

# **Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School**

**2501 Kensington Ave**

**Philadelphia, PA 19125**



## **Parent and Scholar Handbook 2017-2018**

**Dr. Mama Ayesha Imani, CEO /Founder**

**Steve Blackburn, Board President**

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**SANKOFA FREEDOM ACADEMY**  
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**Dr. Mama Ayesha Imani**

It is with great excitement that we begin this our eighth year of operation. We do so humbled by your confidence that we are sincere and committed to providing an excellent, holistic education that is powerful enough to make a difference in our lives, our communities, and our world. Together we can prepare ourselves and our children to realize our potential as a people who love excellence, honor scholarship and are committed to peace and justice, we owe it to our ancestors to continue their legacy. We owe it to our elders to make them proud. We owe it to one another to work hard, and be prepared for whatever challenges that come along.

What an honor it is to be the first k-12 public Freedom School in this country. We have the opportunity to provide a model to this nation of education that is academically rigorous, culturally relevant, and transformative locally and globally.

We thank you for this opportunity and we pledge to you to make excellence in scholarship, culture, and activism our sacred pledge. Working together as a community of parents, educators, scholars, and servant leaders we shall transform ourselves, assist our children in uncovering their gifts and talents, build a model for an education that empowers and transforms, heal our communities, be better keepers of the earth, and in our own way make the world a better place.

We are proud to be Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School and thank you for joining our movement to build intergenerational communities of scholars, educators, and activists.

Striving in Love for Educational Excellence:

Dr. Ayesha Imani

“We who believe in freedom shall not rest until it comes”...Ella Baker

## *Sankofa Freedom Academy – What's In A Name?*



The term Sankofa is an Akan expression that is translated “Reach back to move forward”. SFA believes children of African descent and other scholars of color have absolutely everything they need to achieve academically and live lives as fully actualized human beings who are able to build and maintain healthy communities and establish a just world. Academically applying the principle of Sankofa means SFA will not accept failure or mediocrity”. Remembering always the legacy of the great ones on whose shoulders we stand, scholars, staff, and cultural workers will be reminded to “reach within and back” in order to reconnect with the sources of knowledge and power that will insure academic success and enable scholars to contribute to the communities to which they belong. Thus, Sankofa Freedom Academy will use the history, cultural expressions, aesthetics, literature, orature, value systems, and worldview of African and indigenous diasporan cultures to forge a reconnection between excellence in scholarship, identity, and purpose.

### ***The Four Fundamentals of Africana Pedagogy***

Sankofa Freedom Academy is a school which utilizes Africana pedagogical methodologies to help our children reach their full potential. We are confident that these methods can touch the spirit of all children. We take joy in the diversity of our scholar body, almost 100% of whom are descendents of African and Indigenous people. We first and foremost define ourselves as descendents of African people who have spread out all over the world. We speak many different languages, have many cultures within the African Diaspora, and have many traditions. Yet we share much in common as one people whose consciousness has been shaped for centuries by the worldview of African and Indigenous people. We have a model that is rooted in African Centered pedagogical practices which are universal in scope and designed to assist us all in reaching our potential as fully actualized human beings.

Given this, how is African Centered defined? What does it mean to exercise Africana thought or action, to have an Africana worldview, and ultimately to infuse African-Centered education in a school environment? There are many definitions of terms and concepts, some do not totally agree with others, and there is much debate on the issue. However, for Sankofa Freedom Academy,

African-Centered education is defined with The Four Fundamentals of Africana pedagogy, developed by our CEO /Founder Dr. Mama Ayesha Imani.

1. Use of African Centered Values System to insure physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually safe environment for scholars and staff to develop into their best selves and contribute to their families, communities, race, environment, and world. (Sankofa examples of this are the emphasis and application of the virtues of Maat and Nguzo Saba as the cornerstone of the code of conduct. The recitation and application of these principles and virtues are essential.)

2. Curriculum Infusion of the Aesthetic and Development of a Critical and Cultural Lens. The history, culture, orature, literature, contributions, value system, and aesthetic of African people are infused throughout the formal and informal curricula and rehearsed and celebrated both in and outside of the classroom. Scholars are helped to develop a critical and culture lens through which to view the rest of the world and are reminded in each. (Sankofa examples of this are the infusion of the contributions of African people in all content areas, the use of African and African American proverbs, folktales, stories, and other literary forms. The teaching of Mdw Ntr and the teaching of ancient Africana civilizations across the curriculum are other examples.)

3. Use of Rituals, Rites, Enculturation Practices. Throughout the year Sankofa will adopt enculturation practices designed to assist scholars in internalizing the values, remembering the sacrifices, and continuing the culture of African and Indigenous people. Sankofa examples of this are: Ungalia, Pouring of Libations, Recitation of Ankh Ws Snb, Celebration of Kwanzaa and Umoja Karamu, Use of traditional Africana greetings and protocols, Rites of Separation, Rites of Discovery, and Rites of Passage programs.

4. Pedagogy (Teaching and Learning Approaches). African Centered Education is not just about what we teach but how we teach and assess. This means scholars are using approaches that are culturally synchronistic and consistent with the learning styles of African Children as in the literature by many Black psychologist and educators, and derived from ancient and traditional African methodologies of teaching and learning. This means approaches to teaching and learning that are: experiential, intergenerational, communal, collaborative, dialogic, family and community based, expressive, purposeful, constructivist, generationally, socially, politically, economically relevant to the lives, experiences, and destiny of African people. Sankofa examples of this are cooperative and collaborative forms of learning, service and social justice projects, environmental projects, use of music, poetry, and art in teaching and learning, incorporation of sound and movement, intergenerational learning assignments such as interviewing elders in the family, or constructing family trees, use of inquiry based approaches, and peer tutoring. Attention will also be paid to the wellness and healing arts in order to assist members of the community in obtaining and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

## **Mission and Vision Statement**

Sankofa Freedom Academy is a college preparatory K-12 freedom school that will build on the Philadelphia Freedom Schools model to increase literacy and numeracy levels throughout the community, promote respect for scholarship, servant leadership, conflict resolution, and cultural democracy. Through the use of Africana pedagogy and culturally responsive methodologies, Sankofa Freedom Academy will engender in its scholars, staff, and community a love for learning, pride in heritage and a commitment to personal and societal transformation. By operationalizing the adage, “each one / teach one”. Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School will build intergenerational learning communities in which each and every person is responsible to learn in order to teach, and teach in order to build a better world.

**IWA PELE (Sankofa Freedom Academy Code of Good Conduct)**

The goal of the administration and faculty is to help each scholar achieve success both in his/her studies and in his/her growth and development as a person. This means that we always expect our scholars to operate in the “Sankofa Freedom Way”

Each scholar has responsibilities toward reaching these goals. To help clarify these responsibilities, the following Code of Conduct is offered:

All scholars shall be responsible for their learning experiences, including responsiveness to lessons and completion of assignments.

Respect for adults, fellow scholars, school regulations and property, and personal belongings shall be observed.

All scholars are expected to be cooperative, polite and demonstrate fair play while in school and attending school-related activities.

Self-control and good citizenship are expected from all scholars (see Maatic Development).

Proper and appropriate language shall be used at all times.

Appropriate grooming and personal appearance is the responsibility of the scholar and parent (as it applies to younger scholars). Outdoor and play clothing are not to be worn in school.

All scholars are expected to be prepared for class and arrive on time according to the schedules set by the school.

Good table manners and appropriate cafeteria behavior are expected of all scholars.

All scholars are requested to walk (not run) while in the school building and on their way to and from the school playground.

Absolute obedience for fire drills and other emergencies is required of all scholars.

All scholars are expected to keep the school building and grounds clean and neat. Dispose of waste papers and trash in the proper receptacles.

All scholars are expected to observe acceptable audience behavior while participating in large group activities both on campus as well as during field trips.

All scholars are to follow routine lines of communication. Scholars’ concerns should be directed to the person (teacher or aide) who is on duty or responsible for the group or activity. If a teacher or aide is not available, report concerns to the office.

