

# FAMILY & CULTURE HANDBOOK

2019-2020



LA CIMA ELEMENTARY  
CHARTER SCHOOL

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**OUR MISSION AND VISION**

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The **mission** of La Cima Elementary Charter School is to prepare scholars for academic and life-long success through a rigorous and relevant academic program.

Our **vision** is to develop scholars who have the intellectual capacity, the social capital and emotional strength of character to be personally successful, and to act as effective change makers in their communities.

We also recognize that in order to be successful academically, our children need support from both the home and school. As partners, we share the responsibility for our children's success and want you to know that we will do our very best to carry out our responsibilities. We ask that you guide and support your child's learning by ensuring that he/she:

- **Attends** school daily and arrives on time, ready for the day's learning experience
- **Completes** all homework assignments given by teachers
- **Reads** daily to develop a love for reading and to improve literacy skills
- **Shares** school experiences with you so that you are aware of his/her school life
- **Informs** you if he/she needs additional support in any area or subject
- **Knows** that you expect him/her to succeed in school and put forth their best effort

## HOURS OF OPERATION

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La Cima operates from 7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, our school day is 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., which allows our teachers to have time to meet, plan, and receive training. This weekly staff development time is incredibly important and helps us to improve our skills as teachers and the school program as a whole. Please see our school calendar for details.

## CARE

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La Cima Elementary Charter School's learning environment is built around four core principles: Community, Accountability, Reconciliation and Effective Effort. Scholars, teachers, and family members all commit to a way of working together that exhibits the core principles of **CARE**.

### CARE at La Cima

CARE is the framework through which our scholars develop "*social capital, emotional strength of character to be personally successful and to act as change-makers in their communities.*" The language of CARE provides scholars, families and staff a shared language through which we can communicate with each other and grow together.

- classroom lessons
- daily morning CARE Circles
- weekly grade-wide community meetings
- monthly school-wide community meetings

# RESTORATIVE PRACTICES & THE REFERRAL PROCESS

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## What are Restorative Practices?

Our scholars, like ourselves, are in a constant state of learning and evolving. As adults, it is our responsibility to create a context in which children can learn academically, socially, and emotionally. Much of this learning happens in the face of conflict. Our children must have the capacity to identify the ways in which harm was caused in a conflict. If they are involved in a conflict they need to engage with the resolution process. This is the emotional strength of character that a change maker embodies. It is emotional intelligence and critical thinking that will allow them to navigate their world, hold themselves accountable for unjust acts, and act in a way to hold others accountable for acts of injustice. It is in these moments where the values behind the CARE principles—Community, Accountability, Reconciliation, and Effective Effort— surface.

All humans are hardwired to connect. Just as we need food, shelter and clothing, human beings also need strong and meaningful relationships to thrive. **Restorative practices** is an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Restorative Practices explain the ideas that guide how we approach conflict. We understand that general conflict, as well as severe conflict arises in schools and it is our responsibility to use restorative practices to create opportunities for reflection and learning from these conflicts. Examples of restorative practices include:

- CARE circle
- Peer to peer mediation
- Family mediations
- Restorative Conferences
- Reflection Hall (learning/writing assignment during recess)

## What is a Behavioral Referral?

A **Behavior Referral** is written when an incident of the following nature occurs, which violates the safety of the community:

### Physical aggression towards others

- successfully hits, kicks, slaps, punches adults and/ or peers with open or closed hand
- attempts or successfully bites adults and/ or peers
- attempts or successfully spits on adults and/or peers
- all incidents of self-injurious and/or self-harm behavior will be reported following the immediate referral protocol to Tiffany Young, Guidance Counselor

### Object aggression

- Attempts or successfully pushes and/or throws objects that are not meant to be thrown (e.g. desks, chairs, pencils, manipulatives, paperclips, shoes)

**Harmful or threatening language** towards another person (e.g. Profanity, verbal and nonverbal threats)

**Elopement**-successfully walks/runs away from an adult working with them without permission

**Stealing**- attempts or successfully takes the property of another community member without permission

**Bullying**- unwanted harmful behavior towards another person that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Types of bullying include Verbal, Social/Relationship, and Physical.

When an incident of this nature occurs, a member of Scholar Support will assist all scholars involved by primarily ensuring they are safe. Then, the process requires scholars to write/draw/share their story on a written reflection. The staff will then communicate with families about the incident. Collectively a consequence will be thought of to support the community and to support the scholar who engaged in behaviors that were unsafe and/or hurtful.

### What is DASA?

**DASA** or The Dignity for All scholars Act (The Dignity Act) is a law that was established to protect all scholars from **harassment, bullying, and discrimination**.

This law became effective on July 1, 2012. The act was developed to *prohibit bullying, harassment, discrimination, or cyberbullying against scholars in school based on the following:*

- Race
- Color
- Weight
- National origin
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Sex
- Other markers of one's identity
- Religious practice
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender (including gender identity & gender expression)

**La Cima DASA Coordinator: Taneka Masse**, School Psychologist

**Phone Number:** (718) 443 - 2136 ext. 1022

**Email:** [tanika@lacimacharterschool.org](mailto:tanika@lacimacharterschool.org)

### What is Bullying?

#### The Elements of Bullying

- **Imbalance of Power:** scholars who bully others use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity, to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **The Intent to Cause Harm:** Determining the intent of an individual who demonstrates bullying behaviors should also be considered.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors generally happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once

#### Types of Bullying

- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, and threatening to cause harm
- **Social/Relationship:** Spreading rumors about someone, excluding others on purpose, telling other scholars not to be friends with someone, and embarrassing someone in public.
- **Physical:** Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, and taking or breaking someone's thing

# **ATTENDANCE**

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One of the greatest factors in your scholars' success is attendance. Absence, lateness, and early dismissals could have a serious impact on a scholar's educational progress and performance. Please keep in mind that every absence is a loss of approximately eight hours of instruction which means even a couple absences a month could add up to serious deficiency in instruction.

