



EDCO Youth Alternative

**STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2009-2010**

**650 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 262-9562**

www.edcoyouthalternative.com

Philosophy

The EDCO Youth Alternative (EYA) is an educational program devoted to working individually with high school students to help them grow and meet their goals in life, beginning with a high school diploma. EYA staff believes that given the right setting and enough time, students can learn and change. In order to realize this belief, the EDCO staff works to provide an environment that stimulates:

- Respect for one's self and others
- Honesty and open communication
- Personal responsibility for one's actions and progress
- Non-violent and thoughtful resolution of difficulties
- Tolerance for individual differences
- Value for academic skills
- Development of problem-solving and long-term planning skills

These are high ideals, which do not occur spontaneously. The EDCO staff uses the following strategies to accomplish these ideals:

- Establishing high but realistic expectations for achievement
- Confronting all issues immediately as they arise
- Providing students with professional counseling
- Using the help of parents and outside agencies
- Accurately and honestly describing goals and discussing the consequences of student's actions
- Respecting students and expecting respect in return
- Enforcing rules in a fair and flexible way

The EYA has a tradition of caring for and respecting its students. Students are encouraged to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially. All members of the EDCO Youth Alternative community (staff and students) should expect to feel safe and should expect that their person, property, and opinions will be respected. EDCO staff and students are expected to contribute to creating an atmosphere of trust. The EDCO Youth Alternative has been a setting where staff and students respect rules and common decency. EDCO staff will always try to strike a balance between the rights of individual students and the general good of all students and staff.

The EDCO Youth Alternative does not discriminate based on a student's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. All students have equal access to enrollment, courses and activities at the EYA.

EDCO's Harassment Policy is at the end of this handbook.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

SCHOOL CALENDAR:

The EDCO Youth Alternative follows the 180 school day requirement established by the State of Massachusetts. EDCO follows the Boston Public School schedule. If you have any questions about scheduled school days, consult the School Coordinator or Program Director.

PROGRAM/SCHOOL HOURS:

The EDCO Youth Alternative is a full-time program with classes from 8:30 to 12:30. This time allows for a 5 period schedule with 45 minutes for each class (adjusted for labs and in-class projects) and one 20-minute break each day. Students will be given their schedule of classes at their final orientation session. Students may be required to remain at EDCO after 12:30 for detention and/or Period 6. Detention begins immediately after the end of classes at 12:30 and ends at 12:45. Students are not allowed to leave the building between the regular class day and detention. Period 6 (12:45-1:30) is a time when students may be required to stay to: (1) participate in tutoring, (2) prepare for MCAS, (3) meet with the academic/Wediko counselor or other EDCO staff or (4) complete life-after-EDCO planning activities. As a full-time program, the EYA monitors students' after school activities such as employment, sports etc.

ATTENDANCE:

Boston Public School attendance expectations apply at EDCO. Regular attendance is required to pass classes. Students should be absent only for personal illness or hospitalization, family emergencies, court appearances etc. Parents/guardians should call EDCO (617-262-9562) if their child will be absent. Students must bring a note from their parent/guardian, doctor, etc. which includes the date(s) of the absence(s), an explanation of the reason for the absence(s) and a telephone number to verify the note. EDCO staff verifies all excuses and determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Students should make sure that when they arrive at school they are noticed by the attendance taker. Students are expected to arrive on time for their first period class. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child is absent.

Some parents/guardians think that any absence will be excused as long as the parent sends a note. This is not true. Here are a few examples of unexcused absences (UA's) even if the parent sends a note:

- (1) Student needed to baby-sit.
- (2) Repetitive and chronic absence due to illness or injury; In these cases, the parent must submit a letter from a health care provider verifying that the student was too sick or injured to go to school in order for the absence to be excused.
- (3) Extension of a religious or cultural holiday beyond the designated day(s) on the school calendar
- (4) Family vacation.
- (5) Trip(s) to visit distant relatives.

Attendance Definitions and Requirements:

- 1) Students who arrive by 8:25 will be marked Present (**P**).
There will be 5 minutes of homeroom in the Period 1 class (8:25-8:30).
- 2) Students who arrive after 8:26 will be marked Tardy (**T**).
- 3) Students who arrive between 8:26 and 8:40 will go directly to Period 1.
- 4) Once students enter EDCO after school starts (8:25) they are not permitted to leave to return later. [For example, a student who enters at 8:41 may not leave to return at 9:15.]
- 5) Students who arrive after 8:40 will be required to wait for the start of the next period to enter class.
- 6) Students who must wait for the start of the next class must follow the directions of the Wediko counselor and/or the EDCO administrators. Students will be expected to sit quietly and may not go into any classes or the computer rooms. Students may have drinks but may not eat.
- 7) Students must attend three (3) full 45-minute classes to be marked present for the day.

