



**Student and Family Handbook**

**2022-2023**

**DSST: ELEVATE NE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

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# Letter from the School Director

**August 16, 2022**

Dear Families,

We are so excited to welcome you to the 2022-2023 school year as we join our Elevate Northeast High School Bulldogs. We have some really exciting things in place for our students to ensure that they receive a world class educational experience with us in the coming years and beyond. We are deeply committed to knowing your student both personally and academically and living our core values to ensure that each student succeeds at the highest level.

This year, we will be heavily focused on ensuring consistency in all spaces and also continuing to build an inclusive school community that sets the foundation for academic excellence and self-growth. All of our systems, routines and supports at DSST work in concert toward establishing a safe, engaging and joyful school culture. We know that one of our school's greatest strengths is our connection and collaboration with our families, our alumni, our community and with one another. We hope that each of you will be a voice in giving us feedback and partnering with us throughout the school year to ensure that we offer the absolute best educational experience possible for our students.

We look forward to an excellent year with all of you. Should you have any questions, please call the school office at 303-524-6305.

In partnership,



Briana Mesa  
School Director  
DSST: Elevate Northeast Middle School

**DSST Public Schools** transforms urban public education by eliminating educational inequity and preparing all students for success in college and the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

DSST was founded on 6 Core Values, which create a common language to develop a strong community and are embedded in everything we do. **These values include:**

**Respect:** We appreciate each person and their story through our words, actions, and attitudes. We value their unique perspective and treat others with dignity.

**Responsibility:** We acknowledge that our actions and choices impact ourselves and our community. We take ownership for what we do and how we choose to do it.

**Integrity:** We act and speak with honesty, fairness, and thoughtfulness. We consistently align our words and actions.

**Courage:** We possess the confidence and resolve to take risks, push ourselves, and persevere in the face of pressure, adversity or unfamiliar circumstances.

**Curiosity:** We are eager to learn, question, and explore. We have a thirst for knowledge, a love of investigation, and a desire to learn about ourselves, our community, and our world.

**Doing Your Best:** We put our best effort into everything we do. We know that individual and collective effort for our community to thrive.

***Integrated***

Create a community centered on our six core values which are lived and shared, not just talked about. And where equal importance is placed on character development and academic learning.

Build a common understanding where each student and staff member embraces being a part of our community, sharing in the responsibilities and sacrifices such a commitment brings

Build a unified team that embraces the challenges of gender, economic and racial diversity, and which fulfills our commitment to have a student body of at least 40 percent students from economically disadvantaged families and 45 percent women. Engaging with a diversity of backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints will prepare our students for a diverse society and workplace.

Effectively use technology as a tool to enhance learning and integrate it across disciplines, preparing students for STEM careers and beyond

Understand that a strong liberal arts education, including athletic, artistic, and service endeavors, is a vital piece of our academic blueprint.

Actively encourage parents to partner with DSST and to play significant roles in the daily lives and work of their children.

***Personalized***

Create a community where each student is known and supported to achieve his/her potential.

Provide an advisory where each student has personalized adult guidance and understands his/her unique place in the larger school community.

Instill in students the desire and the knowledge of how to pursue independent learning.

Teach with the aim of producing outstanding individual student learning results, not to adhere to a particular pedagogical philosophy that dictates how we teach.

***Rigorous***

Create a campus environment in which everyone gives their best effort daily, provides the foundation for all students to succeed, and supports their efforts to do so.

Create a world-class academic culture where core academic goals apply to all students.

Provide academic programs centered on the belief that students need a strong foundation in each academic discipline to engage in rigorous project-based work.

Achieve mastery in a set of core performance standards (writing, reading, math, science, critical thinking) that produces college- and career-ready graduates.

Build thinkers who have the skills to solve real-world problems through the ability to understand, analyze, apply, and synthesize ideas and knowledge.

Assess student learning in ways that challenge students to demonstrate mastery in a variety of forms, methods and settings.

# I. Campus Policies

## 1. Closed Campus

DSST's campuses are closed. When on campus, during academic hours, students must always be in class and under the supervision of an adult. Students who leave campus without authorization will receive a discipline consequence. Upon first dismissal, students who are excused may leave campus if they do not have other obligations (clubs, athletics, academic or discipline obligations).

Students who must leave campus early are required to present a written note, signed by a parent/guardian, to the front office or must be picked up by an authorized individual (with valid identification) who will sign the student out at the front desk. As missing class and instructional time can have a detrimental effect on a student's performance, we ask that parents only sign students out for urgent reasons, and try to schedule appointments before and after school as much as possible, so that the student misses as little instructional time as possible.

## 2. Attendance

**Daily Attendance:** We believe every student's daily presence is irreplaceable to our communities. Daily attendance is an essential component to a student's educational and lifelong success. Engagement and connectedness in the classroom and larger school community are critical to the learning process, individual and collective growth.

In the event of a necessary absence, a parent/guardian must contact their school and report the absence by 7:30 a.m. Include the student's name, date of absence, reason for absence and parent/guardian contact number. This notification does not automatically excuse the absence (see Excused/Unexcused Absence Policy below).

Doctor visits or other circumstances require a note from a parent/guardian detailing the time to be excused, reason for leaving, approximate time of return and parent/guardian phone number. The student will be excused from class and may leave class when the parent/guardian arrives at the main office. Upon return, the student must provide a doctor's note verifying the appointment.

**Standardized Testing and Final Exam Attendance:** To assess the effectiveness of DSST's rigorous, integrated and personalized academic curriculum, students are required to be present and take various scheduled standardized tests and final exams. Attendance and promptness is expected in all classes and is essential for assessing student progress. The opportunity to adequately assess learning is lost due to absences.

**Excused Absences** (written statements from appropriate entities may be required):

Illness: fever, contagious disease, illness rendering student to bed rest (Doctor's note required after the second day of absence)

- Injury resulting in temporary physical disability (Doctor's note required)
- Mental Disability (Doctor's note required)
- Emotional Disability (Doctor's note required)
- Family Emergency
- Legal Circumstance (notification from appropriate Judicial Office required)
  - Student is in the custody of Law Enforcement
  - Student has mandatory appearances with the Courts
  - Student is in the custody of Human Services



The Front Office and /or the School Director must approve absence in advance for any reason other than those stated above.

**Unexcused Absences** are defined as those that do not meet the above criteria.

**Other Attendance Policies:** When a student is absent from school or from assigned classes, the school will notify a parent/guardian as quickly as possible. If a student's academic progress is compromised because of absence, reasonable effort will be made to notify the parent/guardian in advance so remedial action can be taken. Students with excused or unexcused absences are responsible for work missed and are expected to make it up for their own benefit.

