



Family Handbook

2024-25

A Denver Public Schools Charter School of Choice

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(Updated June 2024)

Family Handbook

The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School (DDES) administration and its board of directors have the sole authority to determine policies and practices of the school. This Family Handbook is based on current DDES school and board policies and bylaws, DDES core values and mission/vision, best practices by other charter schools, state and federal law, and policies of Denver Public Schools, authorizer of DDES.

The school's administration and board intend for the Family Handbook to evolve. The administration and board will also accept suggested revisions throughout the 2024-25 school year for the next year. The administration and representatives of the DDES Board will consider possible changes for an updated version for the 2024-25 school year.

The Family Handbook is intended to outline the expectations of the school and how it operates. It should not be considered an exhaustive document. There are many aspects of a school that take shape and change as a year progresses; unexpected and unpredictable issues inevitably arise. The administration and the board reserve the right to use their discretion to make decisions on those types of situations that may not be specifically addressed in the handbook or in policies. Those decisions will be based on their experienced judgment, customs of the school, commonly accepted norms of social and educational institutions, law, common sense, and what is in the best interest of the entire DDES community. The board and administration also reserve the right to update, revise or add policies and rules at any time during the year when the need arises. Any updates will be communicated out to all families.

The school will not widely distribute hard copies of the handbook because of the high cost of copying. If you would like a paper copy, please make that request at the main office.

DDES is located at:

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Denver, CO 80203

www.ddeschools.org

Office email: frontoffice@ddeschool.org

Phone: 720.424.2350

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WE ARE CREW

not passengers

The concept of Crew impels all members of our school community to work together as a team, to pitch in and to help one another. For DDES families, this means:

Respectful 2-Way Communication

- Read all communication coming from the school and from your student's crew leader.
- Reach out with any questions or concerns, coming with a desire to understand and work together to determine next steps.

Active Participation

- Participate in all of the meaningful events that your student engages in, such as Student Led Conferences, Celebrations of Learning and Passages presentations & attend school-wide events.

Reinforcing at Home

- Reflect with your student on what they're learning.
- Reinforce good reading habits, Way of the Blue Bear traits (courage, compassion, craftsmanship, tenacity, and self-discipline) and regulation strategies.

Volunteering

- Volunteer where/when you can (at least once), such as on field work or adventure trips, helping out in the classroom or supporting Family Council-sponsored events.

Spreading the Word

- Share all of the great things you're seeing at DDES with your network, on social media, etc.
- Help us get the word out about what an amazing, one-of-a-kind school DDES is!

#WEARECREW

DOWNTOWN DENVER EXPEDITIONARY SCHOOL



Glossary of Terms

DDES uses a lot of terms that are unique to Expeditionary Learning and to DDES. Please find some below.

WORD	MEANING
Adventure	A clear expression of expeditionary learning's roots in Outward Bound, our adventure programming takes students outdoors - overnight camping trips and day trips to snowshoe/snow tube.
Auggie	DDES's in-house therapy dog.
BESS	The BASC-3 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BASC-3 BESS) is a universal screener that offers a reliable, quick, and systematic way to determine behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses of children.
BFP	Benedict Fountain Park. Located at 20th and Grant, DDES uses BFP for 4th and 5th grade recesses, Crew Club Fridays and for community events.
Celebration of Learning	Culminating celebrations at the end of each expedition.
Charter School	A charter school is a tuition-free school of choice that is publicly funded but independently run. As a charter, DDES is authorized by Denver Public Schools, who review and renew our charter every 2-5 years.
Closing Circle	Students end each day with a closing circle, where they are able to reflect on their growth and end on a positive note.
CMAS	The Colorado Measures of Academic Success, are the state's common measurement of students' progress in English language arts, math and science. Students in grades 3-5 take the CMAS tests in the Spring.
Community Circle	Every other Friday, all DDES crews come together in the MPR for a whole-school community circle hosted by one Crew.
Creation Lab	DDES's studio art program.
Crew Block	A 45 minute school-wide social emotional learning block at the start of the school day. Within Crew Block, adults and students build relationships, participate in units focused on social emotional skills, and reflect on their individual and group progress.
Crew Club	DDES's after school program.
Crew Leader	Expeditionary learning terminology for a lead classroom teacher.
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills is a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of literacy skills. DDES uses DIBELS as

	its literacy benchmark and assesses students 3 times per year.
EL	Expeditionary Learning. DDES was founded as an EL school and received a credential for its implementation of EL core practices. EL originated as a joint venture of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Outward Bound.
Expedition	Learning expeditions are the signature EL Education curricular structure. They make standards come alive for students. These long-term, in-depth studies offer real-world connections that inspire students toward higher levels of academic achievement. Learning expeditions involve students in original research, critical thinking, and problem solving, and they build character along with academic skills. All learning expeditions explicitly focus on building literacy skills particularly in reading and writing nonfiction text and writing from evidence.
Family Conferences	A meeting between Crew Leaders and parents/guardians that occurs twice per year.
Family Council	DDES's parent/guardian organization.
Fieldwork	Used by our students to investigate the natural and social environments within our community as sites for purposeful research, context and service for their expedition academic work. Engaging in fieldwork lifts up professional experts and citizens with firsthand knowledge of events and issues to ensure accuracy, integrity and quality student work.
Green Space	DDES uses the fenced in green space behind Trinity United Methodist Church during the school day for recesses.
JFS	Jewish Family Services. DDES has a JFS therapist onsite.
Movement	DDES's physical education program.
MPR	Multi-purpose room. DDES's gymnasium, which is used for movement class, community circle and Crew Club. Denver Public Schools uses the MPR once per month for Board meetings.
MTSS	Multi-tiered systems of support. DDES's intervention system which includes regular review of student data, Student Support Team Meetings, and intervention plans.
NME	Neurosequential Model of Education. A neurodevelopmentally-informed, trauma-informed, biologically respectful perspective on human development and functioning. DDES staff are trained in NME annually.
Para	Paraprofessional. An additional adult who supports our special education team.

Passages	Passage Presentations are done by 5th graders in the Spring. Similar to Student-Led Conferences in that they share many of the same functions (tracking & reflecting on progress, and presenting to important stakeholders). However, a Passage Presentation is slightly more formal, requiring students to share the story of their academic and character competencies in a powerful way before a panel of teachers, administrators and community members. The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate “readiness” for middle school, celebrate accomplishments, and set goals for success in the future.
SAC	School Accountability Committee made up of staff, parents/guardians and community members. The SAC reviews school performance data and improvement plans and makes recommendations for future initiatives and strategies toward performance success. Members of the SAC committee include staff, parents, and community volunteers.
SEL	Social-emotional learning.
SLC	Student-led Conference. Student-led Conferences not only let you hear how your child is doing in school from your child, but they help your child take responsibility for her/his own learning. They occur twice per year.
Solitude	A block of time in the middle of the school day (often right after lunch) for students to do self-regulating activities.
TA	Teaching assistant. An additional adult who supports the Crew Leader.
Way of the Blue Bear (WOTBB)	DDES's five character traits - Courage, Compassion, Craftsmanship, Tenacity & Self-Discipline.
YO Buddies	Younger/older buddies. Every other Friday, a younger Crew (K, 1, 2) gets together with an older Crew (3, 4, 5). Each student is paired with a YO buddy for the year. YO buddies also sit together at Community Circle.

DDES: An Introduction

Mission: The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School follows the expeditionary learning model to offer a diverse, caring, and collaborative learning environment. We will employ the rich resources of our Denver urban community to enable all students to achieve academic and personal excellence to become responsible citizens.

Core Values:

- Be agents of change
- Create joy and adventure
- Nurture a culture of quality
- Celebrate the process
- Seek to understand multiple perspectives & experiences
- Communicate with candor and care
- Champion a growth mindset
- BE CREW

History: The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School (DDES) is a Denver Public School charter which opened in August 2013 as a K-5 public elementary school. DDES was founded by a group of parents, community members and business leaders seeking a high-performing expeditionary learning school to primarily serve a diverse range of families who live, work, or learn in downtown Denver. The charter for DDES was unanimously approved by the Denver Board of Education in June 2012. DDES earned the prestigious Walton Family Foundation start-up grant and the Colorado Department of Education charter start up/implementation grant. DDES' high score on the grant application qualified the school for "distinction status".

Charter Organization: DDES is a charter school and a free public school of choice. The first charter school law in the country was passed in 1992; Colorado adopted charters in 1993. There are now over 250 Colorado charters (including 58 in DPS) with over 130,000 students, or approximately 15 percent of the state's public school students.

Existing now in 42 states and the District of Columbia, charter schools have grown in an effort to reform our public school system. The charter school movement is based on the premise that education is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. It gives families the choices they deserve to select what best suits the needs of their children within public education. Charter schools trade greater autonomy (site-based control) for higher accountability. They operate as nonprofit businesses that are accountable to their authorizer (usually a school district) and their customers – their students and families. For more information go to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, <http://www.publiccharters.org>; or the Colorado League of Charter Schools, <http://www.coloradoleague.org>.

Charter schools have flexibility to select their own curriculum, hire/manage/fire their staff, and control their own financial resources. In exchange for this flexibility, charter schools operate under renewable contracts. In Colorado, charter schools operate under a contract with the local school district (in our case DPS), or a state authorizer, the Colorado Charter School Institute. If a charter school fails to produce results, its authorizer can impose a remediation plan or eventually cancel its contract and close the school.

Most charter schools are organized around a strong and specific mission, and each has a unique educational philosophy/program. Other key characteristics of charter schools:

- They are tuition-free.
- They are non-religious.
- They are open to everyone, regardless of ability or performance level.

- They must meet state content standards; students take the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), the annual state standards tests.
- They must meet all special education laws.
- The school district, just like a regular neighborhood school, must accredit them.
- They provide more learning per tax dollar. Tax funding follows students to their school of choice.
- They create a learning community where students are known, cared about and supported individually and collectively to achieve his or her potential.

Statement on Diversity: DDES defines diversity as all the ways in which people are different. Everyone holds their own story, experiences, and beliefs, and these personal holdings create diversity. DDES seeks to foster a community of inclusion that respects the dignity of the individual in the areas of age, gender, religion, ability, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, culture and sexual orientation. All students and families of the DDES community are responsible for advancing an understanding of and a respect for diversity.

Non-Discrimination Policy: The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School admits students of any race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid policies, or any other school administered programs or policies.

Leadership and Governance: The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School (DDES) is a non-profit corporation for educational purposes as specified by state and federal law. The DDES board, along with the school's executive director and leadership team, create clear operating and educational goals. The board delegates responsibility and authority for day-to-day operations to the executive director. The board shapes the school's direction and policies and ensures necessary resources and finances. The board is accountable for the performance of the executive director and the school's overall academic and operational performance.

DDES Board of Directors 2024-25

Beth Moyski, Board Chair

Geoffrey Brovich, Treasurer

Britt Diehl

Olivia James

Taylor John

Omotayo Adeeko

Liza Eaton

Alejandro Mena Fuentes

DDES' Board of Directors is composed of parents and members of the Denver community. The board holds regular public meetings at the school or via Zoom. Most meetings are scheduled at 8:15 a.m. on the third or fourth Wednesday of the month. The board calendar, agendas and minutes can be found on the DDES website. Executive sessions of the board are closed to the public. Executive sessions can be held for issues related to legal actions or potential legal matters, personnel, or purchases such as competitive bids that require confidentiality to ensure the school obtains the best terms possible.

