Welcome to Denver Public Schools

Whether you are brand new to our schools, or if your family has been attending our schools for generations, our doors are open to you and your family.

The goal of this handbook is to provide an overview of the resources, programs and services available to you as a part of DPS, as well as an overview of some of our most frequently referenced policies. We hope this handbook helps you become a better advocate for your student, and helps students understand what opportunities are available to them throughout the district in order to ensure success.

We want to hear your feedback on how we can provide the most inclusive, equitable education for your student and your family. If you have any comments or suggestions for the handbook, please email communications@dpsk12.org.

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Revised August 2020
We know that the education of each of our students is a shared responsibility between DPS, our schools and our families. We believe that when our communities are educated, engaged and empowered, we can work together to create thriving schools where Every Child Succeeds. From having meaningful relationships with your student’s teachers to participating in a Superintendent Town Hall, we want you to have all the information you need to support your student’s education every step of the way.

This section outlines the many different ways to connect with DPS.

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HOW TO GET INVOLVED AT DPS

In addition to school-level involvement, there are also many ways to become involved with DPS at the district level.

ATTEND A BOARD MEETING

The Denver Board of Education is the policy-making body for DPS, and the board’s powers and duties are established in state law. Board study sessions, meetings and public comment take place at the Emily Griffith Campus, 1860 Lincoln St., and are open to the public. If you can’t attend a meeting, you can also live stream meetings online. Visit board.dpsk12.org for more information.

JOIN THE DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

The District Accountability Committee (DAC) is a citizen oversight committee which gives recommendations to the Board on matters such as budget, district improvement plans, charter school applications and other matters outlined in state statute or identified by the board and/or superintendent. Visit board.dpsk12.org/district-accountability-committee for information on the DAC.

PARTICIPATE IN SUPERINTENDENT TOWN HALLS

Superintendent Town Halls are a great way for the superintendent to communicate and connect with DPS families. The overall purpose of the forum is to provide an opportunity for open dialogue, share key district initiatives, provide information and resources for parents to support their children’s success and give tools for families to share the information with the wider school community.

REGISTER FOR THE FAMILY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Family Leadership Institute promotes academic partnerships and family leadership. All DPS families are welcome to attend any meeting. Each interactive session brings together families from across the district to enhance their advocacy skills at the home, their school, and across DPS. For additional information, contact Denver Council PTSA at 303-420-7820 or email denvercouncilptsa@copta.org.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED AT YOUR STUDENT’S SCHOOL

Families can stay engaged in their child’s education by getting involved in organizations or committees, or by volunteering at their school.

PARENT-LEADERSHIP GROUPS

There is a variety of parent-leadership groups available at DPS schools.

Collaborative School Committee or School Accountability Committee

A Collaborative School Committee (CSC), also sometimes referred to as the School Accountability Committee (SAC), consists of representatives from the school leadership team, teachers, parents or guardians, and representatives from the local community. State statute and DPS Board of Education policy require all schools, regardless of governance type, to establish a CSC or SAC.

Parent Teacher Association

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a nationally supported organization with local chapters at schools across the country. The PTA empowers parents and guardians to advocate for their children, and provides a nationwide network of resources, programs and assistance for families. For additional information, contact Denver Council PTSA at 303-420-7820 or email denvercouncilptsa@copta.org.

English Language Acquisition Parent Advisory Committee

Schools that offer English Language Acquisition (ELA) services may have an English Language Acquisition Parent Advisory Committee (ELA PAC). The organization is comprised of families and educators, and the goal of the ELA PAC is to review and provide feedback on ELA services available at schools, and to develop deeper relationships between educators and parents.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Research shows that children whose parents or guardians volunteer and/or engage in school activities have a better attitude and higher academic achievement. DPS schools offer opportunities to volunteer, either for one-time projects or on an ongoing basis. Contact your school to see what volunteer opportunities are available.

Please contact your school directly to learn more about volunteer opportunities and other ways to become involved. You may also visit face.dpsk12.org/volunteer-services or call Volunteer Services at 720-423-3002 for more information about volunteering in schools.

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JOIN THE ELA DISTRICTWIDE PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The English Language Acquisition Districtwide Parent Advisory Committee (ELA DAC) meets provide families of students who speak a language other than English an opportunity to provide feedback about issues pertinent to English learners. These meetings are included in the Superintendent Parent Forum, the Family Leadership Institute and other district-sponsored school governance meetings.

Please contact your school directly to learn more about volunteer opportunities and other ways to become involved. You may also visit face.dpsk12.org/volunteer-services or call Volunteer Services at 720-423-3002 for more information about volunteering in schools.
HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR CHILD’S TEACHER

PARENT TEACHER HOME VISIT PROGRAM
The Parent Teacher Home Visit Program (PTHV) is focused on building positive relationships between families and educators. Visits are voluntary for families and are hosted somewhere outside of school, such as at home, a park or a library. The PTHV program is a great opportunity to get to know your child’s teacher and for the teacher to learn more about your child’s hopes and dreams for the future.

FAMILY CONFERENCES
DPS holds family conferences twice per school year. Careful preparation can help you get more out of the conference, as well as enable your child’s teacher to better understand how he or she can help your child succeed.

HOW TO BE PREPARED FOR FAMILY CONFERENCES

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE
Talk to your child. Questions can include:
• What do you like best about school? What challenges are you having?
• What are your favorite subjects?
• What would you like me to tell your teacher?

Review your child’s work. Ask yourself:
• Do I have specific concerns about his or her academic progress?
• Do I have questions about the curriculum?
• Do I understand how my child is assessed?

