



# **Student | Parent Handbook**

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# Part 1: Introduction

## NOCCA Vision

We believe in the transformative power of the arts. We aspire to create an educational community that nurtures and challenges young people to become more curious, kind, empathetic, engaged, and willing to grapple with complex problems in order to create a just, sustainable, and joyful world.

## NOCCA Mission

NOCCA's mission is to provide a world-class, pre-professional arts education for every young person in Louisiana with the curiosity, creativity, talent and motivation to pursue a life in the arts as they realize the best possible versions of themselves and their futures.

## NOCCA Community Values

- We believe in **The Arts** as purpose, process, and product. The Arts are celebrated and manifest in everything we do at NOCCA.
- We believe in **community** so that all members of our campus feel a sense of belonging and a desire to connect, learn, and share resources with broader communities and a growing coalition of allies.
- We celebrate and nurture **creativity** in order to transcend traditional ideas by perceiving the world in new ways, finding new patterns, and making new connections to produce novel ideas, forms, and methods.
- We encourage **curiosity** in order to cultivate the pleasure in play and exploration that drives the pursuit of knowledge and the joy of lifelong learning.
- We believe success in any endeavor is achieved through purposeful application of daily **discipline**. This supports the decisions that enable long-term goals and persistence through difficult situations.
- We believe in **diversity** and creating a place of inclusion and safety that embraces each individual as unique and valuable. Celebrating and engaging our individual differences strengthens our ability to be more creative by improving our understanding of different perspectives.
- We believe in **equity** as demonstrated in access and opportunity so that every student with the curiosity, creativity, talent, and motivation can become a NOCCA graduate and an alumnus.
- We hold ourselves accountable to the highest level of **integrity** by consistently, courageously, and honestly acting in ways that demonstrate alignment between our stated values and our actions.

## Students' and Families' Expectations of NOCCA

1. NOCCA will provide highly specialized training in the student's chosen arts discipline.

2. NOCCA will provide grades, academic records, and enrollment times to partner schools in a timely manner.
3. NOCCA will be available for conferences with parent(s)/guardian(s) and student(s) in reference to the student's progress.
4. NOCCA Faculty and Staff will strive to treat all students with courtesy and respect.
5. NOCCA will facilitate the interaction of students with professionals in the arts as well as provide students with counseling in career/college application and preparation for audition.

## NOCCA's Expectations of All Students

**Admission to NOCCA is an earned privilege, therefore students are required to agree to the following:**

1. I understand that to succeed and maintain enrollment at NOCCA I must read, agree to, and abide by all rules and policies set forth in the NOCCA Student | Parent Handbook and support NOCCA's Creative DNA and Values.
2. I must behave and speak in a mature, supportive and respectful manner to faculty and staff members, DPS Officers, and my fellow students.
3. I agree to be present/punctual, professional/prepared, and fully participate in all NOCCA classes, performances, and any NOCCA sponsored events.

## NOCCA's Expectations of All Parents/Legal Guardians

**To ensure that their students find success, parents/legal guardians are required to agree to the following:**

1. I understand the commitment my student has made and I support my student in efforts in attending NOCCA.
2. I understand that in order to help my student succeed and maintain enrollment at NOCCA, I must read, agree to, and abide by all rules and policies set forth in the Student | Parent Handbook and the Enrollment Contract. I must also support NOCCA's Creative DNA and Values.
3. I authorize and consent for NOCCA's professional staff to share information collaboratively with each other regarding any educational, medical, social, psychological, and health information when it is for the benefit of my student and legally permissible.
4. I understand that certain aspects of artistic training require physical contact, both with instructors and other students.– I understand that only physical contact that is safe and appropriate for professional training will be used in the classroom.
5. I understand that all NOCCA classes/rehearsals are closed to all non-NOCCA personnel.
6. I understand that my student's enrollment at NOCCA is a privilege and that NOCCA has the right to immediately dismiss my student or otherwise end my student's enrollment for any disciplinary infraction or violation of any NOCCA policy.
7. I will address concerns appropriately with respect to NOCCA's organizational structure. I will first address the concern with the teacher, then the department chair, the Director of Arts, the Director of Academics, and finally the CEO.

8. I understand that NOCCA is NOT responsible for my student's lost or stolen items.
9. NOCCA may use my student's work, music, writing, photograph, or an interview for recruitment purposes or publicity.
10. I will accept the judgment of NOCCA's faculty and staff relative to my student's progress in the instructional program and decisions regarding my student's participation in rehearsals and productions.

## Part 2: Academics

### Eligibility

NOCCA maintains high standards for both arts and academic progress. As a result, a student-artist must meet the following conditions for continued enrollment:

- **Satisfactory grades in NOCCA Arts Courses.** Students must maintain a minimum "B" average in their arts courses. If grades fall below this minimum, students may be put on a Growth Plan or given the option to withdraw.
- **Enrollment in and satisfactory grades at the academic partner school.** The State of Louisiana requires that all children from their seventh to their eighteenth birthday must attend a public school, private school, or must participate in an approved home study program. Students must therefore be enrolled in a Louisiana High School or must provide documentation of their enrollment in a Registered Nonpublic School (Not Seeking State Approval) or a Home Study/Registered Nonpublic School and must maintain a "C" average (2.0 cumulative Academic GPA). If grades fall below this minimum, students may be placed on a Growth Plan, an Enrollment Growth Plan, given the option to withdraw or not be allowed to continue their enrollment at NOCCA.
- **Daily participation** is required for successful completion of the program. Refer to Department Contracts for specific requirements
- **Adherence to the Enrollment Contract, Student Handbook, and Department Contract.**

### Credits toward State of Louisiana Graduation Requirements

All students within their Conservatory Arts curriculum will receive the state-mandated Fine Arts Survey as part of their Level I arts course (1 Carnegie Unit). Students enrolled in Dance, Drama, and Musical Theatre receive 1.5 Carnegie Unit for Physical Education as part of their coursework.

NOCCA's Conservatory Arts courses provide either one, two, or three units of honors-weighted high school credit for the completed course per year. Grades and credits are sent to students' partner schools for inclusion on the high school transcript.

## Grading

Grading is based on student performance on assigned projects, artistic growth, homework and classwork, written and oral testing, attitude, attendance, and evaluation of other criteria in the particular discipline. Parents/Guardians of NOCCA students are encouraged to have open communication with faculty members concerning all aspects of grading. Faculty members encourage parents/guardians to schedule conference appointments as needed. NOCCA uses the State of Louisiana grade scale as listed below.

**GRADE SCALE:**            A 100-93            B 92-85            C 84-75            D 74-67            F 66-0

## Report Cards/Progress Reports

Students receive final grades at the end of each semester. These are communicated to families through report cards that are mailed home at the end of December and May and are posted on the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Progress reports are sent out by email at the end of the first and third quarters, but the grades on these are a snapshot of a student's progress and not a final grade and therefore are not reported to partner schools or the State of Louisiana. Both report cards and progress reports include the number of absences, number of tardies, and a letter grade for each course or component course. Semester grades are sent to students' partner schools by the Office of Student Services.

## Growth Plans

Students struggling to meet NOCCA artistic, academic, or protocol expectations will be put on a Growth Plan. The Growth Plan will outline what the student needs to do in order to improve, as well as a timeframe for the student to demonstrate growth. Parents/Legal Guardians will receive a copy of the Growth Plan to be signed and returned to school. They may also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the student's progress.

Faculty and staff will monitor the student's progress to determine if the student is meeting the terms of the growth plan and showing improvement. If faculty/staff determine the student has sufficiently improved during the time period, the growth plan will be retired.

If a student has not met the terms of a Growth Plan or has not improved (as determined by faculty/staff), the student can be put on a Growth Plan to Maintain Enrollment (Enrollment Plan). If a student does not meet the terms of the Enrollment Plan, the student will no longer be able to attend NOCCA. At that time, the student would complete a Withdrawal Form and return equipment and textbooks. The student's ID should be returned to Student Services and the student's partner school would be notified, if applicable.



## Credit Recovery in Academic Studio

A credit recovery course is one that offers the opportunity to redo the equivalent coursework for which a student has not met the requirements or shown proficiency (earned an “F”) through alternative means. The failing grade will remain on the student’s transcript and the credit recovery grade will be added when the credit recovery course(s) is(are) completed.

For 9th through 11th grade students, credit recovery will take place during the summer with material approved by the teacher of record and the Director of Academic Studio. Summer Credit Recovery takes place on the NOCCA campus and is directed toward the student’s specific requirements. A student cannot exceed 2 failed credits in a school year. If a student receives an “F” or no credit for 2.5 or more credits, they will not be invited to return to Academic Studio. If a student fails one or more credits in the first semester, they will automatically be placed on an enrollment growth plan, which means that parents/legal guardians should begin seeking alternative school options. If the student has a successful second semester and regains credit during the summer, the enrollment Growth Plan will be retired, and a new Growth Plan will be put in place for the following year to ensure success in their academic work.