## **Morning Arrival Policy**

School doors on Monroe Avenue open every school day at 7:30 am and close at 7:55 am to ensure scholars arrive to school with time to eat a nutritious breakfast and prepare their minds for the school day. Scholars must be dropped off at the door by a grown up directly to a La Cima staff member unless they walk independently. To ensure the safety of all scholars, no scholars are permitted to enter the building before 7:30 am.

## **Dismissal Policy**

Families are required to submit a written Pick-up/ Drop-off Authorization Form indicating who is and is not allowed to pick up their scholar. Should any changes in authorization occur, families must contact the main office to update the Authorization Form. All exceptions must be communicated by the parent or guardian in writing to the school before anyone not on the Authorization Form can pick-up a scholar.

Scholars will be dismissed in the auditorium Monday through Thursday at 3:45 pm and on Fridays at 12:30 pm. To ensure our staff has the time to prepare for dismissal, no scholar will be dismissed from school Monday through Thursday from 3:00 pm – 3:45 pm and on Fridays from 11:45 am to 12:30 pm.

## **Late Arrival**

After 7:55 a.m. scholars will have to enter through the entrance on Gates Avenue. All scholars who arrive after 8:00 a.m. will be considered late. All late scholars must be escorted upstairs by an adult (unless they are a grade 4 or 5 scholar who walks). All late scholars or their escort must sign in at the front desk and receive a tardy pass before heading to class.

Three tardies will be counted as one absence. Families of scholars with excessive tardies will be required to have an in-person meeting with the Instructional Leadership team to discuss next steps to ensure s/he arrives to school on-time, every day.

## **Early Dismissal Policy**

Only authorized adults will be allowed to pick-up scholars. Please call in advance to ensure the scholar is ready once you arrive. Adults will need to enter through the main Gates Avenue entrance, with proper ID and sign in at security. They will then need to come to La Cima on the 3rd Floor to sign-out their scholar in the Early Dismissal log at the main desk. Adults will wait in the waiting area

near the front desk while a La Cima staff member goes to the classroom to bring the scholar up to the front desk to meet the adult.

### **Scholars Walking Home**

Family members must fill out the Pick-up/ Drop-off Authorization Form checking the box that states scholars are permitted to walk home. Walking home is only an option for scholars in Grade 4 & 5, or scholars who have a sibling in grades 4 or 5. In this case, scholars will sign themselves out (and siblings, if such is the case) on class sign-out rosters during dismissal.

### **Late Pick-ups**

After dismissal, our staff is preparing for the following day and late pick-up can be very disruptive to this preparation. Please make every effort to pick up your scholar on time every day. Late pick-ups will be logged daily and parents of scholars who have three or more late pick-ups in a month or six or more in a year will be required to have an in-person meeting with the Instructional Leadership Team to discuss next steps to ensure scholars are picked up on time.

If the late pick-up pattern is excessive or if a parent is more than an hour late picking up his or her child, the school reserves the right to take the child to the local police precinct for safe supervision.

### **Absences**

We understand that a scholar may be absent for illness or emergencies, but the goal is for every scholar to be in school every day. Parents are responsible for getting their scholar to school each day. Missing school means missing learning.

### **Every absence counts! Excused absences are still absences!**

All Absences, "Excused" and "Unexcused", are still considered a loss of instructional time and is therefore an absence. Scholar illness, a death in the family, religious holiday, are all considered absences at La Cima. While we appreciate and consider the reason behind a scholar's absence and recognize the various critical factors that play a role in one's attendance, the scholar is still not in school and will be marked as absent. To have an absence marked "excused" a family member must provide written documentation explaining the absence

### **Scholar Illness**

In the case of absence due to illness, we require a call or note from a parent or doctor explaining the absence. We request medical and dental appointments be scheduled outside of school time. Friday afternoons, following dismissal are the suggested times for doctor's appointments. In the rare case when a scholar has a medical appointment during school day please make every effort to ensure s/he doesn't miss the entire school day.

### **Exams and Quizzes**

If a scholar is absent, he or she must make up any exams, quizzes, interim assessments, or other tests *the day he or she returns*.

### **Vacations**

It is not considered a reasonable excuse for scholars to miss school due to vacation during instructional time during the school year. Those days will be counted as full absences and will affect your scholar's promotion to the next grade.

### Missing the Bus

Missing the bus is not an acceptable reason to miss an entire school day. Although scholars shouldn't miss the bus, each scholar should have a back-up plan for getting to school. Attendance issues due to missed buses will not be considered an excused absence, and the attendance guidelines will be upheld.

### Tracking Absences

Attendance (including tardies) is recorded daily in the classroom, and through our attendance tracking system. Given the importance of attendance on a child's learning, the school is prepared with the following actions as attendance issues arise. The following guidelines will help you understand these in advance, so we can work collectively to ensure all scholars are present and on time each day.