[The EYA uses Verizon time available at 617-637-1234.]

“Constructively present (CP)” is a designation used for students who are absent from school for school related business (e.g. physical examination for BPS working papers, signing out of a home school, etc.). CP's are counted as P's for attendance totals. The director grants approval for a "CP". All visits to a home school must be approved in advance by the program director.

Excessive Absences and the BPS “NC” policy

1. Any student with more than three unexcused absences in a marking term will receive a grade of "NC" (no credit) for the term if the student otherwise earned a passing grade. If the student has not earned a passing grade, s/he will receive an "F" for the term.
2. If a student receives an "NC" for one or more marking terms, but does not exceed twelve unexcused absences for the year, the "NC" will be converted at the end of the school year to the grade the student would have otherwise received.
3. A student cannot get an NC for the final, end-of-year grade.
 1. If the student has more than twelve unexcused absences for the year but has otherwise passed the course for the year, s/he may earn a passing grade and credit for the course only by passing the final exam for the course at the end of the year.
 2. If the student has more than twelve unexcused absences for the year and has done failing work, s/he will receive an "F" for the year.

[Attendance and BPS Summer School: Students who have more than forty (30) absences (including excused and unexcused) during the school year are not eligible to take BPS summer school courses. Other eligibility rules apply too.]

EARLY DISMISSAL:

Early dismissal is granted by the program director in special circumstances. When students are dismissed before attending three full classes their attendance will be counted as an absence. Students are expected to make-up the work that they miss.

CUT-OUT:

The EDCO Youth Alternative premises are on the 3rd floor of 650 Beacon Street. Students may not leave the EYA premises for any part of the class day without authorized permission. If a student leaves without permission, s/he has a cutout. Students may not leave the building to put money in parking meters. Between the end of classes (12:30) and the start of after class activities (12:45) students may leave the building. **Students are not permitted to leave the building before serving a detention.** It is a cutout if a student is scheduled for after class activities and does not return on time. A written warning is given the first time a student cuts-out. The second time a student cuts-out, s/he will be suspended and a meeting with a parent/guardian must occur to review the student's commitment to the expectations of the EDCO program.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

EDCO Youth Alternative classes will be canceled when the Boston Public Schools' high schools close for inclement weather. Please listen to the radio or watch early morning TV news reports for the listing of public schools that are closed because of inclement weather. If there is a delayed start to school for Boston Public Schools then EDCO will start school at 9:15 a.m.

GENERAL RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

The rules and expectations of the EDCO Youth Alternative (EYA) are designed to create a safe and comfortable environment in which students learn and progress on their education and career goals. Students are encouraged to review these rules carefully and make a commitment to live with them when they enroll in the EYA. Students are encouraged to ask questions to ensure that they understand all of the rules and expectations fully.

The EYA Student Handbook will define expected behavior by indicating what rules exist; by encouraging students to meet those expectations by following the rules; and by describing steps that will be taken if students break the rules. All rules and expectations of the EYA are in effect at all times, including at activities outside of the site at 650 Beacon Street.

There are many rules, which apply to all parts of the EDCO Youth Alternative program. In addition to these rules, teachers may also have specific classroom rules individualized to their classes and/or subjects. All classroom rules will be posted in the class so that they are visible at all times.

RESPONSE TO STAFF REQUESTS:

The authority of EDCO staff members is essential to creating a safe and predictable environment that is conducive to an effective educational setting; therefore, students must respectfully respond to staff directives and requests. For example, if a teacher asks or directs a student to leave a classroom, the student is required to do so. Once the student follows the staff person's request, s/he may present any complaints about that request outside the classroom or separate from the situation with a counselor or EDCO administrator. EDCO has a policy of responding to student complaints by encouraging students to request meetings with the EDCO staff member to present their grievances.

This rule is essential to the smooth running of the EYA. Students will be suspended for not responding to staff requests.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to remain awake and alert during class time. Students are not allowed to sleep in class at any time. Students are expected to be engaged in all class activities. They are expected to have their eyes open and visible at all times. Students are expected to refrain from carrying on non-school-related conversations during class time. Sleeping and side-conversations do not allow for a serious classroom environment, interfering with each student's education as well as the education of the other students in the room.

