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PREPARATORY
ACADEMY

SMALL SCHOOL • BIG DREAMS • COLLEGE READY

Student and Family Handbook
2021-22



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WELCOME FROM GRAHAM BROWNE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are honored to welcome you to Fore Preparatory Academy Charter School, as founding family members. We will create new traditions and write new legacies for our students and families over the next four years and beyond. Forte Prep holds a high standard for excellence, by providing an academically rigorous, structured, and joyful school for our students. We are thrilled that you have made Forte Prep your school of choice, and we welcome you to our school community. As a school, we are deeply committed to building strong family partnerships and we look forward to working together to ensure the success of every student that enters our doors. We expect a lot of the members of the Forte Prep community, and in turn, you can expect a lot from us.

As a family, please take the time to read through our entire handbook. Please note that we revise and improve the handbook annually, so re-reading is important for returning families as well. The following pages clarify many of the essential details for families to participate fully in our community, and will help you become familiar with the school procedures, policies, and practices. When you have finished reading the handbook, both parents and the student(s) should complete and detach the mandatory signature page, located at the end of this handbook. Please sign and date the signature page and return it to the main office. Note, that when the word “parents” is used in this Handbook, it also means “legal guardians.”

While this handbook is very detailed, we know that it will not address all of the questions that you may have about Forte Prep. If you do have any additional questions, please contact the school for any clarification.

We look forward to working closely with you during the 2021-22 school year!

Sincerely,

Graham Browne

Executive Director

Forte Preparatory Academy

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Overview

Forte Preparatory Academy Charter School (“Forte Prep” or “School” or “school”) was authorized by the SUNY Board of Trustees on June 10, 2016. Forte Prep opened its doors for the first time to fifth grade students on August 23, 2017. We continue adding a grade level every year, until we reach capacity as a full fifth through eighth grade school. We will have 360 5th - 8th graders in 2021-22. Forte Prep is committed to being one of the best public middle schools in the city of New York and the country.

Mission and Values

Mission

Through rigorous academics, quality instruction, and a positive culture of individual and collective responsibility, Forte Preparatory Academy Charter School equips all students in grades 5 through 8 to excel in college preparatory high schools and use their leadership and voice to change the world.

Core Values

With a clear Code of Conduct as one important foundation for academic achievement, Forte Prep will build a school-wide and classroom culture that rewards and teaches positive behavior.

Our culture of positive behavior is based upon the teaching and practice of our Core Values of **Service, Team, Resilience, Integrity, Voice, and Excellence**:

- Be in **Service** of your community. Seek out opportunities to help one another whenever possible without expecting something in return.
- We are a **Team**. Look out for one another, lend a helping hand, and do your part to ensure that our community is safe and productive.
- Be **Resilient**. Pick yourself up when you falter and work toward achieving your goals with optimism and zeal.
- Exhibit **Integrity**. Perform, every day, as if the spotlight is on you, even when it is not. Value making a good impression to your peers and to your community.
- Use your **Voice** with respect and purpose at all times. Value the diversity of background of your school community, and stand united in the belief that our strength lies in our ability to have all voices of our community strengthened, refined, and most importantly, heard.
- Seek **Excellence**. Constantly push to achieve mastery across our curriculum and in everything you do at school. Come to school ready to give your very best in service of this goal.

Academic Approach

Forte Prep holds an education philosophy motivated by our academic achievement goals and our profound belief that every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, zip code, or home language, deserves the opportunity to transform his or her life in college and beyond through access to a world-class public education. We believe that Forte Prep will equip students in grades five through eight with the skills to excel in college preparatory high schools, college, and life because the research-based education philosophy that underpins the school's design is shared and being executed at successful schools locally and nationally and because the school's leadership has had and continues to have direct access to the network of such successful schools and their leadership.

High expectations for academic success. Every Forte Prep student is college bound, without a doubt. We believe that all students can perform at the level necessary to earn admission to academically rigorous, college preparatory high schools and, from there, to top colleges and universities.

High expectations for structure and personal behavior. At Forte Prep, we create structures that allow our teachers to do what they do best: teach. We maximize every student's opportunity to learn during the school day, as we know that a minute spent on a non-essential procedure is a minute that could be spent on learning.

Forte Prep proactively teaches six core values – Service, Team, Resilience, Integrity, Voice, and Excellence - that underlie all behavioral expectations in our school community because we believe that strong values create a learning environment where students are able to develop the intrinsic motivation needed to excel and be good neighbors.

Emphasis on literacy. Students are able to access the rich and diverse content the world has to offer with the ability to read and write fluently. As a result, we believe that a strong focus on reading skills are essential for students at Forte Prep, especially as we work diligently to support English Language Learners and students with special needs.

Data drives instruction. All instructional and disciplinary decisions are grounded in student data. Daily analysis of these data points allows teachers to make effective decisions about how to modify lesson plans, and identifies students who need immediate remediation. We will rely on norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, diagnostic, formative and summative assessments to equip us with the information to make the best decisions about how to support students' success.

Extended, purposeful learning time. Forte Prep will feature an extended school day and extended school year to reach our ambitious achievement goals. This increased time is designed to be purposeful for both students and teachers, providing more time on task for remediation, interventions, and tutoring.

Meaningful, integrated arts and digital opportunities. During our longer school year, Forte Prep students have the opportunity to explore rigorous and engaging enrichment opportunities in performing arts and computer science. We believe in the power of arts and technology at Forte Prep, and will provide research- and standards-based arts and digital literacy curricula.

Family Engagement

Forte Prep's View of Family Engagement

Forte Prep works closely with families as their children begin the path to college in middle school. If parents and teachers have high expectations for the student's academic performance, then the student generally exceeds expectations. (As used in this Handbook, the word "parent" means a parent or legal guardian, and for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") also means an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian.) Our partnership and constant communication with families is critical especially in the early grades. Beginning with home visits for each and every child and a mandatory annual family orientation, Forte Prep offers extensive support to families as you work to support the academic achievement of your children.

College Emphasis

We clearly articulate our goal of college access and success for all students during our home visits and in subsequent conversations with families. We emphasize how critical our work is in setting students on the path to college, with the first major milestone being access to and measurable preparation for success within college preparatory high schools. We believe in the power of a college-bound mindset, and seek to instill that mindset in all Forte Prep families. We will lead field trips to local colleges and college preparatory high schools throughout the school year; we will reserve for families the opportunity to join their children and the school on these trips.

Home Visits

After the spring admissions and enrollment process, school leadership at Forte Prep will visit every new student's family to introduce ourselves, thank the families for trusting us with their child's education, and share information about the school mission, design, and philosophy. During our home visits, we will also conduct an overview or homework expectations, code of conduct, uniform policy and opportunity for future family involvement. Families will sign the Student and Family Expectations Agreement during the home visit. When necessary, we will administer Home Language Surveys to identify English Language Learners within our school population to allocate appropriate resources to support them from Day 1. School leadership will also be accompanied by a native speaker or translator from our staff or a local community based organization, if the family has limited English proficiency.

Monthly cafecitos

Once per month, we will host a morning open house with free coffee and pastries for parents and families to meet each other and ask Forte Prep school leadership any questions they might have. We see this as an opportunity to open the doors of our school to our families while school is in session, and giving you a great opportunity to interact with one another.

Forte Family Champions

Forte Prep will have a volunteer advisory council of 10-15 family members who will have the opportunity to provide regular feedback to Forte Prep leadership and the Board of Trustees. Additionally, they will be responsible for supporting family engagement and attendance and school events and supporting monthly cafecitos. This group will be managed by our Community Coordinator. If you are interested in participating, please contact Viviana Benjumea, our Community Coordinator.

Family Workshop Nights

We will host at least four Family Workshop Nights throughout the year to support families in helping their children succeed academically and socially at Forte Prep. (Please see Calendar for Workshop dates.) We will cover topics such as homework help, supporting STRIVE values at home, and reading along with children

at home. This will also serve as an opportunity for families to meet one another and to share updates and accomplishments of Forte Prep. Further, in celebration of the diverse cultures that our school community will contain, we will invite families to share food, stories, and entertainment to add a personal touch to the workshops.