- **Every absence and tardy** will result in a phone call from La Cima Elementary Charter School. This call will either be automated or directly from a staff member.
- **10 absences:** an attendance meeting with your scholar's teacher and school leadership is scheduled to develop an attendance plan.
- **15 absences:** an attendance meeting with school leadership and teacher to follow up with attendance plan and review of academic data.
- **20 absences:** If a child is absent 20 times in a year it is considered educational neglect. In accordance with mandated reporting guidelines, we are required to inform State Central Registry (SCR) and a case will be opened with Administration for Child Services (ACS).
- **5 consecutive absences:** If a scholar is absent 5 consecutive days and our staff is unable to get in contact with the families we are mandated to report this incident SCR and a case may be opened with ACS.

### Chronically Absent and Intervention

In accordance with NYC Department of Education, Regulation of the Chancellor A-750, after 20 missed days of school it is considered Educational Neglect and as mandated reporters, we are required to contact SCR and a case will be opened with ACS. If a scholar has missed 10% of the school year (about 2 absences per month) at any given point in the year, they are on track towards educational neglect. We want to make sure families are aware of their status throughout the year and are making a conscious effort to improve attendance. A certified mailing will go home each month for scholars who have missed 10% of the school for the year. The table below outlines the total number of absences for the year that would cause concern.

Chronically Absent									
September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20

*\*For the purpose of targeting educational neglect, lateness and absences will be calculated separately.*



## SCHOOL CLOSING

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La Cima will only close school in cases of extreme weather conditions. In such situations, we will follow the NYC Department of Education closing guidelines. Please listen to local radio and television stations. If New York City announces a delayed opening or a closing for public schools, La Cima will also be delayed or closed. If New York City public schools are open, La Cima is open. The same policy applies for scheduled after school programs.

## UNIFORMS

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We have a school uniform procedure to ensure that scholars exist in a learning environment where learning is central. We attempt to create a space free from the competitive nature that can come from material goods such as clothing, shoes, and accessories.

### The La Cima Uniform

- Burgundy Polo shirts (long sleeve, short sleeve)
- Burgundy Turtlenecks
- Burgundy button down sweaters, zip up sweaters, and pullover sweaters (not sweatshirts)
- Khaki pants, shorts, skorts
- Sneakers (mostly black)
- *Children can bring rain/snow boots, with sneakers in their book bag*
- Simple jewelry and accessories

### Additional Guidelines

- *Please label all clothing so we know which set belongs to each scholar.*
- Scholars are not permitted to wear make-up in school, (including lip gloss or tinted chap-stick)
- Non-uniform items that are brought to school will be saved in the Main Office until a parent/guardian can collect them.
- If a scholar comes to school out of uniform, we will lend them a La Cima uniform which is to be sent back to school washed within a week of its distribution.
- Jewelry including large earrings, necklaces, bracelets and rings or distracting hair accessories are not permitted.

### Extra Clothing (Kindergarten)

- Kindergarteners should have a clean set of clothes at school in the event of an accident.
- Please bring a uniform including underwear and socks, with every item labeled in a clear plastic Ziploc bag, with your scholar's name.
- If a scholar does not have a set of clothes at school, we will lend them a La Cima uniform which is to be sent back to school, washed, within a week of its distribution.

## FAMILY AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

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Family members should check in with scholars, and look through scholars' Homework Folder daily for fliers, calendars, monthly progress reports and other important notices from school. Families may

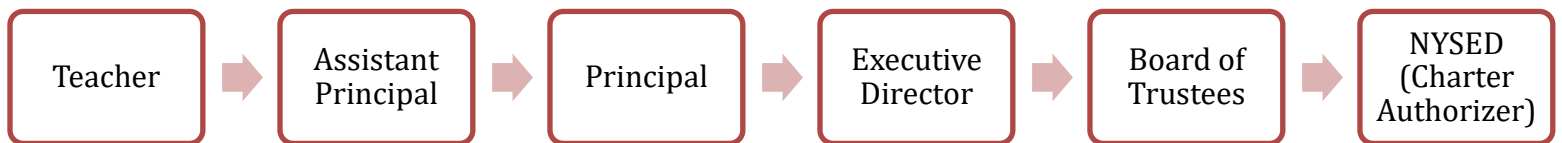
also receive automated calls and emails from the school to keep you informed of upcoming events and other changes.

All families receive their child's teacher's contact information at the start of the school year. It will also be listed on grade wide newsletters that are distributed monthly. If a question or concerns arises, families should communicate with the scholar's teachers between the hours of 7:30 am and 4pm. As a general rule, families can expect a reply within 24 hours.

For an in-person meeting or question, all family members must make an appointment to speak with a staff member. Meeting requests should be directed to the classroom teacher or by speaking with the main office by calling (718) 443-2136. Parent meetings may **not** be held during instructional hours. If a family would like **to schedule an appointment specifically with a School Leadership member**, please contact the main office.

## La Cima Charter School Family Complaint Policy

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La Cima Charter School is committed to ensuring that every member of our community feels heard when they have concerns. In our attempt to get the most accurate and efficient resolutions, we encourage families and staff to attempt to resolve their concerns at the source. Below is a description of the above pictured process.