CELLULAR PHONES:

Cellular phones are often a distraction to students and staff. The EYA cell phone policy is modeled on the Boston Public Schools policy and is designed to ensure that the use of cell phones does not interfere with the serious learning environment of the EYA.

The use of cell phones for any purpose—including telephone calls, text messaging, taking photos, using a calculator, and other functions—**is not permitted at any time on school grounds**. Cell phones must be turned completely off (not simply on silent or vibrate mode) during the school day. Cell phones may be stored in a cell phone case or pouch, but otherwise must be kept out of sight. Students are not permitted to charge cell phones at EDCO. If they wish, students may voluntarily check their phones at the front desk where they are kept in a locked cabinet. If a parent/guardian, worksite, or daycare needs to speak with a student, they should call EDCO and we will gladly get the student to take the call. Any cell phone use after 12:30 needs to be cleared with an EDCO staff person and monitored by that person.

If a student is found to be in violation of this policy, penalties will be as follows:
First offense—The student's cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day. Staff will call home to notify the parent/guardian of the student's violation of the policy. Second offense—The student's cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day. The student will be placed on a contract requiring him/her to either leave cell phones at home or to check them at the front desk for the entire school day. Third offense—The student's cell phone will be confiscated and a meeting with the student's parent/guardian must take place to review the student's commitment to the expectations of the EYA program.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA DEVICES:

The EYA permits the use of electronic games (Playstation Portable, Nintendo DS, etc.) and music players (iPods, CD players, etc.) before classes begin, at break-time, and after the end of the class day or commitments for the day. Cell phones that act as mp3 players are treated as cell phones. All of these items and all headphones etc. must be kept out of sight. If students do not keep it/them out of sight, they will be required to check the item(s) at the front desk. Improper use will result in detention and/or a contract.

DRESS POLICY:

Students may not wear hoods or sunglasses in classes. Hats, caps and other head coverings are allowed, as long as the student's face, including the eyes, are visible at all times. Clothing etc. decorated with themes relating to violence or weapons, drugs and/or vulgarity are not permitted to be visible at EDCO.

Students may not display any gang colors or clothing, including bandanas and gang related hats.

TELEPHONES:

EYA telephones are for business use only. To make a telephone call students must have an administrator approve the call and enter the call in the telephone log. Telephone calls should be made during breaks. If students must use a telephone during class time, they must get permission for the call in advance. Incoming telephone calls to students are permitted in emergency situations. Telephone books, not 411, are to be used to find telephone numbers.

EATING AND DRINKING IN CLASS:

A light breakfast (granola bars, cereal, juice) is provided free of charge to EDCO students from 8:00 AM to 8:25 AM.

Students who are admitted to their first period class (arrive at school prior to 8:41 AM) are permitted to eat food during first period (8:30 – 9:15 AM). If a student's breakfast interferes with their ability to complete the class assignment, teachers have the right to request that students put their food away.

If a student arrives after 8:40 AM, they are not permitted to eat food while waiting for period 2. Given that students are not permitted to leave once they come upstairs, students should be aware of their arrival time if they are expecting to eat food first period. After first period, students are not permitted to eat food (including candy) during class time.

Only drinks and gum are allowed. Drinks and gum may not interfere with the teacher's running of the classroom. Staff may give detention if drinks/gum become a distraction to the class. Students are allowed to eat in the school building prior to the start of homeroom at 8:25, during break, and at the end of the school day.

ELEVATOR:

Mature and appropriate behavior is required on the elevator. Individual students or all students may be prohibited from using it if it is not kept clean or not used properly.

BATHROOM FACILITIES:

Students are expected to use bathrooms during their break or with the teacher's permission during class time. Students will need a bathroom pass during class time. Teachers are to allow only 1 student at a time to leave class to use the bathroom. You may not smoke in the bathrooms at any time.

LEAVING CLASS:

Leaving class is allowed only with the teacher's permission. Students are expected to have a pass with them if they are out of class. If a student leaves class frequently, his/her teacher will address that behavior individually. If a student would like to leave the class for any reason other than to use the bathroom or get a drink of water, s/he needs to check-in with a Wediko counselor or an administrator. Students are not allowed to go into a classroom other than their assigned class for any reason. Students who believe they need to go into another class for any reason must first check-in with a counselor or administrator for help.

