken lightly. Every attempt will be made to close school prior to 5:30 A.M. In the event that school must be delayed or closed because of inclement weather, families will receive an email. An announcement will also be posted on our website and Facebook. In addition, we will post on the following TV stations: KTTC & KAAL. RBA has built snow days into the school calendar. If we exceed those days, you will be notified by the school website and email that your student is required to complete a Weather Inclement Learning Day (WILD DAY). All documents that students produce for WILD Days must be turned in to the Office Manager the following in-service to receive their attendance.

RBA serves students from multiple school districts. If the student's district of residence is delayed or closed, the student should consider themselves delayed or closed as well. In these cases, the student will be excused for attendance purposes.

W. SEARCH OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS

RBA may search students, their possessions, and their lockers for items that may be harmful to themselves, to others, or items that are prohibited from being on school grounds. Consent of the student is not required prior to the search. All searches will be based upon reasonable suspicion that items that may be harmful to the student or others or that items that are prohibited from being on school grounds may be found. Student searches must be authorized and conducted by the Executive Director and/or their designees. One additional staff member must be present during a search of a student, their possessions, or their locker. Depending on what is found during a given search, discipline may occur. A general search of school properties, including but not limited to lockers or desks, may occur at any time, and items belonging to the school may be seized (see below). All items seized will be given to the proper authorities or returned to the true owner.

1. School Lockers

School lockers are the property of RBA. At no time does RBA relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers may be conducted by school authorities for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent and without a search warrant. The personal possessions of students within a school locker may be searched only when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search

will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practicable after the search of a student's personal possessions, school authorities must provide notice of the search to students whose lockers were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.

2. Desks

School desks are the property of RBA. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of desks provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of desks may be conducted by school officials for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

3. Personal Possessions and Student's Person

The personal possessions of students and/or a student's person may be searched when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. The search will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.

For more information on searches, please see Policy #502.

X. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education is a continuum of services available to eligible students with disabilities. Guided by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Minnesota regulations, RBA ensures all special education students receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This is guided by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) development process, which results in a comprehensive, legal plan addressing needs specific to the individual student. Each student with an IEP has a case manager who will oversee their plan and subsequent due process rights. These people serve as the point of contact for students with special education needs. Per law, RBA employs a Special Education Director.

1. Child Find

RBA identifies, locates, and evaluates children suspected of having a disability and needing special education services to address that disability.

2. All students with disabilities, including students with disabilities who qualify for services under the IDEA, are protected from discrimination on the basis of disability by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Minnesota Human Rights Act, and other applicable law. RBA does not discriminate against any student on the basis of disability, or on the basis of any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

Y. STUDENT DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Students and staff at RBA are allowed creative freedom in the form of personal attire, except when this expression is deemed offensive or disruptive by other staff or students. Clothing and apparel choices that are not permitted include: Clothing, accessories, or any attire that displays, depicts, or promotes firearms, weapons, gun culture, or crime is strictly prohibited. Additionally, any attire that targets, bullies, degrades, or discriminates against any individual or group based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or any other protected class is also forbidden. The dress code (Policy #504) is enforced to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of our school community.

In the event that a student violates the dress code, they will be expected to change clothes or cover-up what is deemed inappropriate. In severe situations, students may be sent home. All final decisions on the appropriateness of the student dress code will be made by the school's Executive Director or designee.

Z. STUDENT DRIVERS

Students who have a valid driver's license and vehicle insurance are allowed to drive to and from school. Student drivers must provide a copy of the driver's license and vehicle insurance to the Executive Director before parking on school property. However, driving to and from school is a privilege. Student drivers are expected to follow the laws and regulations for safe driving, including driving slowly in our parking lot and other city ordinances. Student drivers are not allowed to transport other students in their vehicle and will NOT have access to their vehicle during the school day unless accompanied by a staff member to their car. Students who fail to follow the rules may have their drive-to-school privileges taken away. For more information pertaining to student drivers, please see Policy #527.

AA. STUDENT RECORDS

Parents and students have the right to examine their school records. The request should be made to the Executive Director or designee. If a student is 18 years of age or older, he/she can request, in writing, that the parent/guardian receive no communication from RBA. RBA will communicate (report cards, mailings, emails, phone calls, etc.) with the parent/guardian for all enrolled students, unless otherwise instructed by the appropriate form being filled out by the student and on file. For more information about the privacy of student records, please see Policy #515.