Dress and grooming are important factors in determining children’s attitudes toward school. A child, who comes to school neat and clean and dressed comfortably, but in good taste, helps to set a good school climate.

Scholars are not permitted to use cell phones, beepers or other such electronic devices during school. Cell phones should be turned off during school hours but may be used once the scholar has left campus for the day. Scholars are not allowed to bring toys or electronic games to school. Failure to obey this rule may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscating the item.

### **MA'ATIC DEVELOPMENT/RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE**

Ma'atic Development (MD) utilizes an African-centered approach to discipline to address the socialization challenges in various school communities. The primary mission of MD is to formally initiate youth into discovering and overstanding the importance of who they are, why they are here and the purpose and meaning for their existence. Secondly, MD seeks to connect this discovery and overstanding to positive life sustaining and community building attitudes and behaviors by grounding participants in the African principles of Ma'at and Nguzo Nane. MD operates on the premise that "Kinship Love" is the motivating force of the universe. Simply said, Kinship Love speaks to Belonging, i.e. having a sense of connectedness (Kinship) with family, community and school and Concern for Others (Love), particularly those one feels connected to. Kinship Love is the foundation of Iwa Pele/Good Character.

Therefore, it is essential to make youth and their families feel they belong, to make them feel that no matter how it is at home or wherever they reside, it feels good to come here. "Our" school will be a place where youth and their family are loved, respected, valued and listened to and where they will be expected to love, respect, value and listen to others. Here, youth and their family will have another "family" and be part of a "community". Everyone in the community is expected to embrace and practice Iwa Pele (Good Character) and Kinship Love.

Although many schools choose to use punishment as their primary approach to discipline, the tone of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School's MD environment is one of introspection, cooperation and restoration. At Sankofa it has been our experience that when an existing relationship is out of balance/harmony, something must be done to restore it. Therefore, scholars are assigned to MD in an effort to re-center themselves through self reflection in a spirit of cooperation with the MD staff. There, they are engaged in academic, cultural and holistic socialization interventions, focusing on character, culture and community/citizenship. This process is accomplished by allowing participants to learn how values influence and determine their thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, speech and spirit: to look at "our story" in order to see how the past helps to shape and maintain the present; to learn how to use other value systems (e.g. Ma'at and Nguzo Nane) that will address the quality of their life; to use the creative arts (visual, music, drama, movement, etc.) as methods of expressions; and, finally, to explore and utilize communication and relationship building skills in an effort to improve communication and foster righteous relationships.

Scholars who accumulate behavior/discipline violations are subject to increasingly progressive interventions. These interventions may include:

- Recentering (Saturday, after school and other scheduled times)
- Mandatory Parent Conference
- Ma'atic Development (MD)
- Out of School Suspension

- Behavior Contract & Probation
- Pillars of Peace/Mediation Center

Recentering/MD is a place and time where and when scholars are asked to look inside to restore balance and/or order. More often than not, when scholars are disciplined, they are perceived as being out of order/balance with their community/environment. For example, profanity, not following adult instruction, or verbal fighting/sparring would be examples of behaviors that may result in Recentering/MD. The greatest challenge for scholars and teachers once a scholar has been through Recentering/MD is to restore the teacher/scholar relationship. The MD team is committed to assisting facilitators and teachers in that process. Nonetheless, in order for the process to work, all parties have to be willing to be a part of the restoration process. Since each person is different, the approach and strategy used to restore the relationship will often be unique to the specific person and situation.

A Mandatory Parent Conference (MPC) is scheduled to inform parents of our need to provide increased interventions and supports for their children and to discuss our collective efforts to make that happen. When these conferences are scheduled, scholars will not be allowed to return to SFACS without a parent/guardian. After review and when appropriate, scholars may receive a Behavior Contract and be placed on probation.

#### Restorative Reintegration

As part of our Behavior Contract and Probation, students must commit to assignments that restore the culture that was affected due to their behavior.

Sankofa Freedom Academy Community Code:

The Sankofa Freedom Academy Way

The Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School is founded on life-affirming principles that are designed to build and maintain a peaceful productive community where everyone is valued and everyone is expected to contribute something valuable to the collective. Thus, we the members of the Sankofa community affirm that the freedom we seek is the freedom to be our best selves, so that we can build strong relationships, healthy families, and a peaceful world characterized by justice and harmony.

To accomplish this, Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School must be a place where everyone is physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually –safe. Subsequently, it is imperative that each member (scholars, servant leaders, facilitators, elders) commit themselves as individuals to reflecting the virtues of Maat and Djehuty:

- Scholarship
- Order
- Balance
- Harmony
- Justice
- Truth
- Righteousness
- Reciprocity

In addition each individual is compelled to work communally to reflect the principles of the Nguzo Nane (Eight Principles):

- Heshima (Respect),
- Umoja (Unity),
- Kujichaglia (Self-Determination),
- Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility),
- Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics),
- Nia (Purpose),
- Kumba (Creativity),
- Imani (Faith).

**Consequences for Violations of Community Code**

C.O.O. and the Dean of Students shall collaborate with the CEO, facilitators and other adult in the community at large to be responsible for the Maatic development (discipline) of scholars and servant leaders. His or her office will be called the Maatic Development Office. The Maatic Development room will be conducive to reflection, introspection and behavioral reassessment.

Although Sankofa Freedom Academy has its own philosophy and approach with regard to discipline, it will still operate with guidelines established by SFACS of Philadelphia. As a result we have established a hierarchy of offenses in much the same way as SFACS code of conduct and will insure that due process is followed in the Maatic Development process.

**Level 1: A first violation that may impact the atmosphere of balance and order within the community; interventions will be in proportion to the severity of the offense and the record of the offender (i.e. repeat offenses would be deemed more serious).**

Level One	
Infractions	Interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Violations of Uniform Policy(1-4)</li> <li>● Inappropriate Classroom Conduct</li> <li>● Failing to carry out a direct order of an adult</li> <li>● Being in hall without a pass</li> <li>● Possession of Electronic Device</li> <li>● Disrupting the school environment</li> <li>● Inappropriate comment (insult, name calling, teasing)</li> <li>● Failure to complete repeated academic assignments</li> <li>● Academic Posture Violation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scholar conferences</li> <li>● Re-centering session</li> <li>● Service to the community</li> <li>● Mandatory Parent Conference</li> <li>● Saturday Inconvenience</li> <li>● Daily Report</li> <li>● Loss of Participation in School Activities</li> <li>● Maatic Development (In School Suspension from class)</li> <li>● Parent Contact</li> <li>● HERO Points deducted</li> </ul>

**Level 2: Violations of this type threaten the peace and tranquility of the community**

<b>Level Two</b>	
<b>Infractions</b>	<b>Interventions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Harassment</li> <li>● Insubordination</li> <li>● Repeated violations of Level One</li> <li>● Gambling</li> <li>● Obscene/Abusive/Inappropriate Language towards a student</li> <li>● Engaging in conduct that can cause injury to another person or property. Including horse playing, playfighting or other verbal or physical acts.</li> <li>● Refusal to give staff electronic device/headsets that do not have an instructional purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mandatory mediation</li> <li>● Scholar Contract</li> <li>● 2-3 days of Re-centering</li> <li>● Saturday Re-centering</li> <li>● Mandatory Parent Conference</li> <li>● Mandatory Village Circle</li> <li>● 1-3 day Suspension</li> <li>● 1-4 weeks of Daily Report</li> <li>● Suspension from school activities and off site activities</li> </ul>

**Level 3: Violations, which involve actions that are extremely serious violations of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School**