Public comment is taken at the end of public meetings. To manage the Board's and the public's time in the

most effective manner and to include as many community voices as possible, there is a three-minute time limit for individual speakers. If four or more individuals sign up as a group on the same topic they are allotted 10 minutes to arrange their time in any respectful way the collective individuals decide. The board will not answer questions or hold public discussions on comments. Questions may be answered by email following meetings. Those looking to make a public comment at one of DDES's Board of Director meetings must complete this [FORM](#) at least two days prior to a Board meeting. Since the board is a governing Board to the DDES organization, it is most appropriate to address the direction of policy with the board. Families may bring recommendations and general matters of concern about the school to the attention of the board. The board, however, strongly encourages families to work with the classroom teacher and the administration to resolve child-specific issues, and to work with the leadership team to resolve issues specific to a teacher or other staff member or program concern. Laws governing public employees prohibit discussion in a public board meeting of a specific staff member or discussions in which a staff member would be readily identified. Complaints about staff members should be made to the executive director or formally to the board through the DDES grievance procedure (see the DDES web site for grievance policy and grievance form).

As a Charter School, per Colo. Rev. Stat. § 22-11-401, DDES also has a School Accountability Committee whose purpose is to review school performance data and improvement plans and make recommendations for future initiatives and strategies toward performance success. Members of the SAC committee include staff, parents, and community volunteers. The SAC is scheduled to meet 4 times this year from 3:15pm-4:30pm, with the 1st meeting being in October.

School Policies, Practices and Procedures (A-Z)

Academic Accountability

DDES strives to create an environment of academic rigor that will prepare students to excel in high school. Because DDES utilizes portfolio assessment as its primary means of evaluating student performance, it is imperative that all students complete classwork and homework in a timely manner. A comprehensive collection of completed work will be necessary to ensure that students are prepared to compile a portfolio that demonstrates their academic ability.

Portfolio Assessment

At DDES, subject area portfolios and expedition portfolios are the place where students house evidence of intellectual achievement. Students use these portfolios to present their learning at student led conferences throughout the year. Teachers analyze those portfolios and other classroom assessments to determine progress toward academic targets and “Habits of a Learner” targets, which they share in progress reports. Portfolios are a crucial tool for revealing what your child has learned. They help teachers and students notice missing links in a child’s learning and also acknowledge and celebrate a child’s accomplishments.

Student-Led Conferences (SLC)

Student-led conferences are scheduled twice during the school year – in December and then again in April. Because these conferences are such an important part of your child’s learning at DDES, student and parent/guardian attendance is required. A crew leader (teacher) will release sign-up sheets before the scheduled conference days. Families should plan on being available on both SLC days until the appointment times have been confirmed. If there is an emergency situation that requires a family to get preference on a date or time, that will be considered by crew leaders. Please do not plan vacations on SLC days.

Student-led Conferences not only let you hear how your child is doing in school from your child, but they help your child take responsibility for her/his own learning. Conferences provide an occasion for students to reflect on their progress, set goals for future work, and make a public presentation to the most important people in their lives. Your child will lead her/his own conference and present her/his own learning to you. Students prepare for these conferences by choosing their best work, revising work, writing reflections on their learning, and practicing presentation skills. We expect parents/guardians to come with their children for every teacher/family/student conference in the school year.

Family Conferences

Family (parent/guardian - teacher) conferences are scheduled twice during the school year – in October and then again in March. These conferences are also an important part of understanding your child’s experience at DDES and attendance is required. A crew leader (teacher) will release sign-up sheets before the scheduled conference days. Families should plan on being available on both conference days until the appointment times have been confirmed. If there is an emergency situation that requires a family to get preference on a date or time, that will be considered by crew leaders. Please do not plan vacations on Family conference days.

Family conferences are an opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to partner to support the student’s growth. Teachers will share information from the classroom, both data around academic skills and social emotional progress. Parents/guardians are also invited to share notices from home and come with questions.

Together, parents/guardians and teachers will set goals for students and work through plans to support student success.

Accident or Medical Emergency

If an accident or medical emergency occurs to a student at school, first aid will be administered if necessary. If the injury surpasses reasonable first aid, the parent/guardian of that student will be contacted immediately. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, a person listed on the student's health form (or emergency contact list) or the family physician will be contacted. If the situation warrants, the school will call Emergency Medical Services (911). If there is a serious accident at school, the parent/guardian of the affected students will be notified immediately. In the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the family physician or persons indicated on health forms will be contacted. First Aid will be administered as needed.

Administrative/School Hours

The DDES administrative office is open on school days from 7:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. for routine business. The core school day is from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Friday. As explained in our drop-off/pick-up procedures, drop-offs are staggered between 7:45-8:05 a.m. (depending on grade), and pick-up is staggered between 2:55-3:15 p.m. (depending on grade). After-school care day occurs from 3:00pm to 6:00 p.m Monday-Thursday, and 1:00pm-5:00pm on Fridays through Crew Club. Students who do not attend Crew Club should be picked up by the end of their applicable pick-up window and must be picked up no later than 3:30pm M-Th and 1:30 on Fridays. Non-Crew Club students still present at 4pm M-Th or 2pm Friday may result in DDES contacting the Denver Police Department. The administrative staff is glad to meet with parents/guardians for more in-depth discussion, but it is best for all involved to make an appointment. Please understand that faculty and administrators may be in the building in the early mornings, later afternoons/evenings, or even on the weekends. However, their presence does not indicate their availability without an appointment. Faculty and administrators often use these non-school hours to catch up on work, making impromptu meetings difficult.

ADA/Section 504 Compliance

DDES is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (“Section 504”). To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability, which is defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered. If you are in need of an accommodation to assist you in accessing or attending school events, please contact Director of Operations & Outreach, Katie Glesne, at katianne.glesne@ddeschool.org or (720) 424-2350.

Adventure

Our adventure program includes overnight camping trips and day trips for snowshoeing/snow tubing. We believe adventure is essential to crew building. Together, students and adults discover they can do more than they thought possible, and find aspects of themselves that they didn't know were there. Our adventure coordinator and crew leaders take care when planning adventures to ensure physical and emotional safety as they promote risk-taking and courageous action. Adventure at DDES is required. If a parent/guardian has questions or concerns about a trip, they must set up a meeting with the adventure team to discuss accommodations. Failure to go on an adventure trip will be an unexcused absence unless a prior meeting and plan with the Adventure Team has been created or the absence is medically excused (see Attendance). DDES will provide items for all students to attend adventure with advanced notice as needed including tents, sleeping

bags, and essential gear. Our Adventure policies can be found [HERE](#).

After Hours Use of the DDES building

Evening and weekend events may be possible for both DDES-related groups and community groups if they adhere to the Facility Use Agreement through Denver Public Schools. There can be costs associated with such use, including custodial service and security and rental fees.

Any meetings or other use of the building during the school day must be arranged and scheduled with the administrative staff. Anyone wishing to use DDES space after school hours needs to make a request to the administration at least one month prior to the event; some exceptions will be made depending on individual circumstances. Parents and other supervisory personnel are responsible for monitoring and disciplining children at all events. At the conclusion of the event, students and parents/supervisors are responsible for cleaning up and returning spaces to their original state.

After School Care

The DDES Crew Club, a fee-based extended care program, will begin with a healthy snack, followed by an hour-long enrichment block or a group game/choice time in the Multipurpose room. Each day's enrichment curriculum will be centered around a specific content area, for example: Arts & Crafts, Engineering & Math, Science & Technology, and Drama & Theatre. These subjects will change throughout the year and will be overseen by DDES Program Leaders and Crew Club Program Managers. After transitioning from the enrichment blocks, students in the Crew Club will have the choice to participate in organized games/play or participate in a Quiet Reading/Reflective time.

To learn more about our program, please visit our [After School Care Homepage](#). Registration is typically open from May-mid-August. If registration closes, families will be put on our waitlist and be admitted to the program after Labor Day or when staffing becomes available. Our Crew Club Handbook is available on our website.

Assessments

Assessments provide valuable information for students, families and educators on whether students have mastered grade-level content and are on track to graduate. DDES uses a variety of assessments. All students take literacy and math benchmark assessments three times per year. Multi language learners take the ACCESS test, which is a test given yearly (typically in January/February) to emerging bilingual children in K-12 that provides information about the progress they are making in learning English. 3rd-5th graders take CMAS assessments in English language arts and math in the Spring (March/April). Families looking to opt their child out of CMAS should contact the DDES front office. Each year, DDES does universal gifted screening in kindergarten and 2nd grade.

Attendance

Attendance Definitions

1. Excused Absences

Excused absences are those resulting from: temporary illness, extended illness, injury, physical disability, mental disability, emotional disability, family emergency and school service projects. They also include absences excused by the administration through prior requests of parents/guardian, absences that occur when a student is in custody of a court or of a law enforcement authority, and any other absence approved by the administration. The school requires suitable proof of an excused absence including written statements from medical sources. Excused absences are arranged with the permission of the parent/guardian and the administrative staff. Please arrange doctor/dentist appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

2. Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are those absences deemed unacceptable by the administration regardless of parent/guardian approval or knowledge. Unexcused absences include those resulting from suspensions and recommendations for expulsion. Absences not properly reported by the parent/guardian are unexcused. Unexcused absences are recorded daily in a student's attendance record, which is kept and monitored by Denver Public Schools.

3. Tardiness

Tardy students lose valuable instruction time and disrupt the classroom for the teacher and other students. It is up to parents/guardians to ensure that a student arrives on time. Tardiness is the appearance of a student at school without proper excuse after the end of the student's drop-off window. If you bring your child to school after that time, they will receive a pass before going to their classroom. Your child must have a pass from the office to be admitted late to the classroom.

5. Academic Expectations

Students with excused or unexcused absences are responsible for work missed and are expected to make it up for their own benefit. Teachers are not required to provide opportunities for students to make up missed work.

6. Truancy

Truancy is an absence from school without the permission of the student's parent/guardian, or the administration.

7. Habitually Truant Students

DDES students age six and above who have four or more unexcused absences in a one-month period, or 10 or more unexcused absences in a school year, are considered to be "habitually truant" under state law. Absences due to suspension or recommendation of expulsion will not be considered in determining habitual truancy. If a student is absent 10 times in a year or more, the student is considered a habitual truant and will be considered for retention. If absences continue to the point of 20 absences in a year, the school may initiate an Attendance Filing in Juvenile Court. We submit an annual report to the Colorado Department of Education that reports the number of habitual truants.

Students are expected to be at school from approximately 8:00am-3:00pm Monday-Thursday and 8:00am-12:45pm on Friday. Consistent attendance is key to achievement, and families are expected to ensure their children are in school every day. Please do not allow for your student to miss school except for serious illness and the most extreme extenuating circumstances, and schedule appointments for Friday afternoons. We take all absences, regular tardies, and early pick-ups very seriously, as they can be detrimental to academic success.

An absence consists of failure to appear at school by 9:00 a.m. and remain there throughout the majority of the two periods 8-12, and 12-3. When a student is absent, the parent/guardian is to notify the school of the absence by calling the office before 9:00 a.m. The notification and explanation of the absence is only that and does not automatically excuse the absence. Excused absences are granted in accordance with school policy.

Retention and Loss of Privileges

The most significant consequence of missing school is that your child will be behind in their learning. Students who miss more than 10 days per year will be considered for retention and may not be promoted to the next grade level. If a student has 10+ unexcused absences, the student will be at risk of missing out on DDES activities, including but not limited to, adventure trips, fieldwork, dance performances, field day,

and other celebrations.

Travel

We understand that at times a family may wish to travel for personal or educational reasons. The school leader must approve any trips that require 10 or more days of absence during the school year. If your student is behind grade-level, the school leader is unlikely to approve any trips, so please plan accordingly.

All consecutive absences must be approved by the Executive Director or Assistant Director at least a month in advance.

Missing Adventure and Fieldwork

Adventure and Fieldwork are core components to character and academic success at DDES. They are required activities and while a parent/guardian may choose to not send their child an adventure trip, they will be unexcused absences unless they are excused with medical documentation, or a meeting and plan with the adventure team has occurred in reasonable advance of excursion. All students at DDES will be provided materials for going on adventure trips when requested in advance.

Parents/guardian who do not send their child on an adventure trip can keep them home or they can be sent to school with materials to work on. Teachers are not responsible for creating work for students to do who do not attend adventure.