Communication

At Forte Prep, we want all family members to know who to contact to voice questions or comments, and to feel comfortable doing so. Teachers find it extremely helpful when parents and family members feel comfortable contacting them with any questions that may arise. The chart below outlines who you should contact for specific types of questions and comments.

Contact this person:	For questions relating to:
Your child's teacher or advisor	Academics and behavior
Justin Smith Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Questions about Forte Prep academics (note: parents should always contact their child's teacher first.) Ongoing questions about academics
Director of Operations	Report Cards Student Records Requests Updating contact information Enrollment and withdrawals Questions about upcoming events
Viviana Benjumea Office Manager & Family Coordinator	Daily changes to your child's transportation methods Urgent messages to teachers Medication administration General Questions
Julie Mastrella Student Supports Coordinator	Special Education Student Evaluations Record Requests Discipline/behavior interventions
Graham Browne Executive Director	Questions related to Forte Prep's growth, middle school, Board of Directors, Mission/Vision, Strategy and major behavior issues

To Ensure You Receive Communications From Us

- Review all material sent home in your child's take home folder nightly
- Friday homework folders will be also include important school notices
- Like the Forte Prep facebook page (search for "Forte Preparatory Academy" on Facebook.)
- Join our Forte Family Champions facebook group for parents (search for "Forte Family Champions" on facebook)
- Contact the Office Manager to let them know of any changes to your email address, phone number, or mailing address, or if there are additional family members or caregivers you would like to receive communications from Forte Prep.

Key Logistics

School Address: 51-35 Reeder Street, 2nd Level, Elmhurst, NY 11373

Phone: (929) 666-4430

Online: Website: www.forteprep.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FortePrep

Twitter: @forteprepqueens

Instagram: @forteprep

School Hours

Facility Hours: 7:00am – 5:00pm

Academic Day: 7:40am – 4:15pm

Morning drop off: 7:20am – 7:40am

Student start time: 7:40am

Student tardy time: 7:41am

Student dismissal time: 4:15pm

Afternoon car pickup: 4:15pm – 4:25pm

School Entrance

Forte Prep's main entrance at 51-35 Reeder Street is on the west side of the building, and is clearly marked for the school (not the residential entrance of the apartments). Families and guests will always enter the building through the main door. Parents and families are encouraged to wait until 8:00am to enter the building with major questions to ensure that our school day starts smoothly.

Policies and Procedures

Academics

Grading

We measure student performance as progress toward grade level Common Core State Standards as well as internally created benchmarks for student learning. We use portfolios, rubrics, and other assessments; both standardized and internally created to measure student progress. We report progress to parents/guardians through trimester report cards. Teachers also support students in developing cumulative, multi-year digital portfolios. Families will have access to SchoolRunner, our online learning management system, to track their students' academic and behavior performance.

Report Card & Progress Report Conferences

We will send all report cards home with students after the end of each trimester (the black dates on the calendar indicate the end of each Trimester). Family conferences typically take place during the first week of the new marking period. Families will be required to sign up for a time slot during the afternoon hours to meet with their student's advisor for the conference.

Saturday Academy

Beginning in October, and taking place approximately every other week until April, students will have the option of attending Saturday Academy, which provides struggling students with additional academic support, and gives all students additional practice and enrichment by their Forte Prep teachers. Students who have received a specific letter home will be required to attend Saturday Academy, but other students who wish to attend may do so by giving prior notice to the school, provided that we have enough space. Student eligibility for Saturday Academy will be re-evaluated on a regular basis, and students may no longer be required to attend at any given point in the school year. For additional questions, please contact our Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the Forte Prep educational program: it is designed to reinforce skills taught in the classroom, to help students develop a deeper understanding of concepts, and to promote good study habits. Homework will be assigned every night at Forte Prep. Homework will include at least 30 minutes of required reading every night, with extended reading on weekends and holidays. Students will keep track of their independent reading on a regular basis. Students will also receive a math homework assignment each

night, which must be completed in pencil with full work shown. There are high standards for homework. All homework must be neat, clean, and thorough.

In addition to having nightly independent reading, most students will have nightly reading for their literature class. Your students Reading and Writing teachers will give you more information about what the requirements are for nightly homework at the start of the school year. There are high standards for homework. All homework must be neat, clean, and thorough, otherwise the student may not receive full credit.

If a student's homework is late, missing, incomplete, or of poor quality, or if the Independent reading is not completed properly, then the student may earn consequences. For example, the student may be required to make up the work during breaks, meal times (the student will still be allowed to eat), or after school, or the student may be required to complete additional assignments. Homework is also a part of a students' grade, so repeated failure to complete homework or complete homework at a low-quality will result in a students' grade dropping significantly, and in some cases result in failure. Moreover, since bringing all necessary books and supplies is part of homework, student may also face consequences if they do not bring all necessary books and supplies to school. Parents/guardians may receive a phone call if their child has missed several assignments. **Making sure that your child completes his/her homework every night is one of the most important ways you can support college readiness!**

Attendance

Forte Prep students must attend school every day on time in order to grow as students and future professionals. Missing academic time can be detrimental to student performance and can cause difficulty in your child's ability to transition into a busy school day. Forte Prep students can plan to arrive between 7:20 - 7:40 AM, as advisory begins promptly at 7:40 AM to start the academic day.

Absences and tardies

Students are considered tardy at 7:41 AM All absences will be considered unexcused until the school receives documentation of circumstances that merit an excused absence. It is preferred that the parent/guardian provide written documentation regarding a child's absence to the main office on the day the student returns to school. Documentation may also be submitted by email to attendance@forteprep.org. Please note that family vacations or other absences unrelated to the student's medical condition, family visitation, or bereavement will be considered unexcused with no exceptions.

Examples of extenuating circumstances and documentation are:

- Doctor's note specifying the excused day(s) of student illness
- Parent/guardian note indicating student illness (signed): a parent/guardian note will be accepted for one day of illness; in order for any consecutive absences to be excused, the family must provide a doctor's note
- Note indicating observance of religious holidays of the child's own faith
- Parent/guardian note indicating there is a family funeral
- Parent/guardian note indicating visitation with a parent/guardian who is a member of the United States Armed Forces or National Guard

- Court documents mandating court appearance for the student

Forte Prep Attendance Policy

No Absences in a Trimester: The student and family are congratulated and recognized for exceptional attendance and commitment to their education.

Three Absences in a Trimester: Forte Prep considers three absences in a single trimester a serious issue. When this occurs, the school reserves the right to notify the student's parent/guardian, and further steps such as requiring families to attend formal meetings and create attendance "action plans" may be required.

Six Absences in a Year: Forte Prep considers six absences over the course of a school year a serious issue. When this occurs, the school reserves the right to call the student's parent/guardian to the school to meet with the school leader. At such a meeting, the problem will be discussed and an attendance plan will be developed.

More than Ten Absences in a Year: If a student is absent more than ten times in a year, the student may be considered a truant. When this occurs, the student is at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. The parent/guardian will be called to the school to meet with the school leader. The school leader reserves the right to retain any student who misses more than ten days of school. The student may also be required to attend Summer Academy that year. In addition, a report may be filed with the New York City Administration for Children's Services or the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

Twenty Absences in a Year: If a student is absent twenty times in a year, the student may be considered a habitual truant. At this point, the school administration may file a written complaint with a relevant court or child services agency alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family has service needs. The Board of Trustees or its designee will submit an annual report to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services that reports the number of habitual truants at its school.

Tardiness

A Forte Prep student is considered tardy if they arrive to school after 7:30AM.

No Tardies in a Trimester— The student and family are congratulated and recognized for being "on time" and for their true commitment to education.

Three Tardies in a Trimester— If a student is late three times in a Trimester, it is considered a serious issue. Should this occur, the school reserves the right to call the parent/guardian to discuss the problem and develop an "On Time" plan.