For 12th Grade Students who fail courses in the first semester, there are two options for credit recovery. The first is to be withheld from spring arts courses until credit recovery is completed. Their Art Chair must agree to this arrangement. If credit recovery for the course needed for graduation is successful and the remaining coursework is also successfully completed, the student will be eligible to graduate and take part in graduation activities. The second option is for the student to complete credit recovery during NOCCA’s summer credit recovery program or in the case of French, Health, or PE, in other approved summer courses. The student will not be eligible to participate in graduation activities and, if successful in completing all of the graduation requirements in the summer, would receive a diploma with a summer graduation date.

For all students who must complete credit recovery, the following applies: Any student who fails the credit recovery course will not be invited back to NOCCA’s Academic Studio program and may not be eligible to return to their arts classes at NOCCA. If there is a LEAP or other State Exam required for course completion, as per Bulletin 741 “The end-of-course exam weight in a student’s final grade determined by the LEA shall be the same for a traditional course and a credit recovery course. Students who have previously passed the end-of-course exam, but have failed the course, may choose to retain their previous end-of-course exam score in lieu of participating in an additional administration of the exam”.

## Withdrawal from NOCCA

A student’s family may withdraw their student from NOCCA at any time. When the decision is made for a student to withdraw, the Office of Student Services must be notified in writing. The Official Withdrawal Form is presented to faculty for signatures, to the librarian for clearance of indebtedness, and the Director of Admissions for collection of equipment, textbooks, and the student’s ID. A

notification of withdrawal form and a report of the final grade will be sent to the partner school, if applicable.

## Arts Discipline Changes Within the Arts Conservatory

When a currently enrolled student is considering changing disciplines, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The student must communicate with the current discipline.
2. The current department chair will write a letter of recommendation to the chair of the department in which the student is applying.
3. The student must apply and audition for the new discipline following the guidelines and timeline of the regular application process.
4. To be eligible to move to the new discipline, the student must meet the requirements of a successful audition.
5. If the student is offered enrollment in the new discipline, the effective date for the change will be the first day of the following school year, if the student has completed the year in good standing.
6. If the student is not offered enrollment in the new discipline, then the student may continue in the current arts discipline if they are in good standing or they may withdraw from NOCCA.

## Student Internship Program

The New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) internship program has been developed to provide Level IV and above students with the opportunity to explore their arts disciplines in a practical learning environment. Students participating in the internship program will be paired with an employer/mentor designated by his/her department chair. All internships are unpaid (including tips and other non-cash forms of compensation) and must adhere to the U.S. Department of Labor guidelines (see NOCCA Student Internship Policy for more information). Additionally, students are prohibited from working for the employer/mentor at any time while participating in the internship program. Once the student has completed the internship program, there is no prohibition for obtaining employment with the employer/mentor.

## Arts Conservatory Celebration Season

Celebration Season refers to the array of year-end performances spanning April through May during which NOCCA celebrates the accomplishments of its students. At the annual Celebration Ceremony, NOCCA students graduating from high school may receive certificates and recognition.

### *NOCCA Arts Conservatory Certificates*

NOCCA issues four completion certificates: Certificate of Artistry, Certificate of Performance, Certificate of Achievement, and Certificate of Recognition. Requirements for each certificate vary among the

disciplines. Please refer to the discipline curriculum, available on the NOCCA website, for specific requirements. In all cases, faculty decisions regarding the awarding of certificates are final.

## Part 3: Student Life

NOCCA offers student support services to NOCCA students and provides them with opportunities to fully develop their potential while training with NOCCA's faculty. NOCCA staff offers information on educational planning, college applications, and admission requirements, special programs for summer study, and scholarship opportunities.

### Prelude

The purpose of Prelude is to familiarize students with the NOCCA campus, allow them to form a sense of common community, to become familiar with the rules, regulations, and expectations, to meet faculty and staff, to learn about protocol procedures, community standards and to be completely prepared to begin work on the first day of class.

Attendance at Prelude is a required step in the enrollment process. Both new and returning students must attend this event in order to be allowed admission to class. Any student not in attendance will receive an absence for the day.

### The Parent/Guardian Portal

The Parent/Guardian Portal allows parents/legal guardians to access students' grades and attendance records on PowerSchool. Though teachers will update grades throughout the year, parents/legal guardians should note that all grades will be up to date at the end of each quarter. Additionally, parents/legal guardians are able to update their contact information and preferences for how information is communicated. It is the parent's/legal guardian's responsibility to report changes of address, telephone number, or partner school to NOCCA's Front Desk immediately. The site is [nocca.powerschool.com](http://nocca.powerschool.com). New families will receive login information during registration but families can contact NOCCA about their login information at any time.

### Future and College Planning

It is never too early to start planning for college.

**Sophomores** can begin by solidifying their academic progress and researching colleges and career choices. They can also make good use of their summer by working, interning, volunteering, attending summer enrichment programs, and/or studying to prepare themselves for the SAT or ACT. They should strive to pursue leadership opportunities in extracurricular activities; colleges are less interested in students who have a long list of activities than those who show sustained dedication and leadership.

**Juniors** should sustain their academic achievements and begin to develop a working list of possible colleges to explore. This year's grades will be the first impression for admissions officers. Now is the time to practice some personal essay topics, and to meet with your college counselor to get a head start on next year's application season.

**Seniors** should come back from summer vacation ready and willing to apply to college, armed with a list of schools and their requirements and deadlines. They should also have a good idea of what will be required by each prospective college in terms of ACT scores, portfolios, auditions, letters of recommendation, and personal essays. Parents/legal guardians should be ready to fill out the FAFSA for financial aid purposes. Organization is key.

**Summer** study can be a critical component of refining or expanding one's arts and academic skills. As rising juniors and seniors, NOCCA student-artists travel to summer programs around the country for intensive work in their field, many with the help of summer scholarships from the NOCCA Institute.

All students have a **Scoir** account. This platform is used to organize the application process. It is also helpful in the college search process since it has a wealth of information about academic programs and admissions. Students are invited to attend the **college visits** that NOCCA hosts throughout the year. Admissions representatives from colleges and conservatories across the country provide information and answer questions regarding their institutions.

Students at every grade level are welcome to contact the front desk or NOCCA's college counselor for help with transcripts or additional information on any aspect of the college process.

*Remember: each student is responsible for his or her own college application process. Arts and academic faculty can advise students about programs and possibilities and provide letters of recommendation; the college counselor can inform students about admissions and financial aid by guiding them through the process; parents/legal guardians can support and guide. But the student is, in the end, responsible for their own process.*

## Transportation Resources

Parents/legal guardians are responsible for arranging transportation to and from NOCCA. NOCCA does not accept responsibility for coordinating individual transportation needs.

Families have the option to sign up for a carpool database during registration each year. Once registered, students will receive access to contact information of other parents/legal guardians who are driving from locations in close proximity to their own. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for coordinating carpools and for contacting carpool drivers in the event of schedule changes throughout the year. Parents/legal guardians who depend on outside companies for transportation must contact those companies directly in the event of schedule changes or daily transportation needs throughout the year.

## Drivers Permits and Minor Work Permits

The front desk is able to issue Minor Work permits for all students and Required School Attendance (used for driver's permits) for full-day students. These documents require the proper documentation, state approval and are not always immediately available. Please allow at least 24 hours for completion of your request.

## Student Support Team (SST)

The Student Support Team (SST) is a committee designated by the CEO which includes the Protocol Coordinator, Clinician/Social Worker, Special Education Coordinator, Director of Arts, and Director of Academic Studio. The SST meets regularly to discuss struggling students that have been reported by faculty and staff and helps create and carry out short-term plans for each student. The team also helps to develop and facilitate faculty training, classroom support, student individual plans, and instructional differentiation to aid in maintaining a positive learning environment for all NOCCA students by bridging services.

## Special Education (SPED)

NOCCA, in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Education (<https://www.louisianabelieves.com/students-with-disabilities>), is committed to making equal educational opportunities available to students with disabilities, in accordance with: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, and companion Louisiana laws and regulations. Such opportunities include the right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive educational environment.