### Teacher

Most family concerns are about what happens in the classroom either academically or behaviorally. We ask that families first speak with their child's teacher to resolve concerns. Teachers are asked to respond to families within 24-48 hours.

### Assistant Principal

If the issue is not resolved with the teacher, or the family has not heard back from a teacher within a reasonable amount of time [24-48 hrs. for response], the family may raise the concern with the associated Assistant Principal [AP for grades K-2 or AP for grades 3-5].

### Principal

If the issue remains unresolved, or the family has not heard back from the Assistant Principal within a reasonable amount of time [48 hrs. for a response], the family may raise the concern with the Principal. The principal, within their discretion, may call a meeting with the family and any other staff member who can be helpful in providing more information or a resolution to the concern.

### Executive Director

If after working with the principal, the issue is still unresolved, the family may raise the concern with the Executive Director. If the family has raised this concern with the Executive Director because the principal was unresponsive, the Executive Director may refer the family back to the Principal after alerting the Principal to the concern. If the family has raised the concern with the Executive Director because the concern was not resolved to the satisfaction of the family, the Executive Director will interview relevant staff members to investigate the concern and the actions taken up to this point. This investigation may take 1-3 weeks, depending on the nature of the concern.

### **Board of Trustees**

If after working with the Executive Director, the issue is still unresolved, the family may send their concern in writing to La Cima's Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will then investigate the concern and provide a written response back to the family within 30 days.

### **Charter Authorizer: New York State Education Department [NYSED]**

La Cima Charter School is authorized by the Board of Regents at the New York State Education Department. If a family's concern has not been adequately resolved, the family may present their concern in writing to La Cima's authorizer, NYSED.

## **NURSING SERVICES & MEDICATION**

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### **School Nurse**

La Cima shares nursing services with the other schools in the building. The School nurse is available each day during school hours. Our school nurse is actively involved in school health programs.

School nurses:

- Schedule scholars for physician assessments if needed.
- Give prescribed medicine to scholars with a Medication Administration Form (MAF) on file.
- Provide prescribed nursing services to scholars with a medically prescribed treatment (non-medication) form on file.
- Monitor scholars with chronic health problems, and inform parents if health problems are getting worse.

### **Medicine at School and Skilled Nursing Treatments**

If your child has a health condition, they may benefit from taking prescribed medicine at school or a skilled nursing treatment. Talk to your child's health care provider. Ask if taking medicine at school or a skilled nursing treatment would help your child better manage his or her health condition.

- All scholars with a diagnosis such as asthma, allergies or diabetes should submit a Medication Administration Form (MFA) to their school.
- Submitting an MFA enables the school nurse to treat your child in the case of a medical emergency. Forms are available in the Main Office.
- Even if your child can take his/her own medicine, it is important for the school clinical team to be aware of the scholar's medical needs in case of an emergency.
- You must submit a new MFA at the start of each school year.
- MFAs are accepted on a rolling basis.

# SCHOOL BUS & TRANSPORTATION

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Busing to and from La Cima Elementary is provided by the NYC Department of Education, Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). The Department of Education will generally provide busing for any K – 2 scholar who lives between half a mile and three miles from La Cima. For scholars in Grades 3 – 5, scholars must live between one and three miles from the school.

Our expectations for behavior on the bus are ***consistent with our expectations at school and our CARE values***. Scholars who routinely break from community expectations will face consequences aligned to the CARE values. Families will be notified of the issue at hand.

All families of scholars who participate in the Bus program will be required to sign a bus contract upon beginning busing, which outlines the guidelines for bus conduct and the consequences for not adhering to the guidelines.

## La Cima Bus Guidelines

### Scholar Expectations

1. Scholars will only be released to a guardian and those persons who are listed on the pick-up authorization form.
2. Scholars that are in grades 4 and 5 who have an authorization form to walk home on file, will be released to walk home from the bus alone.
3. Scholars will only be dropped off at assigned and designated bus stops.
4. Scholars are expected to use appropriate indoor voices when speaking to their seat buddy on the bus.
5. Scholars will refrain from using obscene or inappropriate language on the bus.
6. Scholars will maintain a safe bus environment by refraining from the following behaviors: hitting, kicking, scratching, punching, pushing, shoving or harassing other scholars on the bus.
7. Scholars will refrain from name calling, threats, intimidation, and other examples of verbal harassment towards other scholars on the bus.
8. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars are not permitted to have their phones out on the bus. Only when a scholar exits the bus will they be able to use their phone. Scholars in grades K-3<sup>rd</sup> are not permitted to have cellphones.
9. Eating and drinking are not allowed on the bus.
10. If there is a monitor on the bus, the scholars must follow his/her directions at all times
11. Scholars must stay in their seats at all times with their seat belts fastened.
12. Scholars must keep any writing materials inside their book bags while on the bus.

### Family Expectations

1. There will be a 2 minute grace period for adults to arrive at the bus stop before they are considered a no show, and the scholar will be brought back to the school. This 2 minute period also applies to
2. Family and Scholars will be respectful in how they speak and approach both the driver and bus monitor.
3. If family decides they do not want their scholar(s) to ride the bus home, they will call the front desk directly and notify the front desk of this change.
4. In the event that the bus is running late, families will give bus arrival a 5 minute grace time before contacting the bus monitor.