**Procedures for monitoring and compliance of attendance:**

- a. A summary of absences will be reported on progress reports and report cards that are sent to parents/guardians.
- b. If a student has 4 or more unexcused absences in a month or 10 or more in a school year, they are considered habitually truant.
- c. The school's administrative team will work closely with any habitually truant students and their families to understand the circumstances behind the absences and work to provide situation-specific supports for the student to regularly attend school.
- d. If a student and family do not meet the requirements in the attendance contract, further actions may be taken by the school including filing for truancy.

**Special Attendance Circumstances:** Students who will be absent due to religious holidays must obtain administrative pre- approval. Absences due to college visits should be scheduled when school is not in session or will be included in the allowed absences each 12 weeks. Administrative exceptions may be granted for a planned program or a pre-arranged appointment with a specific college administrator if verified in writing and approved in advance by the Director of College Success. Students who are absent for an "educationally valuable experience" other than a field trip may receive an excused absence if the following criteria are met:

- a. The absence must be pre-approved at least one week in advance.
- b. There must be written educational objectives for the trip. The teachers will initial the pre-approved request form indicating knowledge of the anticipated absences and the student's receipt of the supplemental assignments.
- c. The pre-arranged absence request will be reviewed by the Dean.
- d. All educational experience absences must be excused within ten calendar days of the student's return to school following the trip.

**Truancy:** A habitually truant student is defined as a student who has four unexcused absences or trancies in any month or ten unexcused absences or trancies during any school year and is between the ages of seven and sixteen, if enrolled in the first grade or above. For the purpose of defining a habitually truant student, absences due to suspension or expulsion will be considered excused.

Once a student is determined to be habitually truant, the school team will notify the student's parents/guardians in writing of the student's unexcused absences and of the fact that the student is habitually truant. At that time, the school will develop a plan with the goal of supporting the student and family overcoming any obstacles that are contributing to the student's absences. Per state law, if students do not show improvement after support and resources have been offered and revisited, schools are required to refer a

truant student and family to the APS or DPS District for truancy filing, potentially resulting in court action with the City and County of Denver or Aurora court system.

**Tardiness:** Being on time to all school commitments is an important student expectation. Students are required to be at school on time. If a student is late to class without a pass the student will be assigned to a consequence.

**Habitual Tardiness:** A parent/guardian will be notified in cases of habitual tardiness. The parent/guardian will be expected to implement a plan to correct the problem. Should there be an emergency that prevents a student from being on time, the parent/guardian should call the office or send a signed note which will excuse the tardiness.

### 3. Arrival and Dismissal

**Arrival:** Students should arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to the start of school unless prior arrangements have been made with a staff member. The building will not be open to students prior to the start of school unless arrangements have been made with a teacher. Students will not be permitted in the academic areas of the building before school starts unless the student has a set appointment.

**Morning Supervision 7:30 - 7:45am**

**Doors Open 7:30 am**

**7:30 - 7:45am Arrival/drop-off window**

**Dismissal:** There are two dismissal times for each academic day. A student's activities, behavioral status, and tutoring/college prep commitments will determine dismissal time. The building will close to all students 3:15 PM M, T, R, F and 1:15 PM on Wednesday, unless prior arrangements are made. Dismissal supervision will be provided from 3:15-3:30pm for 1st dismissal and from 4:00-4:15pm for 2nd dismissal. On Wednesday's, Dismissal supervision will be provided from 1:10 – 1:30pm for dismissal. DSST is not responsible for students who are NOT picked up by parents after these times (3:30 pm and 4:15 pm respectively). Dismissal explanations are as follows:

- *First Dismissal (3:15 pm):* Students who have completed all of their homework at a satisfactory level of quality and who have not been asked to stay after school by a staff member will be dismissed at first dismissal to go home, or attend after school sports or clubs. Students attending clubs and sports will be dismissed according to the club/sport schedule. Students involved in sports may be dismissed from the practice or game location.
- *Second Dismissal (4:05 pm):* Students who are required to stay as a result of disciplinary action or have not completed their previous night's homework to a level of acceptable quality will be released at second dismissal. The school will use the Primary Household Phone Number, as designated in Infinite Campus, to notify parents that day if their child must stay for second dismissal. If families prefer an alternative number to be used for contact, they can request a change with the school's front office team. In the event of an emergency, students will be allowed to make alternative arrangements to attend Tutoring/College Prep or Refocus. **Prior transportation arrangements or alternative activities do not constitute an emergency situation.**

Parents/guardians should check their child's homework nightly, know their child's sports and tutoring schedule (when applicable) and be prepared to make alternate transportation arrangements when he/she is required to stay until second dismissal.

## 4. Dress Code/Uniform

**Middle School Uniform:** We believe that uniform dress in middle school provides students the critical opportunity to both appreciate our communities that allows students to identify as members of their shared community and allow for them to be seen for who they are, not what they have. We believe our students being seen for who they are, not what they have is incredibly vital during this particular stage of adolescent development.

**High School Dress Code:** We believe that in high school, having a known dress code policy allows for students to further their own independent choices and appreciate their growing complex view of community and individuality, and at the same time, provide safe and supportive known requirements.

School administration have the discretion to set their specific uniform and/or dress code policies at their respective schools. Uniform and dress codes are in effect from the start of the school day until all requirements of the day are completed. The uniform and/or dress code will be enforced at all times students are on campus. **See Appendix B for Uniform / Dress Code details.**

DSST faculty and staff reserve the sole right to interpret and enforce the student uniform and dress code. Students who violate the uniform or dress code will have designated consequences set forth by each school. Note: A phone call home to request appropriate clothing to be brought to school is determined by the School Administration.

## 5. Parents/Guardians and Visitors

All parents/guardians and visitors must sign-in and sign-out at the front desk & show photo identification when they enter or leave the building. Parents/guardians are expected to abide by the school's visitor rules and core values in all interactions with faculty, staff, administration, other parents and students. Visitor badges will be issued by a front office team member and visitors should wear them for the duration of their visit.

Alumni and former staff members are considered visitors and must follow all visitor policies and requirements, including signing in at the front office, wearing a visitor badge, and following all campus policies and core value expectations.

Parents/guardians will be asked to leave campus if the school's core values are not practiced. Parents/guardians and visitors are asked to refrain from using their cell phones inside of the building. We ask that parents arrange classroom visits with the teacher or an admin staff member in advance.