DURING THE CONFERENCE
Ask your child’s teacher:
• How does my child participate in class discussions and activities?
• What are my child’s best and worst subjects? How can he or she improve?
• What are the standards for my child’s grade level? Can you show me an example of work that reflects these standards?
• How does my child’s skill sets compare to other children in the class?
• How does my child interact with other children and adults?
• How much help should I provide on homework assignments?
• What is your homework policy, including late and makeup work?
• Is my child trying as hard as he or she can?
• How can I best communicate with you?

AFTER THE CONFERENCE
Talk to your child about how the conference went, including:
• Tell your child what happened during the conference.
• Praise your child’s strengths.
• Talk with your child about how to address areas for improvement.
• Ask your child how you can continue to help him or her succeed in school.
HOW TO STAY INFORMED

DPS WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA
There are several ways to keep in contact with DPS.

- Visit bit.ly/OurDPSWeekly to sign up for a weekly DPS newsletter.
- Visit dpsk12.org for districtwide news and updates.
- Follow DPS on social media:
  - @DenverPublicSchools
  - @DenverPublicSchools
  - @DenverPublicSchools
  - @DPSNewsNow

SCHOOL-BASED COMMUNICATIONS
Many DPS schools have school websites, social media platforms, weekly emails and apps in addition to weekly folders of printed materials that are delivered home. Please call your school directly or visit your school’s front office to learn the best way to get updates and keep in touch.

EDUCA RADIO, TV AND NEWSPAPER
As the multi-language multimedia team within the FACE department, we strive to serve immigrants, refugees and multicultural communities through outreach platforms in six to 10 languages including podcasts, TV, newspaper, social media and internet. We support DPS educators, students and parents with community engagement and information, and partner on districtwide initiatives. We are dedicated to building trust, equity, teamwork and collaboration.

For more information, visit educaDPS.org and DPSVoice.org, follow EDUCA on Facebook at facebook.com/EDUCA.DPS, or email EDUCA@dpsk12.org.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES AND CLASSES
The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Center offers free wraparound services to students, families and community members in order to obtain critical life skills and increase their economic self-sufficiency and the academic achievements of their students. Services include classes in financial coaching, employment assistance, GED support, English language, business development and legal services. There are two FACE Center locations, in far northeast and southwest Denver.

PARENT PORTAL AND STUDENT PORTAL
The Parent Portal and Student Portal are online tools for DPS parents and students to stay informed and monitor student progress.

Grades and Assignments:
Review current grades and assignments.

Report Card and Schedule:
See report cards and schedules.

Attendance and Behavior:
Check attendance details, tardiness and behavior.

Other Features:
- See DPS and state test results.
- Review student On Track to Graduate and ELA status, and your school’s SPF results.
- Explore other tools and apps available to you and your student.

HOW TO ACCESS THE PARENT PORTAL OR STUDENT PORTAL
Families can log on to the Parent and Student Portals at myportal.dpsk12.org from anywhere there is internet access or with the mobile app ("DPS Portal") available for both iOS and Android. Students may log in using their DPS username and password.

CREATE AN ACCOUNT
To create a Parent Portal account, visit myportal.dpsk12.org and click ‘Create an Account.’ You will need an email address and your student’s ID number.

If you have questions about your account or need technical support, email the Portal Team at PortalTeam@dpsk12.org.

Call the Family and Community Helpline at 720-423-3054 or visit face.dpsk12.org for questions, concerns or more information on other ways to become involved in DPS.
We believe that all students, from the very first day they walk into a DPS school, can achieve at the highest levels and ultimately cross the graduation stage ready for college, careers and life. Our goal is to ensure your student graduates ready for college and career through rigorous coursework and high standards.

This section outlines our philosophy and practices around accountability, as well as the requirements our students will meet to earn a DPS diploma.
ACADEMIC STANDARDS

DPS bases our curriculum on the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) to ensure students are equipped for success in the 21st century. Our goal is to provide students with a well-rounded education that will prepare them for success in our rapidly changing world.

Academic standards provide a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn at each grade level. The standards define what skills students need to develop each year to ensure they graduate from high school ready for success in college and career in the 21st century.

Academic standards focus on the development of skills vital to student success: collaboration, communication and problem-solving. The standards challenge students to move beyond memorization to think critically, developing a deeper understanding of the most important skills for each grade level.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments provide valuable information for students, families and educators on whether students have mastered grade-level content and are on track to graduate. Assessments also help school and district teams know how to improve curriculum, instruction and leadership in order to better serve your child and ensure that Every Child Succeeds. Students participate in both summative and formative assessments throughout the year.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

Summative assessments are generally given once at the end of a period of time, such as a unit, semester or school year. Examples include a midterm or final exam, a final project, or The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) test. CMAS assessments are aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards and are used across the state.

Formative assessments refer to the ongoing process used by teachers and students during instruction. In this type of assessment, teachers diagnose where students are in their learning and where gaps in understanding exist. Formative assessments help teachers evaluate how to help students improve their skills and grow their knowledge.

ASSESSMENT POLICIES

All state assessments are administered online unless students have a documented need for paper-and-pencil testing. Parents who wish to excuse their student from participating in one or more assessments may do so by following the parent opt-out policy. The application for opting out of testing is available on the Parent Portal or by contacting your individual school.