5. If families request to have a scholar removed from the bus and rescinds that decision, the family must reapply for busing. The scholar will not be permitted on the bus until the child's name appears on the roster through Office of Pupil Transportation

### **Bus Consequences**

**1<sup>st</sup> violation: Suspension from bus service for 1 day**

*Parent is responsible for finding alternate transportation.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> violation: Suspension from bus service for 1 week**

*Parent is responsible for finding alternate transportation.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> violation: Suspension from bus service indefinitely**

*Scholar is suspended from bus service until reinstated by the Assistant Principal and Principal. Parent is responsible for finding alternate transportation.*

**Note: Bus monitors will track warnings leading up to each violation.**

1st warning = Reminder to scholar and phone call home

2nd warning = Letter home to family

3rd warning = In-person meeting with administration

### **Bus Stops & Schedules**

We have assigned bus routes provided by the Office of Pupil Transportation. For a most up-to-date bus route, please request a copy from our main office. Though we are working to have additional stops and routes added the process can take a long time, sometimes more than a school year. However, all requests for new bus stops are welcomed and should be communicated.

### **Bus Complaints**

La Cima does not manage or control the school bus service—the contract with the bus company is managed and supervised by the NYC Department of Education. Complaints about late pick-ups, drop-offs, driver behavior, bus conditions, etc. should be reported to both the main office at La Cima **and** the NYC Dept. of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation.

NYC Dept. of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation Customer Hotline: 718-392-8855

When you call this number you will need to provide the following:

- La Cima OPT code: 16564
- La Cima school code: 84K649

## **FOOD AND NUTRITION AT LA CIMA**

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Food is what provides us with energy to do what we need to do in our day. Thus, La Cima takes food and nutrition very seriously to ensure our scholars are in the best state for learning, and to establish a culture of wellness at school.

## School Meal Forms

Both breakfast and lunch are available at La Cima Elementary at no charge. All families will need to complete the school lunch form at the beginning of each school year. Although families are no longer billed for lunch, completion of the lunch forms supports our federal school funding.

## Breakfast & Snack

Breakfast: 7:30-7:55 in classrooms (late arrivals will eat a dry breakfast upon arrival)

Snacks are delivered to classrooms every morning and are distributed by the teacher between morning hours and lunch

## Lunch

Each grade has 30 minutes for lunch during their respective afternoon lunch period. Every scholar is entitled to receive a lunch meal. Scholars and families can choose to participate in the school lunch program or bring lunch from home.

Families that choose to provide lunch for their scholar must send a complete, healthy cold lunch to school. Lunches cannot be warmed up at school. La Cima does not have the capacity to heat up or refrigerate any meals. If you are sending lunch to school with your child, we ask that you send in nutritious foods only. Junk food for lunch will be confiscated and tossed away. Eating processed foods that lack nutritional value have a negative effect on learning and health, we only permit water, and 100% juice drinks (no sodas, artificial or soft drinks).

## Healthy Snacks

All scholars will have a healthy snack provided to them in their classroom daily. Please make sure to let our main office know if your child has any food allergies as the fruit and vegetables change regularly to ensure scholars are getting the freshest, healthiest snacks possible. Some scholar favorites include apples, strawberries, carrot/celery sticks, and pineapple.

Children can bring their own **healthy** snacks from home. **Scholars will not be permitted to eat any candy, cookies, donuts, chips, soda or other unhealthy items.** If a child brings an item that is deemed unhealthy, it will be returned home. Please ask us if you are not sure, and remember you don't have to send anything—we already provide the snack here at school.

## Nut Free School

In recognizing the increased number of students with life threatening allergies to peanuts and/or other tree nuts, La Cima provides a nut-free school environment. Our goal is to make school a safe place for all scholars to learn and grow. To avoid these scholars potentially coming into contact with peanut/tree nut residue found on shared supplies, technology, and classroom furniture including doorknobs, we are a nut-free school.

Our school food partners providing school breakfast and lunch will also avoid serving peanut/tree nut options. Please help us by avoiding peanut/tree nut containing lunches or snacks (e.g. including peanut butter sandwiches).

## Birthday Celebrations

At La Cima, we will not host birthday parties during instructional time. Birthday celebrations may be held during a lunch block as long as the classroom teachers agree and communication of the same is provided to all parents of the class. Party treats must comply with our healthy eating policy and provide options for all students including students with allergies and/or dietary restrictions.

We encourage you to provide a small treat for the entire class or to donate books to the classroom library. We prohibit large celebrations including decorations and cumbersome party favors as this takes away from our academic focus. Instead we encourage birthday celebrations outside of school hours with shared invitations to all classroom students.

## **VISITORS**

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We welcome visitors throughout the school year. To schedule a visit, please arrange a date and a time with the main office staff. All visitors to the building are required to present a valid photo ID to the school safety agents for entry into the building, without it entry will be denied. School safety agents may hand you a visitor's name tag.

When you arrive to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, please sign-in again at the front desk and ensure that you are wearing a visitor's name tag. During your visit, please make effort to not detract from the teaching and learning happening in the classrooms by talking with your child, other children, or with the teachers. Even if it appears a staff member is on a "break," it is important to respect this allotted preparation time.

Visitors are welcome to set up a meeting with teachers and staff to discuss observations after a visit. While visiting, guests are welcome to wait in the Welcome Center.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY & MEDIA**

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Families complete a photo release form as part of their scholar's registration. We will also send them home at the beginning of the school year. La Cima uses photos of scholars on the website, and on social media to keep family and community updated and informed about our learning and activities. To update this document at any point in the school year please contact the main office.