General Absences	All absences are treated as missed learning time. When an absence is unavoidable, please call the school by 9:00am to leave a message on the attendance line. If a student sees a doctor, please bring a note so the absence can be excused as Medical . Only absences accompanied by proper documentation will be excused. ALL other absences are unexcused.
Doctors and Dentist Appointments	Please make every attempt to schedule appointments outside of normal school hours or after 1:00pm on Fridays during early release.
Suspensions	Suspensions are considered to be absences.
Early Pick-Ups	Students are expected to be at school until the end of the day, every day. Early pick-ups are treated the same way as tardies, and will count as missed time from school.
Tardies	Students arriving after the end of the student's drop-off window (7:55am for K/1, 8:05am for 2/4 and 8:15am for 3/5) are considered tardy.

4 tardies/ semester	12 tardies/year	Chronic tardiness
Equals one absence. The parent/guardian will be called or emailed by the school office to discuss obstacles that may be leading to tardiness and possible supports.	If a student is late 12 times in a year, it is a serious issue. The parent/guardian will be sent a warning letter and will receive a phone call from school administration to create a plan.	The administration reserves the right to retain any student who misses more than 10 days (4 tardies equal an absence) in accordance with our promotion policy.
4 unexcused absences/semester	10 unexcused absences/year	15+ unexcused absences/year
This is a serious issue. The parent/guardian will be called by the front office.	This is a very serious issue. The parent/guardian will be sent a warning letter by the school. Parents/guardians may also be required to meet with school administration and to set up an attendance plan. The student will be monitored closely for truancy.	The Executive Director reserves the right to retain any student who misses more than 10 days in accordance with our promotion policy. A formal letter will be sent to parents/guardians and the school will file for truancy.

Auggie!

DDES is fortunate to have a school support dog, Auggie. Auggie attends school 2-3 days per week and works primarily with small groups of students. If you have questions or are interested in opting your child out of working with Auggie, please reach out to the front office.

Behavior and Discipline

Behavior and Discipline at DDES: A Shared Community Vision

School Mission:

The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School follows the expeditionary learning model to offer a diverse, caring, and collaborative learning environment. We will employ the rich resources of our Denver urban community to enable all students to achieve academic and personal excellence to become responsible citizens.

What we know:

In order to serve our mission, we must educate the diverse whole child with a focus on engagement, health, safety, support, and challenge. We must create a culture of belonging. We know that this must include a proactive approach for positive behavior in school, understanding every student's ability to grow. This requires

a commitment from our entire community that all DDES students belong here, and that all students must feel that there is accountability when norms are not upheld.

Discipline and Behavior are not the same thing.

Discipline

Discipline occurs when there is a disruption to the learning environment or to the physical or mental safety of another student or students. The consequence should attempt to repair harm, promote accountability, and promote a pathway to a change in behavior. DDES will follow the model of regulate, relate, and repair through training and curriculum from Conscious Discipline and Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics. Per DPS policy, DDES will adhere to Denver Public School's Board of Education Policy JK-R which lists consequences for specific actions. The matrix is available online and at the front desk. Discipline at DDES should inspire reflection and insight - not humiliation or revenge. Discipline should offer short term solutions (stopping the behavior) without sacrificing the long term positive behavior goals (helping students build skills).

Behavior Vision

Students at DDES can and will contribute to a culture of belonging, efficacy, growth, and success if the model is a promotion of positive behavior that is proactive. The ability to create this culture rests on the foundation of the following assumptions:

- Positive behavior requires explicit teaching of social emotional skills in crew block and throughout the day.
- Positive behavior relies heavily on building strong relationships.
- Behavior challenges often correlate with lack of access to academic, emotional or social skills.
- Behavior intervention must be developmentally appropriate and based on understandings of root causes.
- Equity in behavior means that resources are targeted to remove barriers for students disproportionately underserved.

Staff commitment to the community: (communication commitments and training commitments)

1. To communicate with family partners as soon as possible if students are involved in a significant event.
2. To protect the privacy of all our families.
3. To do further training and development to counter implicit bias and systemic racism.
4. To advocate to the district, state and community for the right resources to do this work.
5. To hear from the community by implementing staff, student, and family climate surveys regularly.

Alignment with Denver Public Schools policies

DDES supports Denver Public Schools discipline policies (see below) as a fundamental part of its school-wide approach to discipline – which includes bullying prevention. In addition, DDES uses discipline procedures, such as interventions that reinforce positive behaviors for student development of the DDES core values and culture. The policies and procedures are neither exhaustive nor inflexible. The DDES administration and staff will handle situations with common sense and in a manner consistent with the school's policies and procedures; some decisions will rely on the discretion and experienced judgment of the staff and administration

DDES has fundamental expectations of student conduct that amount to being safe, appropriate, civil and accountable for improper actions. They are summed up as follows:

Each student has the opportunity and the right to use school as a means for self-improvement and individual

growth. To accomplish that, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the school's function as an educational facility. Conduct which disrupts or threatens to disrupt the operation of the school, which interferes in any way with the public or private rights of other students or community members, which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person, or which damages property, will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

Denver Public Schools has identified the following behaviors to be disruptive and not conducive to a safe, healthy learning environment:

- Causing physical, bodily harm or threatening to do so;
- Fighting;
- Bullying or condoning bullying;
- Intentionally damaging school property or property of others;
- Repeated, cumulative behaviors that are disruptive, unproductive, contrary, or disrespectful;
- Repeated violations of rules and norms established in all areas of operation of DDES;
- Obscene or inappropriate language;
- Stealing, academically cheating or lying;
- Inappropriate use of food.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power-such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity-to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. DDES supports a secure school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Our Bullying Policy is found [HERE](#).

Threats or infliction of any physical or cyber act of violence are unacceptable; therefore, persons who threaten or inflict bodily harm on students or school personnel on school property or at a school sponsored activity shall be subject to disciplinary action. Adults at DDES will prevent bullying and help children feel safe by:

- Supervising students in all areas of the school and playground.
- Watch for signs of bullying and stop it when it happens.
- Immediately discuss the actions with the offender and assign consequences based on the school discipline code when necessary.

- Assign immediate consequences for retaliation against students who report bullying.
- Teach, and model appropriate behavior for students.
- Take seriously families' concerns about bullying.
- Look into all reported bullying incidents.

DDES students will prevent bullying by

- Refusing to bully others
- Refusing to let others be bullied.
- Refusing to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being bullied.
- Trying to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out.
- Reporting bullying to an adult.

Suspension

DDES will adhere to Denver Public School's Board of Education Policy JK-R. DDES regards the physical safety and emotional well-being of its staff and students as paramount and extreme behaviors that compromise these priorities will be addressed immediately. Before a suspended child can return to the school, the family will be asked to participate in re-entry meeting. For grade K-3rd grade, in accordance with JK-R students may be suspended for one day out of school for type Three, Four and Five offenses when the behavior severely impacts student or staff safety, and when removal is necessary for planning purposes.

Corporal Punishment / Physical Restraint

Corporal punishment is defined as action taken by school employees to spank or otherwise physically handle a student in any way to purposely inflict punishment. No corporal punishment will be administered to students by anyone in the school. Physical restraint is reasonable and appropriate physical intervention or force by trained staff as necessary for the following purposes:

- To restrain a student from an act of wrongdoing.
- To quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to self or others.
- To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon a student or within the control of a student.
- For the purpose of self-defense.
- For the protection of persons or property.
- For the preservation of order.

Any such acts are not in conflict with the legal definition of child abuse and will not be construed to constitute corporal punishment within the meaning and intention of this policy.

As a supplement to the above definitions, the recently updated DPS matrix and ladder is included in DPS Policy JK-R, which can be accessed at [DPS Board Docs \(Policies - DPS Administration Policies - J-Students\)](#).

Significantly Disruptive Behavior

Definition:

Significantly disruptive behavior is defined at DDES as conduct that materially and substantially interferes with the educational process. Based on the standard set in *Tinker v. Des Moines*, a "material and substantial

disruption” of the school day is more than a minor disruption and must have an impact on more than just the student involved. If an Administrator believes that a material and substantial disruption may occur because of an incident, that belief must be based on past experience, not simply a concern that a disruption may occur.

Significant disruptive behavior communication:

Classroom parents/guardians are notified if a situation adheres to the definition of a significant disruptive behavior AND if students are not able to move through their normal transition routine for more than 5 minutes or learning is significantly impacted for more than 5 minutes. If there are any safety concerns, parents/guardians are immediately notified.

Process:

- If a student is being unsafe or significantly disruptive, the classroom teacher gets administrator support immediately.
- Administrators assist students in leaving the classroom environment. In some cases, it is quicker for the crew to take a brief brain break walk and return to the classroom while administrators support the student leaving the classroom. Classroom parents/guardians are not notified unless students are out of the classroom for more than 5 minutes or need to be in a different classroom.

A student who has left the classroom and is not regulated will not be allowed to return until there is regulation and repair. While doors are locked but often propped, when a student is dysregulated the doors are closed and locked.

BESS

The BASC-3 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BASC-3 BESS) is a universal screener that offers a reliable, quick, and systematic way to determine behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses of children. DDES uses the BESS three times per year. In the Fall, we ask parents/guardians to complete the parent report and have 4th and 5th graders complete the individual self-report and have Crew Leaders complete the teacher report. In the Winter, we ask parents/guardians to complete the parent report. In the Spring, we have 3rd, 4th and 5th graders complete the individual self-report and have Crew Leaders complete the teacher report. Parents/guardians of 3rd, 4th or 5th graders can opt their student out of the student self-report by completing this [FORM](#).

Body Safety Rules

- No one is allowed to touch your private body parts (including siblings), except to help you clean them or to examine them in a medical office.
- You are not allowed to touch someone else’s private body parts.
- No one (adult or teenager) is allowed to take pictures of your private parts or show you pictures of naked people.
- When playing with friends, play with your clothes on.
- You and all your family members are allowed to have privacy when bathing, dressing, and using the toilet.
- You are allowed to choose who you kiss and touch, and when you kiss and touch people.
- You have permission to say “NO” and get away if anyone tries to touch your private body parts or breaks any of your body safety rules.
- If someone tries to or does touch your private body parts, try to get away and then go tell!
- If someone tells you to keep a secret about touching private body parts, tell a trusted adult.

Child Abuse Reporting

According to the Colorado “Child Protection Act” (C.R.S. 19-3-304 – Children’s Code) all school personnel are

mandated reporters and have a legal and moral obligation to make a report to the Denver Department of Human Services if child abuse or neglect, or circumstances which might result in abuse or neglect is reasonably suspected (including emotional, physical or sexual abuse). School personnel are not responsible to contact the child's family or any other persons to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is also not the responsibility of school personnel to prove that a child has been abused or neglected. Failure to report promptly may result in civil and/or criminal liability. A person who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Colorado State Law demands that any and all incidences of suspected child abuse and/or neglect of a child be reported to the Colorado Department of Human Services for investigation requires it. It is the responsibility of the Department of Human Services/Police to determine what abuse/neglect (if any) has occurred in such a case. This is the same for staff and parents/guardians. Staff will immediately be put on leave. Examples of situations that would be reported by DDES staff include:

- Marks or bruises on a child that are unexplained or seem unlikely to have occurred as a result of the explanation given.
- Marks or bruises on a child caused by disciplining a child.
- Reports by the child of abusive/neglectful treatment or observations by staff members of harsh, abusive or neglectful treatment of a child.
- Failure of the parent/guardian to obtain appropriate medical care for a child.
- Observations by staff members of inappropriate sexual behavior by a child.
- Observations by staff members of possible neglect of appropriate hygiene and/or provision of appropriate clothing, food and shelter for the child.

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-844-264-5437

At all times, the safety and well-being of the children is seen as paramount. Communication is very important to the DDES staff. DDES parents/guardians will be kept as informed as the situation allows for.

Class Requests

Our primary consideration in developing class lists is balance. We look at the students that are moving into or leaving each class, and attempt to balance it using a variety of criteria. This is a collaborative process involving teachers and the administrative staff. Often there are many unknowns, especially for new students who will be joining us.