PERSONAL PROPERTY:

Personal property is each person's responsibility. Students, who choose to leave their coat or other belongings in classrooms, offices, etc., do so at their own risk. The EDCO Youth Alternative is not responsible for personal items left in classrooms, offices or hallways. Students should have the teacher's permission and in any case must seek the assistance of the Wediko counselor or an EDCO administrator to get coats, jackets etc. from the coat-racks.

AREAS THAT ARE OFF-LIMITS TO STUDENTS:

The following areas are off-limits to students without a staff person: the counseling room (except when making an authorized telephone call), the director's office, the school coordinator office, the copying room (unless students are using the refrigerator or microwave before 8:25 or at break) and any items in those areas.

VISITORS:

Visitors are not allowed at the EYA. [If students have a friend or family member who is interested in the EYA, the friend should call the school coordinator to initiate the intake process.]

LOITERING:

Loitering (standing or hanging around) is not permitted directly in front of the building, in the lobby, or in the stairwell during school. Students should remember that Kenmore Square is a business and residential area and EDCO must be a responsible part of that community. Therefore, **EDCO student behavior while students are in the Kenmore Square area is the business of EDCO Youth Alternative.** Please do not spit in the vicinity of EDCO. While we encourage students to give their business to the stores in the area, we expect EDCO students will not linger/hang out in Kenmore Square beyond school hours.

Once school has started, students must come upstairs. EDCO policy prohibits students smoking, loitering, lingering, hanging out, chillin' on the EDCO side of Kenmore Square past 8:25. Detention and potentially a contract will be given as a consequence for violating this expectation. Students should be quiet when entering and leaving the building. Please keep the stairwell and elevator clean.

SELLING:

Selling items of any kind, without the expressed approval of the director, is prohibited at the Youth Alternative. The director will clearly define any conditions for selling items.

FIRE DRILLS:

During a fire drill students should listen to the directions given by staff members and file out of the classroom in a quiet and orderly manner. Once out of the building, students should assemble in the parking lot area behind 650 Beacon Street where teachers and other staff members will take attendance.

BEHAVIORAL RULES

The EYA is a School-to-Career high school program where an educational and *work-like* environment should exist. This is true of break-time and the time moving between classes as well. The EYA environment should be marked by an atmosphere that is serious without being somber, respectful without being rigid, and relaxed without being silly or chaotic. The behavioral rules exist to create a safe and comfortable learning environment, but also to help prepare students for being successful in their life after EDCO.

Students are expected to take their schoolwork seriously but also their responsibility to create the appropriate EYA environment. Many times we have heard students respond to criticism of their behavior with something like “I GET MY WORK DONE! What’s the problem?” In our effort to create an educational and work-like environment, doing your work is not enough to meet your responsibilities as an EDCO student. Each student is responsible for his/her behavior and its impact on the general EYA environment.

FIGHTS/THREATS/INTIMIDATION/HOSTILE WORDS/HORSEPLAY:

Fighting between or among EYA students is not permitted in or out of school. Such behavior will result in termination from the program. Threats and/or intimidating behavior will result in suspension and may result in termination from the EYA. Whenever students exchange hostile words/actions with each other, they are isolated from the other student(s) and will have a chance to discuss their concerns with a member of the staff. Students are required to resolve their differences through mediation before returning to class.

Horseplay, which is rough physical play, is inappropriate behavior at the Youth Alternative. This type of behavior may result in detention or temporary suspension.

INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE:

Swearing and/or vulgar language is not an acceptable conversational mode at EDCO. Staff understands the difference between **public** and **private**. If you want to keep your conversation private then you should keep it quiet. **Most drug, sex, and violence related topics are not appropriate for public discussion at the EYA.** Non-directed epithets or vulgarity will be addressed by detention and/or a behavior contract. In addition, other spoken or written language is inappropriate at the EYA. Students who refer to another student or staff member’s nationality, race, sex, religion, intelligence or sexual orientation with inappropriate language with an apparent intent to offend must “process” the incident with the Wediko counselor. Disrespectful language to a staff member may result in detention or suspension.

WEAPONS:

Weapons are not allowed at the EYA. A weapon is a firearm, knife, razor blade, club, studded belt or bracelet, explosive, mock gun, mace, tear gas, or any other dangerous object with no responsible use to students. Possession of a dangerous weapon will result in a temporary suspension and possible termination. Possession of a firearm will result in termination from the EYA. Weapons confiscated by EYA staff are sent to the BPS Safety Section.