## Identification of Students Who May be Eligible for Special Education Services

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) and its companion Louisiana law, all public schools, including NOCCA, must identify and evaluate all Academic Studio students who are suspected of having a disability and are in need of special education and related services, ( "child find"). This obligation extends to all school-aged students. If the parents/legal guardians/student of majority age or NOCCA teachers or faculty observe a student who is experiencing academic and/or behavioral issues that may be significantly interfering with the student's educational performance, a referral may be made to the Student Support Team. This team of individuals, consisting of educational and assessment professionals and the parent/legal guardian/student of majority age, will review a variety of information about the student to determine whether the student is suspected of having a disability under the IDEA and Louisiana Bulletins 1706 and 1508. The team may seek additional information from the parent/legal guardian, recommend academic and/or behavioral interventions, and/or recommend that the student be evaluated for possible classification as a student with a disability ("exceptionality" under Louisiana law).

All academic studio students identified by an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan (“504 Plan”) receive special education services as outlined in those plans to ensure the student receives a free, appropriate public education.

## Talented Services

NOCCA provides professional training in the arts for students who successfully audition. By signing the enrollment agreement, families are acknowledging that their student is receiving specialized services through our accelerated arts programs, and if the student currently has a Talented IEP it will not be renewed annually.

## Gifted Services

NOCCA’s academic program is a single educational tract with fixed class options. All students in the Academic Studio are in the Tops University Diploma pathway, and students may elect to work towards honors credit in their courses and/or take Dual Enrollment classes when available. There are no distinct gifted academic classes. By signing the enrollment documents, families are agreeing to the set curriculum of NOCCA Academic Studio and to waive Gifted Services.

## Mental Health Services

In order to assist students in their adjustment to NOCCA and to help them with emotional, behavioral, and/or interpersonal challenges and concerns that may develop, support and psychoeducation are available at no cost to students and families.

NOCCA employs a full-time School Counselor. NOCCA’s School Counselor is available to assist students through check-ins, coordinate crisis support, provide referrals to outside mental health providers, provide food security support, coordinate care with student’s provider(s), and advocate on behalf of families and students.

NOCCA partners with Loyola University New Orleans (LOYNO) to provide generalized counseling services with an on-site Counselor-Intern. The Counselor-Intern works in tandem with NOCCA’s school counselor to provide individual and group services, classroom interventions, and brief intervention/drop-in services. The Counselor-Intern is supervised by a LOYNO Counseling faculty member and works under the on-site/direct supervision of NOCCA’s School Counselor.

NOCCA partners with Children’s Bureau of New Orleans (CBNO) to provide grief and trauma-focused counseling to students. Students can self-refer and/or they can be referred by family, peers, and/or faculty. Student eligibility is determined through a screening process by the School Counselor, in consultation with CBNO clinical staff.

If your student is currently receiving services from another mental health provider, including medication management through a psychiatrist or primary care physician, please complete a release of information allowing for consultation in order to coordinate services in the best interest of your student.

Consultations with outside providers and/or NOCCA faculty/staff and student counseling sessions are confidential with the following exceptions:

1. The student's legal guardian signs a written release of information indicating informed consent of such release.
2. The student expresses intent to harm himself/herself or someone else.
3. There is reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect against a minor child, elderly person (60 or older), or a dependent adult.
4. A court order is received directing the disclosure of information.

When meeting with the NOCCA School Counselor and/or Counselor-Intern, information may also be shared:

1. With a school administrator if behavior reported is a violation of school policy or safety concern and must be reported.
2. If informing an administrator or classroom teacher is in the student's best interest.
3. If making parents/legal guardians aware of certain situations shared in counseling is in the student's best interest.
4. If a student requests that the counselor tell someone else.
5. If a student is referred for services with Children's Bureau either through the on-site clinician or through the agency itself.

In these situations, any sharing of information will be discussed with the student in a developmentally appropriate way, and will only be shared on a need-to-know basis in an ethical and helpful manner.

If ongoing treatment is deemed necessary and appropriate, including targeted group interventions, the NOCCA's School Counselor will contact the caregiver(s) to discuss options/ services and process.

If it develops that your child would be better served by another mental health provider for services beyond the scope of what NOCCA can provide, NOCCA will assist with the referral process including referrals to Children's Bureau.

If there is reasonable concern that your student may harm himself/herself or someone else, NOCCA may require that your student be evaluated by an outside provider and may return to school with a written statement from the evaluating clinician that the student is cleared to return to normal school activities.

## Healthy Environment for Learning Program (HELP)

HELP is a program of prevention, intervention, and counseling intended to allow early intervention in the lives of students who exhibit or may be developing behavior that is harmful to themselves or others.

This could be in response to indications of alcohol or drug use, self-harm, or potential harm to others that need to be addressed in a therapeutic manner.

HELP does not supersede the consequences outlined in the *Student Handbook* if a student is caught violating one or more of NOCCA's policies. Rather, it is a pro-active program for which a student can apply to participate under the following circumstances:

- schools policies are not currently being violated,
- no disciplinary investigation is underway, and
- a student requests assistance in resolving issues with substance abuse, self-harm, or concern they are a danger towards others.

## Entering HELP

At any time, a student may initiate contact with a NOCCA staff member to express the desire to enter HELP. A member of the Student Support Team will initiate contact with a student to discuss HELP if a staff member has reason to be concerned that said student might be a harm to themselves or others or is abusing alcohol or drugs. The student may be referred to a hospital for self-harm or to police if they appear to be a credible threat to others.

The parent/legal guardian of the student will be contacted following the meeting between Student Support Team member(s) and the student. The parent/legal guardians will be made aware of the reasons for the initial meeting and the student's interest or lack of interest in entering the HELP program. Parental consent is necessary for students to enter the HELP program and the parent/legal guardian will be responsible for all associated costs (evaluations, drug tests, counseling, etc.).

If a staff member believes that a student is currently under the influence of a substance or that a violation is occurring, the situation will be investigated as a disciplinary matter. The HELP program may be discussed at this point, but the consequences of any infraction already under investigation will be applied, regardless of a student's decision to participate in HELP.

A student may also be required to enter HELP following a protocol violation as a contingency of continued enrollment.

## Exiting HELP

A student leaves HELP when NOCCA staff member(s), the parent/legal guardian, and any mental health professional who has been involved agree that the provisions of the HELP agreement are no longer necessary for the student's well-being.

## Disqualification

A student is disqualified from a HELP agreement if they:

- Violates any part of the HELP agreement



- Fails to comply with the requirements of the initial assessment (including refusal of a drug screen)
- Violates school policies related to their initial entrance to HELP

## Health Services

NOCCA's Health Services provides emergency care, physical rehabilitation, medication distribution, wellness education, and nutritional guidance. Health Services is under the direction of a certified nurse.

## Returning from Mental Health Check/Leave or Extended Illness

When a student is absent for health reasons, including, but not limited to, hospitalization for mental health, extended or chronic illness or injury there is a process to ensure that students can best be supported and return to campus safely. The process is outlined below and a student will not be able to return to classes without following these steps:

1. A parent/legal guardian will notify NOCCA that the student will not be in school due to health reasons.
2. Before a student may return, a parent/legal guardian must provide written documentation by a licensed healthcare professional or by a healthcare facility that the student is not a threat to themselves or to others and that they may return to school.
3. A parent/legal guardian must present this document before or at the time of the student returning to campus.
4. The parent/guardian and the student will meet with a member of administration before the student will be allowed to return to classes.

The student may then return to classes. If the student is absent for an extended period of time, additional meetings may be held with the student and/or parent/legal guardian to outline additional support, a timeline for completion of work, or other agreed-upon needs.

## Medication Policy

The **Medication List** and signed **Consent Agreement** sections of the Medical and Emergency Information packet allow parents/legal guardians to authorize the administration of specific over-the-counter or prescription medications by NOCCA's Campus Nurse or other qualified NOCCA personnel. Any student who is taking prescribed medication during the school day must submit a Medication Order completed by the licensed prescriber. Only the medications indicated on these forms will be administered to the student. Students will be supervised by a NOCCA Staff member when administering any over-the-counter or prescription medications and the administration will be documented.

Students are **NOT** permitted to have in their possession any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) while on campus or at any school-sponsored event. Permission may be granted for a

student to possess certain emergency medication (asthma inhaler or EpiPen, etc.) while on campus or at any school sponsored event if an urgent need has been specified by a physician, in writing, and this documentation is on file with the Campus Nurse. All over-the-counter and prescription medications must be given to the Campus Nurse or the Front Office Staff by parent/legal guardian.

## Library

The Senator John Breaux Library provides a quiet place for students to read, write, and study before and after Arts classes. The library has more than 30,000 items, concentrated on the arts and academic disciplines taught at NOCCA, including books, ebooks, CDs, DVDs, board games, musical scores, Internet hotspots, and Chromebooks. The library also includes a copy machine, computers with internet access, and printing to black and white or color printers.

Students must present their NOCCA ID for computer use and for checking out materials. Students may check out books for three weeks and media for 1 week. The library charges a replacement cost for lost or damaged materials. Faculty must grant students permission to use the library during regular class time.