We do not honor crew change requests unless there are extreme circumstances. Any mid-year changes are ultimately the Executive Director and Assistant Director's decision. DDES strongly discourages class requests. To maintain legally mandated student confidentiality, reasons for decisions cannot be provided.

Honoring a request to make a change makes achieving the right balance more difficult. Often, conditions that exist one year that a parent/guardian believes are objectionable or detrimental to their child will diminish or cease altogether as students get older and more mature and have a new teacher. Multiple requests in a given classroom make the task even more complicated. Families are not aware of all issues as to placement and can't always be told for reasons of confidentiality.

Requesting a classroom has several other consequences as well, including:

- When one family's request is honored, it affects other families at that grade level. To accommodate one

request, many students may have to be moved.

- Though class requests are confidential, inevitably teachers may learn of them, which can contribute to poor morale.
- Often, a group of parents/guardians request a specific classroom due to student friendships. This is impossible to accommodate and may lead to negative feelings among families and toward the administrative staff that develops the class lists.

DDES is fortunate to have talented and qualified teachers. While one teacher or classroom may seem to better “fit” a student, all of our teachers are fully capable of working with all students. Every year, classroom environments will change. One year a class may seem ideal; and the next it may not. We all need to work together to encourage and support strong classrooms.

Communication - Families as Partners

Families at the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School play an essential role in supporting the school’s mission, culture and climate. Family engagement is at our core at DDES. Our school’s family engagement goals are:

1. Families are **welcomed** in the school and feel a **sense of belonging** in the school community.
2. DDES and Families participate in regular, meaningful, two-way **communication**.
3. Families are **empowered** to be advocates for their own and other children.
4. Families and school staff are **partners** in decisions that affect students and families.

We ask families to support our engagement goals by holding to the following norms:

- Valuing and committing to a partnership with all DDES staff.
- Recognizing DDES staff as essential members of the learning team for students.
- Effectively communicating with DDES staff and seeking to build trusting relationships with DDES staff.
- Coming with a desire to understand and work together to determine next steps.

Teachers at the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School will provide the following on academic reporting:

- Hold family conference in mid-October and mid-March to report on student progress and collaborate on goals
- Hold student-led conferences in December and April to allow students to reflect and celebrate growth and name personal next steps in learning
- Mail progress reports for the Fall semester the week after holiday break, and for the Spring semester after the last day of school
- Be available to schedule individual conferences or check-ins
- Use the ReachWell (formerly Flyer) app or email to communicate with families

We ask families to:

- Read the progress reports and emails sent home from your teacher
- Read and refer to our Family Handbook
- Read the bi-weekly newsletter on logistics from the front office and classroom teachers
- Pay attention to emails from the Executive Director, Assistant Director and front office
- Attend student-led conferences
- Attend Back-to-School Night and/or other family nights
- Pay attention to the DDES calendar (it does differ from the DPS calendar)
- Contact the front office if you need hard copies of any communication

- Complete the mid year parent feedback survey and end of year DPS satisfaction survey

We ask that both families and staff members respect our Communication Agreements. We:

- Demonstrate respect in both what is said and how it is said.
- Demonstrate public support for one another and recognize that families and teachers are on the same team.
- Assume positive intentions and keep an open mind.
- Ask questions first.
- Raise concerns with the appropriate person. (see flow chart below)
- Use good judgment about the amount of contact that is appropriate.
- Be mindful of the amount of time an individual concern may take and of staff “working hours” (7:30-4:30) when communicating or anticipating responses.
- **Use Reachwell for two-way communication.**
- Schedule appointments if a discussion is needed instead of raising concerns in public settings, especially before school, after school or when faculty and staff are outside doing supervision.
- Keep in mind that voicemail and email are public documents and that confidentiality cannot always be protected. Know that e-mails sent to and from DDES staff are considered ‘findable evidence’ in a court of law. A great rule of thumb is that we should not say or write anything that we wouldn’t want to be published.
- Adhere to “Reachwell message is for information and not for conversation”. We understand our lives are very busy but we would like to spend more time creating partnerships and mutual understanding, than responding to emails/messages. Please schedule an appointment to meet with your teacher, either by phone or by zoom (or in person, once that is allowed) if your request or questions would require **more than a few sentence response**.
- Verbal, physical or sexual harassment towards staff will not be tolerated.

Communication Modes

- Conferences: As noted above, family conferences provide an important opportunity for students, families and teachers to exchange useful information about a student’s particular educational progress and needs. This team works together to review student progress and note any areas of special concern.
- Electronic Newsletters: The DDES administration sends out an electronic newsletter with news, a calendar of events and updates on various topics every day to all DDES families. Hard copies are available in the office.
- Emails to the administration and staff: If a matter is urgent, please call instead of sending e-mail/Reachwell message. For less pressing matters, we ask that all email communication be respectful. The administration attempts to answer all correspondence within a 48-hour period.
- **ReachWell app: So that there is a single, consistent means of communicating, ReachWell will be the primary means of communication from our Crew Leaders, front office and crew club. Be sure that you have the ReachWell app and are regularly checking it.**
- Crew newsletters: Crew Leaders will send out newsletters via ReachWell at least twice a month.
- Infinite Campus: DDES uses a call-generating service that is part of the district student information system called Infinite Campus. We use it to send phone messages to families in case of emergencies or school closings. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have an updated phone number on file

with the DDES front office.

- Social Media: DDES provides an official Facebook and Instagram page for fun happenings in relation to DDES. We are not responsible for social media pages started and maintained by parents, families, or other community members in relation to DDES. All parents/guardians are asked to sign a release at the beginning of the year that allows DDES to post school-related pictures of their children. If you do not want pictures of your child on our social media pages, please indicate that in writing to the administration and do not sign the release. If you see an unwanted picture of your child posted on our Social Media sites, please inform us immediately and we will have it taken down. If you see a photo posted of your child on a page started by other community members of DDES, please contact them to have it taken down. If they do not respond, please contact the social media site directly. DDES reserves the right to delete or hide any comments on its social media platforms that are off-topic, obscene, defamatory, harassing, and/or threatening.

We ask all members of the DDES community to be responsible users of social media. Please consider the following conduct when joining our social media community:

- Please take time to think before you post. Is this the best channel? Is this relevant to the whole community? Does my post have “best-intent”?
- Please utilize a different channel for specific conflicts. Refer to our “Methods of Communication” section and speak with your child’s teacher first. Conflicts brought to social media platforms (unless specifically related to the post in question) will be considered off-topic
- Do not use full names of children from our school in your post. Do not use first names of children without permission. Please do not refer to specific individuals on social media sites.
- Please respect the privacy of our community. Do not post pictures or information about others, including students, without their permission.
- Please remember that the best place to talk to individuals about specific issues is in a more private setting via phone, email or face-to-face.
- Please consider social media a place to promote, explore, and celebrate our community. We are all ambassadors for DDES: our success is shared and our public relationship is vital.
- Above all, please remember that social media is public.

Conflict Resolution

Our conflict resolution process is meant to clearly describe the processes in place for questions and conflict resolution at the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School. Not all disagreements will be solved to the mutual satisfaction of every party, but we strive to be clear and transparent in our process and to address concerns and questions promptly as they arise.

Questions regarding your child, curriculum, social matters in the classroom, and experiences of your child during the school day should first be directed to your crew leader (classroom teacher) first. The teacher will contact the parent/guardian and do his or her best to answer the question and clarify the issues. If the answer/clarification given requires more attention, the parent/guardian or teacher may contact the Assistant Director, Crissy Doty, at crissy.doty@ddeschool.org or (720) 424-2350.

Questions regarding attendance, student records, health issues, enrollment, and school day schedule and calendar should be directed to our Front Office, at frontoffice@ddeschool.org, or (720) 424-2350.

Questions regarding school policies, administration, finances, employment, safety, parent-to-parent or family-family issues and other general school issues should be brought to the Executive Director, Aubrey Wilk, at aubrey.wilk@ddeschool.org or (720) 424-2350. The executive director will respond within a reasonable timeframe and try to answer the question or clarify the issues to the best of her ability.

In the event that conflicts are not resolved using the above processes, a common concern meeting will be scheduled. In attendance at this meeting will be the Executive Director, a note taker, and the concerned parties. During the meeting, it is hoped that all sides of an issue are voiced and that there is motion toward a plan for future action. This meeting is only called as a last resort when the conflict is not moving or improving.

DDES has a formal grievance policy that may be followed if a person believes that their issue has not been resolved to their satisfaction by the administration. The procedure can allow – but does not guarantee - for a grievance to be considered by the board. The grievance policy is available [HERE](#) and under the communication section on the web site: www.ddeschools.org.

Diversity & Inclusion at DDES

DDES is committed to being a diverse and inclusive school. We are a “Diverse by Design” school, which means that since our founding, DDES has acknowledged and focused on the cognitive and social benefits that students receive learning alongside diverse peers.

We believe that we are a well-integrated school, in terms of race, ability and socio-economic status. In ‘23-’24, our student population was 47% students of color, including 12% who identify as two or more races, 17% identified as having a disability, 3% identified as gifted or highly gifted (with more in the gifted talent pool), and 36% as meeting federal free and reduced price lunch eligibility. DDES is the most geographically diverse elementary school in Denver, drawing students from 44 different metro-area zip codes. As a member of the Diverse Charter School Coalition, we celebrate the diversity of our school community, and work alongside schools across the country in order to improve our practice.

At DDES, we seek to build a sense of belonging for all of our students, families and staff by grounding our work in a foundation of respect and understanding for all people. Understanding a variety of races, cultures, gender identities, experiences and perspectives is woven into crew block lessons and/or learning expeditions in all grades as well as music lessons and community circle, each in a way that we believe is both age and developmentally appropriate.

For example:

- In kindergarten crew block lessons, students learn about respecting diversity through the lens of “I can name and celebrate the unique qualities of me,” and write and share a book celebrating what makes each child unique.
- First Grade crews complete a lessons early in the school year celebrating differences and diversity in their crew and later in the year work through lessons on identity and diversity through the lenses of “I can name and celebrate the unique qualities of me and my crew members” and “I can respect the difference of others,”

- In our second grade, students celebrate the diversity of Denver through lessons focused on naming, celebrating and respecting the difference of others. In their Spring expedition, students explore the questions, “How did people respond to injustice during the Civil Rights Movement?” and “How can people in our community respond to injustice?” They use heroes of the civil rights movement as case studies to answer these questions
- Third grade crews work year-long on what it means to be crew, including actively working to ensure that all crew members feel valued and successful, and in their fall expedition, students learn from experts about the challenges faced by undocumented students in accessing college, including financial aid.
- In our fourth grade, students engage in Crew Units centering around empathy (“I can identify and work to understand the feelings of others”), respecting diversity and understanding power and privilege (“I can express my own self-identity and perspectives. I can seek to understand diverse perspectives and experiences.”) In their spring expedition, students learn about migration and human rights. They explore 3 guiding questions: What “push and pull factors” might cause people to migrate? How do our cultures affect our perspectives? What are human rights and how can they be threatened?
- Fifth grade crews work in their crew block on respecting diversity and understanding power and privilege with one objective being “I can seek to understand diverse perspectives and experiences.” In their Fall expedition, students learn about historical barriers to the right to vote based upon color and gender. In their Spring expedition, 5th graders learn about neurodiversity through an in-depth study of the changing teenage brain.

As part of our commitment to build belonging and expose our students to diversity, DDES includes LGBTQ issues in age-appropriate ways at all grades. For example:

- In Kinder, 1st & 2nd, we:
 - Introduce concepts of diversity and inclusion using simple language and age-appropriate examples.
 - Teach about different family structures, including families with same-sex parents, through stories, drawings, or family share.
 - Emphasize the importance of treating everyone with kindness and respect, regardless of differences.
 - Use inclusive language and materials that reflect the diversity of students' experiences and identities.
- In 3rd, 4th & 5th, we:
 - Continue discussions about diversity, inclusion, and respect for all individuals.
 - Introduce basic concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity using age-appropriate language and examples.
 - Teach about historical figures or events related to LGBTQ rights and contributions to society.
 - Address bullying and discrimination, including homophobic and transphobic behavior, and promote strategies for being an ally and standing up for others.
 - Encourage open dialogue and critical thinking about stereotypes and misconceptions related to LGBTQ issues.