If there are 'reasonable grounds' for suspecting that a student is violating either the law or the rules for the EDCO Youth Alternative by carrying a weapon, a search of that student by a member of the Youth Alternative staff is justified under a 1985 decision of the United States Supreme Court (New Jersey v. T.L.O.). EYA staff will always apply a balancing test between a students' interest in personal privacy and the program's interest in maintaining safety and discipline in the classroom and other areas of the EYA.

If there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student is carrying a weapon and s/he refuses to allow an EYA staff member to search for it, the student will be temporarily suspended and may be terminated.

Instruments or objects that may have a responsible use can also be irresponsibly used. Two or more fingered rings, nail clippers, nail files, lighters, laser beam objects, etc. should be kept in pockets or bags. If these items are seen, the student will be asked to put them away. If these items are seen again, they will be confiscated by the staff member and returned at the end of the day if this is a first-time incident. If items are confiscated a second time, they will only be returned to a parent/guardian.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:

Drug dealing at the EYA will result in termination from the program. Possession of drug paraphernalia used in drug sales and/or distribution such as cigars/blunts, scales, baggies, etc. will result in suspension and an investigation.

Drugs and alcohol are not allowed at the EYA. If a student is caught or suspected of using drugs or alcohol s/he will be: (a) sent home; (b) a parent/guardian will be contacted; and (c) the student will receive a Drug/Alcohol Warning. Suspicion of drug or alcohol use will result in a drug warning, so please remember that if a student smells of drugs or alcohol s/he will be given a drug warning. Students are encouraged to address issues of drug/alcohol use to avoid a repeat of this situation. Students who are caught or suspected of using drugs/alcohol again will be temporarily suspended and referred to a drug/alcohol counselor if they wish to remain enrolled at the EYA.

Possession of drug paraphernalia (pipes/cigars [blunts]/papers/roach clips, etc.) used in getting "high" with drugs or alcohol will result in a Drug/Alcohol Warning. The item(s) will be confiscated and only returned to a parent/guardian.

SMOKING:

Smoking and the use of tobacco in school are against the law in Massachusetts. Students may not smoke at the Youth Alternative, in the building, nor on field trips. In school, cigarettes etc. must be kept out of sight. Violation of the smoking rule will result in a “smoking” warning. A second smoking warning will result in a telephone call to a parent/guardian. A third smoking warning will result in a meeting with a parent or guardian and the student being placed on a behavior contract. Students will be temporarily suspended pending the parent meeting.

Cigarettes are not to be lighted in the building as students are leaving it. Violators of this expectation will get detention and may get special dismissal arrangements.

VANDALISM AND GRAFFITI:

Vandalism and Graffiti are not permitted within the EYA’s premises, the elevator, or any other part of the building or buildings in the vicinity and will result in immediate temporary suspension and possible termination from the EYA. In certain instances a student may be given the opportunity to repair the damage that s/he caused and thereby will be permitted to remain at the EYA. If a student defaces the program’s property, furniture or building, s/he must at a minimum clean the markings.

STEALING:

Stealing in school will result in an immediate suspension and possible termination from the EYA.

WEDIKO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

COUNSELING:

The EYA has a long-standing contract with Wediko Children's Services to provide on-site counseling to students and consultation to program staff. Wediko Children's Services is a private, non-profit agency located in the South End of Boston. Since fall, 1980, Wediko has provided therapy and consulting services in close collaboration with many Boston Public Schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Wediko has also worked with many other schools in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Wediko Children's Services began collaboration with EDCO in the 1996-97 school year and is continuing this collaboration for the current school year. Counseling services occur at EDCO during school hours. While Wediko provides many services to EDCO students and staff, individual psychotherapy is not available to students through Wediko. All Wediko services are aimed at helping EDCO students be successful in the EDCO program.