<b>Level Three</b>	
<b>Infractions</b>	<b>Interventions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated level 2 offenses</li> <li>● Leaving school grounds without permission</li> <li>● Cheating/Plagiarism</li> <li>● Using profanity, vulgar language or obscene gestures directed towards an adult</li> <li>● Destroying, damaging or defacing property</li> <li>● Theft</li> <li>● Engaging in appropriate sexual contact including but not limited to kissing and touching</li> <li>● Using an electronic device or computer to distribute inappropriate comments, pictures, videos or audio messages.</li> <li>● Possessing tobacco products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 to 5 days of Suspensions</li> <li>● 1-4 week of Daily Reports</li> <li>● Behavior Contract</li> <li>● Suspension from school activities and off site activities</li> <li>● Mediation</li> <li>● Payment for items stolen or damaged</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device Threats, Intimidation, Bullying and Pre-fighting</li> <li>● Damaging School Property</li> <li>● Extreme Disrespect towards an adult</li> <li>● Sexual Harassment</li> </ul>	
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**Level 4: Violations, which involve actions that are very serious violations of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School and/or are criminal violations of Pennsylvania law.**

Level Four	
Infractions	Interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possession of Firearm</li> <li>● Terrorist threats or acts</li> <li>● Drug/alcohol Possession, Use, or Illicit activity</li> <li>● Larceny</li> <li>● Arson</li> <li>● Sexual Misconduct</li> <li>● Assault of Staff Members, Vendors, Guests</li> <li>● Conspiracy to have someone do violence</li> <li>● Violence/fighting</li> <li>● Physical assault with a weapon</li> <li>● Possessing a weapon which is defined as any object that can be used to cause injury including, but not limited to: a knife/pocketknife, an electronic weapon/taser, gun, club etc.</li> </ul>	<p>All level four violators (grade 3rd-12th) will <b>receive a ten day suspensions</b> and will be reported to the CEO to determine if the offense should be reported to the Board of Trustees and the student be recommended for expulsion. All parents have the right to an appeal the violation and will be able to meet with the CEO within 3 days of the incident.</p>

**Amendment: K-2 students are not eligible for expulsion and can only be suspended for level 3 and 4 infractions. (Revision 1/2018)**

**Search and Seizure**

The Board of Directors reserves the right to authorize its employees to inspect a scholar’s book bag and lockers when such employee has reason to believe that the school bag is improperly used for the storage of contraband, a substance or object the possession of which is illegal, or any material which poses a hazard to the safety, sanitation and good order of the school. In the presence of another faculty or staff person, a scholar’s person and possessions may be searched by the Principal or his/her representative. School bags and lockers can be inspected randomly without due cause.

**Cell Phone/ Mobile Device Policy**

Cell phone use is not permitted in the building for k-8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars between 7:30 am – dismissal. Cell phone use is not permitted for Upper School students from 8:45 – dismissal.

- All students (K-4th) must keep cell phones in their book bags.
- All students (5th-12th) must place their phones inside their lockers during the school hours. All cell phones will be confiscated if a student is caught having or using one. If a cell phone is confiscated they will be placed on a mandatory phone confiscation list and be required to submit their phone to the Dean of Students/designee every morning after morning circle.

If the child does not give the mobile device to the staff member that asked for it, he/she will be subject to disciplinary actions.

**Nuisance Device Policy**

Nuisance devices are defined as any radio, recorder, electronic game, tablets, games, toys, puzzle, cellular phone, laser pointer, or any object which has no legitimate educational purpose.

Possession of such items interferes with the orderly conduct of school business. Scholars are not permitted to have these devices during the school day. Electronics shall be confiscated and given to parents.

### **Drug / Illegal Substance policy**

Illegal substance (i.e. drugs/alcohol), use, or illicit activity (sell, store, production, or purchase) on school grounds, or at school-sponsored events is absolutely prohibited. If this violation occurs during a school event/activity, school activities the police department will be notified, immediate suspension and expulsion hearing before the Board of Trustees.

Students who arrive to school or a school-sponsored event suspected of being under the influence of an illegal substance will be removed from the community immediately. Parents of the student will be contacted and student will be held in the nurse's office until parents arrive to determine whether child is in fact under the influence. Parent must agree to take child to be screened.

If it is concluded that student was intoxicated or high, student will be mandated to attend a substance abuse program. Any behavioral infractions resulting from the intoxication will be addressed accordingly.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities for Regular Education Discipline.**

As described in the **Pennsylvania School Code, Chapter 12.6,12.7, and 12.8.** Students are given the following responsibilities rights with regard to discipline and due process. (Board Ratified 2/2018)

#### **12.6. Exclusions from school.**

(a) Exclusion from school may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

(1) **Suspension** is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.

(i) Suspensions may be given by the dean, principal or administrator

(ii) A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.

(iii) The parents or guardians or administration shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended.

(iv) When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing,

(v) Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period. Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the SFACS Board of Trustees.

(2) **Expulsion** is exclusion from school by the SFACS Board of Trustees for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls.

Expulsions require a prior formal hearing under 12.8.

(b) During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the SFACS Board of Trustees in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his normal class except as set forth in subsection (c).

(c) If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.

### **12.7. Exclusion from classes - in-school suspension.**

(a) A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.

(b) Communication to the parents or guardian shall follow the suspension action taken by the school.

(c) When the in-school suspension exceeds 10 consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the principal shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th school day in accordance with the procedures in § 12.8 (relating to hearings).

(d) The student's school entity has the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension.

### **12.8. Hearings.**

(a) *Formal hearings.* A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the governing board or an authorized committee of the board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the board. When a committee of the board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire governing board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:

(1) Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.

(2) At least 3 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.

(3) The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.

(4) The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.

(5) The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.

(6) The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.

(7) The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf.

(8) A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.

- (9) The proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:
- (10) Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.
- (b) *Informal hearings.* The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended.
  - (1) The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.
  - (2) The following due process requirements shall be observed in regard to the informal hearing:
    - (i) Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.
    - (ii) Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.
    - (iii) A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
    - (iv) A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf.
    - (v) The school entity shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.

## **Procedures for Special Education Discipline**

### **Suspensions for Special Education Scholars Identified as Mentally Retarded**

Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School can only suspend scholars identified as Mentally Retarded with either (a) written agreement of the parent or (b) in an emergency where the scholar represents a danger to him/herself or others and the written approval of the Office of Special Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

### **Suspensions, Expulsion and Transfer for All Other Disabled Scholars**

- Sankofa Freedom Academy may suspend scholars with disabilities and cease educational services for up to 5 consecutive school days or 15 cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education procedural safeguards.
- Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School will provide the following safeguards for scholars referred for expulsion, or suspension for more than 5 days, or for more than 15 cumulative days:
  - Written notice to the parent/guardian of the recommended disciplinary action and the date of an Individualized Education Program meeting;
  - A team shall convene a Manifestation Determination meeting within 24 hours of the misconduct with the parents having been invited;
  - During the IEP meeting, the IEP team shall review the scholar's most current evaluation and the scholar's IEP and placement to determine whether the scholar's misconduct is related to the scholar's disability. The misconduct is not related to the scholar's disability if (i) the current IEP was appropriate and implemented; and (ii) the Disability does not impair the scholar's ability to understand the consequences of his or her behavior and control his or her behavior.
  - If the scholar's behavior is not a manifestation of the Disability, school officials may apply the Uniform Discipline Code, taking into consideration the scholar's special education and disciplinary records. In no event, however, may the scholar be suspended without providing appropriate educational services for more than five (5) consecutive or fifteen (15) cumulative school days in a school year. A NOREP must be issued with the results of this determination.
  - The IEP team shall review and revise, if necessary, the behavior intervention plan or, as necessary, complete a functional behavior assessment and intervention plan to address the misconduct.
  - The IEP team shall determine the appropriateness of an interim alternative educational setting, and as indicated, include in the IEP those services and modifications that will enable the scholar to continue to participate in the general curriculum and address the behavior so that it will not recur

- The IEP team shall issue a NOREP with the results of the Manifestation Determination. If the scholar's behavior is a manifestation of the Disability, the scholar's placement may be changed to an appropriate interim educational setting, only if the scholar carried a Weapon to school or a school function or knowingly possessed or used illegal drugs or sold or solicited the sale of a controlled substance while at school or at a school function. If the parent requests a due process hearing, the Alternative Placement shall be limited to 45 days. The District may ask for an expedited hearing and request the hearing officer to order a 45 day interim placement if the scholar is substantially likely to cause injury to himself/herself or others. Scholars with disabilities, even if expelled, must be provided with a free and appropriate education (FAPE).
- The information regarding the status of the custody of a scholar will be provided to the school CEO/Principal and/or School Counselor, the scholar's teacher and any essential personnel thus determined by the CEO/Principal.