We believe that giving our students an opportunity to understanding a variety of races, cultures, gender identities, experiences and perspectives:

1. Promotes Inclusivity and Acceptance,
2. Prevents Bullying and Discrimination,

3. Addresses Misconceptions and Stereotypes,
4. Fosters Critical Thinking, and
5. Prepares students for the diverse society they will experience as teens and adults.

While we understand that parents may have personal or cultural beliefs that influence their perspectives on issues of diversity, we believe that exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences is an important aspect of a well-rounded education. Our goal is to foster an inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and respected, regardless of their background or identity. As such, except as noted below, we do not offer the option to opt children out of specific presentations or discussions. However, we are committed to addressing any questions or concerns families may have and to providing support to ensure that all families feel comfortable and included in the DDES community.

In alignment with age appropriate curriculum, in 5th grade, DDES teaches lessons on human biology/sexuality/puberty. We do so in a way that is comprehensive and medically accurate. Prior to beginning lessons, we inform families and, in accordance with Colorado law, give families the opportunity to opt their child out of these lessons. Students who are opted out will spend time in a buddy crew.

Dress Code

We ask that students dress in a manner that is school-appropriate. Clothing with inappropriate messages/graphics will not be allowed.

Drop-off/Pick-Up

This year, we will continue to make use of the alleys immediately to the East of DDES (on both the North and South side of 19th street). Please review: [DDES Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures](#) for details. As noted in the procedures, the drop-off and pick-up windows are:

Grade	Location	Drop Off	M-Th Pick Up	Friday Pick Up
K	Alley 1	7:45 - 7:55am	2:55 - 3:05pm	12:40 -12:50pm
1st	Alley 2	7:45 - 7:55am	2:55 - 3:05pm	12:40 -12:50pm
2nd	Alley 1	7:50 - 8:00am	3:00 - 3:10pm	12:45 - 12:55pm
3rd	Alley 1	7:55 - 8:05am	3:05 - 3:15pm	12:50 - 1:00pm
4th	Alley 2	7:50 - 8:00am	3:00 - 3:10pm	12:45 - 12:55pm
5th	Alley 2	7:55 - 8:05am	3:05 - 3:15pm	12:50 - 1:00pm

At drop off, the playground doors (19th/Lincoln) will stay open with DDES staff present until 8:10am. After that, you must park and walk your student up to the front office.

If you are picking up your student early, please email or call the front desk and let us know what time you will be arriving. When you are at DDES, please come through the EGC main entrance and use our call button in the lobby to let us know you are here. You will need to come up to the front office to sign your student out.

Students who do not attend Crew Club should be picked up by the end of their applicable pick-up window and must be picked up no later than 3:30pm M-Th and 1:30 on Fridays. Non-Crew Club students still present at 4pm M-Th or 2pm Friday may result in DDES contacting the Denver Police Department.

Emergency Response Procedures

DDES is in a unique location, not only because of our proximity to downtown, but also because we share a campus with all of Denver Public School's administrative teams. One of the benefits of this allows DDES to be surrounded by the building Safety & Security officers and DPS's central Emergency Preparedness team. In a serious emergency, DDES will be given notice to lockdown, lockout, or evacuate, depending on the call from DPS Safety & Security (see below for term descriptions). Their teams will have direct access to Police dispatch, Fire dispatch and weather service announcements. Practice drills are conducted on a regular basis as required by Denver Public Schools. In the Event of a School Emergency: DDES will try to immediately issue an automated call, text or email to our families describing what emergency is taking place and what action is needed (if possible). We understand that every parent/guardian's first reaction is to immediately come to the school site to make sure his or her child is safe. In order to increase the chances of all students remaining safe during an emergency, we ask the following of our parents/guardians (in the event of an emergency):

- DO check your phone and email for updates.
- DO check the DPS webpage for updated information (<http://www.dpsk12.org>)
- DO tune into local TV/radio stations for school news alerts.
- DO listen for information regarding reunification with your child.
- DO contact DPS Communications at (720) 423-3414.
- Refrain from coming to DDES. This will create traffic congestion hampering the efforts of first responders.
- Refrain from calling your DDES, the EGC (Safety) Front Desk or your child. Excessive phone calls could jam the phone system and interfere with emergency communications. Family Reunification Procedure-On and Off-site In the case of a Lockdown or Lockout that last after-school hours, all DDES parents/guardians will need to enter through the Emily Griffith Campus Main Door. DDES administrative staff will be controlling the flow of traffic in order to make sure all students get home safely.
- Identification will be required for all parents/guardians in the case of an emergency.
- Anyone not listed on a student's emergency pick-up authorization will not, under ANY circumstances, be given permission.
- DDES Administration will notify the front desk which child is to be released & you will receive a pink-slip from the front desk when you go upstairs.
- Crew Leaders have been instructed to only release students to a parent/guardian with a pink-slip, indicating that they have been cleared by Admin. Staff.

Lockdown Procedures: Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside of the school building. From parental custody disputes to intruders to an active shooter, Lockdown uses classroom security to protect students and staff from threat.

- An announcement over the PA system will inform the school to go into lockdown.
- School business & classroom activities are suspended.
- E-Team & District Emergency Response Team is activated.
- All Interior and exterior doors are secured.
- Office lights/Classroom lights are turned off.
- Lockdown notices will be posted on exterior doors (if safe to do so)
- The school will work to account for all students, staff & visitors.
- When there is no longer a threat, DPS Safety & Security Dispatch will announce a full release from lockdown or move into a lockout until further notice.

Secure Perimeter (Lockout) Procedures: Secure Perimeter is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building due to violence or criminal activity in the immediate neighborhood or vicinity. Secure Perimeter uses the security of the physical facility to act as protection.

- DPS Safety & Security Dispatch will initiate a secure perimeter if notified by law enforcement or if they determine there is a nearby threat to the school.
- All perimeter doors are secured and no one is allowed to enter or leave the building.
- Instruction and school business may resume.
- An announcement over the PA system will inform the school to go into secure perimeter status.
- All students on the playground or in the multi-purpose room will immediately be brought upstairs to their classrooms.

Shelter-In-Place Procedures for Severe Weather: Severe weather is any weather condition that may cause injury to students and staff or damage to structures. Different types of weather call for different types of actions. Schools will go into shelter-in-place if the threat of severe weather is in the area.

- DPS Safety & Security will announce to take shelter over the PA system.
- Students will move away from windows - generally into interior hallways.

Evacuation: If it is unsafe for students, staff and visitors to remain inside the building we will evacuate to our designated evacuation locations listed below.

- All students and staff will exit & go to their designated locations.
- Everyone is to remain outside of the building until an “all-clear” is given by Safety & Security.
- If students and staff need to leave school grounds, we will walk to our designated off-site emergency evacuation locations.
- Students will only be released to parents or guardians who are listed on pick-up authorization form.
- Off-Campus Emergency Evacuation Locations: ➤ Assembly Area 1: 19 th & Sherman & Private parking-lot next to 1860 Lincoln St. Used as first option for fire-drills & immediate evacuation. ➤ Assembly Area 2: Benedict Fountain Park Used if weather permits and we know it will a long period of time. ➤ Assembly Area 3: Hampton Inn (1845 Sherman St. Denver, Co. 80203) Used for assembly area when a long-term solution is needed. Contact : Christine Wenzel, General Manager-303-864-8000 ➤ Assembly Area 4: Denver Public Library- 10 W. 14 th Ave. Denver, Co. 80204 Used if Hampton Inn’s proximity is too close to our building. Contact: Diane Lapierre, Community Service-720-865-2048

Enrollment

DDES is committed to providing an excellent education to a diverse group of students. The school will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or eligibility for services for exceptional children. DDES participates in DPS’ School Choice enrollment process, <http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org>. A wait list of applicants is generated by grade. When a position becomes available, the first person on the list is offered the position.

There are no entrance exams or requirements. Once admitted, students do not need to re-enroll for each succeeding year. Students will need to re-register each year and ensure that all proper documents and forms are submitted. Priority will be given to students who reside in the Denver Public Schools. Students who have siblings currently enrolled in the school are given priority and admitted provided there is space. Applicants who submit application forms after the first enrollment deadline will have their names added to the bottom of the wait list on a first come, first serve basis.

Grounds for Denial of Admission

Subject to the school's responsibilities under the Exceptional Children's Educational Act and applicable federal, state and local laws, the following will constitute grounds for denial of admission to the school:

- Failure to meet age requirements.
- Having been expelled from any school district the preceding twelve months.
- Having engaged in behavior in another school during the preceding twelve months that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel.
- Failure to comply with the immunization provisions. Families who choose not to immunize their children must sign an immunization waiver.
- Falsification of application or enrollment documents.
- Applications are considered complete only if all areas are completed and legible.

Kindergarten Enrollment

To be enrolled in the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School kindergarten program a child MUST:

- Be five (5) years old on or before Oct. 1 of the applicable school year.
- Complete new student requirements.

Elementary Enrollment

To be enrolled in the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School 1st grade program a child must:

- Be six (6) years old on or before Oct. 1 of the applicable school year.
- Complete new student requirements.

Priorities

DDES prioritizes siblings of attending DDES students, downtown Denver residents, free and reduced lunch applicants, staff and board of DDES, and Denver residents.

Family Commitment to School Community Service

Due to the limited financial resources available to charter schools and to promote a sense of community, we ask that families invest in volunteer opportunities at DDES. Discuss classroom community service opportunities with your child's teacher and school-wide opportunities with the office staff. These might include serving as a crew parent; volunteering in the office, lunchroom or playground; serving on the Family Council; managing a fundraising event; assisting teachers with field trips, special events or in other ways in the classroom. Some volunteer opportunities can be found [HERE](#).

Family Conduct

DDES 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 or threatening environment for our students and staff members. DDES regards the physical safety and emotional well-being of its staff and students as paramount and extreme behaviors that compromise these priorities will be addressed immediately. If a family member violates this policy, he or she may be issued a warning about his or her behavior, or may be invited to participate in mediation with school staff. DDES reserves the right to take all actions necessary to ensure a positive, safe, and productive learning environment, including but not limited to, requesting the assistance of law enforcement and/or refusing an individual's entry onto school grounds. DDES follows DPS Policy KFA (Public Conduct on School Property)

which can be found [HERE](#).

Family Council

The DDES Family Council is a separate organization from DDES. The Family Council is organized for the purpose of supporting the school community at the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School by fostering relationships among the school, families and teachers. These include but are not limited to:

- Creating and managing the process of identifying volunteer needs within the school and filling those needs.
- Raising and expending funds to enhance and improve the educational quality of Downtown Denver Expeditionary School.
- Sponsoring activities that support academic growth in students, create cultural awareness, and or connections among school families.
- Encouraging a positive, supportive atmosphere among families to enhance students' educational and extracurricular experiences.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy interests of students. It affords parents/guardians the right to access and amend their children's education records, and gives them some control over the disclosure of the information in these records. FERPA generally prevents an education agency or institution from sharing student records, or personally identifiable information in their records, without the written consent of a parent/guardian.

A "parent" is defined as a natural or adoptive parent, a legal guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of the parent or guardian. When students reach the age of 18, or attend a postsecondary institution at any age, they are considered "eligible students" and all of the rights afforded by FERPA transfer from the parents to the students. (34 CFR § 99.3)

Although student files are protected under the law, FERPA does allow the disclosure of student data without parental consent under certain, specified conditions. For example, schools may reveal information from student records to school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

Under FERPA, schools and their employees may not disclose information about students, nor permit inspection of their records, without the parent or student's written permission unless such action is covered by certain exceptions as stipulated in the law.

