



Family Handbook

2024-2025

Dear Families,

Welcome to RCMA Charter Schools. We are delighted you have chosen one of our schools for your child. Families are a critical part of our school communities and valuable partner in teaching academics and values in our students. Consistency between home and school will help achieve our common vision of educating students who are thoughtful scholars and virtuous citizens.

This Family Handbook is intended as a valuable guide and helpful resource. We ask that you review it carefully and discuss it with your child. Doing so will help your child understand our shared school mission, philosophy, and vision. It will help you know and understand the policies, procedures, and expectations that are central to being a successful member of the RCMA Public Charter School family. It also recognizes our joint responsibility for maintaining a safe, nurturing, and academically enriching environment with a focus on learning.

The last page of this Handbook requires your signature and that of your child. The signature serves as an acknowledgement that you have read, discussed, and agree to each of the important provisions of the Handbook. We ask that once you have signed this form you return it the school office.

We look forward to working together and giving our best to every RCMA scholar.

Warmest regards,

Dani Higgins, Principal of Mulberry Community Academy
Zulaika Quintero, Principal of Immokalee Community Academy
Cristina Vega, Principal of Wimauma Community Academy

Juana Brown, Director of Charter Schools

MISSION

RCMA Charter Schools are committed to excellence in education. Students will be educated to reach their potential as bilingual individuals with life choices and opportunities for success.

VISION

RCMA Charter Schools prepare our students to be bilingual, bi-literate and bicultural life-long learners; sources of energy, hope, and leadership for themselves, families, communities, and their nation.

PHILOSOPHY

Our educational philosophy is rooted in the affirmation of human dignity. We believe that our vocation is to help our students use their gifts wisely, in harmony with others in our schools, in our neighborhoods, and in wider (even global) communities. We work with parents to provide students with an education rooted in shared values and ethical foundations necessary for responsible citizenship, a life lived with integrity, and a commitment to the higher purpose of serving and advocating for others.

EQUITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Our school is committed to fair and equitable treatment of all students, parents, staff, and other members of our school community. We adhere to Title VII and IX and all federal legislation relating to a schoolwork and learning environment where all are treated with dignity and no individual feels unsafe, excluded, or diminished. The school does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, national or ethnic origin in administration of its admission policies or in any of the education programs.

CORE VALUES

Our mission to pursue excellence in scholarship, character, and service requires that students and adults in our communities honor and practice the school's core values. Nurturing these qualities inside and outside the classroom will enable our students to excel in high school, college, and beyond the school doors as committed citizens:

CORE VALUES
Collaboration, Compassion, Curiosity, Caring
Citizenship, Discipline, Integrity, Justice, Knowledge
Peacemaking, Perseverance, and Responsibility

These core values will permeate across all aspects of RCMA Charter Schools academic and extracurricular programs. Teachers will help our students make strong, ongoing connections between what they learn in school every day and how they live their lives, developing the confidence to achieve, the courage to lead, and the lasting desire to serve others. Our administrators will base decisions about all academic and non-academic programs on the extent to which programs and policies can help all members of the school community instill and

practice the values. Our families will hold the school accountable for its ability to maintain the values.

HONOR CODE

“We believe as students we are responsible for building and maintaining a positive school community where all are valued and can learn. Each one of us are called to be responsible for our actions. Through the following statements we commit ourselves to living and working in a manner consistent with our core value”.

- **I will arrive at school each day on time and ready to work.**
- **I will treat all with respect and dignity.**
- **I will peacefully solve any conflict that arises.**
- **I will care for and protect our school and our environment.**

SCHOOL CULTURE and DISCIPLINE

RCMA Charter School’s disciplinary policy is aimed to help students make responsible choices. The policy encourages students to contribute to a positive school environment that is conducive to learning and where all community members are safe. The policy seeks to establish disciplinary measures that 1) create, support, and celebrate positive choices, 2) are preventative and corrective rather than simply punitive, and 3) engages the entire school community in being responsible for maintaining a safe and values-centered environment.

We believe all students want to make good choices and will thrive with positive reinforcement. It is our belief that a combination of modeling positive behavior, delivering explicit character development education, values, and teaching students essentials for success in the classroom and great citizens within our communities.

Each morning, we convene to salute the flag, and recognize good and new events such as birthdays, holidays, and school heroes/heroines. Morning gatherings may include yoga and deep breathing techniques to help students transition into the school day. As students move towards the classroom, they are greeted individually by our school principal, teachers, and others with a handshake to welcome them into the day.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

RCMA Charter Schools accepts applications for Kindergarten students beginning in January of every year. Each year the school may also have a limited number of slots for transfer students for mid-year and new academic year transfers from other schools. You may apply to one of our schools by completing the registration packet during the Open Enrollment Period. Only completed applications with supporting documents will be considered. Parents will be notified of acceptance or assigned a lottery number of applications exceed a school’s capacity.

ENROLLMENT PREFERENCE

RCMA Charter Schools grant preference to specific populations within our community as follows:

- Siblings of students enrolled at the school
- Children attending RCMA Early Learning Migrant and Farmworker programs
- Children of community essential workers, including RCMA Head Start and School Readiness programs
- A limited number of seats will be held for RCMA Charter School staff. This number of seats will not exceed 2% or a maximum of 1 seat

ELIGIBILITY

RCMA Charter Schools are tuition-free public schools and open to all students. Our schools do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, national or ethnic origin in administration of its admission policies or education programs. If there are more applicants than available spaces the school will conduct a lottery.

LOTTERY

Should the number of new applicants for a grade exceeds the school’s capacity, the school will hold a lottery, considering enrollment preference. Please note that only potential students with completed applications will be eligible to participate in the lottery.