### *Administrative Statements*

#### **Sankofa Umoja Code Enforcement:**

In order to insure a safe school environment, parents, scholars, and staff have been asked to sign a contract indicating that a fight will result in either parental withdrawal of the scholar or expulsion from the Sankofa community.

#### **Due Process**

In terms of our school, staff and its scholars, due process is the principle of treating all persons equally in accordance with the rules of Sankofa Freedom Academy. Simply stated, every scholar will be given the right to address any allegation brought against them in a forum designated by the school (i.e. meeting with the CEO/Principal or designee). In the event that your child is involved in an incident at school that warrants an investigation, he or she will be:

- Afforded an opportunity to present their side of the occurrence;
- Given all rights and opportunities to relate their side of the story if they are a victim.
- Provided with a copy of the Scholar Handbook for the current school year for their safekeeping and an additional copy will be provided for their parents or guardians prior to the conclusion of the first month of the school year.
- Provided with written notice of any actions being considered against them for violation of school rules and regulations.
- Allowed to review any evidence and documentation regarding the allegation.

If the evidence and the subsequent investigation of the facts warrant disciplinary action against your child, they will be afforded an appeal of the action. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 3 school days to the CEO/Principal or a staff member so designated by the CEO/Principal. The CEO/Principal reserves the right to amend all disciplinary actions as needed.

## **Zero Tolerance**

Sankofa Freedom Academy employs a zero tolerance for any and all actions that can have a negative impact on its scholars, staff or other personnel. The staff and administration will continue to work to reduce the barriers to learning at the same time scholars will work to learn in a safe, disciplined, orderly, and drug free environment.

However, there may be times when a scholar is wrongly disciplined or accused. First and foremost, these cases should be brought to the attention of the CEO. If a parent is still dissatisfied with the decision of the CEO, an appeal can be made to the Sankofa Freedom Academy Board of Trustees. Such an appeal should be made in writing and placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to Mr. Steve Blackburn , President of the Board of Trustees. A parent who submits an appeal to the Sankofa Freedom Academy Board of Trustees should expect to be contacted by the Board within 5 business days.

## **Confidentiality / Personal Notes**

Without question, today’s educators find themselves overloaded with information about their scholars. In many cases, they feel that they may be in possession of too much information; and at other times there may not seem to be enough information given. Thus the question becomes, “What do we, as a school, need to know? What information can be shared? What is considered confidential?”

At no time can we, Sankofa Freedom Academy, promise blanket confidentiality.

Scholars that relay information to a teacher, staff person, administrator or other agent of the school can expect that information to be held in confidence. However, if a scholar brings information to a staff member or agent that in our professional certified opinion indicates abuse, danger to that scholar or danger to others, then there can be no such thing as confidentiality. All staff members are mandated by the state to report any knowledge of abuse.

If confidentiality is broken, we as a school will always try to err on the side of safety first.

The three (3) big areas for basic EXCEPTIONS to confidentiality:

1. Abuse (reported to child protective services if a family member or to the district attorney’s office if the accused is not a family member.
2. The scholar poses a danger to himself or herself in the professional certified opinion of the school’s personnel.
3. The scholar poses a danger to others including staff members, in the certified professional opinion of the school.

## **Child Custody**

The issue of the custody of a child is a legal issue and must be enforced regardless of any differing opinions. Sankofa Freedom Academy will follow the order issued by the court and will

not deviate from that order. Any changes to the custody order begins and ends in the court and not initiated or concluded at the school or by any school representative.

It is the obligation of the parent and / or guardian to inform the school of any such order by the court. The school must be provided with a copy of the order as soon as possible. The school cannot and will not act on verbal requests to change, alter, or otherwise amend a custody order.

**Positive Behavior Program:**

Sankofa Freedom Academy is committed to recognizing and celebrating our students that practice Ma'at and the Nguzo Name. In an effort to celebrate our youth, SFA has adopted a school-wide positive behavior support program called HERO.

The HERO program tracks a number of categories that our school values. These positive categories include, but are not limited to, positive behavior in class and in the community, and promoting a peaceful environment. When students are tracked for the positive categories that school, they receive positive points. However, points are subtracted when a student is late to school, cuts a class, displays poor behavior during libations, participates in horseplay or receives a suspension. Monthly, students with the most points are celebrated.

**Extracurricular Activities Policy:**

Students must be in good academic standing to participate in extracurricular activities. Students with failing grades or unsatisfactory behavior will be ineligible to participate in their activity until their grade reaches above an F. In addition, the following conditions will also render a student ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities:

- Students who fail more than one core class during their season of competition will not be eligible until the next report card is issued.
- Students who accumulate 15 unlawful absences are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year.
- Students with multiple level 2 and/or level 3 infractions will be deemed ineligible until the student's behavior improves. The School's Administrative Team will enforce these criteria.
- Students that are placed on Student Success contracts will be ineligible for extracurricular activities.

To remain in good standing with an activity, student academic progress will be reviewed bi-weekly. If a student is not in good standing during a review, he/she is ineligible until an academic report of good standing is received. If the student's standing does not improve, he/she is ineligible until the student receives a good weekly report.

**Dress Down Day Policy**

On occasion SFA will offer its students an opportunity to participate in Dress down Day as a fundraising opportunity for various grade groups, clubs, or teams. As a reminder, students must have their ID at all times. Students who elect to participate will be charged a \$1.00 fee. The following guidelines/policy has been established to ensure that the attire that is worn during Dress down Day does not impede the learning environment:

1. Hats and Hoods on heads are not permitted in the school building
2. Students must refrain from wearing open toe shoes and heels.
3. Tops and bottoms must not be tight-fitting
4. Miniskirts, mini shorts, sleeveless or see through articles, cutout bottoms, sagging pants and attire.
5. Articles of clothing cannot contain vulgar or obscene designs.

School administrators reserve the right to determine whether a student's Dress down Day attire violates the Dress down Day policy. Violators will be given the opportunity to change articles of clothing that are found to be inappropriate and in violation of the policy. In some cases, when a

student does not have access to a change of clothing the parent/guardian will be notified and the student will be sent home to change.

### **Athletics:**

Students interested in athletics should contact Brother Isaiah Thomas. All student-athletics must complete a PIAA comprehensive physical form and concussion forms. All transfer students interested in an athletic team must turn in a transfer waiver form completed prior to participation. The transfer waiver form will be submitted to the former school. Students are not eligible to participate until the PIAA transfer process is completed.

### **Sankofa Rituals**

#### **HARAMBEE/MORNING CIRCLE**

A typical day at Sankofa Freedom Academy will begin with Harambee Circle. Harambee is designed to get the scholars excited about the school day to reinforce values and principles. All scholars and faculty come together as one. The Nguzo Saba or seven principles (unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith) along with Ma'at are the basic concepts taught during circle time, which means that it is more than a ceremony or assembly program, Harambee Circle is the routine that begins and ends an instructional day at our school. Attendance is mandatory. Morning Harambee includes the pouring of libation, recitation of the Sankofa Freedom Academy Pledge, and important school announcements for the day. Closing circle consists of recitation of Minute by minute.

#### **LIBATIONS**

During Harambee/Morning Circle each day we pour libation. The pouring of libation is a very ancient and a very common practice in many African cultures. The tradition is literally thousands of years old, evidenced in the ancient paintings and writings along the Nile Valley. Among many nations throughout Africa, the tradition of libation is a standard way to begin ceremonies and events. It is one of the traditions that survived the middle passage and has been practiced in various forms among African people in America. There is no one way to perform a libation. Libation is done to first give thanks for the gift of life. Central in the process of libation is honoring those who came before, the ancestors. We honor those who struggled and sacrificed to pave the way in the fight against injustice, for African liberation, and to humanize the world.