BB. TESTING

Each year, the State of Minnesota requires all public schools to take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs). Dates will be posted on our website before the first day of the school year. Families do have the right to "opt out" their child should they so choose. Please discuss this option with your child's case manager or the Executive Director or designee. RBA also elects to participate in the ACT and Fastbridge testing. Dates will be provided as soon as possible.

CC. TRANSPORTATION

RBA is contracting with Rochester Public Schools to provide transportation through Kids on the Go Transportation. More information will be forthcoming about routes and times during orientation week.

Minnesota Statute §121A.59 states: "Transportation by school bus is a privilege not a right for an eligible student. A student's eligibility to ride a school bus may be revoked for a violation of school bus safety or conduct policies, or for violation of any other law governing student conduct on a school bus, pursuant to a written school district discipline policy. Revocation of a student's bus riding privilege is not an exclusion, expulsion, or suspension under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. Revocation procedures for a student who is an individual with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, United States Code, title 20, section 1400 et seq., section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, United States Code, title 29, section 794, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law Number 101-336, are governed by these provisions."

1. Rules at the Van Stop

- a. Get to your bus stop 5 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time. The school bus driver will not wait for late students.
- b. Respect the property of others while waiting at your bus stop.
- c. Keep your arms, legs, and belongings to yourself.
- d. Use appropriate language.
- e. Stay away from the street, road, or highway when waiting for the bus.
- f. Wait until the bus stops before approaching the bus.
- g. After getting off the bus, move away from the bus.
- h. If you must cross the street, always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see you. Wait for the driver to signal to you before crossing the street.
- i. No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
- j. No use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

2. Rules On The Bus

- a. Immediately follow the directions of the driver.
- b. Sit in your seat facing forward.
- c. Talk quietly and use appropriate language.

- d. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- e. Keep your arms, legs, and belongings to yourself.
- f. No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
- g. Do not throw any object.
- h. No eating, drinking, or use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs
- i. Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the school bus.
- j. Do not damage the school bus.

These rules prohibit using nuisance devices (such as laser pointers) on a school bus in a way that disrupts the safe transportation of students and/or endangers students or employees. These rules also prohibit tampering with emergency or safety equipment, including unauthorized handling of emergency or safety equipment on the bus such as first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and emergency doors, windows or hatches, or crossing/patrol flags.

In addition, while riding in a district vehicle or school bus, in accordance with state law students shall not transport gasoline, animals except companion animals accompanying persons with disabilities, or any other object of a dangerous or objectionable nature. Students who violate these or other District policies and regulations while riding in a school vehicle, school bus, or at a school bus stop will be disciplined.

Students who show inappropriate riding behavior including, but not limited to: constant disregard for the van rules, swearing, unsafe riding behaviors, failure to follow van driver or para directives, intimidation of other students, etc. may have their van privileges suspended or taken away for a period of time. If this were to happen, parents would be notified and then responsible for transporting their student to and from school.

DD. VIOLENT STUDENT NOTIFICATION

According to Policy #529, staff who have a legitimate educational interest, are notified in writing of students who have a history of violent behavior. Per that same policy, we must inform parents annually of this requirement.

EE. VISITORS

Students are not to have visitors during the school day, including students from other schools. In addition, due to the vulnerable population we serve, shadowing your own child is prohibited.

IV. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: 2026-27 RBA STUDENT PERMISSION FORM

Please read through this document before signing. If there are any changes to household addresses, phone numbers, cell numbers, and email addresses, it is the *responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the school and update*. Email any changes to office@rochesterbeaconacademy.org or call 507-258-5351 x102.

AFTER you have read and reviewed the following information, **PLEASE SIGN** and return this form to RBA.