WHY ASSESSMENTS ARE IMPORTANT

We believe all kids have talent, potential and the right to educational opportunities that allow them to achieve at the highest levels. Academic standards ensure that all students receive a world-class education with the academic knowledge, language and skills they need to be successful in college, career and life. DPS relies on CMAS and other assessments to ensure students are on track to graduate prepared for the 21st century. CMAS helps school leaders and teachers monitor student progress. With higher standards, it’s more important than ever that we provide students the relevant, meaningful and timely supports they need to be successful, and CMAS helps us determine what those supports should be.

| SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO MEET ACADEMIC STANDARDS |

Here are a few tips you can use at home to support your child’s learning:

- Get to know what your child is expected to learn at each grade level and talk with your child’s teacher about learning goals.
- Help your child learn to persevere in solving problems by encouraging a trial-and-error process that involves multiple creative strategies for discovering solutions.
- Practice communication skills by talking with your child about their day, homework, or how he or she is learning.
- Practice collaboration by working together to solve everyday problems like reading a restaurant menu or calculating a tip.
- Practice critical thinking by asking your child to explain their answers, summarize a book or analyze current events.
- Practice technology skills by supervising computer time or utilizing real-world opportunities like self-checkout at the grocery store.

Visit standards.dpsk12.org for more information on the standards and how you can support your child’s learning.
ATTENDANCE
Students learn best when they are in school. When absences add up, students miss valuable lessons and the opportunity to practice what they’re learning. Studies from across the country show that students who have poor attendance are more likely to fall behind in school. Both students and families are responsible for ensuring that students are at school on time and ready to learn. Families can help by scheduling personal appointments outside of school hours.

BEHAVIOR
Most students will need guidance and redirection at times throughout their school year. However, when a student’s behavior is disruptive to his or her own learning, or to the learning of others, he or she can fall behind. Families, teachers and students should work together to set learning and behavioral goals that lead to success in the classroom for each student.

COURSEWORK
Students should choose coursework that allows them to feel successful in their classes and grow academically each year. It is important for both families and students to understand learning goals for each class and to reach out to teachers or counselors when extra support is needed.
Keeping Your Student on Track

Beginning with the Class of 2021, we have new graduation requirements that mirror what is expected for our students to be successful in college, career or the workplace. The new requirements focus less on grades earned for time spent in a classroom, and more on skills needed for life after high school.

In order to receive a DPS diploma, students will be expected to complete required coursework, fulfill competency requirements and complete an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP).

ICAP

Students work with their counselors, teachers and families to develop, update and complete their ICAPs, a process which starts as early as the sixth grade. Through this personalized career and academic planning tool, students evaluate all aspects of their path to college and career, including goal setting, college opportunities, academic planning, financial literacy and financial aid and essential skills. This framework creates a roadmap for students, so they are able to visualize how exploring possibilities and achieving milestones translates to their future college and career aspirations. At the end of their senior year, they will turn in the completed plan to fulfill the ICAP requirement for graduation.

COURSEWORK

Students will engage in a rigorous course of study and are required to complete 24 units of course credit across various content areas to prepare them for acceptance requirements at postsecondary institutions. The coursework required includes the following:

- Four units of English language arts.
- Four units of mathematics.
- Three units of science.
- Three units of social studies.
- One unit of physical education.
- One unit of arts or eligible Career and Technical Education (CTE).
- Eight units of approved electives.*

* Students planning to attend four-year universities should fulfill world language requirements as part of their electives. Check with a school counselor for more information.

COMPETENCY

Demonstrating competency means a student has learned certain skills, abilities and concepts, and they are able to apply them in the real world. There are lots of ways for a student to show what they have learned in school, which is why we created a flexible menu of options to demonstrate competency. In order to graduate from DPS, every student will demonstrate competency in English, math and/or career readiness by completing one or more items in the DPS competency menu, which is available online at collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org/competency-menu.

THE HOME CONNECTION

At DPS we know that family involvement is a major factor in determining a child’s success in school. Here are some simple things that you can do to help your child learn and succeed.

- Give your child a clear message that education is valued and important in your family.
- Have daily conversations with your child about their school day. Get to know their interests, strengths and talents. Talk with your child about college and career.
- Make sure your child attends school on time every day, and is ready to learn.
- Establish a set time and place to do homework.
- Read on a daily basis.
- Check in regularly with your child’s teacher for ongoing communication. Attend family conferences or schedule parent-teacher home visits.
- Check the Parent Portal at myportal.dpsk12.org so you know your child’s homework assignments, assessment results and progress.
Much of our students’ most important work takes place in the classroom and other learning environments, but their academic achievement also depends on other supports provided by DPS. These include safe and reliable transportation, nutritious meals and crucial language and special education resources.

In this section, we outline the ways DPS programs and services help ensure all students have equitable opportunities for success.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Every student’s primary language is an asset that, combined with English language skills, leads to success in school and life. English Language Acquisition (ELA) programs feature instruction by qualified teachers and dedicated English Language Development support to help English learners develop knowledge in core content areas while they learn English.

All students whose primary language is not English, and are not yet proficient in English, are eligible for ELA program services. At registration, parents of all new students complete a form called the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ), which identifies the language or languages spoken by the student and his or her family. If a language other than English is entered on the HLQ, the parents select an ELA program for their child. The school evaluates the child’s English proficiency level and reviews the student’s performance to determine if the child is eligible for ELA program services.

ELA PROGRAMS OFFERED AT DPS SCHOOLS:

Transitional Native Language Instruction (TNLI) programs, also known as bilingual programs, are for English learners whose first language is Spanish. Instruction in TNLI programs is in both Spanish and English, with English instruction increasing as students become more fluent. The goal is helping students become literate in both languages. Students whose first language is not Spanish who attend TNLI schools will receive English as a Second Language instruction.

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are intended for English learners who speak any language. All instruction is in English with teachers who have completed special training in working with English learners. Depending on the number of students who speak a given language, the school may provide a native language tutor that can provide additional assistance.

In Denver Public Schools, Dual Language is a long-term program offering instruction in two languages with the goal of developing bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural appreciation. Every district-run dual language program includes at least 50% of instruction in Spanish at the elementary level, and Spanish language arts and one content area taught in Spanish at the secondary level.