Lastly, libation is poured for those yet to be born. In the inter-generational link, the cultural link across time, by pouring libations for those yet to be born is symbolic and ritually passing the traditions and the fight for freedom to the next generation. Libations is not a religious practice, thus it is expected that everyone regardless of religion will participate in Harambee including libations.

## **SANKOFA FREEDOM ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL PLEDGE**

### **Elementary Scholars Recite:**

We are the scholars of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School  
We are the sons and daughters of Greatness  
We are the descendents of those who loved Scholarship, Justice, the Arts, and the Earth.  
We take pride in our diversity and find joy in our unity.  
We respect our ancestors, our elders, ourselves, each other and our environment.  
We honor the principle of Sankofa and reclaim our roots  
To build a brighter tomorrow.

### **Middle School Emerging Servant Leaders Recite:**

We are the emerging leaders and freedom fighters of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School.  
We boldly represent our ancestors who fought for the freedom we have today  
We stand with hearts full of strength and determination  
And we reach our hands out to those who have come before us  
As we climb the mountains of faith and struggle  
With new found knowledge we will help younger generations  
Follow the footsteps of greatness

### **High School Servant Leaders Recite:**

We are the servant leaders and intellectual warriors of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School.  
We shall always remember the sacrifices of our ancestors--  
Those who were taken from their land  
And those whose land was taken from them.  
Because we stand on the shoulders of a mighty people  
We shall build mighty shoulders on which others can stand.  
We pledge to develop good habits of the mind, body, and spirit  
We pledge to continue the legacy of the freedom fighters before us.  
We understand that we exist because others have made it possible for us  
and because others have made it possible for us, we will make it possible for others.

### **ALL recite in unison:**

Every day in every way..  
We shall learn so that we can teach and we shall teach so that we can change the world  
We are Sankofa Freedom Academy  
Working to restore excellence in scholarship, culture, and community  
One Heart, One Love, One Earth, One People

**HARAMBEE!!!**

## Lunch Time

Lunch time Affirmation: ANKH WS SNB

In 1975 Dr. Jacob Hudson Carruthers, otherwise known as Baba Jedi Shemsu Jehewty went to Senegal to meet with the great Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop who inspired him to not only continue studying Nile Valley civilization as the cornerstone of African-Centered education, but to study the literature of KMT and to master the process of translating the ancient language known as Mdw Ntr (hieroglyphs). Through his research and activity from the Kemetic Institute, which he founded, Dr. Carruthers would impact African-Centered education in Chicago and across the country. One of those contributions is the Ankh Ws Snb, now slightly modified by our school. There are common themes found in the literature of KMT. Ankh, ws, and snb or life, power, and health are very common among those themes. Dr. Carruthers developed the Ankh Ws Snb from those themes. Sankofa Charter has used the Ankh Ws Snb as a thematic frame for each of our trimesters. The first trimester is Ankh Ws (Life and Power), Wajah Snb (Prosperity and Health), and Djed (Strength and Stability).

Ankh Ws Snb

May you have all Life  
May you have all Power  
May you have all Health

Wah Jah Djed

Khet Nbt

May you have all Prosperity  
May you have all Stability  
And all things

Wab Nfrit

Mi Kheper-Ra Djet  
Shem-Hotep

Pure and Good  
Like the Rising Sun  
Forever May you Walk in  
Peace

### Afternoon Affirmations

## Lower School - Minute by Minute

Our Afternoon Affirmation is done in Honor of Our Great and Loving Ancestor Baba Darryl Kofi Kennon who always taught us to do our “good, better, best”. Baba Kofi dreamed Sankofa dreams and transitioned from this world on January 25, 2009.

Minute by Minute, hour by hour  
If we keep our history, we’ll keep our power  
Minute by minute, hour by hour  
If we keep our faith, we’ll keep our power  
Minute by minute, hour by hour  
If truth is light than knowledge is power  
If it is to be then it’s up to we  
I feel good about myself  
I feel good about my brothers and sisters around me I  
feel goodness all around me

And It will follow me for the rest of my life  
Cause I walk with good. And I talk with  
good And I am good. And that feels real  
good Good, better best, Never let it rest  
Until your good is your better. And your better is your best  
African people, we once knew we were great  
And we shall not that we are great again.  
Lose not faith. Lose not courage. Uplift our community  
Harambee...

## **Middle School - Seven Harambees**

### **Upper School – Say And Do!**

We say and do.  
We say Maat. We do Maat  
We are who we say we are.  
We do what we say we will do.  
We say that we serve our community. We do serve our community  
We say that we will succeed. We do succeed  
We say and do in all that we do.  
We are the servant leaders of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School  
WE SAY AND DO!

**By Norman Bayard**

### ***Policies/Procedure***

#### ***VISITORS***

Parents and relatives interested in the welfare of the scholars are always welcomed although the school administration discourages interruptions which interfere with the operation of the school. Arranging in advance for conferences with teachers will benefit all parties involved. Visitors must secure a pass from the main office/front desk immediately upon entering the building. Failure to do so is a violation of City of Philadelphia Law (10-824).

#### ***PARENT VISITATION***

Parents are encouraged to visit Sankofa Freedom Academy however, please follow these suggestions before visiting:

Send a note to your child's teacher requesting a time for an appointment.  
Report directly to the school office upon entering the building.  
Please sign in and follow the instructions of the designated staff person.  
Appointments with the CEO/Principal or support staff can be made by calling the school office, (number to be determined).

### **Mandatory Parent Participation Hours**

We understand how important it is to develop a strong relationship between Parents and school and require all of our Parents/Guardians to be active in the school for eight (8) hours per school year. Report Card Conferences/Parent Meetings will count as one hour each. Failure to complete the required hours may affect your child's re enrollment for the following year.

### ***SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE***

Sankofa Grades K – 8th

Pupils should arrive at school by 8:10 A.M. daily. K-4th grade scholars are to report directly to the school to the first floor gymnasium. 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars are to report directly to 1<sup>st</sup> floor multi-purpose room. Breakfast will be served in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Gymnasium from 7:40 a.m. – 8:10 a.m. At 8:15 a.m., Morning Circle will begin.

Pupils are officially marked late after 8:15 a.m. Scholars reporting after 8:25 a.m. must obtain a late note from the main office or designated area.

School is dismissed at 3:15 p.m. every day, with the exception of early dismissal days (see attached calendar) or other special circumstance.

Any pupils found roaming the halls during or prior to Morning Circle will be subject to disciplinary action.

Sankofa Grades 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

Pupils should arrive at school by 8:45a.m. daily. 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade scholars are to report directly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor gymnasium. Breakfast will be served from 8:20 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. Morning Circle will begin at 8:50 a.m.

Pupils are officially marked late after 8:50 a.m. Scholars reporting after 9:05 a.m. must obtain a late note from the main office or designated area.

9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade scholars will be dismissed at 3:55p.m. daily, with the exception of early dismissal days (see attached calendar) or other special circumstance.

Any pupils found roaming the halls during prior to Morning Circle will be subject to disciplinary action.

## ***SCHOOL ATTENDANCE***

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

School hours are 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. (Lower/Middle School grades K-8<sup>th</sup>) School hours are 8:45 a.m. to 3:55p.m. (Upper School grades 9<sup>th</sup> –12<sup>th</sup>)

### **Attendance Policy**

- Parent or guardians will be notified after each absence by our automated system. Please maintain up-to-date contact information to ensure the receipt our important school communication.
- All excuse notes must be presented within 72 hours after a child returns to school.
- All absences will be coded “parental neglect” which is unlawful if a note is not provided by the guardian within 72 hours of a student’s return from school

### **EXCUSED**

Parents should call the school office to notify us that their child will be absent from school due to illness. Please notify our school nurse if your child is ill with a communicable disease such as chicken pox, measles, etc.