Students may be involved in counseling services at EDCO in several different ways:

- 1) Wediko counselors will be directly involved in attendance issues at EDCO. This will involve counselors contacting students' parents/guardians when students are not in school. If a student begins to show a pattern of poor school attendance or chronic late arrivals, the counselor will try to work with the student and his/her family to identify the reasons for the difficulty and to develop strategies for improving the student's attendance.
- 2) All students are required to speak with a Wediko counselor if sent out of the room by a teacher. Goals of these check-ins are to identify difficulties which are interfering with the student's learning, discuss problem-solving strategies, and help the student successfully return to and participate in class activities.
- 3) At times, counselors and/or staff may recommend that a student check-in with a counselor when they seem to be upset. Students are also required to meet with a counselor when they are showing a pattern of difficulty meeting the expectations of the program. For example, if a student is chronically failing to turn in assignments, he/she will be expected to talk with a counselor to try to identify reasons and solutions for the negative patterns of schoolwork. A student may also request to speak with a counselor as a way to address any important issues, which may be impacting his/her school performance.
- 4) Wediko counselors will also be working with EDCO staff to provide school-based services aimed at addressing issues and topics that affect the student body as a whole. Such services may include group counseling, on-site presentations, and building a resource library.

- 5) Wediko counselors and EDCO staff will meet regularly to consult on issues and concerns related to students' functioning at school and at work. Information and important themes will be shared back and forth. The purpose of these meetings is to insure that EDCO and Wediko staff members work together to help each student. Sharing of information may include verbal summaries of material from other agencies or professionals, which EDCO and/or Wediko have obtained. It also means Wediko counselors have access to all written materials EDCO has obtained during the admission process to the EYA program. EDCO or Wediko staff may at times contact a student's parent/guardian to clarify questions or make sure that all the important adults in a student's life are working together.

All Wediko counselors and consultants receive regular supervision from a senior Wediko clinician. Clinical staff may review student progress in supervision.

In addition to understanding the collaboration that occurs between EDCO and Wediko, it is important to be aware of state laws that relate to this collaboration. By law, all individuals who work with children (including counselors and teachers) are obligated to report to the Department of Children and Families (formerly the Department of Social Services) any situation in which she/he suspects that child may be suffering from neglect or abuse. In addition, counselors are required by law to take protective action if they feel that a client is threatening harm to him or herself or to another person. Since counseling services are being funded by EDCO, representatives of EDCO have the right to review clinical records of recipients of these counseling services. EDCO and Wediko are forbidden by law from releasing any information regarding counseling or clinical services to anyone without the specified, informed consent of the person in counseling or their parent or guardian (if the student is under age 18).

MEDIATIONS:

Staff wants EDCO to be a safe place where students can focus on learning, not on conflicts or social problems. When staff becomes aware of a conflict between students, the involved students are **required** to participate in a mediation to resolve the issue. Each involved student will first meet individually with a counselor so the counselor can understand the student's concern/complaint. Counselors don't take sides. They ask all students to talk about what they did to contribute to the conflict. The focus of EYA mediations is on resolving the conflict, not blaming or pointing fingers. When the counselor feels students are ready, students will meet together with the counselor for the mediation. In mediation, students are expected to:

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Don't blame or attack
- Talk about how s/he felt when the other student did whatever they did
- Take responsibility for what s/he has done to contribute to the conflict.

Students are not permitted to return to a class they have together until the conflict has been addressed and resolved through mediation.

BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES

If a student isn't behaving appropriately in the classroom, the teacher will give the student a warning about what they need to do differently. Examples of such inappropriate behaviors are: sleeping or appearing to sleep, not working, talking, being disrespectful to the teacher, singing, taking other students' belongings, whistling, making sounds, wearing a hood, sunglasses, or a hat which hides the eyes, excessive walking around the classroom, and violation of rules specific to each classroom.

If the student continues with the inappropriate behavior, the teacher may do one of two things. The teacher may give the student an after-school detention, or the teacher may send the student out of the classroom to check-in with a counselor or administrator. If the teacher gives the student a detention and the student still does not behave as expected in the classroom, the student will then be sent out of the classroom to check-in with a counselor or administrator.

When students are sent out of the classroom for a check-in, they will be given a slip of paper to hand to the counselor in the main area. Students must sit quietly where they are directed to sit and must wait for a counselor or administrator to talk with them. Students must ALWAYS check-in with a staff person when they are sent out of the classroom. After the check-in, the counselor or administrator will determine whether the student is ready to re-join the class. If the student isn't ready to return to class or the class isn't ready to have them return, they will be asked to sit out until they can demonstrate their readiness to learn and be an appropriate member of the class. If a student is still not able to show they are ready to return to class after such check-ins and time out of class, the student may be sent home for the rest of the day. Students are responsible for making up all class work missed while they are out of the classroom.