1. **STUDENT HANDBOOK:** As a parent/guardian, I have read the Student Handbook with my child(ren) and agree to help them become lifelong learners. We will discuss the mission of the school together and how they can live that out each day. As a student, I have read the Student Handbook and agree to uphold the expectations as written. An electronic copy of the Student Handbook can be found on our website.
2. **FIELD TRIP PERMISSION:** My child has permission to participate in field trips planned by the school for educational purposes. By signing this document, I release RBA from any possible liability. It is understood that my permission is to remain effective for the 26-27 school year provided I do not make any changes.
3. **LOCKER AGREEMENT:** I understand and agree that my assigned locker is the property of RBA and subject to search at any time. I will not deface or vandalize my locker. I will not store contraband or valuables in my locker.
4. **ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT:** I understand that Chromebooks and other electronic devices, as well as the internet, are for instructional purposes. I agree that if my assigned device appears to be damaged or unattended, I will immediately notify the teacher and be subject to full reimbursement to RBA of that Chromebook or electric device. I accept this policy as well as any applicable student conduct policies in RBA's Student Handbook found online and understand that I will be subject to discipline according to the Handbook.
5. **PHOTO RELEASE:** I understand that my child's photo may be taken and used by RBA for publication and social media.
6. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SCHOOL POLICY #521:** As a parent/guardian, I have read the RBA policy regarding prohibition of unfair discriminatory practices in education and the grievance procedures. The purpose of this policy is to establish definitions, reporting processes, grievance and investigation procedures regarding claims of unfair discriminatory practices in education.

PRINT STUDENT NAME _____ GRADE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN: Please check off and sign below.

_____ I have read the Field Trip permission statement, and I give my child permission to participate.

_____ I have read and understand the Student Handbook.

_____ I have read and understand RBA Policy #521 (located on the RBA website).

_____ Yes, I allow my child's picture to be taken for publications, including the yearbook.

My signature verifies I have read this document and fully understand its contents.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

STUDENT: Please check off and sign below.

_____ I have read and understand the Student Handbook and agree to uphold its expectations.

_____ I have read and understand the Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety Policy (#524).

_____ I have read and understand the Locker Agreement.

My signature verifies I have read this document and fully understand its contents.

Student Signature

Date

APPENDIX B: Policy References

For further information on the items mentioned above, please visit our website at www.rochesterbeaconacademy.org for expanded policy details.

Policy #102: Equal Educational Opportunity
 #404: Employment Background Checks
 #413: Harassment and Violence
 #419: Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices, and Electronic Delivery Devices; Vaping Awareness and Prevention Instruction
 #502: Search of Student Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions, and Student's Person
 #503: Student Attendance
 #504: Student Dress and Appearance
 #506: Student Discipline
 #509: Admissions and Lottery
 #514: Bullying Prohibition
 #515: Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
 #521: Student Disability Nondiscrimination
 #522: Title IX
 #524: Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety
 #526: Hazing Prohibition
 #527: Student Use and Parking of Motor Vehicles
 #529: Staff Notification of Violent Behavior by Students
 #530: Section 504
 #707: Transportation of Charter School Students
 #807: Health and Safety

APPENDIX C: Policy No. 419: Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices, and Electronic Delivery Devices; Vaping Awareness and Prevention Instruction

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is tobacco free.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, administrator, other school personnel of Rochester Beacon Academy (RBA), or person smokes or uses tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or carries or uses an activated electronic delivery device in a public school. This prohibition extends to all facilities, whether owned, rented, or leased, and all vehicles that RBA owns, leases, rents, contracts for, or controls. In addition, this prohibition includes vehicles used, in whole or in part, for work purposes, during hours of school operation, if more than one person is present. This prohibition includes all RBA property and all off-campus events sponsored by RBA.
- B. A violation of this policy occurs when any elementary school, middle school, or secondary school student possesses any type of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or electronic delivery devices in a public school. This prohibition extends to all facilities, whether owned, rented, or leased, and all vehicles that RBA owns, leases, rents, contracts for, or controls and includes vehicles used, in whole or in part, for school purposes, during hours of school operation, if more than one person is present. This prohibition includes all RBA property and all off-campus events sponsored by RBA.
- C. RBA will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school personnel, or person who is found to have violated this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Electronic delivery device" means any product containing or delivering nicotine, lobelia, or any other substance, whether natural or synthetic, intended for human consumption that can be used by a person to simulate smoking in the delivery of nicotine or any other substance through inhalation of aerosol or vapor from the product. Electronic delivery devices includes but is not limited to devices manufactured, marketed, or sold as electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipe, vape pens, modes, tank systems, or under any other product name or descriptor. Electronic delivery device includes any component part of a product, whether or not marketed or sold separately. Electronic delivery device excludes drugs, devices, or combination products, as those terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, that are authorized for sale by the United States Food and Drug Administration.
- B. "Heated tobacco product" means a tobacco product that produces aerosols containing nicotine and other chemicals which are inhaled by users through the mouth.