Essentially, FERPA prohibits all employees from discussing confidential student information with third parties, including parents. For example, if two students engage in a disciplinary act together, the school is prohibited from naming or discussing the other involved student in conversations with parents. If parents request an explanation of a discipline or academic event that did not involve their child, but which occurred in their child's classroom, the school is not permitted to disclose any names or details of events, nor disclose the resultant consequences. School officials—teachers, administrators, staff, board members, and volunteers—must all comply with the expectations of FERPA and therefore may not discuss any student with anyone but the parent at any time or for any reason.

Fieldwork

DDES believes that fieldwork serves a vital educational purpose that furthers the learning of each child. Parents/guardians must sign a permission form and return it to school before a student is allowed to leave the

school. No student will be allowed to leave without completed forms. If medications must be given to the student during a student trip, a **School Medication Request Release Agreement (available online at the DDES website for each prescription and over-the-counter medication or in the front office)** must be completed. This form must be delivered to the school nurse or administrative personnel **two week prior** to a trip. The medication needs to be given to the nurse or administrative personnel prior to the trip.

Students who require special health procedures in the daily and/or emergency management of their specific health condition may not be excluded from participation in a student trip. They must, however, be accompanied either by a parent/guardian or by a licensed nurse, employed full-time or under contract with the school system, who is able to provide such care.

Fieldwork/Adventure Collection

Families will not be charged an instructional fee as a condition of enrollment in a school or as a condition of attendance in any class that is considered part of the academic portion of our educational program. DDES does follow a common practice for expeditionary learning schools to ask for an [annual contribution](#) for our fieldwork and adventure equipment, transportation, and entrance/participation costs etc. Families may choose to pay their contribution in a one-time payment, or to split up their payments over the course of the school year. Families can pay by check at the front desk or utilize DDES' online payment system Procure and/or Square. Pay what you can and FRL suggested contributions are welcome. This is not a fee and is not a condition of enrollment in a school or as a condition of attendance in any class. Families are encouraged to participate fully in adventure and fieldwork regardless of participation in the collection.

Fire and Safety Drills

DDES, like all DPS schools, has an Emergency Management Plan to address various types of emergencies such as a fire, dangerous weather, or assaults or criminal activity. The administrative and facility management staff, nurse and teachers make up the school's Emergency Response Team or "E-Team" which oversees different aspects of emergency responses. Personnel from Denver Public Schools Safety and Security Office have trained the E-Team. The entire school staff has been trained on how to respond to different emergencies.

DDES conducts one fire drill per month, two during the first month of school, as required by the Denver Fire Department. Detailed instructions for the drill are posted in each classroom. Some general rules are:

- At the signal, the students should walk briskly, orderly and silently to the designated safety area outside and away from the building. Students should not stop to gather coats or belongings.
- The students should stay with the teacher and class.
- Return to the building in the same manner only after the all-clear signal has been sounded.
- Use designated routes only.

We practice one drill per trimester for three other types of situations:

- **Lockdown:** students, staff and visitors are kept inside the building or brought inside, exterior doors are locked, no one is allowed in or out of the building, students, staff and visitors stay in locked classrooms or other areas and line up and sit down against an interior hallway wall and away from exit doors, school business ceases. Occurs when a dangerous event has happened near the school, a dangerous intruder may be in the building or severe weather such as a tornado.
- **Modified Lockdown:** All students, staff and visitors are kept inside the building or brought inside,

exterior doors are locked, no one is allowed in or out of the building, school activities continue. Occurs when some danger may still exist in the area but the building is deemed secure.

- **Shelter in Place:** Students, staff and visitors move away from rooms on the building perimeter and go to a designated inside safety assembly area such as a hallway. Everyone kneels or crouches with their heads between their knees and clasps their hands on the back of their heads. Occurs during severe weather such as a tornado.

We try to conduct fire drills during decent weather conditions. However, fire alarms do go off unexpectedly occasionally. When that occurs the first priority is to evacuate the building as quickly as possible. Since it is unknown whether the alarm is real or not, regulations stipulate that no special effort be made to collect jackets or other clothing if there is unpleasant or cold weather.

We will make every effort to inform you of alarm situations that may cause concern for your children. We want you to be aware of the circumstances from an informed source. We will also inform you when we have drills for the different lockdown scenarios.

Food Services

DDES is partnering with My Kids Lunch and CharterChoice Collaborative (SFA) to provide healthy school meals. We will offer Breakfast and Lunch service for all students. Breakfast will be served every day in the classroom. Lunch will be served in the classroom, allowing a flexible meal-time schedule.

Ordering Lunches

To ensure we have enough food available for all participating students, please make sure you complete the breakfast and lunch order forms, which will be on our website and on the ReachWell App. Parents/guardians will pre-order breakfast and lunches for their child(ren) two weeks in advance. Orders are due every other Monday by 5pm. If your child(ren) will participate occasionally depending on what is being served, please make sure to order a school breakfast and lunch for those days. If your student will need breakfast and lunch every day this year, this form will only need to be filled out ONCE for this school year.

School Breakfast & Lunch at No Cost

Thanks to the Healthy School Meals for All program we are able to provide free meals to all students this school year

Applying for Free and Reduced Priced Meal Benefits

We ask that ALL DDES families complete the [Free and Reduced lunch form online](#), even though all meals will be no charge, you know you most likely do not qualify or do not plan to have your child(ren) eat school meals. This application is crucial for other services and for the amount of federal funding our school will receive for our programs. It takes 2 minutes to do online [HERE](#). DDES front office can help you with the application anytime, please just let us know if you need assistance or would like a paper application.

Allergies:

Be sure to accurately indicate in all appropriate sections of our registration packet and list any allergies your child has. The front office will work with the food vendor, your child's crew leader and food server to ensure your child's needs are met. If you learn of any new allergies, please be sure to contact the front office.

Fundraising Activities

The DDES administration and board are legally responsible for activities conducted on behalf of the school. Therefore it is imperative that any plans for fundraising be presented to the executive director and/or the administrative staff or a designated fundraising committee a minimum of two weeks in advance of any activities. Proposals must be in line with the overall fundraising strategies and activities of the school. These plans must include the appropriate provisions for safety in the implementation of all activities and other necessary logistical considerations. The Family Council is a primary organizer of fundraising activities and a good place to propose fundraising activities. The administration and board are key fundraisers for DDES and are interested in ideas.

Harassment

Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited

DDES is committed to providing safe and equitable learning and working environments that are affirming, inclusive, and free from sex-based discrimination and sexual harassment for students, employees, and community members. This commitment includes addressing student and employee misconduct appropriately. DDES expressly prohibits any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital status, veteran status, military status, national origin, ancestry, age, genetic information, disability, membership or non-membership in a labor organization, or status in any other group protected by federal, state, or local law. DDES employees should also refer to the DDES Employee Handbook for general harassment and discrimination policies applicable to them.

Improper harassment or discrimination which interferes with the ability of an employee, volunteer, or student to perform his/her duties, or safely and comfortably participate in DDES's educational program (including the Adventure Program), will not be tolerated. DDES also prohibits any employee, volunteer, or student from illegally harassing or discriminating against any third party while participating in DDES's educational program (including the Adventure Program), or while in any manner representing DDES in any capacity.

Employees and volunteers may, but are not required to, directly confront any persons who are the source of potential discriminatory, harassing or retaliatory behavior.

Sexual Harassment Prohibited

DDES strictly prohibits sexual harassment. No one at DDES, including directors, supervisors, employees, volunteers, students, vendors, third parties, or any other person, may make unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or engage in any other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature or based upon an individual's sexual orientation or transgender status, where: (1) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's or volunteer's work or volunteer performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, or (2) it is obvious or implied that tolerating or submitting to such conduct is a condition of employment or service, or will be used for the basis of any employment, service, or educational decision (all such conduct is defined in this policy as "sexual harassment").

DDES does not tolerate sexual harassment in any form. No employee, volunteer, or student should be subjected to unwelcome sexual requests or insulting behavior or language based on gender or an individual's sexual orientation or transgender status. No employee, volunteer, or student should be led to believe that any employment, service, or educational opportunity or benefit will in any way depend on his/her cooperation with sexual demands or that he/she must tolerate an offensive sexual environment.

All employees, volunteers, and students shall refrain from inappropriate sexual conduct that could lead to a

claim of sexual harassment, including, but not limited to (1) sexually implicit or explicit communications whether in written form, such as cartoons, posters, calendars, magazines, publications, notes, letters, email, words or designs on clothing, or oral form, such as comments, jokes, foul or obscene language of a sexual nature, gossiping or questions about another's sex life, sexual orientation or transgender status or repeated unwanted requests for dates, and (2) physical gestures and other non-verbal behavior, such as unwelcome touching, grabbing, fondling, kissing, massages, brushing up against another's body.

While DDES prohibits all forms of sex-based discrimination, our [Title IX Policy](#), (also available on our website), outlines the processes used to address sexual harassment as defined by Title IX of the Education Amendments. At DDES, our Executive Director serves as our Title IX Coordinator. Families with any concerns relating to sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, or our Title IX Policy are asked to reach out to the Executive Director.

Reporting Policy

Notwithstanding the foregoing, employees and volunteers are required to bring forward any allegations of unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation to the Executive Director. DDES may promptly address such wrongdoing and prevent future occurrences. If the allegation involves the Executive Director, employees or volunteers should notify the Board President. The Executive Director will promptly contact the parents/guardians of any student involved in, or the subject of, any harassment or discrimination. Any allegations of unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation involving an employee, will be addressed in accordance with the DDES Employee Handbook.

All employees and volunteers are accountable for the effective administration of this policy. Employees or volunteers who believe that they have been harassed, who have observed harassment, or who have received an allegation of harassment of or by a student, shall promptly notify the Executive Director. If the allegation involves the Executive Director, employees or volunteers should notify the Board President.

Immunizations

All students must furnish the required certificate of immunization or will not be allowed to attend school. A student will be exempted from this requirement only upon submission of:

- Certification from a licensed physician that the physical condition of the child is such that immunization would endanger the child's life or health.
- A statement signed by one parent/guardian that he/she is an adherent to a religious belief whose teachings are opposed to immunizations.
- A statement signed by one parent or guardian that he/she is opposed to immunization for personal reasons.
- Minimum immunization requirements are:

Vaccine	Grades K-4
DPT/Td/DT	4
Polio	3
Measles*	1

Mumps*	1
Rubella*	1
Hib**	
Hepatitis B***	3

*Measles, mumps and rubella vaccines must have been administered on or after the first birthday to be acceptable for certification.

** One dose of Hib vaccine must have been administered at age 12 months or older. Children age 5 and older are exempt from the Hib requirement.

*** Beginning July 1, 1997, all students born on or after Jan. 1992, must have had three doses of hepatitis B vaccine. Hepatitis B vaccine must be administered such that dose two is given not less than 30 calendar days after dose one, and dose three is given not less than 60 calendars or more than 150 calendar days after dose two. By July 1, 2003, all students in grades K-12 must comply.

Procedures for Compliance

1. A completed Certificate of Immunization indicates full compliance.
2. A request for immunization signed by a parent/guardian that local health officials administer the necessary immunizations. Request must be submitted at the time of school entry and completed Certificate of Immunization be submitted within 60 calendar days of school entry or child will face suspension or recommendation for expulsion from school.
3. A written plan for immunization signed by one parent/guardian for receipt by the child of the required inoculation or the first or the next required of a series of inoculations within 30 days. The plan must be submitted at time of school entry and completed Certificate of Immunization be submitted to school within 60 calendar days of school entry or child will face suspension or recommendation for expulsion from school.
4. Transfer students from outside the state are the only students who may officially have the 60-day grace period without presenting one of the above statements upon entering.

Please complete the Emergency and Illness Notification/Emergency Medical Treatment form at the back of this handbook or in your registration packet and return to school.