There are three categories of behavior which will **always** result in a student immediately being sent out of class: 1) if two or more students are in a verbal conflict/disagreement; 2) if a student has already been out of a class on a check-in, has returned to class, and then continues to act inappropriately; and 3) if a student is verbally or physically aggressive. Physical aggression will result in suspension.

When a student is sent out of class for a check-in s/he may be required to meet with the teacher before being allowed to return to class. If a student has a conflict/disagreement/argument with another student, the student will be required to participate in a mediation to resolve the issue so it will not further interfere with school activities. If a student misses two classes because s/he missed a required meeting, the director may decide to suspend the student until the required meeting has occurred.

Corporal punishment in public schools is illegal in Massachusetts. Corporal punishment at the EDCO Youth Alternative is prohibited. Staff may not hit, spank or physically punish students. Staff members may, however, use reasonable force if necessary to protect students, other persons or themselves from an assault by a student.

DETENTIONS:

When a teacher or other staff member gives a student a detention, the student is required to report that same day to the day's detention room at 12:30 and remain there until 12:45. If a student has a conflict which s/he feels won't allow him/her to stay after, the student should raise this issue with the program director immediately or in his absence with the school coordinator. If the student gets the detention in class, immediately means at the end of the class. Detention will only be rescheduled for a reason that the EYA administrator determines is appropriate and can be verified.

If a student receives a detention during break time, EDCO staff may choose to have the student serve the detention during break time the following day.

SUSPENSION:

Suspension means that a student is sent home and not permitted to resume normal school activities for a period of time (up to ten days). Any student faced with suspension will be given a meeting with the Program Director, during which the student will be informed of the reason for the suspension and will be given the opportunity to present his or her side of the story. A parent or guardian will be contacted.

When a student is suspended, the length of the suspension will be based on the amount of disruption that was caused by the student's actions, the type of infraction of the rules or expectations, and the number of previous offenses, etc. A student's return to the program is contingent on accepting responsibility for the behavior that caused the suspension and with the understanding that another infraction leading to suspension may result in termination from the program. All classroom work missed during the time of the suspension must be made up.

TERMINATION:

Termination means that a student's enrollment at the EDCO Youth Alternative will come to an end. When terminated from the EYA, a student will be encouraged to return to his/her home high school or to seek enrollment in another alternative program to earn a high school diploma or a GED certificate.

Any student faced with termination has the right: (a) to written notice of the charges; (b) to a formal hearing (c) to be represented by lawyer or advocate (at the student's expense); (d) to adequate time to prepare for the hearing; (e) to access documented evidence before the hearing; (f) to question witnesses; and (g) to a reasonably prompt, written decision including specific grounds for the decision.

A student may be suspended, and in some incidents terminated, from the EDCO Youth Alternative for the following infractions and other infractions described in this handbook:

- Fighting, threats, intimidation
- Carrying a weapon
- Drug dealing
- Possessing and/or using drugs or alcohol
- Stealing
- Not complying with staff directives
- Disrespectful language to a staff member
- Grievous horseplay
- Vandalism
- Smoking in school (on the third offense)

GRADING POLICY

The EYA has a uniform grading policy across all classes. This insures that grading is consistent among different teachers and that how grades are determined is a transparent process. Grades in all classes are determined in the following way:

- Preparation and Practice (15%)
Homework assignments
- Participation (30%)
In-class discussions and activities: to be measured by daily recorded involvement in class, i.e. reading aloud, involved in discussions, attentive and focused as evidenced by body posture and eye contact, note-taking (notebooks), classroom assignments, etc.
- Products (30%)
Completion of required products, i.e. PowerPoint presentations, book reports, science projects, etc. [The BPS promotion policy requires students' grades on these products will count for at least 20% of their year-end grades.]
- Performance (25%)
Scores on tests and exams

While every attempt has been made to make the student handbook as comprehensive and complete as possible, there may be occasions when expectations and rules are enforced and consequences given for behaviors and situations not listed in the handbook.

HARASSMENT POLICY FOR EDCO STUDENTS

It is the policy of EDCO that all of its students should be able to enjoy a school program environment free of discrimination and harassment.

This policy refers to, but is not limited to, harassment in the following areas: (1) age, (2) race, (3) color, (4) national origin, (5) religion, (6) sex, (7) handicap, (8) veteran status, and (9) sexual preference. Harassment includes display or circulation of written materials or pictures degrading to either gender or to racial, ethnic or religious groups; and verbal abuse or insults directed at or made in the presence of members of a racial, ethnic, or minority group.