Three Tardies Equals One Absence— Three tardies is equivalent to one absence and will be recorded as such in the student's file.

Seven Tardies in a Year— If a student is late seven times in a year, it is considered a serious issue. Should this occur, the school reserves the right to call the parent/guardian to the school to meet with the school leader. At such a meeting, the problem will be discussed and an "On Time" plan will be developed, or — if such a plan is already in place — will be modified or reinforced.

Additional information on attendance:

- ***Never miss school for appointments:*** We ask that parents/guardians schedule medical appointments outside of school time. The best times are Wednesday afternoons (after 1:10 PM) or on another day when school is not in session (for example, professional development days). In the rare case that a student has a medical appointment at a time when school is in session, he/she should return to school after the appointment.
- ***Suspensions count as absences unless the student attends alternative instruction:*** If a student is suspended from school for more than one day at a time, the family is entitled to request alternative instruction (one hour at the elementary level, two hours at the middle and high school levels). If the child does not attend this alternative instruction, the suspension will be counted as an absence.
- ***Early Dismissal:*** Students are expected to stay in school until the end of the day (4:15 PM for regular dismissal and 1:10 PM on Wednesdays). In order to maximize time spent learning and avoid unnecessary disruptions, we ask that parents do not pick up students early, except in an emergency situation. Since we are intently focused on climbing the mountain to college, our policy is not to release students prior to the end of the school day without prior notification (a note or call before 9:00 AM). Five early dismissals in a year will be counted as one absence. We also ask that parents wait outside of the main entrance of the building (A Child's Place Main Entrance) until the 4:15 PM dismissal so as not to disrupt learning and the other academic program in the building.
- ***Transportation and Attendance:*** Missing the bus is not an acceptable reason to miss an entire school day. Every student should have a back-up plan for getting to school if he/she misses the bus. Parents should call the school immediately after the student misses the bus so that the school knows the situation and can help problem-solve.
- ***Ten absences to start the school year or during the school year:*** If a student is absent for the first 10 days of school, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his/her absences, that seat will be filled with another student from the waitlist. If a child is absent for 10 consecutive days during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain the absence, that seat will be filled with another student from the waitlist.
- ***Attendance at after-school events:*** Students who are absent from school cannot attend school events, dances, or other school-sponsored activities on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission. Students must be in school for at least seven hours of the regular school day (7:40 AM to 4:15 PM) to be able to attend school events. For weekend events, students must be present at the school on the Friday before in order to attend the weekend event.
- ***The school will track and follow up on student absences:*** The school will take attendance daily and will maintain records of all student absences. If a student misses school, Forte Prep staff will make reasonable efforts to contact the student's parent/guardian by telephone, writing, or in person. The Community Coordinator will follow up with parents/guardians about recurring attendance issues.

- **Exams and Quizzes:** If a student is absent, he/she must make up any exams, quizzes, interim assessments, or other tests the day he/she returns.
- **Vacations:** We expect that families will schedule vacations when school is not in session. Parents should not take a child on a vacation during the school year.

Withdrawals and transfers

We would be disappointed to see any student leave our school, but we will make the transition as smooth as possible. Families must formally request a withdrawal, either by phone or in written form. All withdrawals will be processed as soon as possible, and will be rendered official on the date of the request.

Special Services

Forte Prep is required and committed to serving all students enrolled in our schools, including students with disabilities and students with a history of academic and/or behavior difficulties.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires us (in collaboration with our partner districts) to identify, locate, and evaluate students in need of special education and related services.

Our primary mechanism to identify students who may qualify for special education is the Response to Intervention (RTI). We believe that providing early and robust interventions, that are scientifically-based, can simultaneously help us identify students who may qualify for special education services and slow the over-identification of racial minorities in special education.

RTI encompass a high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom, as well as interventions tier 2 interventions- academic or behavioral supports beyond what is offered in the general classrooms- and tier 3 interventions- individual instruction for the students who need the most support. For this reason, we rely on regular progress monitoring and an active Child Study Team to determine which students may require more intense interventions and/or should be referred to the IEP team for an initial evaluation to determine eligibility for Special Education and related services.

If you have concerns about your student's progress, you should contact Julie Mastrella, our Student Supports Coordinator.

Referral to Special Education

Forte Preparatory Academy has a duty under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to identify, refer, and evaluate students with disabilities. Any parent/guardian who thinks their child may have a disability and wishes to learn more or request an evaluation should contact their child's teacher.

Although we rely on the RTI process to provide early interventions and identify students who should be evaluated for special education and related services, the lack of RTI data should never be used as the reason not to refer a student to determine his/her eligibility for special education and related services.

Once the school refers the student to a team, a series of one or more meetings will occur in a specified timeframe to potentially evaluate the student for special education and related services:

- Referral Meeting: The first meeting is when the team discusses which evaluations a student should receive. This may be a meeting or may be in the form of email communication.
- Evaluations: A student usually receives a social evaluation, psychological evaluation, and educational assessment; sometimes students require specialized evaluations.
- IEP Meeting: After the evaluations, the IEP team convenes to determine if the data collected from the evaluations indicate that the student is eligible for a disability classification. If the team determines that the student has a disability and is eligible for special education services, the team articulates the supports and services the student will require in order to be successful.

At any time you suspect your child has a disability, you have the right to request that your child be evaluated for special education services. You may complete a referral form or submit your concerns in writing. An IEP meeting will be arranged with the district, and you be notified prior to the meeting. If you have questions about the special education referral process, please contact our Student Supports Coordinator.

Section 504 Plans and IEPs:

Students with disabilities requiring specialized support may qualify for a support plan under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or an IEP under the IDEA. A Section 504 plan outlines individualized accommodations and services to support the student, which may include testing accommodations, homework accommodations, special transportation, or other accommodations related to medical conditions. If your child had a 504 plan or IEP at a previous school, please contact our Student Supports Coordinator.

Make-Up Work After Absence

After returning from an absence, students are expected to complete any missed assignments. The parent must help the student check on missed assignments, and any missed work must be completed. The time generally allowed to complete this work will be **the number of days the student was absent**, except in the case of an extended illness. For example, if a student was absent for one day, then he/she will have one day to make up any missed work.

In the event of a planned absence (one that you know about in advance), parents/guardians should notify teachers several days in advance so that they can prepare a packet of work for students to complete during the absence. Again, absences from school compromise a child's academic progress. A child should only be absent in the case of serious illness or real family emergency.

Promotion

Students will earn promotion from grade to grade based on mastery of our school's standards, which are aligned to NY Common Core Standards. Students who score below a 70 in an end-of-year course will have failed that course for the year.

Teachers will grade students on a 100-point scale, with corresponding letter grades. These grades will be provided to families on two mid-trimester and two end-of-trimester grade reports and on one end-of-year summative report card. We will use IEP goals to inform grades as indicated on the student’s IEP; otherwise all grade level goals apply. Standards for promotion are detailed in **Figure 29**. Classes considered for Promotion are Reading, Writing, Math Procedures, Math Problem Solving, Science, Social Studies, and Performing Arts.

Figure 1: Standards for promotion (exit standards)

Performance Standard	Percentage Equivalent	Description
A+	97-100%	Demonstrating advanced levels of mastery with the content standards.
A	93-96%	
A-	90-92%	
B+	87-89%	Demonstrating proficiency with the content standards.
B	83-86%	
B-	80-82%	
C+	77-79%	Demonstrating basic competency with the content standards.
C	73-76%	
C-	70-72%	
F	Below 70%	Not yet demonstrating a basic level of mastery with the content standards and needs to demonstrate mastery of the standard before credit will be earned.

For grade-level promotion, mastery is indicated by a 70% or higher. Internally developed comprehensive assessments are given at the end of each trimester and account for 25% of each trimester’s grade. A student who earns a 70% or higher in all core classes (defined as those that meet four or five times per week) and reaches annual reading targets, earns promotion; a student who fails to earn 70% in one or two classes is eligible for a two-week Summer Academy, at the conclusion of which the student must pass a comprehensive assessment in each subject(s). A student who fails three or more courses is retained. Students with IEPs will be individually evaluated for promotion based upon their satisfaction of schoolwide goals and individual goals as outlined within their IEP and which differ from schoolwide goals.