## **WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL**

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Scholars should not bring to school anything unrelated to school. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Basketballs or other sports equipment
- Magazines
- Make-up/lip gloss/nail polish
- Fancy pens/pencils
- Toys/figurines/Fidget Spinners
- Any electronic devices, other than a basic watch

- Electronics such as iTouches, iPads, iPhones, mp3 players or other gaming devices.
- Slime

## LOST & DAMAGED ITEMS

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### Items from Home

Scholars should not bring anything unrelated to school. If scholars receive permission from class to bring an item for a special purpose, communication will be sent home to families prior to this day with expectations and purpose for its use. If a scholar comes to school with an item other than their book bag, book baggie, and/or clothing (please note the items listed in the section above) La Cima is not responsible for this item in any way. If the item is lost or damaged, only the family is liable.

If a teacher or staff member sees a scholar with unauthorized, non-academic material, the staff member will take the item from the scholar and it will be given to the Assistant Principal and the family will be notified. The Assistant Principal will store it in a secure location. In order to retrieve the item, a guardian/parent will need to arrange a time to pick it up during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Items will not be returned directly to scholars.

### Lost Books

Scholars who do not turn in a book within 15 days after checking it out or who tell the teacher that they have lost it will be issued a "Lost Book" form by the class librarian or the teacher. The scholar will need to pay the school \$6 to replace the cost of the book. If lost or damaged, book baggies will have to be replaced (\$5).

## CELL PHONE POLICY

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Cellphones are a significant part of our world, and are required for a family member's sense of safety when their child is not with them. Working from this truth, the cell phone agreement exists in order to allow for their use with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars during non-school time. **Cell phones are not permitted in school for Kindergarten-3rd grade scholars.** Given the need for safety and communication we've developed guidelines to prevent cell phones from being a source of social/emotional distraction from the learning environment. **The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars who do bring their cell phones to school MUST have this agreement signed and returned by a family member in order for their phones to be permitted at La Cima.**

1. Scholars that walk to school are allowed to call/text their families when they arrive safely.
2. The cell phone must be **turned off**. Being on vibrate or silent is not acceptable.
3. The cell phone must be **turned in to their classroom teacher** upon entry to the classroom.
4. The cell phone must be **labeled** with the scholar's name. If the phone itself is not labeled, the case covering the phone should be with permanent marker. If it is not, teachers will use a piece of masking tape to label the phone.
5. The scholar may retrieve the cell phone at the end of the day from their classroom teacher.
6. The scholar must wait until they are out of the building/at bus stop before turning it on.



7. The school bus operates as an extension of the school. Cellphones and other electronic device usage is **not** permitted on the school bus. These items are to be collected by the bus lead upon entering the school bus and will be given to scholars upon departing the bus.
8. If a parent needs to get in contact with a scholar during the day, families may call the welcome desk: (718) 443-2136 x1000. In most cases, a message will be taken and provided to your child so as not to interrupt learning.
9. If a teacher or staff member sees a **scholar with a cell phone at school outside of the times permitted** (noted above) the staff member will take the item from the scholar and it will be given to an Assistant Principal. Second chances or warnings will not be permitted. The Assistant Principal will store it in a secure location. In order to retrieve the item, a guardian/parent will need to arrange a time to pick it up during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **Items will not be returned directly to scholars.**
10. La Cima is not responsible for lost, broken or stolen items.

## LA CIMA SAMPLE SCHEDULE

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### A Typical Day at La Cima

Please note: Not all grades have the exact same schedule. This is a sample of an average day.

7:30-8:00am: Arrival

- Scholars eat breakfast, socialize with peers, and check-in one-on-one with teachers.

8:00-8:30am: CARE Circle

- Scholars discuss our CARE principles and how they apply to daily life in and out of school.

8:30-10:00am: Reading Instruction (Success for All)

- Scholars work in small reading groups targeted to their specific need.

10:00-10:15am: Snack / Energizer

- Scholars eat snack and engage in an energizing body break.

10:15-10:45am: Math Word Problems (CGI)

- Scholars solve word problems using strategies they create on their own.

10:45-11:00am: Math Routines

- Scholars practice basic routines, including math facts or other games to build number sense.

11:00-12:00pm: Lunch/Recess

- Scholars eat in our school cafeteria and play outside in our schoolyard.

12:00-12:15pm: Mindful Moment

- Scholars engage in a moment that relaxes their mind/body to prepare for more learning.

12:15-1:00pm: Writing or Humanities

- Scholars read and write about texts and topics that are culturally relevant.

1:00-1:45pm: Art or P.E.

- Scholars go to a specialty class to engage their mind or body in a unique way.

1:45-2:30pm: African Drumming or Music

- Scholars dive deeper into a specialty subject.

2:30-3:20pm: Math Workshop (TERC Math Investigations)

- Scholars learn about different mathematical concepts, such as geometry and algebra.

3:20-3:30pm: CARE Reflection

- Scholars join their community again to reflect on how they showed CARE today in school.

At La Cima Specials serve as critical, creative outlets for scholars to explore and develop passions and talents by engaging in curriculum that is designed to not only meet the end of year NYC benchmarks but also to help scholars create and express artistically and musically.