The use of the NOCCA library is a privilege. Students who abuse the privilege and are found to willfully refuse to follow library rules and/or intentionally damaging library property may be prohibited from using the library in the future.

## Lockers

**NOCCA is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.** Students are responsible for their valuable items which should be locked in a locker or kept on their person. Students must empty their locker by the last day of classes each year. Remaining locks and locker content left after the school year ends will be removed and donated.

## Lost and Found

Items are turned into the Lost and Found in the Canteen daily. Students are encouraged to ask permission to check this area frequently when they have missing items. Periodically, after alerting students a day or more in advance, the Lost and Found is donated to a local charity.

## The NOCCA Foundation

The NOCCA Foundation (TNF) is a 501(c)(3) community support organization incorporated in 1982 to provide advocacy and support for NOCCA. In addition to other programs, TNF provides financial aid for department fees, supplies, department overnight trips, required private lessons, and summer study

scholarships. Financial aid or Student Support applications are sent home with registration each year and can also be picked up in NOCCA's Front Office.

## On-Campus Sales

Students are not allowed to sell items on campus for their own benefit or on behalf of another organization. If a student wishes to hold a fundraiser, they should approach a faculty or staff member to make the sale an official school event after approval by the CFO.

## NOCCA Dance/Prom Guidelines

1. All NOCCA rules and regulations are in effect at all times during the dance/prom. These rules include but are not limited to, alcohol and tobacco usage, illegal substances, appropriate conduct, and dress code. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for failure to follow regulations.
2. Students whose suspension includes the day of the event may not attend.
3. Students who have withdrawn from NOCCA without the right to return or have been expelled from NOCCA may not attend the NOCCA dances/prom.
4. Students inviting a non-NOCCA guest must submit a guest form. Guests and students must follow all rules on this form.
5. The NOCCA student is responsible for the behavior of their guest and is subject to disciplinary action for failure to abide by the rules and regulations.
6. Parents/legal guardians will be contacted to pick up their student (and guest) if a Protocol Infraction occurs at the dance/prom.
7. Students will not be allowed to enter or leave a dance/prom after the published lock-in time.

## Part 4: Procedures

### Privacy of Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal privacy law that gives parents/legal guardians certain protections regarding their children's education records, such as report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules. In general, parents/legal guardians and eligible students have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records;
- Seek amendment of the records that are believed to be inaccurate;
- Consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information, except to the extent that FERPA and the NOCCA Board authorize disclosure without consent (see below);

In general, personally identifiable information (PII) from a student's educational record will only be disclosed with the written consent of the student's parent/legal guardian, a student of majority age, or a

student emancipated in accordance with state law (eligible student). However, FERPA includes certain exceptions that permit the disclosure of a student's educational records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials, including teachers, with legitimate educational interests;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

## Registration

After acceptance and confirmation of intent to enroll, students will receive a registration packet. Some of the required documents will need to be returned to the Front Office, the online portion, along with the student fee or financial aid application. Other required documentation will be completed electronically online through the PowerSchool system. **Students' enrollment is not assured until all fees are paid (or financial aid application is received) and all registration documents are completed and returned.** All fee payments are non-refundable. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for updating NOCCA front desk staff with changes to emergency contact information throughout the year and other changes can be made directly on the PowerSchool portal or by contacting the front desk.

All returning and new students must have new medical forms on file **EACH YEAR**. Academic Studio students must submit immunization records upon acceptance of their place in Academic Studio. Dance, Drama, Musical Theatre, Entertainment Production Design, and all Academic Studio students are also required to have a medical examination (physical) by a medical doctor each year. **Students will not be allowed to attend class until all medical forms are completed and filed with the school.**

If students are unable to provide all required registration documents, families should contact NOCCA's Clinician/Social Worker for assessment with McKinney-Vento.

## Parent/Legal Guardian Communication with Students

Students are not allowed to use or have access to their cell phones, smart watches, or other unapproved devices during the school day. Student communication should happen through the front office. Parents/legal guardians may call the front office to ask that a message be given to their student. In emergency situations, the parent/legal guardian can also ask to speak with their student immediately. Students may use the phone in the front office to call their parents/legal guardians throughout the day as needed.

## Campus Deliveries

NOCCA will not accept deliveries from outside vendors for students this includes Uber Eats, flower delivery, or other like deliveries. No food can be dropped off for a student that displays an outside vendor's name or logo.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is key to success at NOCCA. Daily coursework builds on work completed in the previous classes. We believe learning never has a start or stop time, but a student who is absent or late misses essential instruction that cannot be repeated, disrupts instruction, and risks falling behind in our ambitious curriculum. Absence from any class session affects a student's individual standing as well as the dynamics of the class as a whole.

One of the key principles at NOCCA is setting students up for future success. We want our students to grow and succeed in any environment and punctuality and attendance are essential. Failing to attend regularly scheduled classes jeopardizes future participation in events/performances.

As a state school, NOCCA follows Louisiana's laws concerning habitual absences and tardies. Accordingly, pursuant to La. R.S. 17:233, NOCCA will send a notice home to families after three unexcused absences or tardies in a single semester and will further require a conference with the student's parent and/or legal guardian regarding the unexcused absences and/or tardies. Parents/legal guardians will be asked to sign a form acknowledging receipt of this notice. Parents and/or legal guardians are required to enforce the student's attendance under Louisiana law.

A student is considered habitually absent or tardy when the condition exists after all reasonable efforts by school personnel, truancy officer, or other law enforcement personnel have failed to correct the condition after the fifth unexcused absence or fifth unexcused occurrence of being tardy within any school semester. Under these circumstances, NOCCA may refer the student as truant to "Families In Need of Services" (FINS) for further action. Please note that a truancy referral under Louisiana law may result in a student's driver's permit or license being denied or suspended by the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections pursuant to La. R.S. 32:431.1.

## Late Arrivals

When a student is not able to be in class and fully prepared at the start time of each class, they must:

1. Report to the main office upon arrival
2. Make an electronic pass through the SmartPass system

This process applies to the beginning of the day as well as in between classes. Documentation regarding the tardy shall be turned in to NOCCA's front desk at the time of arrival.

**Please note:** *Traffic and Weather Delays have been determined by State Bulletin 741 as an “Unexcused Tardy” unless the school deems all delays “Exempt” for a particular event. This announcement will then be communicated to the entire NOCCA community through our regular communication procedures.*

## Early Dismissals

The following procedure should be followed by **families who wish to pick up their student early**.

1. The person checking out a student must come to the front office and present identification. NOCCA staff will check the student’s information to verify that the person is listed as an authorized person to check the student out of school.
2. The person will receive a physical “pass to leave campus” slip from the front desk.
3. The student will be called to the main office.
4. The pass must be given to DPS (Department of Public Safety) before exiting campus.

**Students checking themselves out early** shall provide written documentation from the parent/legal guardian for the reason for early dismissal. Alternatively, the parent/legal guardian can call the front office to give prior permission for a student to check themselves out. The student should:

1. Show the documentation to their current teacher
2. Proceed to the front office
3. Receive a “pass to leave campus” slip from the front desk administrator
4. Turn in the pass to DPS before exiting campus.

For unplanned departures, the front office will call the parent/legal guardian to inquire about permission for the student to leave campus.

## Absences

**Excused and Non-Exempt Absences** are absences incurred due to an acceptable reason, such as personal illness, documented by a doctor’s note. The student is allowed to make up the missed work, but the absence is counted against the attendance requirement. Notes should be presented upon the student’s return to school and no later than two (2) school days of the student’s return. If notes are received beyond two (2) school days of the student’s return, they will be collected and reviewed, but may not result in an excused absence.

**Excused and Exempt Absences** are absences due to extenuating circumstances. Students are still responsible for their missed classwork, and absences do not count against the attendance requirement. Examples include extended physical or emotional illness, extended contagious disease within a family, observance of special and recognized holidays of the student’s own faith, prior school-approved travel for education (including college visits), death in the immediate family, natural catastrophe and/or disaster, and academic activities required by sending school. Prior approval and documentation is required. Any other extenuating circumstances must be discussed with the Director of Admissions.

**Unexcused Absences** are any absences not defined above for excused or exempt absences. Some examples include family trips, skipping class, weather, or transportation-related absences. (If the schools in the parish where a student resides are closed due to weather, the student's absence from NOCCA will be excused.) The student may be allowed to make up the missed work and the absence is counted against the attendance requirement. Any absence without proper documentation will result in an unexcused absence.

**Out-of-School Suspensions** are a type of school suspension where a student is not allowed to be on the school campus. The student is allowed to make up the missed work, but the absence is counted against the attendance requirement.