Behavior Expectations

At Forte Prep, our mission is to provide our students with both the academic and character skills needed to succeed in college and beyond. As such, school culture and discipline are an important part of what we do every day. We have exceptionally high expectations for student behavior, and we “sweat the small stuff” because we believe these high standards create a safe, positive, and productive environment for our students. Our teachers use a large array of strategies to create and maintain joyful, rigorous classrooms.

All Forte Prep students learn and practice common courtesies (e.g., please, thank you, and proper greetings). They sit at their desks and READY position (Sit up straight, Listen, Ask/Answer questions, Nod, eyes on the speaker). They raise tall “vertical hands” when they have ideas to share with the group and speak in “loud and proud” voices so that their thoughts are heard. We enforce these expectations because they create an environment where teachers and students can focus on rigorous academic learning that is necessary for success in college and beyond.

While we believe deeply in the power of positive reinforcement, we also believe consequences can play an important part in encouraging students to make more positive choices. Moreover, consequences also help us ensure the safety of each individual child as well as the entire school community. Parents and students should understand that making up work or serving consequences after 4:35 PM on weekdays or on Saturdays is part of the regular program of the school, and the school requests cooperation from all parents to ensure that each student gets the help he/she needs to succeed.

Code of Conduct

Forte Prep provides a safe and structured environment that promotes students’ academic and social development. The school’s disciplined environment is a key element of our academic success. Students who fail to meet our clearly defined standards for appropriate and acceptable conduct are not allowed to disrupt the education of others. Students are held accountable through clear consequences for violating the school’s rules.

We care about our students’ safety and conduct not simply when they are in school – but at all times, including when they are traveling to and from school or school activities. Therefore, a disciplinary offense is a violation of the school’s Code of Conduct if it occurs while the student is at school and/or on school grounds; is participating in a school-sponsored activity; is walking to or from school or a school-sponsored event; is walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on school-provided transportation; or is walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on public transportation to and from school or a school-sponsored activity. School-related disciplinary offenses may also include serious misconduct outside the school where evidence exists that the student’s conduct had a significant impact on the educational environment and/or continued presence as a result of such conduct would have a substantial detrimental effect on the school, including the safety of the student, other students, or staff members.

Students may be removed from class and/or school immediately if the student’s presence in school or class poses a continuing danger to persons or property, an ongoing threat of danger, or a serious disruption to the academic process.

The school’s rules and regulations may be supplemented by teachers’ rules for their classes and other school events. A pattern of behavior resulting in demerits and/or extension may lead to suspension. Suspended students are not allowed to participate in school activities. Any breaches of state or federal law may be handled in cooperation with the police department or other authorities.

Disciplinary offenses result in consequences subject to the discretion of the Executive Director or his/her designee(s) and may include STRIVE Point deductions, extension, school service/cleaning (if the offense is related to defacing or damaging school property), loss of school privileges, Homework Club, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action,

school personnel who are authorized to impose disciplinary penalties may consider, among other things, the student's prior disciplinary record.

The following list of punishable offenses is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather provides examples of prohibited conduct and corresponding consequences. Additional violations of school rules and behaviors that compromise the school community and the learning of others will also merit consequences.

Infractions

Behavior infractions are incidents that occur in school buildings/grounds or at school activities that are considered the responsibility of the teachers or support staff designee to address through corrective strategies. A hierarchy of infractions is included below:

Violation of School Rule

- Being out of uniform
- Chewing gum
- Arriving late to school or class
- Mistreatment or inappropriate use of technology or school property
- Possession of inappropriate property or technology
- Unauthorized use of the building elevator

Disrespect

- Minor disrespect of a fellow student or students
- Minor disrespect of a faculty member, staff member, visitor, volunteer, school transportation provider, or other member of the school community

Disruptive, distracting behavior

- Disrupting class for any reason at any time
- Horse-playing
- Running in hallways
- Making unreasonable or distracting noise
- Being off-task
- Failing or refusing to follow directions
- Impeding vehicular or pedestrian traffic
- Misbehaving on school-provided transportation, on school grounds, or while walking to/from school or a school event

Being unprepared for class

- Being unprepared for class
- Failing to have school document, homework, or exam signed
- Failing to complete homework or other assignment

Other

- Other behavior deemed by school staff to be inappropriate or disruptive

Infractions: Range of School Responses, Interventions, and Consequences

- Non-verbal warning
- Verbal warning or reprimand
- Time out within the classroom
- Confiscation of property
- Student-teacher conference
- Student-administrator conference
- Call home to parents
- Loss of STRIVE Points associated with the infraction
- Note home to parents to be signed and brought back to school
- Meeting with parents
- Time out outside the classroom
- Sent to Executive Director's office or other designated area
- Loss of classroom or other school privileges
- Modified classroom participation (e.g., limited partner work, etc.) to best support the student
- Seating arrangement changed
- Exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event
- Suspension of Transportation
- Friday Extension
- Paying for or replacing any damaged or missing property
- Verbal or written apology
- Parent asked to attend class with child
- Sitting in his/her seat during breaks
- Eating lunch alone and/or lunch extension (referred to as Loss of Social Privileges – "LOSP")
- Missing school events, trips, or activities
- Remaining in school for the entire day during ½ days
- Reflecting on behavior orally and/or in writing
- Performing extra service for the school
- In-school suspension
- Other consequence deemed appropriate by school staff or the Board of Trustees

Serious Infractions

Disrespect

- Serious disrespect of a fellow student or students
- Serious disrespect of a faculty member, staff member, visitor, volunteer, school transportation provider, or other member of the school community
- Using an abusive, vulgar, or profane word or phrase

Not being where the student is supposed to be

- Cutting school, class, or required in-school or after-school activity (including detention, homework make-up, required tutoring, etc.)
- Departing, without permission, from class, floor, building, or school-sponsored activity
- Refusing to leave an area where the student is not supposed to be – or refusing to leave an area where the student is distracting others
- Obstructing or blocking vehicular or pedestrian traffic

Not following consequences

- Failing to comply with school-imposed consequences
- Disrupting Friday Extension, In-school suspension, or another significant consequence through misbehavior

Pattern of misbehavior

- Being removed from class/asked to report to the Executive Director's office, or other designated area during class more than one time in a given day
- Being removed from class/asked to report to the Executive Directors' office, or other designated area during class more than three times in a given week
- Excessive and/or repeated afterschool extensions
- Repeated offenses for which the student has already earned in-class or in-school suspension or other consequences

Other serious offenses

- Other breaches of the school's rules or values judged to be serious by the Executive Director
- This includes but is not limited to serious versions of issues listed under the infractions category

Serious Infractions: Range of School Responses, Interventions and Consequences

- Other consequence deemed appropriate by school staff or the Board of Trustees, including, but not limited to, consequences outlined for infractions
- In-school suspension
- Short-term out-of-school suspension

Major Offenses

Medication or Tobacco

- Using or possessing over-the-counter medication inappropriately
- Using, possessing or transferring tobacco products

Fleeing or blocking access

- Fleeing an area, which includes, but is not limited to, running around the classroom, running in the hallways or between floors away from adults, and running out of the building
- Blocking access to any part of the school building

Action that impairs the school's ability to function

- Action that seriously impairs the ability of the school to function, including, but not limited to, extreme language, refusal to move, intentionally sustained distracting behavior, or demeaning or intimidating speech

Damaging Property

- Damaging or destroying personal or school property – or attempting to do so
- Throwing, pushing, or moving furniture/classroom objects in an aggressive or upset manner
- Gross disrespect or destruction of school property, including graffiti

Abuse or Harassment

- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation
- Bullying, intimidation, hazing, threats, and/or harassment of another student