### **Homework**

La Cima scholars will receive meaningful homework assignments each day to reinforce and practice important skills they learn at school. Scholars are also expected to be read to and/or read independently daily. Parents are responsible for ensuring that ALL assignments are satisfactorily completed. Scholars will receive a homework grade on their report cards each trimester.

### **Studio Art at La Cima**

Studio Art aims to connect to the La Cima Humanities curriculum when applicable through rigorous and relevant connections for scholars. It is also intended to give scholars a space for self-expression while they explore their artistic talents and learn about a range of different artists.

### **Science at La Cima**

The Science curriculum is designed to meet the end of year benchmarks established by the New York State Science Standards and the New York City K-8 Scope and Sequence, while heavily infusing the Reading Information and Writing standards from the National Common Core State Standards while making relevant connections to scholar's daily lives. Science lessons are carefully crafted to guarantee that the cognitive demands placed on scholars are appropriate and relevant. Developmental appropriateness and in-depth exposure to the subject matter with multiple experiences give science at La Cima its "horizontal curriculum" character (numerous activities that provide a great variety of experiences at a cognitive level) The curriculum provides challenges for all scholars and results in a much deeper understanding of the subject.

### **Physical Education at La Cima**

Physical Education/ Health aims to be connected to the Humanities and Literacy curriculum through rigorous and relevant connections for scholars. The curriculum contributes to children's overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives. The PE curriculum provides a balanced range of activities for children through hands-on play and work focused on sportsmanship and teamwork. PE curriculum will be aligned to CARE values in such that scholars will be given multiple opportunities throughout class to practice the principal and value of the month in order to emphasize the power of those values in a physical setting.

### **Music Education at La Cima**

Music aims to connect to the La Cima Humanities curriculum when applicable. The music curriculum is based on MusicPlay curriculum. MusicPlay is an award winning music curriculum for elementary schools. MusicPlay is a sequential curriculum with lessons that follow the calendar year. The weekly lesson outlines the new concepts that will be taught, those that will be reviewed, and include seasonal and holiday repertoire. MusicPlay is a learning curriculum that support learning through active play.

### **West African Dance and Drumming at La Cima**

African Drumming at La Cima provides scholars with opportunities to investigate various sounds and rhythms from Senegal. Scholars learn the history of the Djembe drum and about the importance of drumming in African Diaspora culture, while learning how to play a selection of African drums.

## **SCHOLAR SUPPORT DEPARTMENT**

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The Scholar Support team focuses on providing proactive, culturally responsive strategies as well as individualized interventions that maximize scholar's social-emotional, behavioral and academic development for overall success in school and to become change-makers in our community. The team consists of the Special Education Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, School Psychologist and Behavior Technician. The following services are provided by the School Scholar Support Team:

**School Based Counseling:** School based counseling focuses on supporting scholars in developing their social emotional skills including helping them cope with areas of difficulty that interfere with the learning process. The NYS Certified Guidance Counselor and NYS Certified School Psychologist provides individual and small group school based counseling services. Some of the social skills that sessions are focused on our positive peer interactions, conflict resolution, coping strategies, calming/mindfulness techniques, self-regulation and self-esteem. In addition, the Guidance Counselor and School Psychologist help families by providing referrals to community based organizations. Community Based referrals and supports can be provided upon request to provide assistance and information to facilitate healthy growth and development in social, personal and academic areas. Some examples of types of resources are family support groups, mentor programs, mental health and wellness programs. The Counseling department is aligned with the American School Counseling Association Ethical Guidelines. The Guidance Counselor and School Psychologist create a safe, nurturing environment in the Counseling Office where families and scholars can feel comfortable expressing themselves. We believe the most effective way to achieve overall social-emotional growth and academic success is by working together with families. All families are invited to access and utilize the counseling services offered. Please call to schedule an appointment if you would like more information.

**Middle School Counseling:** At La Cima we believe that all our 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars should be able to have choice in this process which includes applying to the Independent Middle Schools, NYC Citywide Schools, NYC Borough-wide Schools, NYC Charter Schools, as well as their zone school. All families receive middle school counseling to support and provide guidance on the next phase of our scholars' academic journey.

**Response to Intervention:** Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered approach that includes ongoing progress monitoring and interventions for scholars. RTI identifies scholars who are struggling and gives support needed early. It is a method that works to scientifically match individual scholars to

the teaching practices that are effective for them. At La Cima, we believe in doing everything we can to meet the needs of each of our scholars to help them to reach their goals. An evidence-based reading intervention program is used at La Cima to support scholars with meeting their reading goals. Once we have results from assessments, we will inform you of your child’s progress and let you know if he/she will need to receive this additional small group reading support.

**Special Education:** At La Cima, special education instruction is designed to meet the individual needs of the scholars and could include a combination of support and services, intended to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Depending on the needs of the child, services that they could receive are Integrated Collaborative Teaching Services (ICT), Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), Counseling, Hearing Services, Speech-Language Therapy and/or Paraprofessional services. These supports and services are documented and legally mandated through the scholar’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). Please contact the Special Education Coordinator, Capri Tenis, if you would like additional information.