- C. "Tobacco" means cigarettes and any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco that is intended for human consumption, whether chewed, smoked, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed, or ingested by any other means, or any component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product, including, but not limited to, cigars; cheroots; stogies; perique; granulated, plug cut, crimp cut, ready rubbed, and other smoking tobacco; snuff; snuff flour; cavendish; plug and twist tobacco; fine cut and other chewing tobacco; shorts; refuse scraps, clippings, cuttings and sweepings of tobacco; and other kinds and forms of tobacco. Tobacco excludes any drugs, devices, or combination products, as those terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, that are authorized for sale by the United States Food and Drug Administration.
- D. "Tobacco-related devices" means cigarette papers or pipes for smoking or other devices intentionally designed or intended to be used in a manner which enables the chewing, sniffing, smoking, or inhalation of vapors aerosol or vapor of tobacco or tobacco products. Tobacco-related devices include components of tobacco-related devices which may be marketed or sold separately.
- E. "Smoking" means inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe, or any other lighted or heated product containing, made, or derived from nicotine, tobacco, marijuana, or other plant, whether natural or synthetic, that is intended for inhalation. Smoking includes carrying or using an activated electronic delivery device.
- F. "Vaping" means using an activated electronic delivery device or heated tobacco product.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

- A. A violation of this policy does not occur when an Indian adult lights tobacco on school property as a part of a traditional Indian spiritual or cultural ceremony. An American Indian student may carry a medicine pouch containing loose tobacco intended as observance of traditional spiritual or cultural practices. An Indian is a person who is a member of an Indian tribe as defined under Minnesota law.
- B. A violation of this policy does not occur when an adult nonstudent possesses a tobacco or nicotine product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for sale as a tobacco-cessation product, as a tobacco-dependence product, or for other medical purposes, and is being marketed and sold solely for such an approved purpose. Nothing in this exception authorizes smoking or use of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or electronic delivery devices on school property or at off- campus events sponsored by RBA.
- C. An American Indian student or staff member may use tobacco, sage, sweetgrass, and cedar to conduct individual or group smudging in a public school. The process for conducting smudging is determined by the building or site administrator. Smudging must be conducted under the direct supervision of an appropriate staff member, as determined by the Executive Director.

V. VAPING PREVENTION INSTRUCTION

- A. RBA must provide vaping prevention instruction at least once to students in grades 6 through 8. Additionally, RBA will provide vaping prevention instruction at least once to students in grades 9 through 12.
- B. RBA may use instructional materials based upon the Minnesota Department of Health's school e-cigarette toolkit or may use other smoking prevention instructional materials with a focus on vaping and the use of electronic delivery devices and heated tobacco products. The instruction may be provided as part of RBA's locally developed health standards.

VI. ENFORCEMENT

- A. All individuals on RBA premises shall adhere to this policy.
- B. Students who violate this tobacco-free policy shall be subject to RBA's student discipline procedures.
- C. RBA administrators and other school personnel who violate this tobacco-free policy shall be subject to RBA's staff discipline procedures.
- D. RBA action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of Minnesota or federal law and RBA policies.
- E. Persons who violate this tobacco-free policy may be referred to the building administration or other RBA supervisory personnel responsible for the area or program at which the violation occurred.
- F. School administrators may call the local law enforcement agency to assist with enforcement of this policy. Smoking or use of any tobacco product in a public school is a violation of the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act and/or the Freedom to Breathe Act of 2007 and is a petty misdemeanor. A court injunction may be instituted against a repeated violator.
- G. No persons shall be discharged, refused to be hired, penalized, discriminated against, or in any manner retaliated against for exercising any right to a smoke-free environment provided by the Freedom to Breathe Act of 2007 or other law.

VII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy shall appear in the student handbook.
- B. RBA will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120B.238 (Vaping Awareness and Prevention)
 Minn. Stat. § 121A.08 (Smudging Permitted)
 Minn. Stat. §§ 144.411-144.417 (Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act)
 Minn. Stat. § 609.685 (Sale of Tobacco to Persons Under Age 21)

2007 Minn. Laws Ch. 82 (Freedom to Breathe Act of 2007)