Physical Aggression

- Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
- Fighting, pushing, scratching, shoving, biting, punching, grabbing, slapping, kicking or any other unwanted physical contact – or any contact with the intent to hurt
- Any action that presents imminent threat to physical safety of self or others (see below for specifics)
- Throwing an object at another person or in the classroom
- Altering records
- Gross disrespect of a faculty member, staff member, visitor, volunteer, school transportation provider, or other member of the school community

Sexual Activity

- Engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching
- Indecent exposure

Endangering Others

- Creating a hazardous or offensive condition
- Setting off false alarms or calling in groundless threats

Gambling, Stealing, Lying, Forgery, Plagiarism

- Gambling
- Lying
- Stealing
- Forgery, plagiarism, or cheating, including forging of parental signatures

Other Major Offenses

- Other breaches of the school rules and values judged to be major offenses by the Executive Director

Major Offenses: Range of School Responses, Interventions and Consequences

- Other consequence deemed appropriate by school staff or the Board of Trustees, including, but not limited to, consequences outlined for serious infractions or infractions
- In-school suspension
- Short-term out-of-school suspension
- Long-term out-of-school suspension

Egregious Offenses

- Strong versions of major or serious offenses or other offenses judged by the Executive Director or regional superintendent to create an unsafe condition for other members the school community; strong individual acts of any offense listed under major offense will be considered an egregious offense; for example, strong acts of bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation of other students will be considered egregious offenses
- Repeated major offenses and/or repeated and fundamental disregard for school policies and procedures

- Possession, use, or transfer of drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances, including, but not limited to, illegal drugs (*e.g.*, marijuana), drug paraphernalia, prescription medication or alcohol, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- Sale or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances, including, but not limited to, illegal drugs (*e.g.*, marijuana), drug paraphernalia, prescription medication, tobacco or alcohol, on school grounds or at a school sponsored event
- Possession, use, or transfer of a firearm or weapon or mock weapon, including, but not limited to, the following: firearm, air gun, BB gun, knife, bludgeon (*e.g.*, metal knuckles), sling shot, explosives, dangerous chemicals, lighter, any sharp pointed instrument or other dangerous instrument intended as a weapon (*e.g.*, broken glass, baseball bat, etc.)
- Assault and/or use of extreme force against or an attempt to inflict serious injury upon another student or students, school personnel, or other member(s) of the school community.
- Sexual assault
- Physically assaulting a staff member or other adult members of the school community; this includes, but is not limited to hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, or pushing
- Significant destruction or attempted significant destruction of school property, including arson
- Student charged with or convicted of a felony that poses a continuing danger to persons or property or ongoing threat of serious disruption to the academic process
- Making bomb threats or violent verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
- Students with a protective order against them that is based on or involves violence, severe harassment, or threat of violence against another student of staff

Egregious Offenses: Range of School Responses, Interventions and Consequences

- Other consequence deemed appropriate by school staff or the Board of Trustees, including, but not limited to, consequences outlined for major offenses, serious infractions, or infractions
- In-school suspension
- Short-term out-of-school suspension
- Long-term out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion
- When an egregious offense occurs, both the Executive Director and regional superintendent should be notified immediately

In keeping with the Gun-Free Schools Act, it shall be the policy of the Board to suspend a student for one full calendar year whenever the student is in the possession of a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921(a). The Board shall modify the term of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Discipline for students with disabilities

In the case of a special education student, or a student who receives 504 accommodations, Forte Prep will ensure that it makes the necessary adjustments to comply with the mandates of State and federal laws, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973, regarding the discipline of students with disabilities. Prior to recommending expulsion for a Section 504 student or special education student, the Executive Director will convene a review committee to determine: whether the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his or her disability; whether the student was appropriately placed and receiving the appropriate services at the time of the misconduct; and/or whether behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the student's IEP or 504 Plan. If it is determined that the student's misconduct was not a manifestation of his or her disability, that the student was appropriately placed and

was receiving appropriate services at the time of the misconduct, and that the behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the students IEP, the student may be expelled.

We will ensure that all students who have a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) associated with their IEP are given all the support they require to be successful, including providing discipline aligned to that BIP. Our Student Supports Coordinator will manage the process of amending or modifying the BIP to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment for the student and the rest of the school community. Teachers will be trained during professional development days on how to effectively deliver individualized student behavior interventions by the Student Supports Coordinator at the beginning of the school year and whenever the BIP is modified.

Parent/Guardian and Staff Concerns

Concerns raised by parents/guardians should be resolved as quickly as possible. Therefore, parents or guardians of students of Forte Prep are urged to fill out a complaint form and discuss their concerns directly with the leadership team when concerns surface.

Complaint forms are available at the main office and will be forwarded to the Leadership Team. The Executive Director/Leadership Team will leverage the assistance of other members of the Leadership Team, staff, and/or student(s) in identifying specifics in order to gather information about the complaint, to continue investigation and/or to work toward resolution of the complaint. To aid in a timely investigation, monitoring, and logging of complaints, it is important that Forte Prep distribute the complaint policy and complaint form to staff via the staff handbook, to parents/guardians via the family handbook, and/or to the school community, if necessary, in order to satisfy complaint protocol and procedure needs.

The Executive Director shall provide a copy of the disposition to the Board of Trustees and to Charter Schools Institute upon request if and when a complaint resolution/decision has not satisfied the complainant and an appeals process has been initiated. A complaint about problems beyond the authority of the Forte Prep Leadership Team shall be forwarded to the Board of Trustees in a timely manner, but not to exceed ten (10) working days for resolution. Nonetheless, the school will maintain a complaint log when complaints are received.

Procedures

All complaints and responses shall be public records. Complainants or student(s) of complainant shall not be subject to retaliation as a result of the filing of a complaint. Complaints shall be processed in accordance with the steps below. In addition, any Title 1 complaints received shall be processed, resolved, and tracked in accordance with the steps below and will be identified as a Title 1 parent complaint.

Step 1: Filing the Complaint

Complaints are registered on the complaint form by Complainant. Complaints may also be verbally communicated with the Executive Director and/or appropriate Leadership Team member(s); however, a record of a complaint must be in written form as indicated. If for any reason a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing, the appropriate Leadership Team member(s) shall allow the complainant to record their complaint onto a recorder to be transcribed and/or translated and affirmed by the complainant. Complaint forms shall be available in the main office of the school. The complaint should state the date of the complaint and a detailed statement of the circumstances, and the requested remedy. A complainant may include as much text as he/she feels is necessary to explain the complaint. The complainant shall be

provided a copy of their complaint form and this complaint policy and procedure if complainant has not already received one.

Step 2: Investigation of the Complaint

Executive Director and/or appropriate Leadership Team member(s) will make all reasonable efforts to investigate complaint/problem within his/her authority. Investigation shall include, but not limited to: interviews with the complainant and/or complaint's representative and any other person(s) believed to have relevant knowledge concerning the complaint.

Step 3: Response and Final Decision

Executive Director and/or appropriate Leadership Team member(s) shall remedy a valid complaint within a reasonable time period but not to exceed ten (10) working days from the date the complaint was received. The Executive Director or appropriate Leadership Team member shall complete a written response/report within fifteen (15) working days of the initial filing and provide a copy to the complainant (if a response is requested by the complainant) as well as place a copy in the complaint log teacher/student file, if applicable.

The reported decision shall be written in English and in the language of the complainant whenever feasible or required by law.

The complainant's right to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint will not be affected by the complainant's pursuit of other remedies, such as the filing of a complaint with any outside entity.

Appeal Process

Forte Prep has provided the above as a procedure for resolving complaints brought by Forte Prep parents/guardians/staff/school community. However, Forte Prep understands that any individual or group may bring a complaint to the Board of Trustees of the School alleging a violation of the provisions of Article of Education Law (i.e. the New York State Charter Schools Act), the school's charter or any other provision of law relating to the management or operations of the charter school.