**Students may only miss five (5) excused or unexcused days per semester.** Students who have missed more than five (5) days in a semester are in danger of failing due to excessive absences and NOCCA may require seat recovery time or other make-up work (see *Procedure for Making Up Absences*, below).

**Parents/legal guardians will be notified when a student has 3 or more absences.** Parents/legal guardians and students are encouraged to use the Parent Portal to remain informed of the status of the student's attendance.

**Students will not be allowed to participate in the NOCCA performance or production on any day that they are absent from their partner/sending school or NOCCA academic classes.** The NOCCA faculty will determine if the student will be replaced in the performance or production.

## Procedure for Reporting Absences

1. If a student is going to be absent, a parent/legal guardian should email the front desk at [frontdesk@nocca.com](mailto:frontdesk@nocca.com) as early as possible to notify the administrator of the absence and make a plan for completing the make-up work by emailing their teacher(s).
2. **Immediately** (no later than two (2) school days of the student's return) upon return to NOCCA following an absence, the student must bring a note to the front desk to document the reason for the absence and the parent's/legal guardian's awareness of the absence. The following information shall be included in the **parent/legal guardian note**:
  - Student's Name
  - Date(s) of Absence
  - Reason for Absence
  - Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

A **doctor's note** is required for medical appointments and in all cases of contagious illness or when three or more consecutive days have been missed due to illness.

## Procedure for Making Up Absences

Students must make up missed class time for absences over the allowed five (5) semester absences. Students are only allowed to make up excused absences. Make-up classes must be completed before the end of the current semester.

## Arriving and Departing

Students who attend Academic Studio students may arrive as early as 7:00 AM and must remain in the breezeway and canteen until 7:30 AM. Students will be allowed in the Chevron Forum at 7:30 AM. Students should be in classrooms prior to the start of instruction. Attendance is taken promptly at the start of each class.

Students who attend partner schools may arrive up to one hour before their first class and must remain in outdoor public spaces until the full campus opens. Buildings are open to students 15 minutes before arts classes (for example 1:15 students may enter the buildings at 1 PM). All students are expected to **leave class immediately** at the end of instruction and move to the breezeway, courtyard, or canteen to leave or await transportation. Students must be picked up within 30 minutes of their last class/rehearsal/coaching/supported studies/workshop activities. If there are any students remaining on campus at this time, the following procedure will be followed:

1. NOCCA will contact parents/legal guardians.
2. Parents/legal guardians must arrange immediate pick up of their student.

## Closed Campus

Once a student arrives on campus, the student may not leave until dismissal time, unless properly checked out through the Front Office. **Students may not leave at or after dismissal time and return to campus unless attending a ticketed event.** If a student has commitments or plans (for example plans to attend Visual Arts Opening or after school rehearsal) on campus after dismissal time (other than to a ticketed event), then prior plans must be made to bring food or clothing needed in the interim. **STUDENTS CANNOT COME AND GO FROM CAMPUS EVEN IF THEY ARE DISMISSED FROM INSTRUCTION.**

## Visitors on Campus

NOCCA is a closed campus, meaning only NOCCA Students, Faculty and Staff, and The NOCCA Foundation Staff are allowed on campus. Visitors must check in with DPS and be issued a visitor permit. Any visitor must be escorted by NOCCA or NOCCA Foundation faculty or staff during their entire visit. Every person on NOCCA property will wear an official ID card or a visitor's permit clearly visible on their upper body.



Visitors, including family members of students, are not allowed to join students on-campus for lunch. Students are not allowed to bring visitors to campus to observe instruction or socialize. All visits/tours must be coordinated through the Office of Communications and DPS.

NOCCA alumni are considered visitors. Alumni are welcome to visit campus when the visit is prearranged with a current faculty or staff member. Alumni should follow protocols for signing in to campus and should stay in the main office to await their escort.

Visitors to NOCCA's campus are expected to follow the policies outlined in this Handbook. Visitors who violate these policies, exhibit threatening or violent language or behavior towards NOCCA students or staff, or otherwise disrupt the operations of the school will be escorted off campus and may be prohibited from future campus access.

## Passes and Student Movement on Campus

During Prelude, faculty members orient students to instructional areas and the prescribed pathways to and from those areas. Students may also use common areas (Library, Canteen, Administrative Office) with faculty permission. Students may not use emergency-only stairwells, secondary entrances/exits, and elevators without special permission and/or staff supervision.

To use the elevator, students must have a written pass by the Campus Nurse or an Administrator and not "verbal" permission or be accompanied by a faculty or staff member.

Students needing to visit other departments (i.e. Health Services, Library, Student Services) on campus during class time must have permission from their teacher and must generate a one or two-way pass through the NOCCA SmartPass system. Students shall go directly to the desired destination and either end the pass upon arrival or return to their classroom teacher and end the pass. Teachers will report concerns of misuse of this procedure to the Protocol Coordinator for potential disciplinary action.

Students are not allowed to leave campus during their scheduled school hours without prior parental permission. Students are not allowed to return to cars or the parking lot until the end of day. Students may not loiter in the parking lot before or after school.

If a student feels unsafe walking to their vehicle, they should ask DPS police or administrative staff for an escort.

## Off-Campus Performances & Activities

Student-artists have frequent opportunities to perform, present, or display works in off-campus events. Only activities pre-approved by the Department Chair and administration can be branded with the

NOCCA name and logo. It is essential that all off-campus and pre-approved NOCCA student-artist activities, performances and displays represent the highest standards of preparation and implementation. All NOCCA rules and regulations are in effect at all times during the off-campus activity. These rules include but are not limited to, alcohol and tobacco usage, illegal substances, appropriate conduct, and dress code. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for failure to follow regulations.

## Part 5: Protocol

### Search and Seizure

While NOCCA respects a student's right to privacy, it is also the responsibility of the school to maintain standards of safety and student behavior. Consequently, when there is reasonable suspicion of a violation of school policy or law, NOCCA reserves the right to search a student, and/or their personal effects including but not limited to book bags, purses, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Additionally, NOCCA reserves the right to seize any prohibited items discovered during the search and turn any illegal items over to law enforcement.

NOCCA reserves the right to search NOCCA school property, including lockers, desks, dressing rooms, computers, etc. at any time for weapons, drugs, alcohol, stolen goods, or other materials or objects, the possession of which is a violation of Louisiana Law, federal law, or NOCCA School Policy. These areas are solely school property and, therefore, the school retains control and access to these areas. A school administrator and/or designated staff member may search these areas at any time, with or without cause, in order to fulfill their responsibility of maintaining proper control, management, and safety of the school. Searches by a school administrator and/or designated staff member shall be conducted with a witness present, unless exigent circumstances require the school administrator and/or designated staff member to perform the search immediately before a witness is made available. The witness shall also be an administrator or designated staff member.

A school administrator and/or designated staff member who has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search of a student's vehicle will produce evidence of a violation of school policy or law may ask the driver of the vehicle to open the vehicle and may inspect the vehicle in the driver's presence.

Students who fail to comply with reasonable searches or requests for searches, where the school has a reasonable suspicion of violation of law or NOCCA policy based on articulable facts, may be subject to additional disciplinary consequences (such as the loss of a parking privilege) and law enforcement may be contacted.

## Protocol Consequences

Administration, faculty, staff, and DPS officers are empowered to enforce community norms and manage protocol issues. The Protocol Coordinator is ultimately responsible for determining if a student is meeting the terms of the Enrollment Contract. Students who display behavior in conflict with the Enrollment Contract are subject to dismissal from NOCCA.

The goal of Protocol at NOCCA is student growth in terms of personal responsibility and respect for others. As with the training students receive in the classroom, Protocol is the technical grounding necessary for a student to gain and exercise the non-cognitive social skills that will help them succeed not only in high school but throughout their lives.

Students benefit from consistent critique and feedback, so protocol is managed on a Response To Intervention (RTI) model. All students start at Tier 1, receiving feedback about their behavior and choices, with corrections as needed. Response to and repercussions for student choices that are not in keeping with community norms will aim to help the student learn from their actions and make different choices in the future.

Students having difficulty with school expectations will be moved up in the Tier system to Tier 2 and, in some cases, to Tier 3.

### **Tier 1**

When a student is not meeting specific school expectations in a manner that does not involve or immediately impact others (including, but not limited to dress code violation, use of wireless device, or lack of personal responsibility) a faculty or staff member will address their behavior and, when possible, document the violation. If the behavior continues or escalates, parents/legal guardians will be called and more serious conversations surrounding the student's choices will be had.