**Mandated Reporting:** Mandated Reporters must comply with NYC Department of Education, Regulation of the Chancellor A-750, located at the following web link: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/381F4607-7841-4D28-B7D5-0F30DDB77DFA/97056/A7501202011FINAL.pdf>. “Certain professionals are required by law to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the New York State Central Register (SCR) of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, also known as the Child Abuse Hotline. The law also assigns civil and criminal liability to those professionals who do not comply with their mandated reporter abilities. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment – or cause a report to be made – when, in their professional roles, they are presented with *reasonable cause* to suspect abuse or maltreatment ([http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/child\\_safety/mandated\\_reporters.shtml#q1](http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/child_safety/mandated_reporters.shtml#q1)).” Who are mandated reporters? Teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, medical professionals, school safety, administrators, or other school personnel are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when, in their professional roles, they are presented with reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment.

Type of Neglect	Description modified from NY ACS Parent’s Guide to Child Abuse and Neglect Laws ( <a href="https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/stateguide_english.pdf">https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/stateguide_english.pdf</a> )
Educational	Educational neglect could occur when a scholar is absent 5 consecutive days without any phone call explaining the reason or more than 20 absences in one school year.
Emotional	Emotional neglect is the failure of a parent or caregiver to supply a child with the love and support necessary for a healthy emotional development. Examples include failure to provide warmth, attention, supervision, affection, praise or encouragement to a child.

Medical	A parent or caregiver is required to supply adequate medical, dental, optical and surgical care for a child under 18 years old. This medical care includes seeking adequate treatment for conditions that impair, or threaten to impair, the child's mental, emotional or physical condition. Following prescribed treatment for medical, psychiatric, and psychological care. Obtaining preventive care such as well-child care checkups, and immunizations for polio, mumps, and measles.
Physical Neglect/Inadequate Guardianship	Parents are responsible for providing a minimum degree of care for their children. Physical neglect is the failure by the parent or caregiver to provide food, clothing or shelter. It also includes abandonment, inadequate supervision of a child by a parent or caregiver, and excessive corporal punishment.

Type of Abuse	Description modified from NY ACS Parent's Guide to Child Abuse and Neglect Laws ( <a href="https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/stateguide_english.pdf">https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/stateguide_english.pdf</a> )
Emotional	A child who is consistently exposed to negative and abusive statements, such as the examples given above, is likely to suffer from emotional abuse that can impair his or her psychological development.
Physical	Physical abuse is inflicting or allowing someone to inflict physical injury other than by accidental means. This includes: hitting with objects (a belt, shoe, or hanger), shaking, beating, biting, kicking, punching, and burning. Children should NEVER be hit on the head/face because there is a high risk for injuring eyes, nose, mouth, ears, or a concussion. A case will be opened if a legal guardian uses force on the child's head. Hitting your child may cause physical and psychological injury. This can also result in a report to the State Central Registry.
Verbal	Belittling or insulting a child can impair his or her emotional well-being and leave the child feeling helpless and worthless. This situation could therefore be considered verbal abuse.

For additional information about the NYS laws regarding child abuse and neglect, please visit the following websites:

[https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/stateguide\\_english.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/stateguide_english.pdf)

## **THE LA CIMA FAMILY CONTRACT**

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As a La Cima parent and stakeholder, I pledge:

- To model and live by the C.A.R.E principles of Community, Accountability, Reconciliation and Effective Effort.
- To ensure my son/daughter arrives to school on time each day because I understand that missing school will adversely affect my academic and social emotional learning.
- To minimize absences to the best of my ability and to notify the school of an absence no later than 8:30 am on the day of the absence. I will send a note with my scholar when they return to school.
- To ensure that my scholar comes to school in a complete and clean uniform, which includes wearing the appropriate footwear.
- To ensure my child's homework is completed every day because homework offers practice and opportunities to reinforce my child's learning.
- To engage with members of the school community with respect.
- To read all information provided by and communicated from La Cima to keep myself informed of what's going on in both the classroom and school community.
- To provide La Cima with up-to-date contact information and to notify the school when changes are made so that I (and my emergency contacts) can be reached for both school-related and emergency purposes.
- To ensure the safety of my scholar and school community by providing the necessary information, including, but not limited to, medical documents, medicine (e.g. asthma inhalers, epi-pens, etc.), behavioral changes and any related information.
- To ensure my scholar is picked up at 3:45 pm every day and to notify the school in advance when someone who is not listed on the authorized pick-up list is going to pick-up my child.
- To reinforce the guidelines set forth in La Cima's Family & Culture Handbook.
- To demonstrate my commitment to my child's education by attending all required family meetings and events.

I understand that as a parent/ stakeholder, it is my responsibility to support my scholar's education and emotional development so that my scholar can achieve academic success and become an effective member of our community. I pledge to follow these school policies to support both my scholar and the La Cima school community.

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Parent Name

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Parent Signature

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Date

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK & CONTRACT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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After checking off each box and signing below, please return this page to the school acknowledging receipt of the La Cima Family Handbook containing our school policies, guidelines and family contract.

In the event you have questions or would like to discuss the items therein further, please contact the school at 718-443-2136 or by email at [info@lacimacharterschool.org](mailto:info@lacimacharterschool.org).

- I acknowledge receipt of the Family handbook containing school policies, guidelines and family contract.
- I understand that as a parent/ stakeholder, it is my responsibility to support my scholar's education and emotional development so that my scholar can achieve academic success and become an effective member of our community. I pledge to follow these school policies to support both my scholar and the La Cima school community.

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Scholar Name

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Parent Name

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Parent Signature

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Date