Regardless of the program, all English learners receive a daily class dedicated to English Language Development (ELD), which gives students the fundamental tools to speak and write English.

EXTENDED LEARNING AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

DPS families and students have access to programs that extend the learning experience beyond the traditional school day and year. Many schools offer programs before or after school, on school holidays and breaks, or over the summer. These programs provide students with a safe and welcoming place to spend time as well as opportunities to increase their engagement and learning.

DISCOVERY LINK

Discovery Link is a licensed before- and afterschool and summer camp program offered in more than 40 DPS schools. Discovery Link incorporates hands-on learning in areas including physical activity, nutrition, math, literacy, science, art, and social-emotional learning. Discovery Link includes homework help, healthy snacks, opportunities to build relationships with peers and adults. Discovery Link is fee-based, limited tuition assistance is available. Enrichment programs are available at an additional cost. Discovery Link accepts the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Visit discoverylink.dpsk12.org for more information.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

DPS works with many community partners who are committed to providing programs and services to serve the diverse needs of our students, both during and outside of school. Please contact your school directly to learn more about what partnerships may be available at your school, or visit cps.civicore.com/map for the Denver Afterschool Program locator.
Programs and Services

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

DENVER HEALTH SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

DPS operates 18 Denver Health School-Based Health Centers. These are clinics that DPS students can access for free health care. Any student who has submitted a signed parental consent form is welcome to use the services at these centers during school hours. Services available to students include physical examinations and sports physicals, care of injury or illness, immunizations, lab tests, prescriptions and medications, mental health counseling, sexual and reproductive health care, and health insurance enrollment. Health centers are located at the campuses listed below. For more information, visit denverhealth.org.

- Abraham Lincoln High School, 2285 S. Federal Blvd.
- Bruce Randolph School, 3955 Steele St.
- East High School, 1600 City Park Esplanade
- Evie Dennis Campus, 4800 Telluride St.
- Florence Crittenton, 55 S. Zuni St.
- John F. Kennedy High School, 2855 S. Lamar St.
- Kepner Campus, 911 S. Hazel Court
- Kunsmiller Arts Academy, 2250 S. Quitman Way
- Lake Campus, 1820 Lowell Blvd.
- Manual High School, 1700 E. 28th Ave.
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College, 19535 E. 44th Ave.
- Montbello Campus, 5000 Crown Blvd.
- North High School, 2940 Speer Blvd.
- Rachel B. Noel Campus, 5290 Kittredge St.
- Place Bridge Academy, 7125 Cherry Creek Drive North
- South High School, 1700 E. Louisiana Ave.
- Thomas Jefferson, 3950 S. Holly St.
- West Campus, 951 Elati St.

Every day, a complimentary breakfast is available to all students. Many of the school meal entrees and sides are cooked from scratch and we are committed to serving locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables on our menus, including produce grown at our own schools. DPS also participates in the National School Lunch Program, which allows us to provide meals at a reduced price or no cost depending on family income and household size.

Visit the Food and Nutrition Services website at foodservices.dpsk12.org for more information on our breakfast or lunch programs, to apply for the free and/or reduced lunch program, to add funds online to pay for meals, and to see what’s on the menu.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Research shows that students perform better when they are nourished and healthy. At DPS, we ensure our students are offered a variety of nutritious, delicious and convenient school meals that cater to a variety of tastes and dietary needs.

MEDICAID AND SNAP ASSISTANCE

The DPS Medicaid Department helps families apply for free or low-cost health insurance and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We also help families with utilizing their benefits. We offer one-on-one appointments at any DPS school, and families can apply year round.

For more information about Medicaid and SNAP Assistance, call 720-423-3661 or email outreach@dpsk12.org.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

SPECIAL EDUCATION

All DPS schools, including charter schools, provide a continuum of services to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities with mild to moderate needs. Center-based programs are offered in select schools and may be accessed through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process based on individual students’ needs.

The IEP describes the specially designed services that will be provided to students. This includes instruction from specifically trained and licensed special education teachers and practitioners (including Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Vision). Students may also receive support from nurses, mental health providers, speech/language and motor therapists.

Eligibility is determined by a formal assessment process that uses criteria associated with specific disabilities. Within this evaluation process, families are provided information regarding their child’s eligibility and options for services. If you believe your child may qualify for special education services, please contact your school to inquire about an assessment.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

Section 504 is a federal civil rights law that ensures students with disabilities are afforded “equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement” as an average peer. To pursue eligibility, a student can be referred to the school’s Section 504 coordinator. A Section 504 team would convene to determine eligibility. If the student is found to be eligible, the Section 504 team would determine the student’s placement, services, and accommodations to help mitigate barriers caused by the impairment(s). Visit studentequity.dpsk12.org or call your school for more information.
TRANSPORTATION

The mission of DPS Transportation Services is to provide safe, equitable and efficient transportation services to our students. We know that getting to school safely is the first step in a great learning experience and helps ensure that Every Child Succeeds.

TRANSPORTATION OFFERINGS

Standard Transportation
Elementary school students (grades K-5) are eligible for standard bus transportation if they attend their neighborhood boundary school and live more than 1 mile from school.

Middle school students (grades 6-8) are eligible for standard transportation if they attend their neighborhood boundary school and live more than 2½ miles from the school.

High school students (grades 9-12) are eligible to receive a free monthly Regional Transportation District (RTD) pass if they attend their boundary school and live more than 2½ miles from their school.