## 6. Student Phone Usage

School Administration has the discretion to set specific student phone usage policies at their respective schools. All Middle School Students must put ALL cell phones and non-class permitted headphones/airpods\*\* in their backpack or in their locker every day. Having either item in a sweatshirt or pants pocket (or somewhere else on body) is not acceptable. Failure to put cell phone in a backpack/locker at the start of school will result first in a Core Value point deduction. If a student is using the cellphone or non-class permitted headphones/airpods, the item will be confiscated for the remainder of the day and a Refocus will be assigned.

Any adult who sees cell phones or headphones out (at a non headphone class time, during transitions, etc) will confiscate them from the student and assign a Refocus. The teacher gives the phone to the Dean/Front Office, who locks up the phone until the student picks it up at the end of day. The Front Office tracks the number of times the student's phone/headphones have been confiscated. The first time, the student may pick up their phone. The second

time, a guardian must pick up the phone from the Front Office. Upon the third time, the advisor or Dean will contact the student's family to create a plan where the phone is left at home or at the Front Office for the school day.

If student is non-compliant after skilled redirections, they should be referred. Dean will conduct a referral with student and hold their phone until the end of the day. If a student receives 2 referrals for their cell phone, parent will be required to pick it up at the front of the office.

## 7. Deliveries to Students

Families may drop off school items, such as uniforms, school work, or school supplies, during the school day. The Front Office will contact the student's teacher and at an appropriate time in the lesson or day, the student will be given a pass to pick up the item from the Front Office. However, if the student forgot any of these items before arriving at school, they may lose a Core Value point for being unprepared. School Administration has the discretion to set this policy at their respective schools.

# I. Academic Policies

## 1. Academic Honor Code

DSST believes that a commitment to the Core Values is integral to ensuring that we are all learning and growing in the classroom and beyond. Because of this commitment, we take academic integrity very seriously. The Academic Honor Code is a student commitment to the core values of Integrity and Responsibility – a commitment to honesty and to taking ownership of our actions in the classroom.

Academic Honor Code violations include plagiarism, cheating and copying. Additionally, any of the following acts, without full acknowledgement of the original source, are also violations of the Academic Honor Code:

- Direct duplication by copying another's work, whether from a book, article, web site, another student's assignment, etc.
- Allowing another student to copy an assignment
- Inclusion of images, text or other forms of media, in whole or in part, from the internet or other electronic resource without proper citation
- Duplication in any manner of another student's work during a quiz, test, or exam
- Possessing *any* unauthorized documents or resources during class time, including crib sheets, calculators or the internet
- Paraphrasing another's work closely, with minor changes, but with the essential meaning, form, and/or progression of ideas
- Piecing together sections of other works into a new whole
- Submitting one's own work that has previously been submitted for assessment purposes in another subject or at another school
- Producing assignments with other people (another student, a tutor) that should be your own independent work
- Using often-quoted phrases without citation
- Pressuring others to violate the Academic Honor Code

- Presenting group work as your independent work, or presenting an individual's work as that of a group
- Falsifying or fabricating information, data, or sources

#### **Potential Consequences of Academic Honor Code Violations:**

- **1<sup>st</sup> Academic Honor Code Violation:**
  - Receive a failing grade on the assignment
  - Serve one (1) intervention day
  - Complete extensive intervention assignments (reflection essays, interviews, research, etc.)
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Academic Honor Code Violation:**
  - Receive a failing grade on the assignment
  - Serve up to two (2) intervention days
  - Complete extensive intervention assignments (reflection essays, interviews, research, etc.)

Students may be asked to report disciplinary or academic infractions in their college and/or scholarship applications, which is aligned to our core value of integrity. In these cases, we require students to self-report these infractions, and our campus college success teams will support students in responding to these questions and meeting these application requirements.

Each student will attend an Academic Honor Code mini-course. The course will cover principles of academic integrity, review the Academic Honor Code and allow students to ask questions to ensure that they understand and can abide by the Academic Honor Code. Students are required to sign the Academic Honor Code pledge (see below) and commit to upholding it throughout the year. Families will also be asked to sign a statement of support.

**Academic Honor Code Pledge:** *I accept the responsibilities for maintaining Integrity and Responsibility in all academic work, in maintaining and promoting personal academic integrity, and to only submit individual work that is completely my own or properly cited.*

## **2. Academic Effort**

DSST fosters a rigorous academic environment that prepares students to excel in college and the 21st century. We believe consistently living a commitment to our Core Value of *Doing Your Best* is critical to academic success – the strength of our community is built on the shared effort of each community member and it is only through a commitment to every person giving their best effort, every day, on all academic work, that each student can be successful.

**Homework:** DSST assigns homework to students on a nightly basis. We believe that homework assignments are meaningful and serve the important purpose of reinforcing previous learning from the classroom to further mastery of conceptions and skills. We also believe homework has academic benefits as well as developmental benefits. It helps build responsibility, time-management skills and independent problem-solving skills. Development of such skills is essential to a student's success at DSST, in college, and beyond.

Each night, students are expected to complete all homework in a thorough manner, paying attention to detail and quality. **Completion of homework assignments is mandatory.**

**Targeted Academic Interventions (such as College Prep):** College Prep (CP) or other forms of targeted interventions are assigned to all students who do not complete homework assignments or need additional academic support. Assigned students are required to stay after school or other identified times during the academic day to complete

their assignments or other academic related work. CP is a **mandatory** commitment. Schools have the sole discretion in determining whether or not a student’s homework is deemed complete and/or acceptable. Students may also be assigned CP for unorganized work and materials, or any other academic related need as determined by the school.

Parents/Guardians will be notified prior to first dismissal if their student must stay for CP.

CP takes precedence over other after school commitments including DSST athletics and clubs. **Prior transportation arrangement DOES NOT constitute an emergency situation, nor do other obligations deemed “non-emergencies” by faculty or staff.**

Failure to report to CP will result in mandatory attendance at CP/RF or an intervention on the next academic day as well as a consequence deemed appropriate by the Dean (morning or afternoon detention, community restorations, silent lunch, Saturday school, suspension, etc.)

**Homework - Parent/Guardian Role:** Parents/guardians must be aware and supportive of their child’s homework requirements and effort. They are expected to actively check and review homework, sign their child’s planner each night and to let the advisor know if their child is struggling with homework. Parents/guardians may assist students with their homework, but should never do it for them.

### 3. Advisory Program

DSST’s Advisory Program is an essential part of creating a powerful learning community centered on core values and fulfilling the principle of personalization. Each year, students are assigned to an Advisor with a group of other students. The Advisor is committed to knowing each advisee, to providing guidance and support and to creating a strong sense of community. The Advisory Program provides an important human’ context for academic planning, goal-setting, school-to-home communications, team building and reflection, and social-emotional learning. **Advisors serve as the primary contact for parents/guardians and facilitate communication between teachers and other resource personnel.** Parents/guardians with general concerns should first contact the advisor, who will resolve the situation or facilitate further conversations.