If a complaint is not able to be brought to resolution by the Forte Prep Leadership Team, then the complainant(s) has/have the right to bring the complaints to the Board of Trustees of the School during a regularly scheduled Board Meeting. In this case, the complainant(s) has the right to file a written appeal to the Board of Trustees within fifteen (15) days of receiving the decision that had been rendered by the Forte Prep Leadership Team.

Complaints received at least five business days in advance of a board meeting will be addressed at the next board meeting. Those complaints not received within that time period will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. Every effort will be made to respectfully address the matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group who presented the complaint. The Board of Trustees, as necessary, shall direct the Executive Director and/or other responsible party to act upon the complaint and report to the Board. The Board shall render a determination in writing, as necessary.

If, after presentation of complaint to the Board of Trustees of the School, the individual or group determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the complaint to the SUNY Charter School Institute, which shall investigate and respond, if so determined by

them. If, after presentation of complaint to SUNY Charter School Institute, the individual or group determines that SUNY Charter School Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the case to the SUNY Board of Trustees, which shall investigate and respond, if so determined by them. SUNY Charter School Institute and the Board of Regents have the power to take appropriate remedial action, if so determined.

Cheating, Plagiarism and Copying Other's Work

Cheating on homework or exams, using resources inappropriately, and copying other people's work is not only unfair, it also means that a student is not actually learning the material. If students are unsure about an assignment, a test question, or a testing procedure, they should go to their teacher and ask for direction. Specific guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism will be reviewed with students during Student Orientation and throughout the year. The school will determine appropriate consequences, but cheating, plagiarism, and copying other's work may result in loss of academic credit, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and/or other consequences.

Student Searches

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Forte Prep staff reserve the right to conduct searches of students and their property when there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated the law or a school rule. If searches are conducted, the school will make every effort to ensure that the privacy of the students is respected and that students and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search.

The school authorizes the Executive Director and the Executive Director's designee(s) to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the school's Code of Conduct or otherwise constituted a threat to the health, safety, welfare, or morals of the school, other students, school personnel, or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function. Additional searches may be warranted in certain situations related to school safety. In authorizing searches, the school acknowledges both state and federal constitutional rights which are applicable to personal searches of students and searches of their possessions.

Reasonable individualized suspicion to conduct a search of a student or a student's possessions, and the scope of the particular search shall be based upon, among other things, the student's age, the prevalence and seriousness of the problem to which the search is directed, the urgency necessitating an immediate search, and the probative value and reliability of information used as justification for the search.

Students should have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, cubbies, desks, or other school storage places.

Transportation, Arrival, & Dismissal

Bus Transportation

The DOE Office of Pupil Transportation will provide bus transportation to all students who are eligible for it. In order to be eligible for bus services, the Office of Pupil Transportation automatically calculates a student's distance from the school.

	Less than 0.5 mile	0.5 mile or more, but less than 1 mile	1 mile or more, but less than 1.5 miles	1.5 miles or more
5 th grade	Not eligible	Half-fare	School bus or full fare metrocard	School bus or full fare metrocard
6 th grade	Not eligible	Half-fare	School bus or full fare metrocard	School bus or full fare metrocard
7 th and 8 th grade	Not eligible	Metrocard	Metrocard	Metrocard

Bus conduct

Busing for Forte Prep is provided by the local school district. Unsafe behavior on the bus endangers our students, and it will not be tolerated. A pattern of unsafe behavior may result in loss of bus privileges.

Bus drivers must focus on the road to make sure all students arrive to school and home safely. At dismissal, students should go directly to their bus, greet the bus driver, and have a seat. On the bus, students must remain in their seats, talk quietly, and follow all directions given by the bus driver. Students should not communicate with students on other buses or any people outside the bus. Students who behave poorly on the bus compromise the safety of themselves and others. Poor bus behavior may result in suspension or termination of transportation services. If your child is suspended from the bus, it will be your responsibility to arrange for alternative transportation. Remember: our Code of Conduct applies to the buses as well!

NYC MTA Metrocard

If a student wishes to take public transportation, a Metrocard will be provided to the student based on distance eligibility. A student will not receive a Metrocard AND a yellow bus seat, they will have to choose between one or the other.

Car transportation

For families who choose to drive their children to school, they will be directed to drop the child off directly in front of the building. **Families should not, under any circumstances, drop their child off across the street and instruct them to cross the middle of Reeder Street.** This is for the safety of all students. To reduce congestion, parents are encouraged to consider the school bus whenever feasible. Parents are also encouraged to arrange carpools with others families to reduce the number of vehicles traveling to school. Students who are dropped off will line up along the side entrance to the school before 7:40. All late arrivals will enter the building through the main entrance.

Walkers

Students who walk to school accompanied with a parent must follow the Forte Prep Code of Conduct at all times. Parents will leave their children at the front gate of the school, and will not be able to enter the building with their children unless they have an urgent health emergency to address.

Afternoon dismissal

Students will be dismissed from the building at 4:15pm. Families who wish to pick up their children will be permitted to wait outside of the building, but will not enter the building during dismissal procedures.

Inclement weather

Forte Prep follows the same school-closing policy as the New York City Department of Education (the "NYCDOE"). Therefore, if the NYCDOE makes an announcement regarding the delay of opening, closing, or early dismissal of students, Forte Prep will adhere to those same decisions. Instructional time that is lost as a result may be made up by adding an equal number of days to what was scheduled to the end of the school year. This decision will be made by the Executive Director.

The Chancellor or Deputy Chancellor of Operations will announce the city-wide decision to close schools (including the cancellation of after-school activities) on days of inclement weather or other city-wide emergency conditions after consultation with the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, the Weather Bureau, the City Sanitation Department, the City Transit Authority and other appropriate agencies. The city-wide decision will be made as early as possible prior to 5:00 AM on the affected day.

The NYCDOE's Office of Communications and Media Relations will notify the Associated Press news wire service and radio and television stations as soon as possible prior to 5:00 AM. All relevant information will also be posted on the NYCDOE website (<http://schools.nyc.gov>), in addition to NYCDOE social media outlets (<https://twitter.com/nycschools> and <https://facebook.com/NYCschools>). School staff and parents are advised to check the NYCDOE website, listen to information broadcasts by local radio and television stations, and/or call 311.

Notifying the School of Transportation Changes

Please arrange transportation home before your child leaves for school in the morning. Students will not be allowed to call home to check if they are being picked up. If you need to pick up your child from school and your child usually rides the bus, or if you must otherwise change your child's transportation for that day, please do one of the following:

- ***Be at the school at dismissal time*** – All bus riders are walked to the buses daily. If you need to pick up your child instead of them getting on the bus, you should be at the school at dismissal to be able to pick up your child as he/she is in the bus line. If you are not here by the time the buses leave, your child will be sent on the bus.
- ***Send in a note***– Send a note to school with your child detailing the change in plans and providing a clear description of who will pick up your child.
- ***In an emergency, call the school***– If you or your family is having a medical emergency that requires a change in your child's transportation plans, please call the school immediately to make arrangements. **The school does not accept transportation change requests by telephone except in the case of an emergency.** If your child normally rides the bus and you wish to pick him or her up from school and you did not notify the school in writing that

morning, you must meet your child at the school at dismissal time or provide your student with written notification to the main office that s/he is allowed to take public transportation home or leave with someone other than a parent or guardian.

Late Pickup From School

Students who are picked up by their parents or another adult at the end of the school day are expected to be picked up promptly at the end of the school day (4:15 PM for regular dismissal and 1:10 PM on Wednesdays). Students who ride the bus must have an approved adult meet the child at the bus stop daily. When a parent comes late to pick up their children (or is not at the bus stop at the specified time), it makes the job of our already very hard-working school staff even harder. The school will log late pick-ups daily. Parents of students who have three or more late pick-ups in a trimester or six or more in a year may be required to have an in-person meeting with the Executive Director. If a parent is more than an hour late picking up his/her child, the school reserves the right to take the child to the local police precinct for safe supervision.