Enrollment Zones
Students who live within enrollment zones receive transportation specific to that zone. Visit the Enrollment Zone page under the “Families and Students Eligibility and Routing” section at transportation.dpsk12.org.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools determine their own transportation policy and whether or not they will contract with DPS to offer their students transportation services. To learn more about each charter school’s transportation service, speak with your school directly.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

Transportation is available to all students enrolled in a magnet program who meet the transportation-eligibility criteria, and who live within the magnet transportation zone.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Special Education
In addition to providing transportation via the school bus, transportation is also provided to students with special needs via American Logistics Company (ALC), a third-party vendor. Transportation is provided as a related service to students in a center-based program. For information about transportation for a child with special needs, call Student Equity and Opportunity at 720-423-3437 or email StuTrans@dpsk12.org.

English Language Acquisition
When boundary schools do not provide English Language Acquisition (ELA) services, students are eligible to attend – and receive transportation to – the school in their area that offers ELA services. For ELA school locations and transportation guidelines, visit ela.dpsk12.org.

Exception Requests
Families of students who are not eligible to ride the school bus can submit a request for their student to be considered for transportation. This process is called the Exception Request process. Additional information can be found at transportation.dpsk12.org/eligibility-and-routing/exception-request-process.

+Pass
The +Pass is a required card that students must scan when getting on and off the school bus. The mandatory +Pass program was created to keep parents informed about when and where their student gets on and off the bus. Every transportation-eligible student in DPS who rides a school bus must use their +Pass every day. More information can be found at transportation.dpsk12.org/pluspass.

Bus Bulletin
Families of students who ride the school bus will receive real-time information and updates about their student’s bus service through Bus Bulletin. Text, email and voice notifications will be sent to families when buses are running more than 15 minutes late due to traffic, emergency or weather delay. Families of transportation-eligible students are automatically enrolled to receive Bus Bulletin based on the phone number and email address provided when they registered their student for school, and you can update this information by logging into the Parent Portal.

Contact your school directly for detailed information about your student’s transportation options.
Educating your student in a safe and respectful environment is our top priority at DPS. That’s why we have important policies in place regarding student behavior, school safety and parental conduct. We’ve also developed procedures to make sure all our families feel fully supported, including with enrollment, student records, translations and interpretations, and more.

This section provides an overview of the DPS policies and procedures most frequently referenced by students and families.

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**ATTENDANCE**

It is essential that students attend school daily in order to acquire the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to be college and career ready. Per the Colorado School Attendance Laws, students are required to attend school up to age 17.

**STUDENTS MUST ATTEND A MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS OF SCHOOL IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW. THESE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ARE:**

- 1,056 hours in middle and high school.
- 968 hours in elementary school.
- 900 hours in full-day kindergarten, or 450 hours in half-day kindergarten.

**EXEMPTIONS TO THE COLORADO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW INCLUDE:**

- Temporary injury or illness.
- Enrollment in a private school.
- Physical, mental or emotional disability.
- Suspension, expulsion or denial of admission.
- Certificate to work.
- Legal custody by public agency.
- Religious holidays or observance.
- School-approved work-student program.
- Home-based instruction.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**

An excused absence requires approval by both the parent or guardian and the school. In some cases, documentation may be required, such as a note from a parent or guardian, or from a healthcare provider.

**TRUANT AND HABITUALLY TRUANT**

Truancy is an unexcused absence, or an absence without parent, guardian or school permission. A student is considered habitually truant if they have four unexcused absences in one month and/or 10 unexcused absences in the school year.

Schools will notify parents or guardians of student absences by telephone, letter, conference or home visit. In order to support the family of a student who is habitually truant, DPS works to understand reasons for the student’s absences. We will work to provide support that could include meeting with the student’s family, counseling, tutoring, providing a referral to support programs, or implementing an attendance or medical plan. A truancy court proceeding may be initiated if the student continues to miss school.

**BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING**

We believe that all students should be able to learn in an environment that is free from threat, harassment, or any type of bullying behavior, including cyberbullying.

**WHAT IS BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING?**

Bullying is the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental or emotional harm to another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal, or electronic means, or by a physical act or gesture. Bullying is classified as harassment and may constitute a violation of civil rights when it is based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, transgender status, religion, national origin, immigration/citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy status, veteran status or disability.

Cyberbullying is any type of harassment or bullying that occurs through any mobile or electronic device. This can include texts, videos or pictures sent through email, chat rooms, instant messaging, blogs, text messaging, websites or social media.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROTECT STUDENTS**

To protect students from bullying and cyberbullying, DPS has several policies and procedures in place.

- Bullying is not tolerated in DPS schools, on school grounds, on our buses or other DPS-approved vehicles, or during any school activities such as sporting events or extended learning programs.
- Students who engage in bullying behaviors are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement.
- All schools have procedures for investigation and intervention with students who are engaging in bullying behavior. Program methods include teaching acceptable behavior, engaging in discussions, participating in counseling sessions, and implementing the appropriate consequences and supports.
- Curriculum and training is also available to help teachers and parents or guardians prevent bullying.
- School psychologists and social workers are available to assist students and families who are victims of bullying.

**HOW CAN FAMILIES HELP?**

If you are concerned about bullying at your school, we recommend contacting your school’s principal, social worker, school psychologist or teacher directly to address the issue. We encourage you to talk to your student about bullying, and to teach your student to always tell a trusted adult if he or she, or another student, has been bullied or cyberbullied. Learn more about bullying and cyberbullying online at the following sources:

- Cyberbullying.org
- Safeschools.state.co.us
- Stopbullying.gov
- Commonsensemedia.org

You can anonymously report any bullying behavior that threatens you, your family or your community through Safe2Tell by calling 877-542-7233, by visiting Safe2tell.org, or by using the Safe2Tell app on a mobile device.
Policies and Procedures

ENROLLMENT

DPS believes that all students should have equitable access to their preferred schools, regardless of where they live in Denver. Incoming students are guaranteed enrollment in their neighborhood school, or a school in their enrollment zone. However, any student who wants or needs to attend a different school the following year may take part in SchoolChoice, our online enrollment system. Enrollment for preschool students at a DPS program is not guaranteed; preschool families need to apply on a yearly basis.