The primary goals of the DSST Advisory Program are as follows:

1. Teach, strengthen and live the DSST Core Values in and out of the school community
2. Provide adult and peer support both personal and academic skills
3. Establish camaraderie and accountability in a smaller group within the larger DSST community
4. Recognize and celebrate individual and community accomplishments and growth

### 4. Grades

Students will receive letter grades for each completed class. The letter grades represent a performance descriptor (outstanding, very good, etc.) and are assigned to the quality of a student’s completed work. For purposes of determining a weighted grade point average, see the table below.

ALL GRADE LEVELS			HIGH SCHOOL ONLY		
Grade	Performance Descriptor	Points	Non-AP Classes	Honors Classes	AP Classes

A+	Outstanding	99-100	4.25	4.75	5.25
A	Excellent	90-98	4.00	4.5	5.0
B+	Very Good	88-89	3.25	3.75	4.25
B	Good	80-87	3.00	3.5	4.0
C+	Average	78-79	2.25	2.75	3.25
C	Satisfactory	70-77	2.00	2.5	3.0

**Grades below a “C”:** “D” grades **are not** given at DSST. Any work that is deemed unsatisfactory does not receive a passing grade. Students who earn below a “C” in a course will be given one of two grades:

- I: Incomplete
- F: Failing Grade

**Incomplete:** A student will earn an Incomplete (“I”) under the following circumstance:

- An extended excused emergency leave during which a student missed a portion of the work that needs to be made up.
- Students who earn an Incomplete (“I”) will be given the opportunity to complete specified work over a defined period of time to earn a C in the class. If the work is not completed satisfactorily at the end of this prescribed time, the student will receive a failing grade.

**Failing Grade:** Students who receive a Failing Grade (“F”) have demonstrated inadequate performance and will not be given a chance to redo poor quality or incomplete work.

**Composite Grading:** DSST will weigh trimester grades in the following way in order to create a composite final grade at the end of the school year.

- **6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade:**
  - 20% - Trimester 1
  - 35% - Trimester 2
  - 45% - Trimester 3
- **7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> Grades:**
  - 33% - Trimester 1
  - 33% - Trimester 2
  - 33% - Trimester 3

**GPA Weighting (High School Only):** Final grades will be weighted in accordance with the table above. Certain courses (ex: Honors Physics) are designated as “earned honors” courses. In order to receive the honors weighting in these classes, students must pass the final exam with a 70 or higher in addition to passing the class overall. Honors, AP and classes are designated as such in the title of the course. At this point, Freshman Physics is the only class that is designated as Earned Honors. Students and parents will be updated if any additional classes become available for Earned Honors.

**Middle School Grading - Category Weighting:**

All Middle School classes use the following breakdown to determine grades at the end of each trimester:

	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
<b>Practice and Participation</b>	50%	45%	40%
<b>Formative Assessments</b>	20%	20%	20%
<b>Summative Assessments</b>	30%	35%	40%

\*\*Note: Schools may deviate from the aforementioned policy, and will communicate relevant changes.

### High School Grading - Category Weighting:

All High School classes use the following breakdown to determine grades at the end of each trimester:

	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
<b>Practice and Preparation (P&amp;P), Classwork, Homework</b>	30%	30%	20%	20%
<b>Formative Assessments</b>	20%	20%	20%	20%
<b>Summative Assessments</b>	30%	30%	35%	35%
<b>Final Exam and Performance Assessments</b>	20%	20%	25%	25%

### Missing Work, Make-Up Work:

After absences, students are responsible for making up missed homework, quizzes and tests. Students will have the opportunity to complete missing work during appropriately assigned times that are scheduled throughout the school year. **See Appendix C for current Make-Up Work Policy.**

### Effort Grades:

Students are given effort grades at the end of each trimester. These grades *do not* reflect ability, solely effort (in-class participation, homework effort and overall willingness to learn). Effort grades are given on the following scale:

- 5: Excellent**
- 4: Good**
- 3: Satisfactory**
- 2. Needs Improvement**
- 1: Unsatisfactory**

**Elective Courses:** Each trimester students will rotate to a new creative core class, they will earn a final grade at the end of the trimester for creative core classes.

Elective classes are typically graded on the same scale as core academic classes but can vary based on campus.



## Core Value Grades:

Each trimester, students are assessed on how well they live DSST's Core Values. Core Value assessment is initiated by the student's Advisor and confirmed by the grade-level teaching team. Core Value scores are based on daily actions inside and outside of the classroom. Core Value grades are given on the following scale for each of the six Core Values.

**5: Excellent**

**4: Good**

**3: Satisfactory**

**2: Needs Improvement**

**1: Unsatisfactory**

## 5. Report Cards and Progress Reports

The school year is divided into three trimesters. Students receive report cards at the end of each trimester. At the conclusion of the first trimester and the second trimester, parents/guardians and students must attend a conference with the Advisor to receive report cards. At the end of the year, final grades in each course will be recorded on student transcripts; only the final grade in year-long courses (or the trimester grade in stand-alone trimester courses) will appear on the transcript.

Progress reports will be issued periodically during each trimester. These progress reports must be read and signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the student's Advisor. Progress reports will be sent home on a weekly basis and families can also access student grades any time in Parent Portal.

## 6. Honors and Awards

**Traditions and Rituals:** Our communities are grounded in traditions and rituals. Without traditions and rituals that mark accomplishment or symbolic recognition, communities and individuals very often miss out on renewal of hope, spirit, and pride. In our community, we believe traditions and rituals are an important part of the experience and expression of humanity. As communities that believe in the power of the human condition and adhere to the importance of our Core Values, we have to ensure collective learning is fostered through traditions and rituals that reinvigorate cultural cohesion as connection is made to a higher purpose and ties to our past that brings new life to our present. Each convening of the community brings people together, connecting us all to our shared Core Values, collective and individual identities, and reinforcing our core purposes.

School Administration have the discretion to set their specific student honors and awards at their respective schools.

## 7. Middle School Promotion Requirements

To be promoted to the next grade, all students must:

1. **Pass all Core Classes with Grades of 70% or higher.** The composite final grade will be used to make this determination.