### **Respect and Responsibility Reset (R<sup>3</sup>)**

When a student habitually violates a Tier 1 rule or exhibits behavior that immediately adversely impacts others or is of a more serious nature (including but not limited to Academic Dishonesty, skipping class, severe disrespect, bullying) the student will take part in a R<sup>3</sup> to reflect on their past choices and how to make better ones in the future.

### **Tier 2**

If a student's behavior is more serious and/or the student exhibits ongoing challenges and choices that need to be addressed, a team made up of relevant faculty/staff, parents/legal guardians, and the student will be convened to discuss the causes of the unwanted behavior and possible interventions. If needed, the group will develop a growth plan for the student to follow. The student's progress will be revisited on at least a monthly basis and revised if-needed to help the student grow and meet expectations.

If the student's pattern of behavior and decision-making improve, the student will move back to Tier 1 and the growth plan (if in-place) will be retired. If the student's behavior has not improved after two months on Tier 2 despite interventions, or if the behavior worsens during that time, the student will be moved to Tier 3.

### **Disciplinary Review Committee (DRC)**

A Disciplinary Review Committee (DRC) will be engaged as needed to offer insight on serious protocol cases and make recommendations for future administrative response. It will be composed of three (3) to five (5) NOCCA faculty/staff appointed by the President/CEO or his/her designee. The committee will have alternate members to ensure that a student's case will never be reviewed by a faculty member from their own discipline, faculty who is currently teaching them, their Academic Studio mentor, or any faculty/staff who have been directly involved in or have detailed knowledge of the incident to be considered by the DRC. When the DRC is convened, they will choose a chair who will be responsible for leading the review and submitting a recommendation to the President/CEO.

### **Tier 3**

If a student does not respond to interventions at Tier 2 or if a student has a major protocol violation (including, but not limited to a documented threat to a member of the campus community, vandalism, documented off-campus illegal activity) the student will be moved to Tier 3. **Students at Tier 3 will not be allowed to participate in NOCCA activities outside of the graded academic/arts curriculum.**

The DRC will be engaged, given background information about the case, and set options for the student's future at NOCCA. The recommendation of the DRC will be the final recommendation to the CEO regarding the student.

***Note:** NOCCA views both out-of-school suspensions and enrollment termination as a last resort in dealing with disruptive student behavior. Expulsion is an extreme measure used only after repeated warnings concerning behavior or after severely inappropriate behavior.*

## **Stay Away Agreement**

The Stay Away Agreement is a document that defines the limits of interaction between two or more students and is designed to ensure the safety of NOCCA students. It also serves to protect due process by setting rules of interaction between/among students. The document outlines the rules that the students are required to follow to remain enrolled at NOCCA. Noncompliance is grounds for further disciplinary action. Stay Away Agreements may be used in a variety of situations including, but not limited to sexual misconduct, bullying, or in support of the behavioral health of a student.

## NOCCA On or Off Campus Suspension Policy

All NOCCA student suspensions are to be led and managed by the Protocol Coordinator or his/her designee. The NOCCA President/CEO shall receive notification from the Protocol Coordinator when suspension is being considered as an appropriate disciplinary action.

All suspensions shall be preceded by a conference conducted by the Protocol Coordinator or his/her designee between the student, and whenever applicable and practical, the faculty member, or staff member who referred the student for Protocol matters. At the conference, the student shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against them; they shall be given the opportunity to present their version and evidence in support of their defense. All statements shall be documented in a disciplinary report containing:

- a. the student statement;
- b. any witness statements;
- c. the statement of the faculty member who witnessed the student's violation;
- d. citation of the exact NOCCA policy violation; and
- e. signatures of all participating parties.

Parents/legal guardians shall be notified, as stated below, of the student's infraction and the conference. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) may be included in the initial conference at the discretion of the Protocol Coordinator of his/her designee.

The NOCCA President/CEO shall receive a copy of the disciplinary report.

At the time of the suspension, the Protocol Coordinator or his/her designee shall contact the parent/legal guardian by telephone or in person and record a log of the same. The parent/legal guardian shall then be officially notified of:

- a. the reason(s) for suspension;
- b. the length of suspension;
- c. the date and time when the student may return to school;
- d. the growth plan outlining the conditions and expectations and agreed upon student actions upon return to NOCCA; and
- e. the right to appeal and the process for initiating an appeal via NOCCA's Suspension Letter which goes home with the student.

If the suspension is an off-campus suspension, a signed copy of this letter by the parent/legal guardian **must** accompany the student upon his/her return to school.

### Guidelines for Suspension Appeal

Parents/Legal Guardians have the right to appeal a suspension. Should a parent/legal guardian wish to appeal the decision, they have the right to file an appeal with the President/CEO and the Protocol

Coordinator within five (5) school days of receiving the written notice. The appeal will be heard by the NOCCA Discipline Review Committee (DRC). The DRC will convene within five (5) school days and determine whether to recommend upholding, reversing, or modifying the decision to suspend the student.

The President/CEO retains the right to modify the original decision after hearing the NOCCA Discipline Review Committee's recommendation. The decision of the President/CEO shall be final.

## Suspendable Offenses

**Offenses for which a student may be suspended include, but are not limited to:**

1. Violation of the [NOCCA Student Acceptable Use Policy](#)
2. Bullying/Cyber Bullying
3. Treating a NOCCA Staff, Faculty, student, or community member with intentional disrespect
4. Making an unfounded charge against a NOCCA Staff, Faculty, student, or community
5. Engaging in offensive, hateful, discriminatory or profane communication or behavior
6. Using or possessing tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery system (eg. vape or e-cig), or a controlled dangerous substance at school or at school-sponsored functions
7. The use, possession, distribution of, or being under the influence of alcohol at school or at school-sponsored functions
8. Cutting, defacing, or damaging any part of the NOCCA Campus, any property belonging to NOCCA, or any public/private property while on any NOCCA Activities
9. Carrying implements which can be used as weapons, the careless use of which might inflict harm or injury
10. Instigating or participating in fights
11. Violating traffic and safety regulations on campus
12. Leaving the NOCCA Campus without permission
13. Leaving a classroom/performance without permission
14. Academic Dishonesty
15. Committing any other serious offense not otherwise mentioned in the Student Handbook
16. Suspension or expulsion from a partner school.

## NOCCA Expulsion Process

**Note: Any incident involving alleged criminal activity will be reported to on-campus state police and when applicable Department of Child and Family Services in satisfaction of NOCCA's mandatory reporting obligations under Children's Code Article 609.**

**When a student is suspected\* of an expellable offense, the following procedures will be followed:**

1. **Notice of Investigation:** The Protocol Coordinator or his/her designee will conduct an investigation into the alleged disciplinary infraction, which includes an interview of the student

accused of an expellable offense. The student will be suspended pending an expulsion determination and the parent/legal guardian will be notified by phone or electronic communication twenty-four (24) hours from the time the Protocol Coordinator is informed of the disciplinary infraction. The Protocol Coordinator or his/her designee will submit the conclusions of his/her investigation no later than three (3) school days following the Protocol Coordinator being notified of the alleged disciplinary infraction. If the Protocol Coordinator or his/her designee does not recommend expulsion, the parent/legal guardian will be contacted via phone or electronic communication.

2. **Notice of Recommendation for Expulsion:** In the event the Protocol Coordinator recommends the student for expulsion, a certified letter will be sent to the "mailing address" of the student and addressed to "parent 1" and "parent 2" as listed in PowerSchool. The notice of expulsion shall include: (a) the reason(s) for expulsion; (b) the committee members of the DRC; (c) the date and time for the Disciplinary Review Committee ("DRC") hearing; and (d) request for a written student statement that must be submitted by the date/time of the DRC hearing.
3. **Disciplinary Review Committee ("DRC"):** When expulsion is recommended by the Protocol Coordinator or his/her designee, a hearing before the DRC will be conducted to review the facts of the case and make a finding of whether or not the student in question is guilty of conduct warranting a recommendation for expulsion.
  - a. The DRC will convene no more than three (3) school days after the conclusion of the Protocol Coordinator's investigation recommending expulsion.
  - b. The student in question may be accompanied by up to two parents/legal guardians and one other adult before the DRC. The student/family must identify the one adult who will speak on behalf of the group, along with the student, before the DRC. It is solely at the discretion of the committee to allow for more than three adults and/or one speaker at the hearing.
  - c. In making its determination, the DRC will review written documentation including, but not limited to:
    - i. Student Statement
    - ii. Description of Incident
    - iii. Evidence
    - iv. Witness Statements
  - d. The DRC may interview the student at issue and may request other interviews of pertinent parties in the incident.

After reviewing the case, the DRC shall make a finding of whether or not the student is guilty of conduct warranting an expulsion. If the Committee finds the student guilty, they consider if the offense is such that the student can reapply for the Arts and Academic Studio. The committee shall present the recommendation in writing to the CEO who will then determine the student's future enrollment at NOCCA.