Visitor & Volunteer Requirements

Visitor sign in

Without exception, all adult visitors to the Forte Prep campus must carry a valid photo ID in order to sign in and obtain a printed visitor's badge. These badges must be worn on the visitor's shirt at all times. If a parent or guardian is simply picking up or dropping off their child it is not necessary to obtain a visitor's badge. However, if a parent or guardian intends to visit any part of the campus besides the main office after 8:00 AM, he or she must first obtain a visitor's badge. The sign-in sheet is located in the main office. You will also have to sign in when you enter the A Child's Place entrance to the building.

Classroom visitation policy

Please be mindful that teachers are very busy in the mornings preparing for your child's day. Your child's teacher will likely be unavailable to engage with you for a long period of time. If you visit a classroom, please stand silently in the back of the room to observe with your phone on silent. You are encouraged to set up an appointment with your child's teacher to discuss any concerns, rather than trying to address them during arrival and dismissal.

Requirements for School volunteers

School volunteers must meet the following requirements:

- Provide full name and date of birth to be searched on the U.S. Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website
- Always wear a visitor badge
- Maintain confidentiality about students
- Model Forte Prep's core values
- Obtain an updated background check every three years.

Health & Nutrition

School Nursing Services

All staff will be trained in CPR, AED, and basic first aid. Our Operations staff will be responsible for checking all health records to be certain that each student is properly immunized. The School is required by law to have a completed health form on file for every student within 14 days of a child attending our school. The health form documents the vaccinations that a child has received to date. If you have not received this form from the school, please contact the school's Operations Manager immediately.

Medications

If your child requires medication during school hours, please contact our Operations Manager to request a Medical Administration Form (MAF). Medication cannot be administered to your child until your child's physician has completed the form. This is a requirement of the Health Department and pertains to all medicine, including aspirin, Tylenol, and other over-the-counter medicines.

Illness/injury at school

A student who becomes ill or injured while at school will be referred to a member of the emergency response team, and a parent/guardian will be contacted. If deemed necessary, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the student. For minor injuries (minor cuts and scrapes, bruises, etc.), the student will receive first-aid treatment and be returned to class. Any major or life-threatening injuries will be immediately referred to New York Emergency Medical Services (911) for transportation to the hospital. Parents and guardians will be notified immediately after EMS has been summoned.

AED

The school maintains an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in the hallway closest to the student entrance on the north side of the building. This device is used in case of cardiac arrest. A trained staff member will administer the AED if necessary.

Breakfast and Lunch

Forté Prep offers free breakfast, lunch and snack, which is provided by SchoolFood. Students may bring a healthy bag breakfast or lunch if they choose not to eat the school breakfast or lunch. Students may not bring any candy, soda/ pop/cold drinks or other food considered unhealthy (typically food with high sugar content and/or limited nutritional value). Students with these foods will be instructed to put the food away and be given a healthy school-provided breakfast or lunch option. Due to possible food allergies, students must not share or trade food in the cafeteria. All school meals are provided free of charge to all students, regardless of their ability to pay. This is subject to change at any time.

School food accommodations

Students with food allergies or dietary restrictions may request alternative breakfast and lunch options. These options include vegetarian, gluten free, and dairy free. Vegetarian and dairy free meals are available without a doctor's note, however a doctor's note is required to provide gluten-free meals. To request a food service accommodation, please contact the Director of Operations.

School Safety

Single point of entry

To maintain security, all staff, students and visitors must enter through the school's main entrance, which is also the main entrance of A Child's Place. No visitors may enter the school building via any other entrance. Visitors must exit the school via the main entrance. The emergency exit doors are clearly marked and should not be used except in case of an emergency.

Authorized pick-up persons

To ensure the safety of your child, only those adults who are listed as emergency contacts on your child's school record may pick up your child from the school's main office. Please ensure that your child's records list the two adults who are most likely to pick up your child from the office.

Search policy

A student and his or her possessions can be searched if there is a reasonable suspicion that the student violated the law or the Student Behavioral Expectations. A school leader or teacher may seize any item that is illegal or violates school rules, including weapons or drugs. Students' desks or other school property can be searched without notice at any time and for any reason.

Emergencies

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the school either by phone or in person. Under no circumstance should parents or guardians contact students in their classrooms, including after school, or attempt to remove students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the school office.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures

Please note that some procedures may change once the school year has officially begun. Students will be notified of and trained in any significant changes.

In case of emergency, if a student or staff member sees fire or smells smoke, he/she should immediately close the door and notify an administrator or teacher. Upon hearing an alarm, school staff will assemble students in their rooms and proceed out of the building according to the fire evacuation plan posted in each room. Students should follow the direction of staff members who will verify the safety of the stairwells and lead students outside the building to the designated locations, where school staff will line up students by class and take attendance.

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

In case of a more serious emergency, should it be necessary to evacuate our school before, during, or after the school day – and it appears that we will be unable to return to the school for an extended period of time or for the rest of the day – school staff and students will evacuate according to the school's evacuation

plan. Staff will line up students in a safe and orderly fashion on the sidewalks outside the evacuation site. After staff takes attendance, should conditions permit, all staff and students will return promptly to school. If the school is off limits, the school has a designated congregation point where all staff and students will gather.

General School Policies

Dress code

Forte Preparatory Academy Charter School (“Forte Prep”) will require and enforce a uniform policy for every day of the school’s academic calendar. Students will be required to wear their uniform on all school field trips. Uniforms create a sense of unity, equality, and professionalism for students and for the Forte Prep community. The Forte Prep uniform always includes required shirt, pants, belt, socks and shoes.

Item	Requirements
Shirt/Top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th Grade: Lime green polo shirt with the Forte Preparatory Academy logo • 6th Grade: Dark green polo shirt with Forte Preparatory Academy logo • 7th Grade: Black polo • 8th Grade: White polo • Hunter green crewneck sweatshirt with Forte Preparatory Academy logo during cold months
Pants/bottom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey slacks with belt loops (preferably from Student Styles Uniform Company or French Toast) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No pockets anywhere on the leg ○ No visible logos ○ No jean or corduroy material ○ Not too loose or too tight ○ Must be worn at or above the hip line • Black belt, either with holes or braided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No studs, designs or extra notches
Socks/Shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black, grey, or white socks – no logos or markings of any other color are permitted • All black shoes – no logos or markings of any other color are permitted
Jewelry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No jewelry except one pair of stud earrings not to go below the earlobe
Gym uniform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will wear the same top for gym

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can choose to wear the same uniform pants or Forte Prep grey sweatpants for gym. They can only wear gym uniform pants on the days that they have gym.
Hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple elastic hair ties may be used • No hats

Our uniform never includes tattoos, fake tattoos, any sort of visible writing on the skin, hats, kerchiefs, bandanas, other head coverings which do not have a religious purpose, or outer garments such as hoodies or sweatshirts, **unless provided by Forte Prep.**

Uniform Cost

Every family who attends all required orientation activities will receive from Forte Prep one full uniform set with the exception of belt, socks, and shoes. We intend to raise money through private philanthropy to cover this cost. Families will be required to purchase additional uniform items through vendors approved by Forte Prep. Families who are unable to afford additional uniform items may request a voucher to purchase additional required items (e.g. to replace a damaged item).

Enforcing Dress Code Policy

At Forte Prep, we are committed to maximizing every student’s time spent on learning. Thus, we will implement an efficient uniform process that maintains the integrity of our vision while getting students into the classroom quickly. If a student comes to school out of dress code, they will receive a demerit and be sent to the Main Office or Dean of Students office in future years to receive a spare item. This item must be returned at the end of the school day. Students who break uniform policy more than once in a week will be required to call their parents, who may be required to bring the missing Dress Code item to the school, or authorize the student to return home to retrieve the necessary items. Parents will be reminded of the Dress Code Policy in any communication regarding uniform infractions.

Students who are suspended may come to school in full uniform between 3:00 and 3:30pm to collect their homework to avoid late marks. Students who come outside of the designated time, or without complete uniform, will not receive their work, and will receive zeros on those assignments that are not submitted on time.