Core Classes include:

- English: Integrated Literacy

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies

If a student fails to meet the above criteria, they will be eligible for retention. DSST's middle school retention policy is as follows:

- A student who fails one or two core classes will be eligible for summer school based on additional assessment data. If eligible, summer school will provide the opportunity to earn a passing grade in that course over the summer. This includes passing the end of summer school course assessment. If a student does not attend summer school or pass the class in the summer, he/she may be required to stay back in his/her current grade.
- A student who fails three or more core classes **is likely to be retained in his/her current grade in the following school year**. DSST staff will review a variety of measures in addition to course grades to make the final determination.
- Any student in Special Education that falls under these categories, will have additional review measures taken to determine promotion, retention, or summer school eligibility.

DSST holds the sole right to choose one of the following courses of action for any student that does not meet promotion requirements.

- Require the student to repeat the current grade.
- Require the student to complete work over the summer of which the scope and expectations are defined by DSST.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive written and verbal notification from the school during every trimester regarding their student's status as it relates to promotion requirements. The school will send additional notification during the third trimester should the school be seriously considering retaining a student in their current grade. The school will communicate expectations to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) about what must be done to avoid being retained. A final decision will be made following the conclusion of the school year.

**Acceleration:** Acceleration of a student's coursework or grade-level will be made on a case-by-case basis by the school director in collaboration with the student's parents or guardians. This decision will be based on the student's academic performance, social-emotional readiness, input of the school's staff and a suitability of courses to serve them.

## 8. High School Promotion Requirements

To be promoted to the next grade, all students must:

- **Pass all classes with grades of 70% or higher.**
- **Be on track to complete graduation requirements by the end of senior year.**
- Demonstrate a consistent commitment to living the core values of our school community.
- Demonstrate a satisfactory academic commitment to participate in classes, complete homework and projects and take one's education seriously.
- Complete an academic internship successfully (11<sup>th</sup> grade year)
- Complete a Senior Project (12<sup>th</sup> grade)

Should a student not pass his/her core classes, the following policies apply:

- A student who fails one core class will be eligible for summer school and will have the opportunity to earn a passing grade in that course over the summer. A student must attend summer school and earn a 70 or higher in the course to pass it. If a student does not attend summer school or pass the class in summer, he/she may be required to stay back in his/her current grade.
- A student who fails two core classes **may be retained in his/her current grade in the following school year**. Staff will review a variety of measures in addition to course grades to determine if the student will be retained or if they will be eligible for summer school.
  - Students that are determined to be eligible for summer school must attend and earn a 70 or higher in their courses to pass them. If a student does not attend summer school or pass their classes in summer, he/she will be required to stay back in his/her current grade.
- A student who fails three or more core classes **will likely be retained in his/her current grade in the following school year**. Staff will review a variety of measures in addition to course grades to make the final determination.
- Any student in Special Education that falls under these categories, will have additional review measures taken to determine promotion, retention, or summer school eligibility.

DSST holds the sole right to choose one of the following courses of action for any student that does not meet promotion requirements:

- Require the student to repeat the current grade.
- Require the student to complete work over the summer of which the scope and expectations are defined by DSST.
- Retake a course in the next grade.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive written and verbal notification from the school during every trimester regarding their student’s status as it relates to promotion requirements. The school will send additional notification during the third trimester should the school be seriously considering retaining a student in their current grade. The school will communicate expectations to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) about what must be done to avoid being retained. A final decision will be made following the conclusion of the school year.

**Acceleration:** Acceleration of a student’s coursework or grade-level will be made on a case-by-case basis by the school director in collaboration with the student’s parents or guardians. This decision will be based on the student’s academic performance, social-emotional readiness, input of the school’s staff and a suitability of courses to serve them.

## 9. Graduation Requirements

### Course Requirements:

Required Coursework: The coursework at DSST is designed to give students the opportunity to meet the college entrance requirements for competitive schools as well as to pursue more advanced topics and independent study.

### Coursework for DSST Students:

Subject	Academic Program
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Humanities	<b>4 years including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Humanities/Geography (9<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Composition (9<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● World Literature (10<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● American Literature (11<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Senior English (12<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● World History (10<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● U.S. History (11<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Civics (12<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<b>4 Years including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Integrated Algebra/Geometry I (9<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Integrated Algebra/Geometry II (9<sup>th</sup> grade OR 10<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Algebra II/Algebra 2 Honors (10<sup>th</sup> grade OR 11<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Pre-Calculus/Pre-Calculus Honors (11<sup>th</sup> grade OR 12<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● AP Calculus (12<sup>th</sup> grade) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AB (Course 1)</li> <li>○ BC (Course 2)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Natural Sciences	<b>3 Years including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Physics (typically 9<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Chemistry (typically 10<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> <li>● Biology (typically 11<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> </ul>
STEM or Creative Core	<b>2 Years including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● STEM or Creative Core Elective which can be completed at any point in 9<sup>th</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade (e.g. Creative Engineering)</li> <li>● Additional STEM or Creative Core course (12<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> </ul>
Foreign Language (Spanish)	<b>3 Years</b> (of a single language - Spanish)
Physical Education	<b>3 Trimesters</b> or an acceptable equivalent approved by the school.
Internship	<b>1 Trimester</b> (11 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Senior Project	<b>2 Trimesters</b> (12 <sup>th</sup> grade)

The table below lists the number of years in each subject students must take to meet DSST expectations:

Courses	Years
English	4
Social Sciences	3

<b>Math</b>	4
<b>Science</b>	5
<b>Language</b>	3
<b>Physical Education</b>	1
<b>Electives</b>	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

### Graduation Requirements:

In addition to physical education requirement (3 trimesters), a student must meet all of the requirements outlined below to earn a diploma from DSST Public Schools. Only students who earn a diploma are permitted to participate in graduation activities.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Core Academic Program</b>
Coursework	Successful completion of all required courses as listed above
GPA	Overall C or higher
Standardized Tests	Completion of CMAS and SAT
College and Post-secondary Planning	Meet with college counselor to map out college applications, post-secondary plan, and FAFSA completion. Utilize Overgrad for application submission.
Internship	Complete 1 internship
Senior Project	Complete 1 Senior Project
Competency Requirements	Demonstrate competency through in-class measures or performance on selected national assessments**

\*\*Competency requirements will be communicated in more detail by your school administration.

## III. Discipline

The DSST community is founded on the six core values of Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Courage, Curiosity and Doing Your Best. The Core Values foster self-improvement, individual growth and character development and help define our shared expectations. For personal benefit and that of the entire school community, students are expected to consistently live the core values and support their peers in doing so. School staff have the right and responsibility to manage student conduct and to ensure an orderly and safe learning environment. Conduct that disrupts learning,

threatens school operations, interferes with the rights and privileges of community members, endangers health and safety or damages property will not be permitted.