4. **CEO:** The CEO will make a decision whether or not to uphold the DRC’s finding no later than three (3) school days from receipt of the DRC’s finding.
5. **Parent/Legal Guardian:** The parent/legal guardian will be notified of the CEO’s final decision via certified letter dated no more than three (3) school days from the conclusion of the DRC hearing. If the final decision is expulsion, an Expulsion Appeal Form will be included in the letter from the CEO. At this time, the parent/legal guardian can choose to withdraw their student or appeal the expulsion to a Committee of the NOCCA Board (“CNB”) appointed by the NOCCA Board Chair.

\* The case may not go to the DRC if a student is considered to be guilty of an expellable offense beyond a reasonable doubt. Examples include but are not limited to, surveillance video depicting the guilt of the student or a student confession of guilt.

## Guidelines for Expulsion Appeal

1. Appeals should be made using the Expulsion Appeal Form within five (5) school days of the CEO’s final decision and should be sent to the CEO and the NOCCA Board Secretary or the NOCCA Board Counsel.
2. The appeal will be heard by a Committee of the NOCCA Board (“CNB”) within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the appeal request.
3. In addition to the student facing expulsion, up to two parents/legal guardians and one other adult at the appeal hearing. The student/family will have to identify the one adult who will speak on behalf of the group, along with the student, before the DRC. It is solely at the discretion of the committee to allow for more than three adults and/or one speaker at the hearing.
4. Any documentation a family or their representative chooses to use as part of the appeal should be sent to the NOCCA Board Counsel at least forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing. The NOCCA Board Counsel’s email address will be provided upon receipt of the Expulsion Appeal Form. Any files shared with the CNB will also be shared with the family so long as such disclosure complies with the requirements of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”).
5. The CNB, upon notice of appeal, will have access to all documents reviewed by the DRC.
6. Unless the CNB decides otherwise, the appeal will proceed as follows:
  - a. 10 minutes for NOCCA Statement
  - b. 10 minutes for Family Statement
  - c. Board Questions
  - d. Deliberation
  - e. Decision
7. The decision of the CNB is representative of the entire NOCCA Board and is final. Parents/legal guardians have the legal right to challenge the final expulsion decision by filing a lawsuit in Louisiana’s Civil District Court within ten (10) days.



## Expellable Offenses

### **Expellable Offenses include, but are not limited to:**

1. Violation of the NOCCA Rail Policy
2. Possessing, use, or transmittal of a weapon
3. The use, possession, distribution of, or being under the influence of unlawful drugs or prescription drugs not prescribed to the student
4. Committing or attempting to commit assault
5. Committing or attempting to commit battery
6. Committing or attempting to commit arson
7. Engaging in consensual sexual activity on campus or at a school-sponsored activity
8. Being charged or convicted of a crime.
9. Habitually violating NOCCA expectations and policies as outlined in the Student Handbook and the NOCCA Enrollment Contract
10. Sexual Misconduct or Violence

## Process for Reentry

If a student has been expelled or recommended for expulsion they must be approved to be considered for readmission. Pending review by the DRC and the President/CEO's approval a student can submit an application to NOCCA no sooner than the school year following the recommendation for expulsion.

For example, if a student is expelled or recommended for expulsion during the student's Freshman year, the student may first reapply to NOCCA during the application period (beginning in October) of the student's Sophomore year. The student could then be readmitted for the student's Junior year.

If a student is expelled or recommended for expulsion during the student's Sophomore year, the student may first reapply to NOCCA during the application period (beginning in October) of the student's Junior year. The student could then be readmitted for the student's Senior year.

A student expelled or recommended for expulsion in the student's Junior or Senior year cannot return to NOCCA.

The parent/legal guardian must submit a Letter of Intent to apply to the President/CEO by the application deadline. The student will be required to submit an application and participate in NOCCA's audition procedures with other first-time applicants.

## Sexual Assault Disciplinary Procedures

**Note: Any incident involving alleged criminal activity will be reported to on-campus state police and/or a member of the Administrative Leadership Team and when applicable, also the Department of Child and Family Services in satisfaction of NOCCA's mandatory reporting obligations under Children's Code Article 609.**

Sexual misconduct and violence are serious problems on campuses throughout the country. To address these concerns, NOCCA provides awareness programming and resources for individuals dealing with sexual misconduct and violence, and accessible methods of complaint resolution. NOCCA is committed to creating and sustaining a school environment in which students, faculty, and staff can study and work in an atmosphere that is open, healthy, safe, and unhampered by discrimination. Consistent with this commitment and in keeping with federal and state law requirements, it is the policy of the school to establish an environment where there is zero tolerance for sexual misconduct and sexual violence. Non-consensual sexual misconduct and violence can be traumatizing and detrimental to a person's learning experience and total health and have no place in our community. NOCCA will take action needed to prevent and discipline behavior that violates this standard of conduct. Due diligence will be used to ensure the disciplinary review and any appropriate action be taken as expeditiously as possible. The school will make every effort to provide assistance and support to the victim(s) of sexual misconduct in a thorough, consistent, and sensitive manner. Moreover, this policy is applicable regardless of the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of individuals engaging in sexual activity.

Student Title IX issues may be reported directly to the Title IX Coordinator in person or at [titleIXcoordinator@nocca.com](mailto:titleIXcoordinator@nocca.com) Please refer to NOCCA's Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures for additional information on how NOCCA responds to sexual harassment and assault in its programs.

## Respect and Common Community

Community rules emphasize values such as:

- respect for the rights of others
- consideration for the needs of other students
- acceptance of diversity
- treating all members of the community with dignity
- promotion of individual responsibility and community health and safety.

In short, students are expected to always speak and behave in a mature and respectful manner to faculty, staff, DPS Officers, and fellow students. Students who can successfully incorporate these values into their experience within the NOCCA community are sure to have a rewarding experience and accomplish many of the goals they have set for themselves as young artists.

Students travel to and from NOCCA in a variety of ways, at different times and locations. At all times and locations, students must conduct themselves with appropriate decorum and respect for the environment, including all residences, businesses, and public property. Students' conduct and demeanor should demonstrate the self-discipline and professional courtesy that distinguishes the true artist.

## Audience Protocol During On-Campus Performances

During performances, audience members should never rest their feet or legs on the seats of any performance space. Respect should always be shown to the performer(s) when they appear on stage or in the front of the performance space. Students must follow proper protocol depending on arts discipline. If a student is unsure of proper protocol, they should contact the appropriate arts faculty.

## School Campus and Property

Respect for the NOCCA environment, including buildings, campus, and the neighborhood, requires constant attention to litter control and damage prevention. Damage to campus through misuse, unauthorized use, or defacing (including graffiti) can result in dismissal and students may be fined for any damage. Students are required to report any such protocol incident to any faculty member or DPS officers immediately.

Students wishing to post announcements on campus (flyers, postcards, sidewalk drawings, etc) should seek prior administrative approval by contacting a faculty member or the Director of Communications. Postings that have not been approved will be removed.

Students and families are responsible for NOCCA and state equipment, supplies, and school property checked out to them or offered for their use and should treat these items with care and respect. Students and families should report lost or destroyed property or textbooks checked out to them. Families are responsible for damages due to lack of respect or care and are responsible for paying NOCCA to have property repaired or replaced as determined by the state. If students prove unable to take care of school property, they may lose the privilege of access to supplies or property.

## Specific Protocol Policies

### Eating and Drinking on Campus

Students may only eat and drink in the Canteen, Solomon Family Hall, and outdoor spaces. Some departments may allow consumption of bottled water in certain areas at certain times.

Students must properly dispose of litter before they leave any space and must discard all trash in trash receptacles.

Students may not chew gum while on NOCCA property.

Due to federal guidelines, students may not have carbonated beverages or restaurant/fast food branded containers and/or wrappers in the Solomon Family Hall during breakfast and lunch.

## Identification Cards

As part of campus safety, all students **must wear their current NOCCA ID while on campus or at NOCCA off-campus activities**. Students who arrive on campus without their NOCCA ID will be required to purchase a new NOCCA ID. Upon the third incident, if a student cannot produce their NOCCA ID, a parent or legal guardian will be called.

Students must wear their NOCCA ID at all times, unless instructed to remove it during class and they must replace it before they leave the classroom.

## Dress Code

Students should dress in a manner that is deemed a professional representation of their arts and academics. This includes the following:

- Students must be covered from mid-thigh to top of chest in non-see-through materials.
- Clothing should not include suggestive symbols, words, or advertisements of products or substances that are prohibited or deemed inappropriate.
- Due to safety concerns, shoes must have backs and may not have wheels attached to them.