Tops

Green short sleeve shirt with white and dark green embroidered logo: Purchased from Student Styles



Sweaters & Sweatshirts

Dark or Lime green crewneck or hooded sweatshirt with white and dark green embroidered logo: Purchased from Student Styles



DK GREEN/ON LIME



WHITE/ON DK GREEN

Belt

Solid Black. No embellishments.



Bottoms

Grey twill pants: Must be purchased from student styles



Shoes

Black sneakers: Sneakers must be ALL BLACK and meet the following criteria:

- All logos or designs must be black
- Sides of soles must be black
- Laces must be all black
- Sneakers must not contain shiny material of any kind

Backpacks

No rolling suitcase style backpacks are permitted.

School supplies

Forte Prep is excited to provide all students with all of the tools they need to be successful in school. Students will always have the pencils and paper they need to be successful. Every student will receive pencils, pens, a calculator, and a Chromebook computer to use during the school day. We'd like parents to be a part of that preparation, too. At the beginning of the school year, families will be responsible for providing the following items:

- 2 boxes of Kleenex tissues
- 1 container of Lysol wipes
- 1 composition notebook, marble ruled, 100 pages
- 2 sets of sticky notes

Textbooks, library books, and other instructional supplies loaned to students must be returned in good condition at the end of the school year. Parents/ Guardians will be held responsible for the cost of replacement of lost or damaged textbooks, library books, or other instructional supplies.

Field Trips

Forte Prep students take several field trips throughout the school year. In your registration forms, you completed a local field trip permission slip form. This permission slip will be maintained in the student's file for all field trips in the student's file. A permission slip signed by a parent/guardian is required for any student to take part in other, larger scale field trips out of the city or out of the state. Notification of said field trips will be sent home no later than 48 hours in advance of the trip, with the opportunity for a parent/guardian to let the school know if they do not want their child to attend. Any parent or guardian wishing to attend a field trip must have a background check on file with our Operations Manager.

Records Release

Parents/Guardians may inspect their child's education record in accordance with the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Forte Prep student records can only be released at the written request of a parent or legal guardian with proper documentation on file. Education records will be produced within five (5) business days of receiving the request. To request general records, contact the Operations Manager. For Special Education records, contact the Student Supports Coordinator.

Cell Phones

Students wishing to bring cell phones to school must keep them in their backpacks during the school day. Cell phones must be kept in silent or vibrate mode. Cell phones brought into the classroom will be collected by teachers or other school staff and returned only to a student's parent/guardian. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones.

Valuable Items

Students should not bring money or expensive items, such as jewelry, cameras, watches, electronic devices, etc., to school. Students--not the school--are responsible for their personal items. Inappropriate items will be collected by teachers or other school staff and returned only to a student's parent/guardian. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen valuable items.

Toys

Personal toys **-including fidget spinners-** are not allowed at Forte Prep at any time. Toys brought into the classroom will be collected by teachers or other school staff and returned only to a student's parent/guardian.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays at Forte Prep in a very special way. All Forte Prep students' birthdays will be officially celebrated during the first Community Meeting of the month if their birthday falls in that month, and in June for June, July and August birthdays. Families wishing to bring a special treat to school on a child's birthday may do so during the afternoon before 2pm, but prior arrangements must be made with the classroom teacher and enough treats must be brought to be shared among the child's class. All serving utensils (plates, cups, napkins, eating utensils, serving utensils) must be provided by the child's family. The school will not provide any of these items. To ensure student safety, only disposable utensils should be used. Goodie bags and classroom parties are not permitted. Invitations for birthday (or other celebratory) activities off site may only be distributed in school if the family invites every child in the student's respective classroom. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

Lost and Found Items

Parents must label all of their child's clothing, books, and all personal items using permanent marker or other type of permanent label. Found items will be placed in the Lost and Found bin in the main office. The school is not responsible for any lost clothing or any other personal articles.

Student Computer and Internet Use Policy

Forte Prep uses computers, networks and Internet services, as one way of enhancing its mission to provide all of our students with the academic and character skills they need to graduate from top colleges, to succeed in a competitive world and to serve as the next generation of leaders in our communities.

The following rules are intended to provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited computer and Internet uses, but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by users. Failure to comply with Forte Prep's Student Computer and Internet Use Policy and these rules may result in loss of computer and Internet privileges, and/or legal and disciplinary action.

A. Use is a Privilege

Student use of Forte Prep's computers, networks and Internet services is a privilege. No one will deliberately or willfully cause damage to computer equipment, network resources, or assist another in doing the same.

B. Acceptable Use

Student access to Forte Prep's computers, networks and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the curriculum and instructional goals. The same rules and expectations govern student conduct and communication on computers and online services. Students are expected to comply with these rules and all specific instructions from staff members when accessing computers and network resources.

C. Prohibited Use

The student is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving school computers, networks and Internet services, and for his/her information, files, passwords and accounts. Examples of unacceptable uses that are prohibited include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Accessing Inappropriate Materials - Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning or displaying materials that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal
2. Illegal Activities - Using computers, networks and Internet services for any illegal activity or that violates other Forte Prep policies, procedures and/or school rules
3. Violating Copyrights - Copying or downloading copyrighted material without the owner's permission
4. Plagiarism - Representing as one's own work any material obtained on the Internet
5. Copying Software/Media Files - Copying or downloading software without the authorization of the system administrator; illegally downloading music, photos, movies or other such files
6. Non-School Related Uses - Using the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services for non-school-related purposes such as private financial gain; commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes
7. Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access - Sharing passwords, using other users' passwords without permission and/or accessing other user accounts
8. Malicious Use/Vandalism - Any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services, including but not limited to hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses
9. Unauthorized access to Social Networking/Chat Rooms/News Groups - Accessing social networking sites or software, chat rooms or news groups without specific authorization from the supervising teacher

D. No Expectation of Privacy

Forte Prep retains control, custody, and supervision of all computers, networks and Internet services owned or leased by Forte Prep. Forte Prep reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by students. Students have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, software accounts, Internet services, email, and stored files. Each person will respect the rights of others to the protection of the files they store on a computer and will not alter or damage such files or accounts.

Cyber Bullying

The law defines “cyber bullying” as the use of digital information and communication devices to willfully and repeatedly hurt either a person or persons through the medium of electronic text, photos, or videos. Examples of this behavior include, but are not limited to:

- *Sending false, cruel or vicious messages.*
- *Creating websites that have stories, cartoons, pictures, or jokes ridiculing others.*
- *Breaking into an email account and sending vicious or embarrassing materials to others.*
- *Engaging someone in electronic communication, tricking that person into revealing sensitive personal information and forwarding that information to others.*
- *Posting/sharing of a student’s picture without his/her permission.*

The online activities and technologies often used by students engaged in cyber bullying include, but are not limited to, social networking sites, chat rooms and discussion groups, instant messaging, text messaging, computers, cell phones and personal digital devices, digital cameras, cell phone cameras, and webcams. As new technologies emerge, they too may be included with the above forms of electronic communication.

Communication

The school will inform students annually of procedures for reporting bullying, including cyber bullying, either by including this policy in the Family/Student Handbook or by other means.

Statement of Understanding

By signing this, students indicate that they have received and read a copy of Forte Prep's Family Handbook and understand and agree to the rules, regulations, and procedures of the school. Student signatures further show that students understand that if they ever have any questions regarding school policies, they can always ask their parent/guardian or other member of the school community for a further explanation.

By signing this, parents indicate that they have received and read a copy of Forte Prep's Family Handbook and understand and agree to the rules, regulations, and procedures of the school. Parent signatures further show that parents understand that if they ever have any questions regarding school policies, they can always ask a teacher or staff member for further clarification.

Student Name

Parent / Guardian Name

Student Signature

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

Date

A signed copy of the Statement of Understanding is due one week after receipt of the Handbook.

We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to partnering with you as a member of the Forte Prep community.