DSST's core values frame a set of specific expectations. Unpredictable situations and circumstances will arise and will be handled with common sense and in a manner consistent with the guidelines and policies established herein. Behavioral consequences will always be determined with mutual respect for all involved parties, focused on the safety and development of our students. DSST will make every effort to ensure that behavior consequences are explicit, timely, consistent, age-appropriate, involve parents, respect individual differences, maximize student learning and ultimately address the needs of the student, as well as the overall school community.

Behavioral expectations apply during school, on school grounds, at school sanctioned activities or events, in school vehicles and at school functions that occur off campus. Any violation of school rules during these times will result in disciplinary measures and/or notification of law enforcement authorities. Behaviors that happen outside of this context, but still end up impacting students or the community on campus during the school day, can also result in disciplinary measures.

## 1. Student Behavioral Expectations

**Communication:** Students are expected to communicate respectfully with teachers and peers in their actions and words. Examples of unacceptable behavior may include, but are not limited to: using profane language and/or gestures, ignoring or refusing to complete a staff request, disrupting class or any other student's learning, threatening, slandering, bullying, discriminating, engaging in any behavior deemed to be harassment due to gender, race, ethnicity, etc., engaging in any behavior deemed to be a Title IX offence (i.e. sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual contact), being dishonest, stealing and/or fighting.

**Expectation of Ownership:** Students are expected to take ownership of their behavior, actions, personal commitments and commitments to the community. When students make poor choices, we will support them and hold them accountable so that they are able to take full responsibility for their behavior and commit to do better in the future.

**Reporting Breaches of School Policy:** For the safety and wellbeing of the school community, all students are expected to report breaches of school policy as soon as they are aware of the problem. Staff members will respect student privacy when concerns are reported. In some cases, students who do not participate in breaches of school policy, but *are aware of* such situations and do not report them may be assigned consequences due to their **inaction**. Students who witness questionable activity should talk to their Advisor or an administrator right away.

## 2. Rules (Schools insert specifics)

**Food and gum:** Food is allowed in the cafeteria and the outdoor front courtyard. Food is not permitted in other school areas unless approved by a staff member. Chewing gum is not permitted at school or on the campus.

**Personal electronics and computer games:** Cell phones and all similar devices must be turned off during school hours and stored in backpacks or lockers. Headphones may be used only under supervision of a staff member. Playing computer games, video games or using an electronic reader on campus is unacceptable unless approved by and under supervision of a staff member. If a device is not turned off and stored away, it will be confiscated by a staff member and a parent/guardian must reclaim it from an administrator. A subsequent confiscation may result in the item no longer being

allowed on campus, even after school. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items (even if confiscated). **The ONLY time students are permitted to use cell phones is before or after school outside of the building.**

**Wheels on Campus Policy:** Bikes, roller-skates, “wheelie” shoes, rollerblades, skateboards, scooters, and other wheeled devices may not be ridden on school property for recreational purposes. If so, they will be confiscated on the first offense. Confiscated items can be reclaimed by a parent/guardian from a school administrator. Bikes and other wheeled devices may be ridden to/from school, but must be properly locked away and only ridden for school travel purposes.

**Lunchroom:** Behavior in accordance with our core values is expected in the lunchroom. Additionally, students **MUST:**

- Clean the table, bench, and floor of their eating area
- Sit **ONLY** on chairs or benches in the lunchroom
- Refrain from throwing food or any other items
- Use appropriate volume and table manners
- Demonstrate respect and the core values towards all cafeteria staff

**Public Display of Affection (PDA):** Public displays of affection are not permitted while at school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. Inappropriate touching with hands or other parts of the body is **NOT** permitted including, but not limited to, hugging or sitting on laps. A brief hug with a friend is permitted. Appropriate consequences are determined based on the situation at hand.

### 3. Policies

**Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco:** Possession, distribution, use or sale of alcohol, tobacco, vapes, or illicit drugs is prohibited on school grounds, at any school-sanctioned activity, in school vehicles, or at any time or in any place where such conduct interferes with or obstructs the educational program/operations of the school, or the health and safety of the community. Distribution includes situations where a student brings drugs or controlled substances to share. Selling includes bartering or exchanging controlled substances for another item or a gift.

As required by law and/or the school district’s discipline policies, or at the discretion of the school, violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary measures, including possible suspension, a report to authorities, and a possible recommendation for expulsion.

**Weapons:** Knives, explosives or weapons of any type are not permitted in school, on campus, in school vehicles or at any off-campus, school-related activities or events. Possession of any such weapons or items that appear to be weapons will result in consequences aligned to the district’s discipline policies, including potential police involvement and possible expulsion per district policy.

Guns are not permitted anywhere on campus or at any off-campus, school-related activities or events. In accordance with Denver Public Schools policy, possession of a gun will be considered a Type 6 offense, automatic expulsion for one full calendar year.

**Gang Activity:** The purpose of this policy is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of those in the school community and to prevent the initiation or continuation of gang membership and gang activity at DSST.

Pursuant to state law, the term “gang” refers to all groups of three or more individuals who share a common interest, bond, or activity characterized by criminal, delinquent, or otherwise disruptive conduct engaged in collectively or individually.

Prohibition of gang-related actions will be determined at the discretion of the staff. Consequences will be determined according to the circumstances of the infraction. DSST conducts on-going communication with Denver law enforcement agencies regarding this policy.

**Student Searches and Seizures:** School property is under the control of the school. If reasonable suspicion exists (illegal, disruptive, general nuisance to the educational process), searches on school property (including, but not limited to, lockers and vehicles parked on school property) may be conducted at the discretion of the administration. Upon reasonable suspicion of illegal or unauthorized materials, school authorities may search a student’s person and/or personal property, desk area or backpack. School officials may detain students upon reasonable suspicion that they possess drugs, narcotics, weapons, explosives or other dangerous contraband that constitute clear and imminent danger to the safety and welfare of community/property. School authorities are permitted to seize any items that are found to be detrimental to the school community/property for evidence. Furthermore, school officials will notify parents/guardians and law enforcement agencies of such possession.

**Physical Restraint:** Corporal punishment is defined as intentional infliction of physical pain as a method of changing behavior. **Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be administered at DSST.** In accordance with Denver Public Schools policy JKA, physical restraint and intervention by trained staff is allowed in situations where:

- Reasonable physical restraint and/or time-out as a means to protect the student being restrained or others from a serious, probable, imminent threat of bodily harm;
- In cases of emergency when other less restrictive alternatives have failed or the staff member determines that such alternatives would be inappropriate or ineffective under the circumstances;
- An emergency is a serious, probable, imminent threat of bodily harm to self or others where there is the present ability to effect such harm.