FIND YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

If you are a Denver resident, have not choiced out of your neighborhood boundary school and need to enroll your student for the current school year, you may enroll directly at the neighborhood school that serves your address. You can visit schoolfinder.dpsk12.org to determine your neighborhood school. To enroll, contact the school office directly for registration dates and required documents.

Some parts of Denver are served by enrollment zones, or geographic areas where students are guaranteed a seat at one of several schools, not just one particular school. If you recently moved and reside within Denver, and you now live in an enrollment zone or would like to attend a school other than your neighborhood school for the current school year, please visit schoolchoice.dpsk12.org to create an account and complete an online application.

SCHOOLCHOICE

If you want to enroll your student in a DPS school other than your neighborhood school (or the school you are currently attending) for the following school year, you may take part in SchoolChoice. During SchoolChoice, families submit one application per student, on which they rank their top school preferences. DPS then matches students to schools based on those preferences, as well as school admission priorities and available space. Our system is designed to maximize the number of students getting their most-preferred school.

Round 1 of SchoolChoice takes place mid-January through mid-February for the following school year. You can create an account and apply at schoolchoice.dpsk12.org anytime during the application window.

Visit board.dpsk12.org to review all Board of Education policies regarding discipline. Contact your school directly to learn more about school-specific policies. If you have discipline concerns, please call the Family and Community Helpline at 720-423-3054.

For more information on enrollment and SchoolChoice, visit schoolchoice.dpsk12.org or call 720-423-3493.

DISCIPLINE

Effective school discipline policies help promote classrooms that are conducive to learning and allow for uninterrupted education for all students. In our schools, disciplinary consequences should be reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, and should match the severity of the student’s misbehavior, as well as consider the impact on the victim and/or community. When consequences are paired with meaningful and developmentally appropriate instruction and guidance, students are offered an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and contribute to the school community. Schools may adopt their own school rules and codes of conduct as long as they are consistent with district policy.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

DPS believes that the removal of students from school for disciplinary reasons – especially during the early years of education – negatively impacts their opportunity for long-term success. We have modified our discipline reform policy to significantly reduce suspensions and eliminate expulsions for students in grades ECE through third, except in cases required by law.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities have certain protections under the law relative to student discipline procedures. Please contact your school’s 504 Coordinator or Special Education case manager for more information.

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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

At DPS we recognize the significant impact that health has on the academic achievement of our students. We know that healthy kids make better students, and better students make healthier communities.

IMMUNIZATION AND VACCINATIONS

Immunizations are an important part of our students’ health. Colorado law requires that children attending school are vaccinated to prevent disease. In addition to the vaccines required by the Colorado Board of Health, there are vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Certain vaccines will be required to attend school, with exemptions per House Bill 14-1288 for health, religious or personal purposes.

DPS school nurses follow the Colorado Board of Health schedule to identify students with immunization needs. Parents or guardians will be notified if their child is missing required immunizations and vaccines.

MEDICATIONS

Medications and medical treatments can be provided at school when a parent or guardian requests and submits a completed Student Medication/Treatment Request Release Agreement form. This form provides the parental consent required for a nurse or delegate to give medication on school property. All medications must be provided in the original pharmacy container, labeled with your child’s name, name of the medication, dosage and frequency, and date for the medication to be discontinued. Students may be permitted to carry their own emergency medications such as an asthma inhaler or epinephrine (epi-pen) if a corresponding medical order and a self-carry contract are completed.

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and wellbeing, all foods and beverages outside the school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. For more information on school wellness standards, please visit foodservices.dpsk12.org.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

All members of the DPS community deserve to learn or work in an environment in which they are treated with dignity and respect. Discrimination and harassment have no place in schools, school grounds, DPS office locations, or in other settings with a connection to DPS. Discrimination and harassment by employees, students and community members will not be tolerated.

POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Consistent with federal civil rights laws (Title VI, Title IX, Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504, and Age Discrimination Act), state law, and Board of Education policies, DPS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, transgender status, religion, national origin, immigration/citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy status, veteran status or disability in admission into, access to, or treatment within its educational programs or activities or in employment. Additionally, DPS does not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on the basis of genetic information. Harassment is a form of prohibited discrimination. DPS prohibits retaliation against any individual for making a good-faith complaint or participating in good faith in an investigation of discrimination or harassment.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in DPS or school activities. Please contact the school or department at least three working days prior to the activity.

RESOLUTION PROCESS

The resolution process for discrimination and harassment concerns is contained in Board Regulation AC-R1. The resolution process for concerns related to requests for reasonable accommodations is contained in Board Policies AC-R2, GBA-R1 and JB-R-1. DPS will promptly investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment.

INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

Inquiries and complaints concerning discrimination or harassment based on any of the above listed protected classes may be addressed to the District Discrimination Prevention and Response Coordinator or submitted using the External Complaint Form.

District Prevention and Response Coordinator
Kristin Bailey, Equity and Safety Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
1860 Lincoln, Room 1230, Denver, CO 80203
720-423-3517 | reportdiscrimination@dpsk12.org

Additionally, inquiries or complaints alleging discriminatory actions may be addressed to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 1244 Speer Blvd., Denver, CO 80224.
INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The internet is a vital tool for education, and DPS provides internet connectivity to all schools. Use of the internet requires that both students and staff follow certain rules. Accessing the internet for illegal, obscene or inappropriate purposes is prohibited. DPS filters internet content in an effort to prevent illegal, obscene and inappropriate materials. All accessed internet content can be investigated by DPS and should not be considered private.