REGISTRATION TIMELINE

January - February	January-February	April-May	Year round
Information sessions held in the community for families interested in RCMA.	Kindergarten applications accepted. Transfer applications accepted for other openings in 1 st -8 th . Lottery held if necessary.	Orientation sessions for new Kindergarten families.	Transfers are considered.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is provided at Wimauma Community Academy and Mulberry Community Academy. This service is provided to students who reside outside of a two-mile radius from the school and within the boundaries of the area that the school serves. Bus route information is available by contacting the school’s front office. Students are expected to demonstrate good behavior while on the school bus traveling to and from school and to any activity. The following are bus transportation rules to establish safeguards for students, bus drivers, and bus aides.

- Keep your hands and feet inside the windows and out of the aisle.
- Always remain seated when the bus is traveling.
- Use quiet voices while traveling on the bus.
- Follow the instructions of the bus driver and bus aide.

UNIFORM POLICY

RCMA Charter Schools takes pride in the appearance of its students as ambassadors of their schools. Students are expected to demonstrate this pride by wearing appropriate uniform attire. It is expected that:

- students come to school dressed in proper uniform attire.
- outerwear be labeled with the student's name.
- uniforms be cleaned, pressed, and free from stains.
- students keep shirttails and blouses tucked into the waists of slacks, shorts, and skirts.

The uniform dress code consists of the following:

- Students must wear specified colored collared tops with the RCMA School logo according to their school.
- Students must wear specified colored bottoms which may be pants, skirts, or Bermuda shorts according to their school.
- Students may wear their navy blue or gray zip up jackets with RCMA logo on days with cool temperatures.
- Uniform bottoms must fit appropriately and be neither baggy nor too tight.
- Skirts and shorts must be no more than 2 inches above the knees.
- Belts must be worn with pants and shorts having belt loops.
- Athletic shoes or other shoes with laces must be laced always tied.

APPEARANCE and ACCESSORIES

Students must arrive to school with appropriate uniform attire and a neat appearance. No extreme hairstyle including unnaturally dyed hair colors or spiked mohawks. No shaved symbols on the hair are allowed.

The wearing of jewelry must be kept to a minimum. Girls may wear piercings including ear piercings however, the size of the earrings must be no larger than a dime sized. Stud earrings are acceptable. Hoop earrings are not acceptable as they may become a hazard, a safety concern, or cause injury during class or physical activities. Only one earring on each ear may be worn.

The following accessories are NOT acceptable:

- Bandanas
- Pants, shorts, or skirts in any color other than the designated school colors
- Pants made of spandex, lycra, or other stretchy materials
- Open toe shoes, including sandals, flip flops, crocs, slides, or shoes with heels
- Sweatpants or wind pants
- Wallet chains
- Non-prescription contact lenses

- T-shirts, sweatshirts, and any other article of clothing with inappropriate symbols, language, phrases, or messages
- Tattoos
- Hoop earrings larger than a dime

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

It is necessary for us to have current, accurate directory information so that we may reach you in case of an emergency. It is essential that the emergency contact information includes someone other than yourself who can pick up your child from school if he/she is ill. The school will contact you first. If you are not available, we will contact the emergency names on your list. Do not include yourself as an emergency contact. Please keep your child's teacher and the school office informed of any changes that occur in address, home or work phone numbers, or emergency contact persons.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RCMA Charter Schools students should attend school on all calendar days. If a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian must call the school secretary the morning of the absence BEFORE 9:00 AM. Upon the student's return to school, he/she must bring a note from the parent stating the reason for the absence. Doctor's notes are sufficient if the absence is due to a medical appointment. If a student is absent for more than three consecutive days, he/she must return to school with a note from a doctor or other official documentation explaining the absence.

The following are considered reasons for a lawful absence:

1. Illness or injury.
2. Death in the immediate family.
3. Religious observances.
4. Medical or doctor appointments (with a note from the doctor).
5. Educational opportunity.

Parents are encouraged to make medical appointments outside of school hours. If a student has a medical appointment during school hours, the parent/guardian use sign-in and sign-out procedures for the student. The student should return to school following the medical appointment if time permits. Students will not be allowed to leave school grounds without the physical presence of a parent/guardian to sign-out the student in the main office. Families should refrain from arranging vacation time during school days. The school provides several days and weeks during the school year to plan vacation time.

STUDENT ILLNESS

If a student is ill, he or she should not report to school. Sending a child to school could potentially impact other students, teachers, and staff from becoming ill. Please do not send a child to school in the morning if he/she:

- has a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher is present.
- is vomiting or diarrhea is present.
- shows signs of a severe head cold, persistent cough or sore throat.
- shows signs of a suspicious skin rash or other contagious condition (i.e., pink eye)

STUDENTS WITH AN ILLNESS MUST BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS PRIOR TO RETURNING TO SCHOOL. Parents should notify the school if their child has a contagious disease including, but not limited to, chickenpox, pinkeye, impetigo, pediculosis, or Covid-19.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

Off campus field trips and other excursions are a benefit and enhances student learning. Students who have multiple discipline referrals, demonstrated a recent pattern of non-compliance, failure to follow adult instruction, or other behavior concerns that may endanger their safety or the safety of others will not be allowed to participate in off-campus activities. The school principal has the right to deny students the opportunity to participate in field trips.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

RCMA Charter Schools have developed academic programs based on the belief that all students come to school with innate gifts and talents. It is our expectations that all students will achieve at the highest level of their potential given a supportive environment that nurtures their curiosity, builds thinking and communications skills, and offers opportunities for real world problem-solving. Our program seeks to celebrate and reinforce the rich cultural background our students bring through a dual-language learning program that supports the development of bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural scholars.

We believe that our responsibility as educators is to develop the body, mind, and spirit of every child. We therefore ask our students to use all three components when gathering, processing, and acting on new information-ever mindful of our core values.

READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

The Reading and Language Arts curriculum is based on research that identifies balanced literacy as the most effective model of reading, writing and language instruction. This approach blends direct instruction of fluency and decoding skills with opportunities for developing vocabulary and comprehension using authentic pieces of informational texts and literature. Instructional time is broken down into smaller increments of time with opportunities for reading to students, for shared reading, and guided reading.

Our goal is to develop life-long readers who read for information and pleasure and confident communicators who can express ideas effectively and creatively, in both English and Spanish. To address all aspects of the Reading and Language Arts program, our schedule may contain extended literacy blocks in grades K – 8.

We ask parents to support our classroom learning by taking every opportunity, each night and on weekends, to speak with your child in their native or home language. This can be a dinner conversation, discussions while grocery shopping, or even when doing chores at home. We emphasize the importance of speaking in complete sentences and ask our students to answer questions and communicate using more than one word or gesture.

MATHEMATICS

Our mathematics curriculum is designed to help students appreciate that the language of mathematics is precise and used to communicate quantitative information. Since scientists have adopted the conventions of mathematics, it is important that our students become confident mathematicians as well as good writers so they can communicate ideas and information effectively in a rapidly changing, technology-driven society. We support their development of skills that are fundamental to mastery, application, and communication of mathematical concepts. Our schedule for grades K- 5 devotes extended time for math instruction. At grades 6 – 8, 50 minutes per day five days per week and extended time per week will be devoted to a mathematics block.

We use a research-based math program as a resource for teaching the content and skills described in our mathematics standards in grades K – 8. This is enhanced by our own RCMA curriculum that integrates math chants, bell work, interactive notebooks, and digital resources, along with opportunities for applying skills and concepts to foundational knowledge in a culturally appropriate manner.

In the elementary program, new concepts are developed through hands-on activities. The middle school program gives students time to learn and practice skills throughout the year, develop higher-order thinking skills, become more confident problem solvers, and integrate manipulatives for hands-on learning experiences. At all levels, concepts are developed, reviewed, practiced, and assessed over time. Although some schools follow the sequence of lessons in the order in which they appear in the textbooks, our teachers have developed standards-based curriculum units, identifying the lessons and additional activities appropriate for teaching the Florida State Standards. Students work in small groups to help teachers differentiate and allow students to learn at their current pace.

RCMA Charter Schools strive for academic rigor and as such will have advanced classes for accelerated instruction for 7th and 8th grade students ready to begin Algebra and Geometry which are both high school leveled courses. Accelerated learners may also participate in mixed age groupings to allow them to work at their academic potential and challenge.

SCIENCE

Our science curriculum emphasizes the connection of the mind and body by reminding students that we receive much of our information through physical senses. Students in primary grades

use their senses to explore the natural world. They are introduced to the scientific process and are challenged to apply this process of disciplined inquiry and experimentation demonstrated through an end-of-year science project based on their preference. Students in grades K through 2nd will complete a class projects and students in grades 3rd-8th will have a choice in completing a group or individual project. These projects are showcased during the annual Science Night where parents and the community members can view student work.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies' courses present students with the unique opportunity to engage in thoughtful reflection and problem solving as they link the past to our present day. It also allows students to critically review historical events through the lens of socially responsible citizens. Students are exposed to a broad perspective through the curriculum and resources, such as texts that combine all disciplines with supplementary materials, including primary sources and materials that link history to current events. Novels and leveled readers help to unify learning through thematic humanities units that reinforce a focus on the human experience.

The humanities aspect of the social studies curriculum develops students' cultural literacy. Students visit virtual and local museums and cultural institutions, to make the exploration of social studies a hands-on experience. Historical local and national sites are significance as they are living resources for the standards-based social studies curriculum, particularly for the study of Florida and American history.

VISUAL, ARTS, MUSIC, AND DANCE

We believe it is essential that students have access to quality arts instruction, including an opportunity to participate in choir, learn to play a musical instrument, engage in visual arts, and experience various dance traditions. The arts enrich students' understanding of culture and society and are an important part of inquiry into the natural world and creative realm. We have enhanced the instructional program through partnerships with local arts organizations and national institutions. Students will demonstrate learning in these areas through an annual performance showcase.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Our physical education program includes basic movement, yoga, and aerobics as well as team and individual and team sports. There is ample research that links physical activity with healthy brain and cognitive development. Physical conditioning and health education—integrated with our science curriculum—are important aspects of the physical education curriculum. We emphasize the importance of exercise, and fitness to help students develop comprehensive wellness and health habits, along with the development of a positive body image. The program also builds teamwork and good sportsmanship, with exercise and movement taught in the context of several of core values, including teamwork, cooperation, discipline, resilience, and respect.

DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Our students are privileged to live in communities with representatives from many nations. RCMA Charter Schools are proud to serve hundreds of students with families who speak at least two languages with most of those students and families speaking Spanish and English. In addition, many families also speaking an indigenous dialect. As schools who serve multicultural communities, we are honored that students find pride in their heritage. Students have gained a level of curiosity and an appreciation for cultures of fellow students. While we value all languages RCMA Charters has chosen to teach Spanish because of the growing use of this language in our community and nation. We have taken the opportunity to begin the process of ensuring that all students work towards competency in the Spanish language in our schools and receive instruction as a daily component of our dual language program in Spanish.