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.

## 4. Habitually Disruptive Student

In situations where students may be considered disruptive, DSST schools will follow policy outlined by Denver Public Schools, Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures, Policy JK-R.

**First Out of School Suspension in a school year:** A behavior plan will be developed for the student. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing. A re-entry meeting may be required for the student and a parent/guardian to attend.

**Second Out of School Suspension in a school year:** Student’s behavior plan will be reviewed and modified and the student and parents/guardians will be notified in writing. A re-entry meeting may be required for the student and a parent/guardian to attend.

**Third Out of School Suspension in a school year:** Student may be declared habitually disruptive which could result in a recommendation for expulsion made to Denver Public Schools. Before making any recommendation, parents/guardians will be notified in writing. A re-entry meeting may be required for the student and a parent/guardian to attend.



**Students with Disabilities:** Disruptive behavior, as defined by school policy, by a student identified as a student with a disability, will be supported in accordance with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## 5. Actions that May Warrant Interventions or Suspensions

The following list is not exhaustive and is subject to modification/additions by either DSST Public Schools or Denver Public Schools, in accordance with Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures, Policy JK-R.

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Destruction of school property
- Theft
- Fighting
- Disobedient/defiant or repeated interference
- Drug or alcohol possession, use, or distribution
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Arson
- Hazing
- Witness intimidation/retaliation
- Habitual disruption
- Possession of a dangerous weapon

## 6. Actions that will Lead to an Expulsion Hearing

Expulsion hearing criteria are outlined in the Board of Education Policy by the Denver Public Schools Conduct Code, and by laws and regulations for the State of Colorado and the City and County of Denver.

Recommendation for expulsion hearings are **mandatory** for:

- Robbery
- First or second degree assault, and sexual assault
- Sale or distribution of, or intent to sell or distribute, unauthorized drugs or controlled substances
- Carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon without the authorization of the school or District (including any firearm or firearm facsimile that could reasonably be mistaken for an actual firearm, spring action or compressed air devices such as BB guns, fixed-blade knives with blades longer than 3", pocket knives with blades longer than 3.5", spring-loaded knives, and any other objects used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury)

Expulsion is mandatory under state law for:

- Possession of a firearm

Additionally, DSST may recommend an expulsion hearing for offenses listed in Denver Public Schools Discipline Matrix, Policy JK-R, attachment B, which include, but are not limited to:

- *Repeated Suspensions:* Being suspended out of school three times over the course of a school year.
- *Gang-Related Activity:* Evidence of gang-related activity.

- *Serious Violation*: A more serious violation of school rules and expectations which the School Director and Dean deem the circumstances of that violation warrant a more significant consequence than suspension.
- *Drug and Tobacco Use*: Violation of the drug and tobacco policy.

## 7. The Discipline Process

**Discipline embedded in learning, restoration, and re-engagement:** We believe that discipline is a lifelong process and must be collaborative, holistic, and shared by all members of the community. Every human is striving to be the best version of themselves and we are relentless in assisting them in the development of essential skills and behaviors. Therefore, all disciplinary actions are used to assist students in learning, restoration, and re-engagement.

DSST **core values** are the cornerstone of our discipline process. We hope to develop individuals who are responsible, respectful, curious, courageous, and who do their best and demonstrate integrity. When students embody our core values, they receive **core value points**. We track these points on the **Liveschool** app, and the points accumulate into a “paycheck” that can be spent at our school store. Paychecks will also be used to determine eligibility for end of trimester field trips and other extracurricular events, such as school dances.

If students do not demonstrate behaviors of our core values, they will receive a **core value deduction**. Typically, it is a 1-2 point deduction at a time. If students engage in very disruptive or disrespectful behavior, they will be issued a **Refocus**. Additionally, if a student has seven core value deductions within one school day, they will be issued a Refocus for the following day.

**Refocus** takes place during lunch/recess. It is a time and space for students to reflect upon and take accountability for mistakes they’ve made. Refocus should be viewed as a restorative intervention rather than a punitive one. It’s also worth knowing that while Refocus is an intervention that works well for the vast majority of our students, a few students will require additional steps or even individual plans to learn from their mistakes. Just as we know that students in the same classroom will be reading at different levels, an adolescent’s maturity should be viewed in a similar manner. Students who struggle with reflecting properly should be taken in stride and looked upon as a teaching opportunity.

In the case of egregious behaviors, students will be given a **referral**. Referrals are reserved as an intervention for more severe student behaviors or repeated lower-level behaviors that happen within a single class period. We believe that when a student is referred, before reentering that classroom, the student needs to restore the relationship with the classroom teacher whenever possible. The teacher is responsible for contacting the family to explain the situation, setting up a Restorative Justice Conversation (RJC) with the student to be conducted with the student before class the following day. If a teacher feels they need another adult present for the RJ, they are responsible for scheduling time with that adult.

For very severe disruptions of the school environment that poses danger to student safety, **suspension** may be warranted. We carefully follow the Denver Discipline Matrix to determine appropriate consequences for student behavior and work closely with families in this process. For any suspension, students complete a reflection assignment and are required to attend a re-entry meeting upon their return to school.

School Administration have the discretion to set their specific student discipline process at their respective schools.

## 8. Consequences

The main purpose of disciplinary consequences is to assist as necessary in the learning, restoration, and/or re-engagement process of disciplinary actions. Additionally, they also assist in ensuring that students and the community is safe and that all are able to maintain complete focus on learning and growth. Inappropriate student behavior impacts individuals and exacts a cost on the larger school community. Students must understand that they are accountable to their peers and to the core values and expectations of the community as a whole. Family involvement is encouraged and expected to ensure prompt resolution of concerns and behaviors that do not align with our core values and our policies.

Disciplinary measures, depending upon the nature of the action and necessary student learning, may include the following interventions:

- In-school Intervention
- In School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension
- Restorative Conversations
- Refocus
- Other determined actions determined for learning, restoration, or re-engagement needs

## 9. Expulsion

DSST works closely with Denver Public Schools on situations where an expulsion hearing may be warranted. After a proper investigation and hearing, in accordance with Denver Public Schools policy JK-R, Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures, a student may be recommended for expulsion from DSST. Parents/Guardians will be notified before a student is formally recommended for an expulsion hearing.