If you call before 7:30 AM, please leave a message. Sankofa may excuse the absences of students under certain circumstances with original documentation. Those circumstances are for emergency (non-routine) doctors’ appointments, court subpoenas, or funeral notices only. (Routine medical and dental appointments are to be made after school hours. All written documentation explain. Families are asked not to schedule vacations during the school year due to vacation during the school year will be coded parental neglect. If this kind of absence persist beyond a week, the absence will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

### **UNEXCUSED**

Parents/guardians and students are to submit a written explanation of the reason(s) for an absence within three calendar days of the absence. If they provide a written excuse within three days of the absence, the absence is counted simply as “Unexcused.”

### Excessive Absences

- Four (4) unexcused absences in one year will result in a letter being sent home to the Parent/Guardian indicating that their absences can possibly affect the student's ability to achieve academically.
- Eight (8) unexcused absences in one year will result in a conference with the student and their parent/guardian with the Dean/Site Administrator.
- Twelve (12) unexcused absences in one year may result in a conference with the Principal and may affect the student's re enrollment.
- Students who reach 15 unexcused absences will be referred to truancy court.
- After 6 consecutive unexcused absences a certified letter will be sent as a reminder that the student will be dropped from Sankofa Freedom Academy's enrollment
- After ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences, students will be dropped from Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School's enrollment.
- All students who reach 36 unexcused absences will be retained in grade but eligible for school.

### Truancy Prevention/Policy

SFA will take the following measures to prevent our students from being truant:

- A letter will be sent home after the students 4<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence reminding them of the importance of being present.
- A mandatory parent conference may be requested by the Dean of Students after a student's 8<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence.
- A mandatory conference may be requested by an administrator after a student reaches their 12<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence.
- All students who reach 15 unexcused absences will be referred to truancy court.
- A certified letter will be sent to parents whose child reaches 20 absences reminding them that their child is in danger of retention.
- Students that reach 36 absences will be retained in grade, but eligible for school.

### LATE ARRIVAL

#### EXCUSED

Scholars are expected to be in the school for Morning Circle by 8:15 AM (grades k-8) and 8:50 am (grades 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>). In order to be excused, scholars must have a written note from a parent or guardian, except in the case of the school bus being late (all bus tardiness is excused and a note is not required). If more than 3 hours of school (but not the full day) are missed, it is considered a ½ day absence.

#### UNEXCUSED

All tardiness unaccompanied by a note from the parent or guardian, other than the bus being late, is unexcused.

## **Consequences for Lateness to School**

- Parent or guardians will be notified after each lateness by our automated system. Please maintain up-to-date contact information to ensure the receipt of our important school communication.
- Excessive lateness to school will result in further disciplinary action and will likely impact academic performance.
- Ten (10) unexcused latenesses in one year will result in a letter being sent home to the Parent/Guardian indicating that their behavior is threatening the student's ability to achieve.
- Fifteen (15) unexcused latenesses will result in a meeting with the student and their parent/guardian with the Dean/Site Administrator
- Twenty (20) unexcused latenesses will result in a conference with the student and their parent/guardian with the Principal.
- Students with over 20 latenesses will result in a conference with the student and their parent/guardian with the C.O.O. Those students who reach 20 latenesses will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular events/trips.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

- For the safety of all the children we require that parents stop by the office if they are picking up a child before 3:15 p.m. (grades K-8<sup>th</sup>) and 3:55 p.m. ( grades 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>). Please send a note or call in advance so that the teacher may make the necessary arrangements for your child to be dismissed early.
- All early dismissal notes must be presented to the main office by 10:00 am. Main office staff will verify the early dismissal by contacting a parent.
- We will need parental permission to release a child to someone other than a legal guardian or a member on the emergency contact form.
- The person picking up your child must be at least 18 years of age and present a valid form of identification to the main office.
- All students k-8<sup>th</sup> grade must have an adult pick them up for all early dismissals.
- Please limit early dismissals to necessary medical or dental appointments or other urgent matters. This ensures that each child receives a full day of quality instruction.

## **WRITTEN EXCUSES**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires that schools receive a written excuse from the parent or guardian when a scholar is absent from school. Please bring a written excuse to the teacher within 3 days upon return to the school following an absence.

Please note the following with regards to chronic lateness or absenteeism:

The school will place a scholar who is absent 5 days or displays a pattern of multiple absences under an attendance contract. This contract will indicate to the parent and scholar that he/she is in danger of receiving no credit for the class and/or is in jeopardy or being dropped from roll.

The school will place a scholar who is late 15 times or displays a pattern of frequent absences. Scholars who incur ten consecutive unexcused absences will be in jeopardy of being dropped from roll and a report will be filed with the proper authorities.

## UNIFORM POLICY

### Introduction & Purpose

Scholars must wear their complete uniforms every school day unless otherwise stated by the teacher or the administration. They will also dress in uniform for all school programs and field trips unless otherwise specified. In general scholars are expected to arrive in full uniform each day.

### Uniform Requirements:

Elementary School (grades K – 4th) - green SFA polo shirt/dashiki (school ordered) with black pants/skirt, black socks, black belt and **SOLID black shoes or sneakers**, solid black cardigan with the Sankofa logo

Middle School (grades 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) - red SFA polo shirt/dashiki (school ordered) with black pants/skirt, black socks, black belt, SOLID black sneakers, solid black cardigan with the Sankofa logo (optional)

High School Freshmen/Sophomores (grades 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>) - gold or black SFA polo shirt/dashiki (school ordered) with black pants/skirt, black socks, black belt, SOLID black shoes or sneakers, solid black cardigan with the Sankofa logo (optional)

High School Juniors (11<sup>th</sup> grade) - white SFA oxford button up/ specific dashiki (school ordered) with black pants/skirt, black socks, solid black shoes or sneakers, solid black cardigan with the Sankofa logo (optional)

High School Seniors (12<sup>th</sup> grade) - white SFA oxford button up or any colored dashiki with Black pants/skirt, black socks, solid black shoes or sneakers, solid black cardigan with the Sankofa logo (optional)

**All shirts must be tucked in at all times.**

**All students must come to school in full uniform. Students are not allowed to change into their uniforms upon arrival.**

### Uniform Violation Policy:

Violations of the uniform policy will result in the following:

Parents will be contacted to bring the scholar a proper uniform or to take the scholar home. Students will not be allowed in a classroom without being in full uniform. All students who are out of uniform will be sent to the Dean's Office until a parent/Guardian brings their proper uniform.

Upper school students parents will be contacted and informed they will be sent home to get in full uniform and return to school.

Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action being taken including out of school suspension.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

First Aid – If a pupil becomes ill or hurt he/she should tell the teacher, CEO/Principal, administrative assistant, secretary, or adult supervisor. A first aid attendant is on duty at all times.

School Nurse – Our school nurse is here to help monitor the health and wellness of our scholars, give first aid in emergencies, and give advice in case of illness. The nurse will see minor cases of illness only during specific times. Only the nurse has the authority to dispense medication to scholars. This includes aspirin or other related medications. Scholars with respiratory conditions must bring their inhalers directly to the nurse. In the event the nurse is not available, preparations will be made for services to be provided by the CEO/Principal. Any changes in any manner to medications for scholars must be reported, in writing, by the parent or guardian to the nurse as soon as possible. All medications must accompany the proper documentation which includes the child's name, nature of illness, the medication and its proper dosage. This information must be provided to the school nurse upon the scholar's return to school.

## **IN CASE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS**

It is extremely important that the school secure all necessary information as it pertains to your child/children. If there is a change of home telephone and/or cell phone numbers or emergency numbers, the school office should be notified immediately. In case of injury, a scholar will be taken by police to the nearest hospital emergency ward. Parents will be contacted as quickly as possible.

### ***FIRE DRILLS***

Law requires periodic fire drills. Signs posted in each room giving emergency evacuation procedures are readily visible. The following must be observed during all fire drills:

Take valuables with you.

Turn off classroom lights.

Close windows and doors.

Walk rapidly to exits. Don't run.

Stay with your class or group.

When the return signal is given, return to the room from which you exited. Failure to follow procedures will result in disciplinary action.

Facilitators must take your grade/record book with you and take roll.

Talking is not permitted during any safety drill.