GRADING POLICY

RCMA Charter Schools distribute grades based on the following categories:

K-2nd

- Classwork and Projects 50%
- Measures of Mastery and Assessments 50%

3rd-8th

- Classwork and Projects 50%
- Quizzes 20%
- Measures of Mastery and Assessments 30%

RCMA Charter Schools follows the grading scales provided:

K-2nd

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

3rd-8th

A	90-100% Outstanding Progress
B	80-89% Above Average Progress
C	70-79% Average Progress
D	60-69% Below Average Progress
F	0-59% Failure

HOMEWORK POLICY

Although RCMA Charter Schools does not issue a grade for homework however, these assignments are essential to reinforce learning and help students practice material that has been taught in the classroom. Completing homework assignments are an expectation of RCMA Charter School students and aid in developing a sense of responsibility and effective study habits. Homework assignments should be completed as requested by teachers and turned in by the due date. These assignments will be evaluated and will help the teacher assess student's level of mastery of grade level standards.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

A parent or guardian shares the responsibility for fostering good study habits, providing encouragement and appropriate support to reinforce learning taught in the classroom. A parents or guardian should establish a "homework spot" for their child to complete assignments in a quiet space conducive to learning. Be sure to provide necessary materials like a pencil, pen, paper, dictionary, calculator, art supplies, etc. to complete homework assignments. We strongly encourage parents or guardians to allow their child to complete homework at the same time each day helps to create a consistent routine.

If your child is absent from school, it is his/her responsibility to collect missed assignments from their teacher(s) upon their return. These assignments should be completed within 3 to 5 days after a student return to school.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

Our focus is for all students to successfully transition from each grade level attaining mastery of each grade-level content. For dual language classrooms mastery must be achieved in both languages. Upon school entry, all students are assessed for appropriate placement and support through use of several instructional assessment programs for both Reading and Math. Based on these results and conversations with parents and students, a learning plan is developed. The learning plan will include a support structure that may contain recommendations for small group intervention, added instructional and social/emotional support, and a referral to the MTSS, a multi-tiered interventions and support system. The goal is to ensure support and intervention to prevent grade level retention.

Student progress is measured through classroom learning and student performance on unit and benchmark assessments. Student work samples are shared with parents on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school. At the half-way point of each quarter a written interim and progress report is shared with parents to inform them of current academic progress for their child. A student cannot receive failing grades (0-69 F) unless an interim progress report has been received, signed, and returned to the school by his/her parent and a conference is held to discuss interventions. In addition to student mastery of grade-level standards, the strongest consideration for promotion is that students are equipped with the necessary skills to perform at each grade level. The following criteria is considered when determining retention.

There is substantial evidence that:

- the student has not mastered grade-level standards.
- the student is failing multiple core content areas.
- the student may benefit from repeating the grade level.
- the student is performing more than one year below grade level.
- the student is missing key foundational skills in English and/Math.
- the student has not been previously retained.

Excessive absences may be a factor when considering student retention. If a student has a total of more than 10 unexcused absences per semester, they are considered truant. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

MASTERY

Successfully completing all subject areas with a final grade of C or better along with evidence that a student has mastered at least 80% of the standards in reading, writing, and math. In addition, teacher recommendation is taken into consideration when determining whether the student is prepared to transition into the next grade level. Students who receive a D or F in Reading and Math and/or score below basic on state assessments in a grade other than grade 3, *may* be promoted if they receive the principal and teacher recommendation for promotion. A student cannot receive failing grades (D or F) unless an interim progress report has been received, signed, and returned to the school by his/her parent and a conference is held to discuss interventions.

Kindergarten students must show social, emotional, and appropriate academic readiness for promotion to first grade. This includes evaluating each of the learning domains through the designated assessment tools. The principal and teachers consider developmental factors in collaboration with parents to determine the appropriate placement of students into first grade.

Elementary and Middle School promotion in the elementary grades is dependent upon a student's mastery of grade level standards for each core subject area. Student knowledge is measured through performance on unit and state assessments in grades 3-8. Students will also be required to demonstrate the integration and application of skills as demonstrated by curriculum-based assessments.

Middle School failure is considered not passing one or more core subjects (e.g., reading/language arts and math) and will be considered for retention. Failure of a course is evidenced by a final grade of F. In addition to quarterly conferences, principals will conduct a retention conference with appropriate staff members and parents before a final decision is made regarding student retention.

TEXTBOOKS, BOOKS, CHROME BOOKS, OTHER TECHNOLOGY DEVICES, SUPPLIES, AND MATERIALS

Textbooks and electronic devices are the property of the school. Teachers will assign these to individual students at the beginning of the school year. It is the responsibility of each student to protect technology devices so that damage will not occur. Students must return books and non-disposable materials to their teacher/homeroom teacher at the end of the school year in the same condition as they received it. Chrome books and other technology devices must also be returned in good condition.

Students who lose or damage a textbook or technology devices will be required to pay the cost to repair or replace. Theft is not an acceptable excuse for non-payment. Loss or theft of books or technology devices is not an acceptable excuse for non-completion of assignments.

Parents are asked to refer to the campus supply list for specific requirements to ensure students are adequately prepared. Parents will need to replenish supplies throughout the school year as needed.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Possession or use of cell phone and other electronic devices not assigned by the school is prohibited on campus. If a student needs to call home, he or she may ask to use the telephone in the main office. Parents may leave a message through the office and not expect to be in electronic communication with their child during school hours. If cell phones or other electronic devices are found in a student's possession (powered on or off) during school hours, the device will be confiscated. A parent can arrange to pick up the confiscated electronic device by contacting the main office.

CELEBRATIONS AND AWARDS

RCMA Charter Schools emphasize good character and manners and believe students deserve recognition for exhibiting these behaviors. We are proud to recognize our students through a variety of activities that take place daily, weekly, and monthly. Some examples include:

Students-of-the Day, Week, and Month

Student recognition will be given for good choices made, for example, students who make good choices, from peacefully solving a conflict with another student to sharing a compliment, will be highlighted in class, daily announcements and monthly assemblies.

Good News Notes

Notes are shared with the principal, parents, and school community to highlight those students who were "caught being good" and exemplify the values code. These notes can be given to a student by any teacher who sees notable behavior.

Values Assemblies

Skits, songs, and celebration of outstanding works by students and classes

Honor Roll Assemblies

Celebrates famous pioneers, movers, and shakers in our world and honors students who excel in academics, hard work, citizenship, and peacemaking.