Social media, such as sites like Facebook, Google+ and Twitter, have important educational uses and can be powerful communication tools. If students and teachers behave politely and professionally in these environments, these sites can and should be used in schools. If students feel as if they are being harassed or bullied by a peer through social media, they should report this to their school.

Students who violate the internet use policy can lose their internet access and/or access to social media sites and may face disciplinary action.

MANDATORY REPORTERS

All school staff members are mandatory reporters. They are required to complete mandatory reporter training every year and are required by law to report child abuse or neglect if they reasonably suspect abuse or neglect is occurring.

To report child abuse or neglect, contact the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 844-264-5437.

PARENT CONDUCT

DPS encourages all families to engage in their children’s education. We expect parents and guardians to model professionalism and respect, and refrain from disrupting teaching or school-support operations.

Such behavior can create an unsafe, unproductive or threatening environment for our students and staff members. If a parent or guardian violates this policy, he or she may be issued a warning about his or her behavior; may be invited to participate in mediation with school staff; or may be barred from entering school grounds. We want to help prevent conflicts by working together so we can maintain a positive and productive environment for our students and staff members.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Student safety is a top priority for DPS, and responsible conduct in every school is required to maintain a safe educational environment. Student safety policies and procedures apply when students are on school grounds, in DPS-approved vehicles, at designated school bus stops or at school-sponsored events.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE BY STUDENTS

Students must not possess or use alcohol, narcotics, marijuana, legal but unauthorized, or illegal substances on school grounds, in DPS-approved vehicles, at designated school bus stops or at school-sponsored events. There are disciplinary consequences for these misbehaviors.

STUDENT DRESS

Attire must not disrupt the school’s learning environment. It must meet reasonable standards of cleanliness and show respect for others. Please check with your child’s school for specific dress code or uniform policies.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DPS is dedicated to creating an environment that promotes student success, balanced with student rights and responsibilities. Students have the right to a safe and equitable education that meets individual needs and abilities. Students share in the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a safe school environment and should not engage in disruptive activities that might interfere with the educational rights of others.

If you need assistance handling parent or student conduct concerns at your child’s school, please call 720-423-3054 or visit face.dpsk12.org for more information.
STUDENT RECORDS

We are committed to the privacy and security of our students. Our Student Records Policy complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). DPS provides the Annual Notice for Family Education Rights and Privacy Act to parents, guardians and eligible students regarding their rights under FERPA.

REQUESTING RECORDS

For students who have withdrawn or who are no longer enrolled in DPS, parents, guardians or students over the age of 18 can submit requests online at denverco.scriborder.com. After the request has been submitted, they will have access to the records within 45 days. To request copies of records for students currently enrolled in a DPS school, parents, guardians or eligible students can submit a request directly to the school of attendance.

REVIEWING RECORDS

Parents, guardians and eligible students can submit a written request directly to the school principal to request inspection of records. They may also control the release of records by requesting that written consent is required before records are released. Current students and parents can view transcripts and other reports in Student Portal and Parent Portal. To request official transcripts or other student records online, please visit denverco.scriborder.com.

AMENDING RECORDS

Parents, guardians and eligible students may request in writing that records found to be inaccurate or misleading are corrected by the school. They should clearly identify the part of the record where the change is requested, and specify the reason for the requested amendment. If it is decided that the record should not be amended as requested, DPS will notify the requester of the decision. They will then have a right to a hearing regarding the petition for the amendment.

DISCLOSURE WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT

Disclosure of student records to school officials with legitimate educational interests does not require parental consent. DPS may also designate third-party vendors, community partners or officials of another school district as individuals who may access information if they have legitimate educational interests.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

DPS may disclose directory information unless a parent, guardian or eligible student objects to such disclosure in writing to the Superintendent within two weeks of enrollment at DPS_Superintendent@dpsk12.org.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND EMERGENCY DISCLOSURE

DPS may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

SCHOOL SAFETY

DPS is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all students and families, and we are proud to be a national leader among school districts for emergency preparedness.

EVACUATION

An evacuation is when students are sent outside of the school building to prevent harm or injury due to a hazardous situation inside of the school, such as a fire.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE

Shelter-in-place occurs when there is a hazard, such as a tornado or a severe weather warning, and it has been determined by the Department of Safety that evacuation or early dismissal could possibly place students in danger.

LOCKOUTS

A lockout takes place when a threat has been identified in the area of a school. All exterior doors are locked to prevent any hazards or threats from entering the school. No entry or exit to the school is allowed during a lockout.

LOCKDOWNS

A lockdown takes place when a hazardous threat or a possible hazardous threat has been identified inside of the building or in close proximity of the school. All exterior and interior doors are locked and students must remain in the school. No entry or exit to the school is allowed during a lockdown.

REUNIFICATION

Reunification occurs when students have been moved from the school facility to an alternate location due to an emergency that has affected the school site or a site on or around the school grounds. During the reunification process, students can only be released to an adult listed as an emergency contact with the school. Adults coming to pick up students must be proper government-issued photo identification, such as a driver’s license, state ID card, military ID card or passport.

WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A SCHOOL EMERGENCY

If you are notified of a school lockdown at your child’s school, do not come to the school. Stay in a location where you are able to be notified with additional information of your child’s school situation. Students will not be released until the incident has ended or the scene is safe for release. Be prepared to pick up your child at a reunification site.