### ***HALL AND CLASSROOM PROCEDURES***

Be prepared for each class with a notebook, pens, pencils, and other required materials (please review your child's supply list).

Be prompt for each class and in proper uniform. Lateness or out of uniform violations will result in a Ma'atic development session and/or disciplinary action.

The teacher dismisses each class.

Scholars may not be in the halls during class time without a valid hall pass. Failure to obey this rule will result in all parties involved being subjected to disciplinary action.

Scholars must be in a uangalia (attention) position when walking throughout the school. This position is achieved by simply folding both of your arms in front of you, for boys; touching anything or anyone other than themselves.

Scholars may not leave the building during the day unless authorized by the CEO/Principal or the CEO/Principal's designee. Failure to obey this rule will result in disciplinary action.  
girls cross their arms over their chest. If followed there is little chance of a scholar

### ***LUNCHROOM***

All scholars should report to school with a nutritious lunch (e.g. sandwich, fruit, salad, juice or water). Lunchroom rules are plain common sense and good manners. Those who cannot control their behavior or fail to obey lunchroom rules will be subjected to disciplinary action.

Scholars should wash their hands before going down for lunch or use a hand sanitizing solution provided by their teacher. All scholars are to line up and when quiet are escorted by their facilitator (teacher) to the lunch room.

Each grade level has assigned tables in which to sit.

Scholars are to remain seated until they have finished their respective meals.

All scholars should remain seated until dismissed. Scholars are expected to clean up their tables before they are dismissed and place any garbage in the garbage cans provided where they line up to go to recess or back to their classrooms. Do not run, play rough games or throw objects.

Proper nutrition is foundational for physical and intellectual growth. Your cooperation in providing a healthy breakfast and lunch for your child is expected. Candy or foods containing mostly sugar serve no useful purpose in the school setting. Please reserve these treats to be enjoyed at home.

Scholars are not permitted to have a lunch purchased from or deliver by nearby stores. Parents who wish to deliver a lunch to their child must do so through the office. Parents may not go to the classroom to deliver a lunch. Please do not deliver fast food for your child.

## **Title I Parental Involvement**

The Title I Parent Involvement section of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires each Title I school to develop a written parental involvement policy that describes the means for carrying out the requirements of Section 1118.

### ***Six Federal Requirements to Build Parents' Capacity to be Involved in School***

1. Assist parents in understanding the State's academic content standards, student academic achievement standards and academic assessments
2. Provide material and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, to foster parent involvement.
3. Educate school personnel, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, how to reach, communicate and work with parents
4. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other organizations such as Head Start, Parents as Teachers, etc.
5. Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents in a format and language that parents can understand
6. Provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents request

The faculty, staff, and parents of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School (Sankofa) believe that it “takes a village” to prepare children to become lifelong learners and contributing members of a changing society. Sankofa encourages education for the entire family and works to support the adults in continuing to provide what children and communities need to be successful. This is done by creating situations where families not only feel welcomed to participate but are provided numerous opportunities for involvement in the educational, social action, and Wazuri council of the school. Just as Sankofa Freedom Academy values the expertise of its teachers as school based

educators, parents and other family members are valued as home based educators.

Parental Involvement activities in Sankofa will include opportunities for:

- Parents to be involved in the planning, review and improvement of Title I programs and policies
- Parent Teacher conferences will be held at least three times annually.
- Parents to participate in the Wazuri council.
- Parents to volunteer and be involved in activities within the school
- Review of the Parental Involvement Policy via Sankofa's website

With regard to the professional development, Sankofa will:

- Provide staff development to improve student achievement and facilitate school improvement
- Provide intervention strategies and programs to staff and parents
- Involve parents in the ongoing planning, review and improvement of Title I programs and policies.

With regard to parent meetings, Sankofa will:

- Host a meeting to inform parents of the school's participation in the Title I program, the requirements of Title I and the rights of parents to be involved
- Inform parents in a timely manner of conferences and encourage attendance through notices sent home, monthly newsletters, and via school web page. Alternative times will be offered to parents who are unable to attend

With regard to Title I programs and plans, Sankofa will:

- Inform parents of the goals and purpose of the Title I Program, the Literacy and Numeracy programs implemented, the assessments used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels the students are expected to meet
- Provide opportunities for parents to offer suggestions and ask questions regarding the Title I program and policies
- Provide timely responses from administration to parent's suggestions and questions
- Advise parents of their child's progress on a regular basis through:
  - Sending papers home
  - Weekly telephone calls (10 students per week)
  - Eight week progress reports
  - Reports cards
- Parent/Teacher conferences held at least twice a year where the student/parent/teacher compact will be discussed as it relates to the student's progress

- Provide opportunities for parents to volunteer around the school and to participate in their child’s classroom and observe classroom activities.

**REPORT CARD POLICY**

Sankofa Freedom Academy uses a trimester reporting system. Approximately every twelve (12) weeks ends a marking period for your child. Scholars are evaluated based on various assessments and assignments. Our system is as follows:

Grade	System of grading	Definition
K-1 <sup>st</sup>	S, O, N,	Satisfactory, Outstanding, Needs Improvement
2 <sup>nd</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup>	A, B, C, D, U	A – highest; U – unsatisfactory progress
5 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup>	Numerical system	A – 90-100; B – 80-89; C- 70-79; D – 65-69; U – Below 65 (unsatisfactory)

**HONOR ROLL**

Category	Descriptor
JENGA (Mastery)	All A’s
SBA	A’s and B’s
Scribe (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> only)	A’s and B’s and one (1) C

**Report Card Conferences**

Mandatory parent report card conferences are scheduled three times a year. Failure to attend a report card conference will jeopardize your child’s enrollment status. Your child’s report card will only be released to a parent or guardian not a sibling or relative. The final report card is given to the scholar and mailed to the home

**PROMOTION POLICY**

Mandatory parent report card conferences are scheduled three times a year. Failure to attend a report card conference will jeopardize your child’s enrollment status. Your child’s report card

will only be released to a parent or guardian not a sibling or relative. The final report card is given to the scholar and mailed to the home

Parents/guardians will receive a failure notice presented to them by the child's teacher during 3rd report card conference.

Lower School: If a scholar is making unsatisfactory progress in math and/or reading the scholar is subject for retention. If a scholar fails both math and reading they may be retained.

High School Promotion: Matriculation through high school is based on the acquisition of credits the completion of mandatory projects, and fulfillment of all rites of passage competencies. (Scholars who do not complete rites competencies are not assigned to the next level advisory group). Below please find the credit requirements. Please note credits must be accumulated in the following areas of matriculation:

English, Math, Social Science, Science, Servant Leadership, World Language, Humanities, Physical Education and Electives. (See Graduation Requirements Below)

To be promoted to the next grade all rites competencies must be complete in addition you minimally need the following academic credits accumulated:

From 9 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	6.0 credits (English, Math, Social Studies, SL)
From 10 to 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	13 credits (2 English, 2 Math or 2 SS, 2 SL)
From 11 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	19 credits

#### Graduation Requirements

- 4 English credits: English 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 3 Mathematics credits: Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2
- 3 Science credits: General Physical Science, Biology and Chemistry
- 4 Social Studies credits: World History, African History, American History and Social Science
- 2 World Language credits: Language 1 and 2
- 2 Arts and Humanities credits
- 1.5 Physical and Health Education credits
- 1 additional credit, which must be a fourth credit in Mathematics, Science, AP, honors or IB in any content area, or a college level course in any content area
- 4 Servant Leadership / Rites of Passage Credits
- 2 additional elective
- 26.5 credits

In addition a Sankofa Freedom Academy must complete:

Completion of Junior/Senior Service Project which includes an internship and exhibition

Mandatory sports requirement – Freshman – Junior year.

2 Mandatory summer internship/off-site learning experiences (.5 credit will be awarded)

## **HOMEWORK = LIBERATION WORK**

Liberation work (homework) is an integral part of the educational program at Sankofa. It provides an opportunity for children to strengthen basic skills, reinforce study habits, stimulate independent thinking and develop initiative, responsibility and self-direction. Homework projects are related to classroom work and are designed to help scholars learn how to study. Assignments include review, development, independent study and creativity.