Principal's Message and Scholar Recognitions

Chromebook Acceptable Usage Policy

1. Receiving and Returning your Chromebook:

- 1.1 Receiving Chromebook:** Parents & students must sign and return the Chromebook agreement, and the Acceptable Usage Policy before the Chromebook can be issued to their child.
- 1.2 Chromebook Return:** Chromebooks will be returned during the final week of school so they can be checked for serviceability. If a student transfers out of RCMA Charter Schools during the school year, the Chromebook must be returned and checked before the student can be withdrawn from the school.
- 1.3 Failure to Return:** If a student fails to return the Chromebook at the end of the school year or upon termination of enrollment, a theft report will be filed with the Sheriff's Department and that student could be subject to criminal prosecution or civil liability. Furthermore, the student will pay the replacement cost of the Chromebook.

2. Taking Care of Your Chromebook:

2.1 **General Chromebook Care:**

- Do not carry the Chromebook by the screen; carry the whole Chromebook.
- Do not press on the screen. Do not touch the screen with a pen or pencil.
- Open and close the Chromebook carefully and slowly. Do not use force to close it.
- Do not lean on the top of the Chromebook when it is closed.
- Do not place anything on the carrying case that would put weight against the cover.
- Chromebooks must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels, except labels provided by RCMA.
- The Chromebook keys and trackpad must be kept in working order.
- Never attempt to charge your Chromebook with a charger other than a Chromebook charger. Insert the charger with care, not force.
- Before cleaning, turn off the Chromebook and unplug all cables.
- Only use a clean, soft cloth to clean the screen; do not use cleansers of any type.

2.2 **Daily Chromebook Care:**

- Students will be held responsible for maintaining their individual Chromebook, battery charger and carrying case, and keeping them in good working order.
- Students are responsible for keeping their Chromebook's battery charged for classes each day by safely returning the Chromebook to the cart and plugging it in every afternoon before they leave school. Chromebooks are to be returned to the cart at the end of each day. The charger should never be removed from the cart. If you leave early, you must return your device to the cart before leaving.

- Chromebooks that malfunction and/or are damaged must be reported immediately.
- Chromebook damage: Students are responsible for any and all damage that is not covered under the insurance policy RCMA has taken out on the Chromebooks.
- Chromebooks that are stolen must be reported immediately to the Office and to the Sheriff's Department.

2.3 Inspection: Students may be selected at random to hand over their Chromebook for inspection. The history of internet pages visited on the Chromebook will be viewed as well as the overall condition of the Chromebook will be inspected.

3. Using Your Chromebook at School:

3.1 Daily Use: Chromebooks are intended for use at school each day. Students must be responsible to bring their Chromebook to all classes, unless specifically instructed not to do so, by their teacher.

3.2 Storage during non-academic times of the day: When a student is at lunch, P.E. or otherwise not in an academic classroom, the student should leave their Chromebook in their homeroom cart.

3.3 Charging the Chromebook's Battery: If the Chromebook runs out of battery power during the school day, students may be able to connect their Chromebook's charger to a power outlet in class, with the teacher's approval. Again, it is the student's responsibility to plug in the Chromebook every day before leaving in the afternoon.

3.4 Screensavers/Background photos:

- Inappropriate media may not be used as a screensaver or background photo.
- Photos with the presence of guns, weapons, pornographic materials, inappropriate language, alcohol, drugs, gang-related symbols or pictures are prohibited.

3.5 Sound, Music, Games, or Programs

- Internet Games are **not** allowed on the Chromebooks, unless the teacher has given the student permission to be on an educational website, for example, REFLEX.
- Sound must be always muted unless the use of audio is a component of the class lesson or assignment.
- Students must supply their own earbuds to listen to websites.
- Music is not allowed on the Chromebooks unless being used for instructional purposes.
- Google Apps will be provided by RCMA.
- Data Storage will be provided through Google Drive and Gmail.

3.6 Research: Students are to use appropriate websites to complete research projects. Remember that web sites ending in .org, .edu, .gov are more reliable websites. Any websites that have inappropriate material, such as the presence of guns, weapons, pornographic materials, inappropriate language, alcohol, drugs, gang-related symbols, or pictures, are prohibited.

3.7 Saving to the Chromebook's Google Drive: Students should save work to their Google Drive. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that schoolwork is not lost due to mechanical failure or accidental deletion. Chromebook malfunctions are not an acceptable excuse for not submitting schoolwork.

4. Acceptable Use:

4.1 Chromebook Privilege: The use of RCMA technology resources is a privilege, not a right. This policy is provided to make all users aware of the responsibilities associated with ethical and lawful use of technology resources. If a student violates any of the terms and conditions named in this Chromebook Acceptable Usage Policy, the student's privileges to his/her own Chromebook may be terminated. As applicable to the offence, the appropriate disciplinary action shall be applied.

4.2 Infractions: Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension/expulsion for students. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

4.3 Parent/Guardian Responsibilities: Talk to your son/daughter about the values and the standards that should be followed on the use of the Internet just as you do on the use of all media information sources such as television, telephones, movies, and radio. Understand the terms of the insurance policy.

5. School Responsibilities are to:

- Provide Internet access to its students.
- Provide internet blocking of inappropriate materials, as able.
- Provide network data storage areas as required.
- RCMA reserves the right to review, monitor, and restrict information stored on or transmitted via school owned equipment and to investigate inappropriate use of resources.
- Provide staff guidance to aid students in doing research and help assure student compliance of the school's acceptable use of technology policies.

6. Student Responsibilities in Use of Chromebook, not already mentioned:

- Use the Chromebook to enhance learning. However, the Chromebook does not replace the teacher. Students should pay attention to teacher directions and/or teacher instruction when that is appropriate.
- If the student receives an email containing inappropriate, sexually explicit or abusive language, he/she is must alert a teacher or administrator

IMMEDIATELY.