WHAT TO DO IF A LOCKDOWN OCCURS AT YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL

• Check the DPS website at dpsk12.org and DPS social media channels for updated information.
• Call the Family and Community Helpline at 720-423-3054.
• Tune into local TV and radio stations for school news alerts.
• Wait for an automated phone call and/or text message that will notify you when it is safe to pick up your child and the location for pickup.
• Do not come to your child’s school. This will create traffic congestion that could interfere with the efforts of first responders.
• Do not call your child or your child’s school. Excessive phone calls could interfere with emergency communications.
TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS
DPS is committed to providing written translation and spoken interpretation support at no cost to families who do not speak English. Any DPS parent or guardian may request services through their school.

INTERPRETATIONS
In-person, phone or sign language interpretation services are available for any essential family group meetings, such as DPS community meetings, CSC, ELA PAC, ELA DAC and board meetings. Phone interpretation services are available for urgent or unexpected family-school communication needs.

TRANSLATIONS
Essential family communication can be submitted for translation including letters, permission slips, forms, applications, school fliers and brochures, agendas from school meetings, and Individualized Education Program evaluations.

To request translation and interpretation services, please contact your school’s main office. Visit dpsk12.org/languages for policies, district resources and parent guides in the most common languages used by DPS families.

WEATHER
In case of severe weather, DPS schools may be closed or delayed. We are committed to informing families about school closures or delays as early as possible, with the goal to make the call by 5 a.m.

DPS announces closures or delays through the following communications channels:
- **Automated Calls, Text Messages and Emails**: Families who provide phone numbers or email addresses to schools will receive a phone call, text message and/or an email in their preferred language announcing any closure or delay due to severe weather.
- **DPS Homepage**: Closures and delays are announced via a red “alert” banner across the top of the district homepage at dpsk12.org.
- **DPS Social Media**: Announcements to close or delay school will quickly be posted to Facebook and Twitter.
- **News Media**: DPS immediately notifies news media for inclusion on their weather closing or delays lists.
- **Bus Bulletin**: DPS’ transportation tool automatically informs parents of any school bus delays.
- **District Closure or Delay Hotline**: A message announcing the closure or delay will be left on DPS’ closure hotline at 720-423-3200, as well as on the DPS Transportation Services hotline at 720-423-4600.

Please visit www.dpsk12.org/weather for a list of frequently asked questions around weather as well as the list of schools who may experience delayed starts in the case of severe weather.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS
We encourage our families to visit our classrooms, and we recognize that family volunteers play an important role in the success of DPS. In order to ensure that no unauthorized persons enter buildings with wrongful intent, all visitors must first report to the school office to obtain school approval. We also have a volunteer application and background check process in place for family and community members who wish to volunteer in our schools.

Visit face.dpsk12.org/volunteer-services for a list of volunteer opportunities and to download the required volunteer forms.
At DPS, we know that it takes all of us working together to prepare our kids for college and career. DPS departments provide a variety of services to support our families and our student’s success.

This section outlines some important contact information so that you can connect with the DPS resources available to you.

**IN THIS SECTION**

Important Resources and Contact Information
**IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY HELPLINE**
Have a general question about DPS? The Helpline is a great place to start.
- face.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3054

**ACCOUNTABILITY, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**
Assessments, survey results and questions about the School Performance Framework (SPF).
- are.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3736

**ATHLETICS**
Sports schedules and news.
- athletics.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-4240

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**
Access board docs, and learn how to watch or attend board meetings.
- board.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3210

**CAREER AND COLLEGE SUCCESS**
Learn how families and students can prepare for a student’s future goals.
- collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-1240

**COMMUNICATIONS**
Access public information, for media requests or to provide feedback on DPS publications.
- communications.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3414

**DISCOVERY LINK**
Questions about before- and afterschool or community programs.
- discoverylink.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-1781

**DPS FOUNDATION**
Donations, or questions on how to support DPS’ fundraising partner.
- dpsfoundation.org
- 720-423-3553

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)**
Learn more about early education options for 3- and 4-year-olds, and kindergarten.
- earlyeducation.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-2678

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION SERVICES**
Services for English Language Acquisition programs, immigration rights, newcomer centers, the Seal of Biliteracy and how to become involved in ELA Parent Advisory Committees.
- ela.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-2040

**ENROLLMENT SERVICES**
Information on how to find, apply and register for your school of choice.
- schoolchoice.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3493

**FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES**
Breakfast and lunch menus, pay for meals online, and health and wellness resources.
- foodservices.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-5400

**SCHOOL FINDER**
Find your neighborhood school, find a school based on program or interest, or explore schools across Denver.
- schoolfinder.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3493

**STUDENT EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY**
For Information on social-emotional supports, school nursing, special education, psychological and social work services, gifted and talented, 504 accommodations, federal title programming, Medicaid enrollment and school health programs.
- studentequity.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3437

**STUDENT RECORDS**
Request student records or transcripts.
- denverco.scriborder.com
- 720-423-3552

**SUPERINTENDENT’S OFFICE**
Learn more about or contact the superintendent.
- www.dpsk12.org/about-dps/dps-leadership
- 720-423-3300

**TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES**
Provides translation (written) and interpretation (spoken) to support linguistically diverse parents and families. Contact your school to request these services.
- dpsk12.org/communications/language-services
- 720-423-3767

**TRANSPORTATION**
Eligibility, policies, routes and resources related to school transportation.
- transportation.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-4600

**VOLUNTEERING WITH DPS**
Learn how to start volunteering, how to donate to DPS, and explore available opportunities.
- volunteerservices.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3002

**WORK FOR DPS**
Join Team DPS and learn more about how you can make your career making a difference.
- careers.dpsk12.org
- 720-423-3200