Important Items to Notify the Office About

Please notify the DDES front office of any and all changes of information regarding you and your child's address, phone number, emergency contact, email addresses, etc. as soon as possible. It is essential that the office keep this information up to date and your prompt notification regarding any changes is greatly appreciated.

Internet Use

DDES provides a network service that connects classrooms to each other and to the internet. The goal in providing this service is to promote educational opportunities by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Users must adhere to the guidelines of this policy in order to acquire and maintain network access. Violation of any of the provisions of this policy may result in termination of access, denial of future

access or possible disciplinary action.

The school provides filtering to restrict access to obscene, pornographic, or other material that is harmful to minors. The school does not guarantee that such material will never be encountered. The school believes that the valuable information and interaction available on the internet outweighs the possibility that users may access material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the school.

The use of the school's network is a privilege, not a right. Crews that use technology regularly are required to sign a technology use agreement (provided by Crew Leaders at the beginning of the year). Inappropriate use may result in a cancellation of this privilege. The following activities are prohibited:

1. Using the school's network for or in support of any illegal, inappropriate, or obscene activity.
2. Using the school's network for non-school-related business and/or commercial purpose, product advertising, or support of any political or lobbying activity.
3. Vandalizing the network or network resources, which includes, but is not limited to, any malicious attempt to harm, destroy, or alter data on the school's network, including introduction of any computer virus.
4. Attempting to access restricted data or to disrupt the use of the network for other users.
5. Using profanities or language that is generally offensive, defamatory, harassing, or threatening to another individual and/or group.
6. Creating or accessing dangerous information.
7. Violating copyrights or interference with license agreements. This includes, but is not limited to, software, unaccredited use of text, graphics, photographs, electronic data, or interference with the privacy rights of individuals or entities without their authorization. Plagiarizing any information gathered via the school's network is also prohibited. Users have no proprietary ownership of materials placed on the school's network, unless such material is otherwise covered by copyright.
8. Providing access to the school's network to unauthorized users.
9. Sharing electronic email account passwords, leaving passwords available in obvious locations, or leaving "signed on" computers unattended.
10. Compromising personal safety.
11. Allowing minors to access inappropriate material.
12. Disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

Communication conducted over the school's network is not private and school staff may, in conducting network supervision and maintenance, review and inspect directories or messages. The school reserves the right and will access stored records with or without reasonable cause to assure compliance with this policy. The school makes no warranties that the functions of its network system will meet any specific requirements. Nor will the school be responsible for any damages suffered through the use of the network. This includes loss of data, non-deliveries or service interruptions. Use of any information obtained through the school's network is at each user's risk.

Students should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the DDES computer equipment. The computer network is the school's property and may only be used for school-sanctioned activities.

Lice

Lice is not considered a public health issue and does not transmit disease. If a parent/guardian or teacher suspects a child may have lice they may send them to the front office. If nits or lice are detected the front office will contact the parents/guardians. The child will not be excluded from school activities although the parent/guardian may choose to pick up child. Parents/guardians should pick up the child at the end of the day and will need to start treatment on a child before returning to school. Lice cases are considered a confidential medical issue. An entire classroom community will only be notified if the staff is informed that there are three or more cases in a single classroom. Please inform the front office if you detect lice or nits on your child. Helpful hints in regard to lice:

- Check your children’s head each night for lice. If they have it, please begin treatment with lice shampoo **immediately**. If you need assistance obtaining treatment, please let us know.
- Head lice are easiest to spot around the ears and on the back of the neck
- It is strongly recommended that you do a **follow-up treatment** 7-10 days AFTER your first treatment because that is the next nit hatching cycle.
- Wash all bed linens and clothing that’s been recently worn by anyone in your home who’s infested in very hot water (130° F [54.4° C]), then put them in the hot cycle of the dryer for at least 20 minutes.
- Put soft items that cannot be washed into airtight bags for at least 3 days.
- Vacuum carpets and any upholstered furniture (in your home or car), then throw away the vacuum cleaner bag. **DO NOT FORGET THOSE CAR SEATS**
- Soak hair-care items like combs, barrettes, hair ties or bands, headbands, and brushes in rubbing alcohol or medicated shampoo for 1 hour. You also can wash them in hot water.
- Every 3 or 4 days, examine members of your household who have had close contact with a person who had lice.
- Three stages of lice to pay attention to:
 - Nits before hatching are usually tan, brown or yellow dots, very close to the scalp and sticky (hardest to spot).
 - Nits after hatch are usually white and sticky, they look like dandruff but very stick. You will usually see them further down the hair shaft (this is when most lice is detected).
 - Live lice: considered infestation, small greyish crawling bugs

Medication Policy

- School employees will administer medication to students only if we have a medication release form signed by the parent/guardian and physician and approved by our school nurse. New forms are required each school year.
- All medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the office of the nurse.
- Students will not be allowed to keep medication in their possession while in school.
- An adult should bring medication to school, and the student should not carry medication.
- Prescription medication will be counted upon receipt and returned to the parent/guardian.
- A physician’s order is required for all prescribed medications administered 30 days or more including “as needed” prescription medications. Orders for prescription medications will be accepted from those persons legally authorized to write prescriptions in the United States. Out-of state prescription medication not accompanied by a physician order will be considered on an individual basis.
- Medication must be in the original container and properly labeled with the name of the student, the prescribing doctor, the name of the medication, the date the medication was prescribed and the

instructions for administration.

- Prescription medication will be administered only to the person named on the prescription label, and in the dosages, intervals and for the duration period prescribed.
- Modifications of a prescription will be accepted only upon receipt of written instructions from the prescribing doctor.
- Non-prescription ("over-the-counter") medication will be administered according to the instructions on the original container and must have a Medication Request Release Agreement filled out and signed by your physician.
- If the school nurse believes that continued administration of the medication is not beneficial to the student, the nurse will notify the student's parent or legal guardian.
- If the period of administering the medication expires, it must be picked up by the student's parent or legal guardian. Medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, will not be returned home by delivering it to students. Medication will be discarded if it is not picked up within thirty calendar days after the period for administering it has expired.
- Only the amount of medication required for administration while on fieldwork will be sent.

Personal Property/Toys/Electronics/Cell Phones/Smart Watches

All personal property brought to school is at the owner's risk. DDES takes no responsibility for student property. Video games, MP3 players and other electronics are not allowed at school. Distracting or inappropriate objects will be taken from a student and returned at the end of the day. Repeated violations will require a family conference. Students should not bring large sums of money to school; if money must be brought it should be taken to the office. Toys are also not allowed in school.

Student cell phones and smart watches are not to be used during the school day. If parents/guardians want students to have cell phones or smart watches for use before or after school, they must be kept in the student's backpack or cubby during the day in the "off" position. Teachers may grant exceptions to this rule if use of the personal electronic equipment can be used for educational purposes. Student failure to comply with this rule will result in confiscation of the personal equipment. Repeat violations may result in confiscation for longer periods of time as well as a family conference.

Playground and Recess Rules

DDES uses multiple spaces in order to allow all grades to receive one or more outdoor recesses each day. This includes the use of the playground for K-2, the green space for all grades and Benedict Fountain park for 4-5. Recess rules include:

- During school hours, the playground is off limits to DDES' students unless supervised by a DDES staff member.
- Misuse of equipment is not allowed. All equipment must be used only as intended.
- Students must be sure the areas around all equipment are clear of others before usage.
- If a student is not in full view of a supervising adult, that student is in an off limits area.
- Any injury during games results in an immediate end of activity until the student is helped.
- Any conflict during a game/activity will result in immediate end of activity until agreement is achieved.

Students must be outside during lunch recess and may only be in the building if they have a pass from a teacher to use the bathroom or get a drink. If students are to return to the classroom to work instead of going to recess, they must provide a note from their teacher to the staff supervising the lunchroom. Students will not be given permission to return to the classroom to get sweaters or jackets before going outside for lunch recess.

Public Health Outbreaks

When your child is ill, please inform the front office. It is helpful to give the front office details about illness, particularly if you believe it is contagious or poses a risk to other students. If the nurse identifies more than two cases of a public health risk illness in a classroom, he or she will work with the front office to notify the entire classroom community. If there is an outbreak and your child does not have a required immunization for the particular illness identified, the child will need to remain home until our leadership team has been instructed it is safe for them to return. Specific student information will remain confidential.

Release of Information: Student Records

At the beginning of each school year, in the Student / Family Handbook, DDES will notify parents/guardians of rights pursuant to this policy.

A parent/guardian has the right to review the student's education records unless the custodian of the education records has received a copy of a court order to the contrary. The school, via the Director of Operations, maintains permanent education records or temporary records directly related to a student. Education records may contain personally identifying data, progress reports, courses taken, standardized achievement test scores, attendance data, aptitude tests, psychological tests, interest inventory results, health data, family background information, teacher observations and reports of serious or recurrent behavior problems. Parents/guardians must submit a written request to see the files to the Director of Operations or Executive Director, who will set a date and time for the inspection and review no more than three working days from the date of request. The record itself cannot be taken from the school building. If any material or document in a student's education record includes information on other students, the parent/guardian has the right to review only that part of the material that relates to his/her student. The special education teacher will inform parents/guardians of students with disabilities when information under this policy is no longer needed to provide education services to the student. The information will then be destroyed at the request of the parent/guardian.

A permanent record of the student's name, address, telephone number, progress reports, attendance record, classes attended, level completed and year completed may be maintained without time limit.

A parent or guardian has the right to challenge the contents of a student's education record if the parent/guardian feels that any information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student. In this event, the parent/guardian requests a conference with the Director or submits a written request for amendment. The conference can be conducted by telephone or in person. Within five working days, the Director will notify the parent/guardian of his/her decision regarding the requested amendment. All correspondence regarding records is to be sent via certified mail. In the event the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision, the process for addressing a concern is followed. If/when a request to amend education records is granted, the custodian will amend the records accordingly. If/when the request to amend education records is denied the parent/guardian has the right to document in the records a statement commenting on the reason for disagreement with the records. DDES, for as long as the record of the contested portion of the record is maintained will maintain this explanation. If the record or contested portion is disclosed to any party, the explanation will also be disclosed.

Directory information including a student's name, address and telephone number/email will be made public

unless a written request to withhold such information is submitted by the student's parent/guardian.

The school will not disclose personally identifying education records without written consent of the parent/guardian except to the following:

- School officials charged with the responsibility of providing education programs and/or services to the individual student.
- Authorities named in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act including Comptroller General of the United States, Secretary of Education, Director of NIE, Assistant Secretary of Education, or state educational authorities.
- Authorities investigating or providing emergency services involving the health and safety of students.
- State and local officials who are required to obtain specific information pursuant to state law.
- Accrediting institutions.
- Testing and research organizations as long as confidentiality is maintained and such organizations are required to destroy records after they are no longer needed.
- Anyone, if required by a court order or subpoena, provided that a reasonable effort is made to notify the parent/guardian prior to complying with the subpoena or court order.

The school may disclose group scholastic achievement data from which the individual cannot be identified without written consent of the parent/guardian. All other requests for information must be submitted to the Director of Enrollment and Communication by the parents/guardian in writing. The Director of Enrollment and Communication will maintain a list of all requests for information from an individual student's education record. This list will be contained within the student's educational record.

Retention Policy

Grade retention or acceleration will be based on the best interests of students and their educational success. At DDES, grade retention of students will depend on several factors including the following:

- Academic skills
- Maturity
- Evidence of academic growth
- Chronological age
- Language proficiency
- Special education status
- Attendance record/Truancy
- Previous grade retention or acceleration; and
- Likely success in completing the academic work at the next grade level

Grade retention may increase the likelihood that students will succeed in meeting challenging academic and behavioral expectations at the next grade level. Retention provides a second opportunity to master skills, and is recommended only after other interventions aimed to support the student have been documented. That said, retention is a significant intervention that is used only when potential positive outcomes outweigh inherent challenges. Retention will only be done with the consent of the student's parent/guardian.