- Return your Chromebook during the last week of the school year. If a student leaves RCMA Charter Schools before the last week of the school year for any reason, the student must return their Chromebook computer on or before the date of withdrawing from the school. Transcripts will not be released until the Chromebook is returned.

7. **Student Activities Strictly Prohibited:**

- Gaining access to other student's accounts, files, and/or data.
- Online communication should facilitate learning. "Cyber-bullying" is strictly prohibited and subject to school policy regarding bullying.
- Illegal transmission of copyrighted materials.
- Use of chat rooms, sites selling term papers, book reports and/or other forms of student work.
- Internet/Computer Games, unless authorized by teacher.
- Accessing, transmitting, downloading or saving materials that are obscene, offensive, profane, threatening or otherwise intended to harass or demean recipients.
- Use of outside data disks or external attachments without prior approval from the teacher or administration.
- Changing of Chromebook settings (exceptions include personal settings such as font size, brightness, etc.)
- "Spamming," or sending mass or inappropriate emails.
- Students are not allowed to give out personal information, for any reason, over the Internet.
- Vandalism (any malicious attempt to harm or destroy property) of school equipment will not be tolerated.
- Accessing unauthorized web sites.
- Any action that violates existing school policy or public law.

8. **Legal Propriety**

- Do not violate any trademark or copyright laws. Do not violate any licensing laws.
- Plagiarism is not allowed. Give credit to all sources used, whether quoted or summarized. This includes all forms of media on the Internet, such as graphics, movies, music, and text.
- Use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited. Violators will be subject to criminal prosecution and/or disciplinary action by RCMA.

9. **Student Discipline:** Violating any part of the above policies will result in disciplinary actions, which may include, but are not limited to loss of Chromebook privileges, in and/or out of school suspension, referral, subject to the severity of the infraction and the principal's decision.

9.1 **Minor Infractions:** We will follow a step policy:

- Step One: Written Warning with parent involvement.
- Step Two: Written Warning, parent involvement, ISS.
- Step Three: Written Warning, parent involvement, ISS, and/or loss of Chromebook privileges for a specified amount of time, depending on the severity of the infraction.

9.2 Consequences: All consequences are subject to severity of infraction and Principal decision.

10. Chromebook Identification and Inventory:

10.1 Chromebook Identification: Student Chromebooks will be labeled in the manner specified by the school. Chromebooks can be identified in the following ways:

- Record of inventory, serial number, and MAC Address
- RCMA label w/ Chromebook ID#

10.2 Additional labels: Chromebook charger and carrying case will also be labeled.

- Do not remove any RCMA labels. If a label seems to be falling off, let a teacher know.

11. In the case of damage to Chromebook:

Claims: All damage to a Chromebook must be reported to RCMA immediately. In the case of damage, RCMA will file an insurance claim. If a Chromebook is lost or stolen, students or parents must file a police or fire report and bring a copy of the report to the principal’s office. Then, RCMA will file an insurance claim.

12. Cost of Repairs:

Students will be held responsible for ALL damage, if said damage is above and beyond the insurance policy coverage. This includes damage to the Chromebook, battery charger and/or carrying case, including, but not limited to broken screens, cracked plastic pieces, inoperability, etc. Should the cost to repair exceed the cost of purchasing a new device, the student will pay for full replacement value if damaged due to negligence. Lost items such as carrying cases and cables will be charged the actual replacement cost.

I agree to the stipulations set forth in the above document titled the Chromebook Acceptable Usage Policy.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (Please Print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

**RCMA Charter Schools
Parent and Student Acceptable Use of iPad Agreement**

Congratulations! Your student can use a school-issued iPad or computer during daily instruction!

Student Technology Usage Rules

The technology, as an educational tool, is the property of RCMA Charter Schools. They may be confiscated and inspected at any time. The student should have NO expectation of privacy of any materials found on the technology. RCMA Charter Schools' technology is provided as an educational tool for schoolwork.

Some technology comes equipped with both a front and rear-facing camera and video capacities. Recording must be used appropriately in an educational manner. Technology must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels that are not property of the RCMA Charter Schools. District affixed labels and tags shall not be removed from all technology.

Inappropriate images including but not limited to guns, weapons, inappropriate language, threatening language, drug, alcohol, or gang related images are not permitted and subject to classroom/school consequences.

While on the Internet, students shall not reveal personal information, including a home address or phone number, or the address or phone numbers of other students. Social Media Apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. are not allowed.

After reading the RCMA Charter Schools Acceptable Use Policy, please complete this form to indicate that you agree with the terms and conditions as stated. The signatures of both the student and parent/guardian are mandatory before access may be granted to your student for use of the iPad at home.

STUDENT PRINTED NAME: _____ GRADE: _____

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN PRINTED NAME: _____

I understand that I may be held responsible for violations by my child. I understand that some materials on the Internet may be objectionable; therefore, I agree to accept responsibility for guiding my child and conveying to her/him appropriate standards for selecting, exploring, and/or sharing information and media.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

RCMA CHARTER SCHOOLS CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose: The Code of Conduct for RCMA Schools is designed to create a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment where all students can thrive academically and socially.

Respect for Self and Others:

1. Treat others with kindness, respect, and empathy.
2. Use appropriate language and actions that do not harm or disrupt others.
3. Respect personal and school property.

Responsibility:

1. Arrive to school and class on time, prepared, and ready to learn.
2. Complete assignments and participate actively in classroom activities.
3. Follow school rules and guidelines.

Safety:

1. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
2. Follow safety rules in classrooms, hallways, and on the playground.
3. Report any unsafe situations or concerns to an adult immediately.