Some disciplines have a specific dress code, which should always be followed during the Arts class time. Students are reminded to follow the Student Dress Code when not in Arts class, which may require a cover-up when moving between classes.

Students who do not conform to the Dress Code will be asked to adhere to the dress code either by putting on clothing/shoes of their own, wearing loaned clothing, or having a parent/legal guardian bring appropriate clothing. If the latter is necessary, the student will wait in the front office and be counted absent in classes until appropriate clothing/shoes are brought to school.

## Wireless Device Policy

NOCCA desires to promote an environment that is conducive to instruction and creativity. Wireless/electronic devices used by students to communicate with others inhibit the creation of such an environment. NOCCA also intends to protect students' personal privacy while on campus.

Personal electronic devices including but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, computers, iPads, tablets, earbuds, and headphones must be turned off and properly stored away throughout the instructional day and then can be only used in the Breezeway and Canteen after dismissal. A telephone is available in the front office for students to use to call parents/legal guardians and if necessary, parents/legal guardians may leave an emergency message with the front desk at any time.

Students who require use of specific devices for Special Education needs must be preapproved and that device must be listed in their IAP/IEP/IHP.

Students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of their wireless devices. NOCCA shall not assume any responsibility for theft, loss, or damage of an electronic device or unauthorized calls/charges/purchases made on a cell phone.

Faculty or Staff will ask the student to hand over the wireless device. The student will, without hesitation or comment, release the wireless device to Faculty or Staff. The device will be given to the Protocol Coordinator or designee and a protocol infraction will be issued. If the student refuses to hand over the device, the Protocol Coordinator will be contacted and the student will face additional consequences.

Any student not in compliance with the wireless device policy will have the device confiscated and will be required to turn in their device to the front office every day based on the number of offenses.

First Offense: 1 week

Second Offense: 1 month

Third Offense: Will be issued with a Behavioral Growth Plan

If a student is found with an electronic device that should have been turned in to the front desk, the student will face additional disciplinary action.

The student's electronic device can be picked up from the front office **by a parent or legal guardian** (*only those listed on emergency contact cards*) at the **end of the day** if the above conditions have been met.

NOCCA will hold the wireless device until a parent or legal guardian can come by the office to pick it up.

If no one can pick up the wireless device, it will be returned to the student after one week.

## Closed Campus/Security

Once a student arrives on campus, the student may not leave until dismissal time, unless properly checked out through the Front Office. **Students may not leave at or after dismissal time and return to campus unless attending a ticketed event.** If a student has commitments or plans (for example plans to attend Visual Arts Opening or after school rehearsal) on campus after dismissal time (other than to a ticketed event), then prior plans must be made to bring food or clothing needed in the interim.

**STUDENTS CANNOT COME AND GO FROM CAMPUS EVEN IF THEY ARE DISMISSED FROM INSTRUCTION.**

Students who violate these policies will be moved up a protocol tier and are subject to removal of privileges, suspension, or expulsion.

## Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy

NOCCA strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students. Therefore, it shall be the policy of NOCCA to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyberbullying in any form will not be tolerated. As defined by the state of Louisiana (RS 17:416.13), bullying is:

A **pattern** of any one or more of the following:

- Gestures, including but not limited to obscene gestures and making faces.
- Written, electronic, or verbal communications, including but not limited to calling names, threatening harm, taunting, malicious teasing, or spreading untrue rumors.
  - Electronic communication includes but is not limited to a communication or image transmitted by email, instant message, text message, blog, or social networking website through the use of a telephone, mobile phone, pager, computer, or other electronic device.
- Physical acts, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, choking, damaging personal property, or unauthorized use of personal property.
- Repeatedly and purposefully shunning or excluding from activities;

Where the pattern of behavior:

- Is exhibited toward a student, more than once, by another student or group of students and
- Occurs, or is received by a student while on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related function or activity, in any school bus or van, at any designated school bus stop, in any other school or private vehicle used to transport students to and from schools, or any school-sponsored activity or event.

The pattern of behavior as provided above must have the effect of

- physically harming a student
- placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm
- damaging a student's property
- placing the student in reasonable fear of damage to the student's property

Or must be sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough to

- create an intimidating or threatening educational environment
- have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's performance in school
- have the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

A student shall report a complaint of bullying orally or in writing to a faculty/staff member or the Protocol Coordinator. If a parent/legal guardian initiates the complaint, the Protocol Coordinator will follow up with the student. Upon a report of bullying, the school will immediately conduct an investigation and families of the victim and the accused student will be notified of the investigation.

A violation of this policy shall subject the offending student to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include protocol growth plan, counseling, suspension, expulsion or notification to the appropriate authorities.

## Physical Altercations

Safety of all members of the NOCCA community is of the utmost importance. Consequently, actions that put a student or faculty member in physical danger are taken very seriously. Any student involved in a physical altercation with a fellow student(s) will be subject to an immediate protocol infraction or

expulsion. Any student who stays to observe the altercation instead of notifying any faculty or staff member will also be subject to a protocol infraction or expulsion.

## Academic Integrity

Respect for the artist and the work is one of the DNA strands of NOCCA. Consequently, the school takes academic integrity very seriously. It is important that students are honest about their own work and respectful of others' work.

### **Academic Dishonesty includes the following:**

**Cheating:** Using aids (written, digital, or through a fellow classmate) to gain an advantage on an assessment or assignment. Though a lot of the work at NOCCA is collaborative and we celebrate producing work as an ensemble, students should be very careful to understand what assignments are meant to be done individually. Similarly, students should also be clear with faculty what work is their own and what was produced as part of a group.

**Plagiarism:** Using someone else's work or AI-generated content (including, but not limited to words, ideas, or images) in whole or part as one's own without properly citing and or giving credit.

**Other Academic Dishonesty:** Dishonesty that impacts academics in any way. Examples include but are not limited to forging signatures, fabricating excuses for absences, facilitating another student's academic dishonesty on the part of another.

If a student is discovered to have engaged in cheating or plagiarism after an investigation, the following will take place:

- The student loses the ability to receive full credit on the assignment.
- The teacher will identify how the student will demonstrate their learning on the original assignment and how much, if any, credit the student will be able to receive on the assignment.
- The case may be brought to the Discipline Review Committee (DRC) for feedback on appropriate response from the school.

## Rail Safety Policy

NOCCA strives to provide a safe learning environment for students. Therefore, it shall be the campus policy of NOCCA to maintain a high level of rail safety at all times. Rail Safety is crucial to the safety of every student in the NOCCA community. Students should adhere to this policy at all times to ensure Rail Safety on the NOCCA campus.

- Students **should not cross over or crawl under** a parked railroad train at any time.
- Students **should not approach** a moving or parked railroad train at any time.
- Students **should not violate** rail safety laws while operating their vehicles on the NOCCA campus.

- Students **should adhere to the directions** of DPS officers, faculty, or staff members when a train is approaching or parked.

If a student violates the Rail Safety Policy the following protocol consequences will take place:

1. The student's enrollment in the Arts Conservatory **will be immediately terminated.**
2. The student's enrollment in the Academic Studio **will be immediately terminated.**
3. Parent/Legal Guardian conference will be held to terminate the enrollment.
4. The parent/legal guardian is responsible for locating another school for the student.

## Drug/Alcohol Safety

Alcohol and drug involvement are violations of the laws of the State of Louisiana and incompatible with the school's mission and operation. Students are responsible, as citizens, for knowing about and complying with the provisions of Louisiana Law that make it a crime to use, possess, sell, deliver, or manufacture drugs collectively known as "controlled substances".

Consequently, all students are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing, manufacturing, or having controlled substances, prescription drugs (without a doctor's note and permission from the school) or any other mind-altering or intoxicating substances present in their system while at school or participating in school events, either on or off campus. All students are prohibited from having associated paraphernalia at school or at any school events.

NOCCA reserves the right to require students to submit to a chemical test when administrators have reasonable suspicion that the student is using or is under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances while on campus or at school-sponsored events.

Reasonable suspicion may arise from:

- A student's behavior, physical appearance, actions, and/or odor, indicating the possibility of use or possession
- Student possession of drug paraphernalia, alcohol, or any controlled or illegal substance.

Refusal to submit to a chemical test in the circumstances described above will be considered an admission of guilt by the student and treated as such.

## Smoking and Tobacco Safety

Students are prohibited from using, possessing, and purchasing for self or others any tobacco product or any paraphernalia that may facilitate the use of a tobacco product (e.g., cigarette paper, pipe, vaporizer, etc.) or nicotine delivery devices (such as electronic cigarettes, vaping pens) while under the supervisory authority of NOCCA, whether on campus, off campus, on a field trip, or on another such activity sanctioned or sponsored by NOCCA.