Safety

Safety of our students is paramount to the experience at DDES both on and off site. Plans will be put in place with our safety team for individual behavior exhibited unsafe at the school and according to DPS policy in accordance with JKR will be followed. For all off-site excursions including recess at the park, fieldwork, and

adventure, if students exhibit harm to self or others on the trip or prior to the trip they may not attend the excursion.

School Closings and Delays

If Denver Public Schools (DPS) declares a two-hour delayed start due to inclement weather, DDES will also have a delayed start time, with the drop-off window adjusted to 9:45-10:05am, depending on grade level. We will communicate to families via ReachWell, our Facebook page and our website as early as possible when we have a delayed start. Families can also monitor local news stations to learn when DPS has declared a delayed start. If a DPS delayed start occurs on a Friday (DDES early release day), DDES will likely call a full day snow day so that our staff are not commuting in and back for less than 3 hours of instruction.

For severe weather, we will do traditional snow days, with NO in-person or remote learning. We will follow DPS's recommendations on school closures, so any day that DPS calls a snow day due to weather, DDES will have a snow day. There may also be times when we declare a snow day ahead of DPS. Any day that DDES is closed due to inclement weather, Crew Club after school programming will not be available. We will communicate to families via ReachWell, our Facebook page and our website as early as possible when we are considering a snow day. Families can also monitor local news stations to learn when DPS has declared a snow day.

If severe weather comes in during the school day, DPS may declare an early release and may cancel after school activities. We will make a determination for DDES based on the weather in our area. If weather is severe, we may cancel Crew Club or set an earlier end time. We will communicate to families via ReachWell, our Facebook page and our website as early as possible when we are considering an early release or any adjustment to Crew Club availability.

School Hours

Students are expected to be in school from 8am-3pm M-Thur. DDES has an early release every Friday at 12:45pm so that teachers can engage in professional development.

Sick Child

If your children are sick, please do not send them to school. This includes fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat and any other symptoms that may be contagious. Children sent to school with these symptoms, or children that develop these symptoms at school will be sent to the office and their parents/guardians will be called to pick them up. If your children are sick at home, please do not send them to school until they have been free of these symptoms for 24 hours and/or on antibiotics for 24 hours. Please remember to call the office by 9:00 a.m. and let DDES know if your child will be out sick.

Special Education

The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School provides special education services in a mild moderate setting for students who qualify for such assistance. If a student is having persistent academic and/or social emotional difficulties, parents/guardians or teachers may consider a referral for an initial special education evaluation.

The referral process for special education begins with the general education teacher providing and documenting interventions. If a student does not respond to interventions the case is taken to the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) team, where intervention specialists are involved who may provide more intense interventions. In order to comply with federal law that mandates that students needs be serviced in the least restrictive educational setting possible, the action plan must be implemented for a minimum of 30 days within

the general education environment.

If a student does not respond to interventions the referring teacher will consult with parents/guardians, intervention specialists, administration, and special education service providers. An initial special education evaluation may be recommended. Such testing requires written consent from a parent/guardian. Results of the evaluation will be shared with parents/guardians and a team decision will be reached about whether the student qualifies for special education services. If the IEP team does determine that the student qualifies for special education services, an individualized education plan will be developed. This plan outlines accommodations and services for meeting the student's academic and/or social emotional needs and provides legal support to ensure that they receive such assistance.

Staff Screening Process

DDES carefully interviews all potential employees. In order to receive a Colorado teaching license, fingerprinting is required. Additionally, a background check with the Colorado Bureau of Investigation is completed for all Denver Public Schools/DDES employees. DPS provides ongoing updates from all of the above agencies while the person is employed here in case any new crimes are committed.

Standards Based Grading

DDES uses standards-based grading, which you will see on your student's progress report. Educators have been reporting grades for as long as children have been attending school. Grades have always informed parents where their child lands along a certain spectrum. Standards-based assessment is no different.

What is the difference between traditional grading and standards-based grading?

Traditional grading systems often fail to inform parents/guardians, students, and teachers what content and concepts the students have actually learned. Rather, they show us how children measure up to one another depending on a specific teacher's system. Parents/guardians have, in the past, seen report cards with A's and given their child praise for those high marks with little understanding of what those marks actually imply.

Standards-based grades should reflect a student's current level of achievement. This means focusing on trends in student work, especially the most recent work connected to a particular learning target, versus averaging all of the scores in a term. These grades encourage teachers to be very explicit about what a student needs to learn in order to develop skills along the continuum from beginning to exemplary. Such a system helps everyone celebrate what has been learned as well as identify gaps in learning. An additional feature that is particularly applicable to Expeditionary Learning is the ability to report on the Character Traits of DDES - measuring and assessing a child's tenacity or compassion, for example, separately from academic progress.

Grades at DDES are reported on a 1-4 scale, which aligns with the following descriptors:

- 4** = Exemplary (the student consistently exceeds the expectations of the target)
- 3** = Accomplished (the student has independently met the target)
- 2** = Developing (the student partially meets the target or often needs assistance to meet the target)
- 1** = Beginning (the student does not meet the target without assistance)

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about information within progress reports, please contact your child's Crew Leader.

Student Emergencies

If a student becomes seriously ill or injured at school, a parent/guardian contact will be made as specified on the school emergency contact form. A parent/guardian must keep the school informed of any changes in work, home, or emergency phone numbers. Every effort will be made to inform a parent/guardian as soon as possible. A parent/guardian must notify the school regarding child custody information that affects the release of health and academic records, or the release of the child from school. Students will be released only to their parent/guardian, unless the school has received written notification of changes.

Student Records

The following records must be on file in the school office at the beginning of each school year.

- Student Verification Form, includes emergency contacts
- Physical Exam Form – a physical is required every year
- Proper immunization records
- Doctor administered medical profile if traveling out of the country for fieldwork
- Permission to Participate & Acknowledgment of risk form
- Pick-up authorization form
- Parent/guardian permission & release form
- My student-at-a-glance form

Failure to have the above records on file by the first week of the school year could prevent the student from participating in fieldwork and other activities. In accordance with state law, DDES cannot allow students who do not have the proper immunization records on file to attend school.

Students Staying with Another Family

If a student is staying with another family in the absence of the parent/guardian for a short term, the office must be notified with a note indicating the dates the parent/guardian will be away and the name and phone number or other contact information of the designated responsible person. This information will be used in case of an illness or an emergency.

Sunscreen Policy

If a caregiver wants a student to wear sunscreen, families are expected to provide their student with sunscreen and teach them to apply it for fieldwork or any outdoor activity. DDES will offer sunscreen before fieldwork that requires long periods outdoors, adventure trips and during Crew Club activities that are held outdoors.

Textbooks, Library Books and School Supplies

Prior to the start of each school year, DDES produces a school supply list that details needed supplies for the upcoming school year. Some supplies are needed for individual student use, while others are collected by teachers for communal classroom use. Supplies used by an entire class will not be returned to individual students. Families that need assistance to obtain school supplies, please contact the front office.

Visitors

Parents/guardians are welcome in DDES and we follow the DPS Board Policy on visits to schools. The Board recognizes the importance of engaging the community in our schools and the importance of school/community partnerships yet also recognizes concerns for the welfare of students. Therefore, the district limits visitors to:

1. Parents/guardians of current students;
2. Other family members of current students who are approved by the student's parent/guardian; and
3. Board members; and
4. Other persons invited by school leadership, the superintendent or her/his designee or a board member for educational or official business purposes.

In order to ensure that no unauthorized persons enter buildings with wrongful intent, all visitors to the schools shall report to the school office when entering, receiving authorization before visiting elsewhere in the building. Authorized visitors may: 1) be required to sign in and out; 2) be given name-tags to wear identifying themselves as visitors; 3) may be required to leave an identification card at the main office while visiting; and 4) be accompanied by a school or district employee for some or all of the visit. School administrators may approve additional building procedures pertaining to school visitors to preserve proper and safe learning environments.

Visiting a school is a privilege, not a right, which may be limited, denied or revoked by a school administrator or designee based on considerations of student and /or staff safety, efficient school operations, maintenance of a proper educational environment, or failure to comply with this policy.

AT DDES, we allow classroom observations that are set up in advance with the Executive Director or Assistant Director. Parents/guardians are asked to share their intention and next steps at that meeting and the school is to outline privacy norms. In dual households, both parents/guardians must sign consent for observations if the observer is not the child's guardian . Volunteering must also be arranged ahead of time with the teacher, and the appropriate background check needs to be on file in the office (see Volunteers).

Volunteers and Background Checks

DDES welcomes volunteers. Volunteer opportunities can be found [HERE](#). DDES requires that all volunteers in classrooms submit a background check through the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. Volunteers should visit the following website: www.cbirecordscheck.com. Generating the report takes less than 10 minutes. Volunteers should print out the report and submit a copy to the DDES main office prior to volunteering in a child's classroom or on fieldwork/adventure.

Way of the Blue Bear - DDES's character traits are:

The Way of the Blue Bear

Character at the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School

Courage

I take action to do the right thing, even when it's hard. I admit my mistakes and ask for help when I need it. I stand up for others when it's right, and I stand up for rules that help everyone succeed. I do the right thing at any cost.

Compassion

I use kind and helpful words with my crewmates to make sure that every person can experience success. I am mindful of others and care as much about them as I do myself.

Craftsmanship

I take pride in my work. My work shows that I am working towards the learning target. I use feedback to make my work better. I take care of the environment around me.

Tenacity

I stick with things, even when they're really challenging. I overcome frustrations and setbacks quickly. I finish what I start. I believe that my efforts will improve my future.

Self-Discipline

I am able to quiet my mind and focus my attention on what I need to learn. I pay attention and resist distractions. I get to work right away. I remain calm even when criticized or otherwise provoked. I allow others to speak without disruption.

Weapons

The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School does not tolerate weapons of any kind in any school location, including toy weapons that could reasonably be mistaken for an actual firearm, except for academic reasons and with the prior approval of the teacher and the Executive Director.

A weapon is defined by law as "any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon, including but not limited to, any firearm whether loaded or unloaded; air guns; pellet guns; spring action or compressed air devices such as BB guns, all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; chains; arrows; and object that have been modified to serve as a weapon." and any other objects used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury. Knives used for cooking or eating with teacher's approval are not considered weapons.

No student or staff member shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e. belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.) to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

This policy applies to the entire school grounds, including the parking lot, and is applicable whether the weapon is concealed or easily visible.

Individuals failing to comply with this policy may be immediately escorted off school grounds, and the weapon will be confiscated. In addition, failure to comply may also result in school suspension. Individuals who are not students and therefore not subject to school suspension may not be allowed to return to the school grounds for a period of time determined by the executive director. Depending on the severity of the situation, law enforcement authorities may be involved.

Carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon may result in disciplinary action. "Dangerous weapons" include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A firearm, whether loaded or unloaded
- Any object that looks like a firearm
- Any pellet or "BB" gun or other device, whether working or not, designed to propel projectiles
- by spring action or compressed air
- A fixed blade knife with a blade longer than three inches, a spring loaded knife, or pocket knife with a blade longer than three and one half inches
- Any other object, device, instrument, used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious injury

Weather Considerations

DDES believes that even in cold weather, children should be outside in fresh air and have a chance to run around. Please send your child to school with the appropriate clothing, including boots, hats, mittens and warm jackets. DDES recognizes that there can be other factors affecting the weather than just temperature alone (i.e. wind chill, amount of sunshine, wind), and therefore, the administration will have discretion in determining whether children play outside.

Withdrawal from DDES/Records Transfer

If a student moves to another school or school district during the school year or summer months, the student's records will be sent to the appropriate school at the request of that school. Parents/guardians must submit a withdrawal form prior to departure. This form is available in the school office. On the last day of withdrawal, students should have in their possession all books and materials in order to return those items. A parent/guardian should be certain that there are no fees due to the school at the time of withdrawal. Forwarding of transcripts and records may be delayed pending the payment of such fees.