Consequences:

1. Minor infractions may result in warnings, redirection, or loss of privileges.
2. Continued or serious infractions may result in disciplinary action, such as detention, parent conference, or suspension, based on severity and frequency.

Parent and Guardian Role:

1. Support and reinforce the Code of Conduct at home.
2. Communicate with teachers and administrators regarding any concerns or issues.

School-Wide Expectations:

1. All students are expected to participate in and uphold the values and expectations of the school community.
2. Students are encouraged to resolve conflicts peacefully and seek assistance from adults when needed.

Review and Amendments: The Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually by school administration and staff to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Amendments may be made as necessary with input from stakeholders.

Acknowledgment: I have read and understand the RCMA Charter Schools Code of Conduct. I agree to uphold these expectations and contribute positively to our school community.

Parent Sign: _____ Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

CONSEQUENCES

Just as appropriate behavior choices make the learning environment safe and positive, inappropriate behavior creates a negative climate where learning is compromised. In the event students fail to comply with the honor code, school rules, and/or school policies the school has identified logical consequences that will be given to students. These consequences escalate depending on the seriousness of the offense.

Guiding these consequences are the Responsive Classroom approach to situations:

- “You break it, you fix it”, with students taking the opportunity to fix a problem that has been created.
- “Loss of privilege”, with a teacher taking away a privilege until a student can demonstrate readiness to handle the privilege again.
- “Thinking time”, with a student removed from the group until they regain self-control and can participate in the community once again.

DISCIPLINE CODE

Education cannot take place unless there is an atmosphere of self-management, responsibility, and discipline necessary for learning. Together they are described as the absence of distractions and disturbances which interfere with the good functioning of the student, class, or school. Self-management and self-regulation are necessary for each student’s personal growth as well as to help students function well as part of a learning community.

The purpose of education and school is to create a learning climate where the rights and responsibilities of everyone are known and respected. Implicit in these rights and opportunities is the responsibility of respecting the rights of others.

The Code of Conduct is enforced when a student is traveling to and from the school, in school, and in the afterschool and summer programs. This code is active during field trips and all school related events and activities where school staff are responsible for students.

Level A Infractions

These infractions interfere with a safe and orderly school environment and/or compromise a student’s ability to learn and develop. Behavior considered level A infractions include but are not limited to:

- Failure to complete homework or class assignment
- Non-defiant failure to carry out instructions
- Lack of participation in class activities
- Dress code violation
- Excessive Tardiness (over 3 in a marking period)
- Disrespectful behavior that is non-threatening

Consequences

Level A infractions carry consequences designed to ensure that the student understands why the behavior is inappropriate. Likewise, RCMA Charter Schools believe that parents are partners in implementing the code of conduct; therefore, we notify and involve parents early whenever there is an infraction.

1st Infraction

Verbal warning/corrections

Notice to parent/guardian explaining the behavior

2nd or 3rd Infractions

Phone call home to parent/guardian

Written discipline slip requiring parent signature

Referral to the Principal for discussion and reflection assignment

Parent invited to meet with Teacher and/or Principal to discuss corrective action

Continued Infractions

Loss of school privilege, including student conducts self-study and reflection. The parents must meet with Principal to discuss corrective action.

Level B Infractions

Misconduct that disrupts classroom instruction and interferes with the safety and well-being of the school community requires that student be removed from his/her community. This is done to reinforce the need for adherence to rules in order to remain a responsible member of the community. Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- Repeated lack of preparedness, including homework
- Skipping class
- Repeated dress code violations
- Disrespecting a fellow student, teacher, school personnel, parent, or visitor in a way that is threatening or verbally abusive
- Insubordination
- Use of inappropriate language or profanity (oral or written)
- Inappropriate displays of student affection
- Bullying/Cyberbullying (includes teasing and exhorting money, possessions, and/or favors)
- Plagiarism
- Truancy
- Fighting
- Inappropriate computer uses and internet access
- Violation of fellow student privacy rights (e.g., records, files, report cards)
- Gambling

Suspensions

A suspension of a student is a consequence for inappropriate behavior choices that warrant the removal of a student from the classroom for a period. This decision is taken seriously as a suspension will result in loss of instructional time and participation in classroom and school activities. The decision to suspend will be made by the school principal or other administrator, with or without the recommendation of the teacher.

Procedure for Suspension

After a thorough investigation, the principal or other administrator will call parent/guardian to inform them of the reason(s) and the decision to suspend the student, as well as provide a letter with the specific details of the suspension.

Students who are on suspension will be given schoolwork for the duration of the suspension. This schoolwork will include a reflection assignment. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents/guardians to ensure the timely completion of any additional assignments that may be missed during the suspension.

Students may not participate in school activities such as field trips or after school clubs/sports activities during a suspension. An expulsion may be considered after three suspensions within one school year.

Level C Infractions

Serious misconduct that disrupts classroom instruction, threatens the safety of the school environment, or threatens or causes harm to members of the school community are cause for severe consequences. Examples of this misconduct would include, but are not limited to:

- Possession of a weapon
- Possession, distribution, and/or use of illegal drugs or controlled substance (including prescription drugs, alcohol, or tobacco)
- Assault or threat of assault on another student, teacher, or any school personnel
- Violence or threat of violence
- Sexual harassment
- Severe, persistent, or pervasive bullying – either verbal, written, or physical, and/or cyber bullying behavior that results in another student’s physical or emotional duress
- Willful destruction of property (e.g. graffiti, arson)
- Bomb threats
- Theft
- Consistent and willful disrespect and/or insubordination
- Excessive Bullying

Consequences

Change of Placement

Expulsion is an action taken as a last resort. It is a consequence used for repeated offenses by a student who shows an inability to correct his/her behavior after repeated interventions, consequences, and other measures have been exhausted. It is also the consequence for behavior outside the acceptable norms identified in the school values code.