Harassment also refers to behavior that is personally offensive, impairs morale and interferes with the students' ability to benefit from the school program instruction or service. Any harassment of students by other students or harassment of students by staff will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other offensive verbal or physical conduct that is sexual in nature. Sexual harassment undermines the relationships between students and between students and staff and will not be tolerated.

In fulfilling their obligation to maintain a positive and productive school environment, program administrators and other staff are expected to halt any harassment of which they become aware by emphasizing the EDCO policy and, when necessary, by more direct disciplinary action.

Students who believe that they have been subjected to harassment from another student or an EDCO staff member should be instructed to make it clear to the offender that such behavior is offensive to them.

If a student attending EDCO wishes to report or allege harassment on the part of another student or an EDCO staff member, the reporting procedure shall be as follows:

The student should request an immediate meeting with the program administrator. The student will be asked to comment on the incident or incidents and will be asked to complete a Harassment Investigation Form and give it to the program administrator. The program administrator will take appropriate and expeditious actions in consultation with the Associate Executive Director of EDCO.

If the program administrator is the subject of the complaint, the student should be instructed to request a meeting with the Associate Executive Director. The student will be asked to comment on the incident or incidents and will be asked to complete a Harassment Investigation Form and give it to the Associate Executive Director. The Associate Executive Director will take appropriate and expeditious action.

Should the action taken by the program administrator and/or the Associate Executive Director fail to resolve the issue to the student's satisfaction, their action may be appealed in writing to the Executive Director, whose decision in the matter shall be final and binding.

Any EDCO employee or student found to have engaged in any type of harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge or expulsion.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

The Technology Mission of EYA is to ensure access to appropriate technology in our educational community to support and enhance student learning, staff instruction, school communication and data management.

The use of the EYA Network is a **PRIVILEGE**, not a right. Users should not expect privacy in the contents of personal files on network. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the EYA Network may lead to discovery that a student has violated this Policy, the student handbook, or the law, and will lead to disciplinary action and loss of privileges. The following unacceptable uses include (but are not limited to):

General

- Students are expected to sit at the workstation assigned to them. Teachers will record workstation use. Students may not switch computers without informing the teacher.

Network

- All network use will be confined to the students' eLocker folders for saving and accessing files.
- Using the network to browse another student's work or another computer is strictly prohibited.
- Opening, altering or deleting another student's work constitutes vandalism.

Internet

- All Internet use requires approval from a teacher.
- Deleting the Internet History of a workstation constitutes a serious violation.
- Students must avoid filling out forms or logins on the EYA Network. Doing so often leaves "cookies" on the workstation, which constitutes an illegal download and altered Internet setting.

Appropriate Content

- Students should always follow teacher's instructions when using the Internet.
- Students will confine their Internet browsing to on-topic sites and pages.
- Browsing sites and files containing nudity, overt sexual content, drugs, guns, gangs or chatrooms are serious violations.
- If students mistakenly access inappropriate information, they should immediately inform a teacher to protect themselves against a claim of intentionally violating the Policy.

Email

- Email use is not allowed on the EYA Network, unless specific classroom projects are involved.
- Email use without permission constitutes an inappropriate site.
- Students should never use the workstation's default email program (MS Outlook).

Downloading

- Students may not download or save anything on the workstations.
- Students should use their eLockers for saving any appropriate files.
- Student eLocker files should follow the same Appropriate Content rules as Internet use.

Workstation Settings

- Changing the Desktop image, application/folder names, network, sound or Internet settings is prohibited.
- The software settings on each workstation are designed to safeguard the students and the technology equipment. Any altering of these settings constitutes vandalism of school property.

AUP Violation Consequences

Action	Minimum Consequence	Potential Consequence
Inappropriate website	detention (1 day)	suspension
Inappropriate web usage	detention (1 day)	suspension
Inappropriate printer usage	detention (1 day)	suspension
Inappropriate application	detention (1 day)	suspension
Inappropriate download	detention (1 day)	suspension
Browsing other students' folders	detention (5 days)	suspension
Altering desktop or settings	detention (5 days)	suspension
Clearing Internet History	suspension, meeting with parent	termination
Altering other student's work	suspension, meeting with parent	termination
Browsing staff computer or folder	suspension, meeting with parent	termination
Vandalizing network/system	termination	