Parents are encouraged to take an active interest by providing a suitable place for study, making resource materials available, and checking to make sure assignments are completed.

Liberation work is assigned no less than five times a week and each child is required to have a separate copybook for assignments. All liberation work or assignment sheets must have the signature of a parent/guardian. For elementary grades (K – 2) homework assignments may require approximately one hour. For the remaining grades homework assignments are approximately of two hours. Expect scholars to have both long and short term projects throughout the year. Additionally, your scholar should always have a book that they are assigned to read.

Sankofa offers an after school tutoring program for its scholars in grades K-8. Additional online resources for assistance may be found at the following websites:

[www.infoplease.com/homework](http://www.infoplease.com/homework)

[www.homeworkspot.com](http://www.homeworkspot.com)

homeworktips.about.com

encarta.msn.com/encnet/departments/homework

[www.scholastic.com/kids/hom](http://www.scholastic.com/kids/hom)

[www.homeworkhotline.com](http://www.homeworkhotline.com)

[www.zen.org/~brendan/kids-homework.html](http://www.zen.org/~brendan/kids-homework.html)

## ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

Sankofa Freedom Academy will provide free and appropriate public education services to all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of the disability. Special Education and related services are provided by the school. Parents who are interested in the service should contact school administration (telephone numbers to be determined).

Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability and to ensure access of the child to the general education curriculum so that he or she can meet the educational standards. Scholars in these categories are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

If the scholar's behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, school officials may apply the Uniform Discipline Code, taking into consideration the scholar's special education and

disciplinary records. In no event, however, may the scholar be suspended without providing appropriate educational services for more than five (5) consecutive or fifteen (15) cumulative school days in a school year. A NOREP must be issued with the results of this determination.

If the scholar's behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the scholar's placement may be changed to an appropriate interim educational setting if the scholar carried a weapon to school or a school function or knowingly possessed or used illegal drugs or sold or solicited the sale of a controlled substance while at school or at a school function.

School officials may suspend scholars with disabilities and cease educational services for up to 5 consecutive or 15 cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education procedural safeguards. For all exceptionalities when school officials anticipate a referral for expulsion, the following apply:

Provide written notice to the parent/guardian or surrogate parent of the disciplinary action being considered and the date of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, which must be held within 24 hours of the date of this misconduct.

## *General Information*

### *EMERGENCY CLOSING*

In the event of inclement weather (ice and snow), Sankofa will follow the Philadelphia School District's closing policy. Stay tuned to KYW radio station for school closing; Sankofa's school number is (980). In case of a National Emergency, a Shelter in Place plan is available in the main office.

### *SCHOOL NOTICES*

Our method of contact with our parents is through notices sent home with the children. Frequently, the School and the Parent's Association send notices home. Please impress upon your child the importance of taking all notices home. Check your child's belonging for all notices. Notices will also be posted on the school's website at:  
[www.sankofafreedomacademy.org](http://www.sankofafreedomacademy.org)

### *LOST AND FOUND*

Please place pupil's name on all clothing, lunch box, and copybooks, etc. Found articles may be brought to the main office to be claimed by the owner. After a each report conference, if articles remain unclaimed, they are donated to charity.

### *SCHOOL PROPERTY*

Parents / guardians must teach our scholars to respect school property. A Sankofa scholar should feel that his/her school is a very special place. Therefore, special care should be given to school property. Care of school property then becomes the responsibility of

each scholar. Each pupil is responsible for all books issued to him/her. All books must be covered as soon as they are received. Parent/scholars are required to pay for all books or equipment lost, destroyed, or damaged. Book covers may be purchased at the Sankofa School store.

Scholar records will be held by administration if lost or damaged books are not paid by the parents. The school assumes no responsibility for items lost or stolen. Scholars must not write on walls, desks, floor, etc. It is against the law to deface school property. **ANY SCHOLAR CAUGHT DEFACING OR DESTROYING SCHOOL PROPERTY WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RESTORATION.**

#### USE OF ELECTRONICS

PLEASE NOTE: The school assumes no responsibility for items lost or stolen.

##### Cell phones

The administration fully understands the need for parents to both stay in touch with their children and the need of scholars to be able to reach their family while traveling to and from school. The school's policy on cell phones is as listed:

Cell phones are permitted on school buses and in the school but may not be used during the course of the school day on school grounds in any manner including as a clock, a calculator, a camera, as a means of communication or as a musical or other entertainment device.

In case of emergency or urgent notice, parents are asked to contact the school directly to have a message delivered to the child. In case of scholar emergency, medical or other urgent matter, the scholar must report to a staff person preferably the teacher or lead administrator (i.e. Nurse, Dean, CEO/Principal) and a call will be placed on their behalf.

Phones lost due to misuse or other incident will not be replaced by the school and are solely the responsibility of the child. All Middle and Upper school students must leave their cell phones locked in their lockers until dismissal. All elementary students must leave their cell phones in their book bags.

If a scholar is found using a phone or openly in possession of a phone during school hours the phone may be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. After a student violated this policy they will be required to turn their cell phone into the Dean of Students/Designated Staff daily. Repeated violations of the policy may result in further disciplinary action including out of school suspension.

If a cell phone has been used to instigate a fight or other disturbance including issuance of threats or gossip, the scholar(s) involved will be subject to strict corrective action including suspension up to legal prosecution as deemed appropriate by the laws of the state.

##### iPods, MP3 Players, CD Players, etc.

Listening devices such as those listed may not be used at anytime in the school during the school day unless written permission is granted by the CEO/Principal or designee. Scholars may use devices aboard public and school transportation but must cease using them once they have reached the school grounds. These and other similar devices may not be used during lunch or recess also (unless granted permission from a dean/administrator). Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the confiscation of the device(s).

GameBoy™, PSP™, Nintendo DS™, and other games

The use of portable, electronic games are strictly prohibited while on school grounds and during the school day. This includes lunchtime and during recess or any other social activities. Scholars who wish to use a gaming device while riding aboard one of the school buses, must receive written permission from both their parents/guardians and the school before doing so. Any gaming devices, games or other like instruments may be taken and will require a mandatory parent meeting to recover.

#### *TRANSPORTATION POLICY*

School busing is available free to children in grades 1-7th who live at least 1 ½ miles from the school. SFACS of Philadelphia's Transportation Department determines qualifications, routes, and schedules. Bus route information is mailed from the District in late August. Most neighboring suburbs also provide transportation for residents.

#### **Bus Rules and Regulations**

Scholars should be at their stop 10 minutes before the actual stop time. The bus will only wait up to the stop time. If the bus is late, please remain at the location at least 20 minutes.

Be at the bus stop on time. You should not have to run to make the bus.

Wait for the bus in an orderly fashion in your assigned area. Pushing, shoving or creating a disturbance might result in being late for school.

The school bus is an extension of the school and thus scholars are expected to conduct themselves in the same manner as they would in school. Scholars that are found to disrupt bus service in any way are subject to disciplinary action and may have their bus privileges suspended or revoked at the request of the Director of Operations or the CEO/Principal.

#### **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS TO PARENTS**

1. Encourage your child to come home immediately after school is dismissed.
2. Please do not phone your child during school hours. If there is an emergency, please contact the school directly.
3. Instruct your child never to converse with a stranger, never to accept a gift from a stranger, and never to get into a car with a stranger.
4. Your child must have plenty of sleep each night for him/her to achieve academic success.
5. If you have any concerns or if you need additional information, please see your child's teacher or the CEO/Principal by making an appointment.
6. Visit your school. You, as a parent, are not only welcome at school, you are urged to visit. It is highly desirable that you attend the various meetings arranged by the CEO/Principal and the Parents' Association.
7. Reserve a time for homework and turn off the television.
8. Encourage your children, but avoid undue pressure.

9. Show interest in what your children are doing, but do not do the work for them.

10. Understand that the school expects liberation work to be completed and returned with your signature on it.