Expulsion of a student may also be a consequence for a parent/guardian's repeated failure to adhere to and/or respect the school code.

Once the decision has been made to expel a student the principal calls the parent/guardian for a meeting to review the offending conduct and consequences. Parents will also be given a letter with this information. Expulsion is irrevocable and the student may not return to school once the decision has been made.

The decision to suspend or expel students will be made by the principal in consultation with the Academic Dean, School Counselor, teacher(s), parent/guardian, School District, and RCMA Leadership team.

APPEALS PROCESS FOR EXPULSIONS

Parents may appeal the decision to expel a student through a formal appeals process, beginning with an appeal letter challenging the expulsion. This will be followed by a hearing before a three-person disciplinary hearing committee including the RCMA Executive Director and the Director of Charter Schools. The appeal must be made within two business days of expulsion. Once the appeal is received a hearing is scheduled no more than two weeks after parent is notified of intention to expel.

The teacher, principal, and parent/guardian prepare a written and oral statement for presentation at the hearing. The student presents an oral statement. The Disciplinary Hearing Committee will consider the testimony of all participants and render a decision within two business days of hearing.

PARENT CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES

To address a concern or seek resolution for a problem, we ask parents to address the situation in the following manner. This will be the most productive way to address academic, behavior and other concerns.

- First, address the problem with the teacher or other staff member directly. Parent should remain calm and state their concerns respectfully and with as much detail as possible. Be open to hearing other sides of the issue.
- If after this discussion their concern remains unresolved, we ask that the parent speak to the Principal or the Director of After School Programs, should it be an after-school concern.

- If the parent remains unsatisfied, they should continue working through the problem up the “chain of support” by speaking with the RCMA Director of Charter Schools.
- Should it be necessary, the next step is to address matter with the RCMA Executive Director.

Complaints that remain unresolved may then be addressed to the RCMA Board through a written formal complaint process.

Formal Complaints to the Board

Formal complaints are made in writing to the RCMA Board of Education. All complaints will be adequately, reliably, and objectively investigated and any evidence presented by the person(s) making the complaint considered. Concerns will be responded to in writing within a reasonable period, not to exceed ten business days.

The response will summarize the concern(s) raised, the course and finding of the investigation, and an appropriate outcome to the appeal.

These grievance procedures apply to any concerns that may arise, including but not limited to concerns about discrimination or harassment. All information presented and discovered during the course of an investigation will remain confidential. RCMA Charters will not retaliate against any person who raises a concern using the procedures outlined above or otherwise participates in the investigation of such concerns. If, during the course of the investigation, it is determined that corrective or remedial action is necessary, such action will be taken in a prompt and reasonable manner. Contact Information for the individuals to whom formal grievances are to be made are as follows:

Wimauma Community Academy	Immokalee Community Academy	Mulberry Community Academy
Cristina Vega, Principal cristina.vega@rcma.org Teresa Decarbo, Director After-school and Summer Programs teresag@rcma.org School #: (813) 672-5159	Zulaika Quintero, Principal zulaika@rcma.org Manuel Preciado, Director After-school and Summer Programs manuel@rcma.org School #: (239) 867-3220	Dani Higgins, Principal dani.higgins@rcma.org Rosalinda Rosales, Director After-school and Summer Programs rosalinda.ortiz@rcma.org School #: (863) 425-2566
Ashley Johnson RCMA Principal Manager ashley.johnson@rcma.org	Ashley Johnson RCMA Principal Manager ashley.johnson@rcma.org	Ashley Johnson RCMA Principal Manager ashley.johnson@rcma.org
Juana Brown, Director of Charter Schools juanabr@rcma.org	Juana Brown, Director of Charter Schools juanabr@rcma.org	Juana Brown, Director of Charter Schools juanabr@rcma.org
Isabel Garcia, RCMA Executive Director isabel@rcma.org	Isabel Garcia, RCMA Executive Director isabel@rcma.org	Isabel Garcia, RCMA Executive Director isabel@rcma.org
Linda, Miles, RCMA Board Chair lindamilesadams@rcma.org	Linda, Miles, RCMA Board Chair lindamilesadams@rcma.org	Linda, Miles, RCMA Board Chair lindamilesadams@rcma.org

This information is also available on the school websites listed below:

ICA

<https://charterschools.rcma.org/academies/ica/>

MCA

<https://charterschools.rcma.org/academies/mca/>

WCA

<https://charterschools.rcma.org/academies/wca/>

Board of Directors

Board Member	Profession	Board Position Held	Location
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Wilma Robles-Melendez, Ph D	Professor in Early Childhood Education		Miami-Dade County
Al J. Hinson	Retired Educator		Highlands County
Ansberto Vallejo	Public School Supervisor and Counselor		Hillsborough County
Sonia Tighe	Director of Memberships for Agribusiness		Hillsborough County
Aedan J. Dowling	Retired Executive for Agribusiness		Manatee County

Acknowledgement and Signature Page

Parents should initial the following statements:

____ I, _____ have read the entire handbook.

____ I have read and signed the Chromebook and Acceptable Use Policy.

____ I have read and signed the Parent and Student Acceptable Use of iPad Agreement.

____ I have read the RCMA Code of Conduct.

____ I understand my expectations as a parent of a student attending a RCMA Charter School.

____ I have shared all information within this handbook with my child.

____ My child understands the expectations of a student attending RCMA Charter Schools.

Students should initial the following statements:

____ I, _____ have read the entire handbook.

____ I have read and signed the Chromebook and Acceptable Use Policy.

____ I have read and signed the Parent and Student Acceptable Use of iPad Agreement.

____ I have read and signed the RCMA Code of Conduct.

____ I understand my expectations as a student attending a RCMA Charter School.

Student Name	Student Signature	Date
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Parent Name	Parent Signature	Date
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