# IV. Facility and Resource Policies

## 1. School Property

Students must treat school property and equipment with care, respect and responsibility. School property includes, but is not limited to, the building and grounds, equipment, books and laptops. Intentional actions to damage or harm school property may lead to a fine, suspension and/or may lead to an expulsion hearing. Should the damage be deemed as an unintentional act, students may be given the option of reimbursing the school and/or completing community restoration.

## 2. Textbooks

When required, school textbooks will be provided. Students must maintain the quality of each book, using a book cover if necessary. At the end of the year, the exact numbered copy issued must be returned to receive credit for the book. Damaged or lost book fees will be assessed accordingly.

## 3. Laptop Computers

Upon parent/guardian and student signature of the *Student and Family Handbook Contract*, the student will be issued a laptop for the school year. Use of the laptop is a privilege - not a right - and can be revoked at any time. Laptop use and all school technology resources are governed by DSST's acceptable use policy. DSST reserves the right to enforce the Acceptable Use Policy and to limit or revoke a student's privileges at any time. Parents/guardians may

not use the student's email account to send emails to any student or group of students without the permission of the School Director.

When laptops are distributed at the beginning of the year, or replaced at any time during the year, parents/guardians will be asked to review the condition of the computer and report any noticeable problems via the Laptop Checkout form. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign this form acknowledging acceptance of the laptop.

Students are responsible for the proper care and use of laptops. In the event of damage, parents/guardians will be responsible for payment to repair or replace the equipment based on the cost to process the replacement. DSST will publish the cost for each replacement prior to the beginning of the school year. Rates will be published and distributed to families at the beginning of each school year. Any time a damage fee is assessed, parents will have two weeks to inspect the laptop to verify the condition.

#### **4. Responsibility for Personal Property**

All property brought to school is brought "at your own risk." DSST will not assume responsibility for any personal property. Distracting or inappropriate objects will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day or parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up. Repeat violations will require a parent/guardian conference.

#### **5. Lost and Found**

Periodically throughout the school year, items not claimed from the lost and found will be donated to charitable organizations.

#### **6. School Supplies**

Students are responsible for obtaining appropriate school supplies for personal use. DSST will publish a school supply list prior to the beginning of each school year. Students are expected to have required supplies by the first day of school.

#### **7. Student Resource Fees**

Parents/Guardians of students who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch are asked to pay a student resource fee to support services provided by the school (e.g. student activities, technology). Parents/guardians of students who do qualify for free or reduced lunch are encouraged to support DSST's academic program by contributing to a student resource fee. The student resource fee plays a significant role in providing a high quality educational experience by supplementing public funds, but is voluntary. Fees pertaining to optional aspects of the program, such as athletics, extra-curricular activities and clubs, may be required for students wishing to participate. A fee schedule will be provided at the beginning of each school year.

### **V. General School Policies**

#### **1. Non-Discrimination Statement & Title IX**

It is the policy of DSST to recruit, hire, train, educate, promote, and administer all personnel and instructional actions without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual-preference, age, national origin, disability, marital status, public assistance, or any legally protected classification. DSST will not tolerate any discrimination, and any such conduct is

prohibited. DSST also prohibits any form of discipline or retaliation for reporting incidents. DSST Public Schools is committed to a policy that no otherwise qualified person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to unlawful discrimination in its admissions, or under any School program or activity, on the basis of ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.

Consistent with these commitments, and in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), the School aims to provide a safe learning and working environment for students, employees and community members, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, in its admission, educational programs and activities, and employment.

DSST Public Schools Title IX Procedures are located at <https://www.dsstpublicschools.org/title-ix>.

The DSST Network of Schools has designated a central Network Title IX Coordinator to oversee the Network’s compliance with Title IX. That person is:

William Carter, DSST Network of Public Schools 3401 Quebec Street, Suite 2000 Denver, CO 80207 (303) 524-6324

For additional information about discrimination or to file a complaint, you may contact the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at: Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building 1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310 Denver, Colorado 80204-3582 Telephone: 303-844-5695 Email: OCR.Denver@ed.gov Online: [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)

## 2. Student Special Services

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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

The IEP describes the specially designed services that will be provided to students. This includes instruction from specifically trained and licensed special education teachers and practitioners. Students may also receive support from nurses, mental health providers, speech/language and motor therapists. Eligibility is determined by a formal assessment process that uses criteria associated with specific disabilities. Within this evaluation process, families are provided information regarding their child’s eligibility and options for services.

If you believe your child may qualify for special education services, please contact your school to inquire about an assessment.

### **SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT**

Section 504 is a federal civil rights law that ensures students with disabilities are afforded “equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement” as an average peer. To pursue eligibility, a student can be referred to the school’s Section 504 coordinator. A Section 504 team would convene to determine eligibility. If the student is found to be eligible, the Section 504 team would determine the

student's placement, services, and accommodations to help mitigate barriers caused by the impairment(s). Call your school for more information.

## **MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION**

At DSST, we believe that every student's primary language is an asset that, combined with English language skills, leads to success in school and life. Multilingual Education (MLE) programs feature instruction by qualified teachers and dedicated English Language Development courses to support Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in developing knowledge in core content areas while they learn English. All students whose primary language is not English, and who are not yet proficient in English, are eligible for MLE program services.

At registration, parents of all new students complete a form called the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ), which identifies the language or languages spoken by the student and his or her family. If a language other than English is entered on the HLQ, the parents select an MLE program for their student. The school evaluates the child's English proficiency level and reviews the student's performance to determine if the child is eligible for ELA program services.

Regardless of the program, all Multilingual Learners receive a daily class dedicated to English Language Development (ELD), which gives students the fundamental tools to speak and write English. At DSST ELD courses are differentiated by language proficiency level to ensure that students are receiving the language instruction most appropriate for their proficiency level.

## **3. Student Records and FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. DSST has access to and maintains an information file on each student via the DPS electronic records system, Infinite Campus. Parents/Guardians may review their student's file upon request. School officials may access student records for educational purposes only and pertinent student information may be shared in cases of medical emergency to protect student safety. All individually identifiable educational information is protected from disclosure except for "Directory" information. Directory information includes student name, date of birth, place of birth, participation in officially recognized sports and activities, height and weight (for athletic teams), dates of attendance, degrees and other honors awarded. Families may opt out of sharing any information with any party outside of the school at the beginning of each year, or at any other time by contacting the school's front office team. DSST recommends that families who wish to opt out do so during the Registration/Annual Family Update period.

## **4. Educator Qualifications**

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) states that any school that receives Title I funds must inform families of students of their right to request information on teacher qualifications. Furthermore, the Colorado Department of Education requires districts who receive these funds of teachers who provide instruction for four more weeks if they do not hold a Colorado teaching license.

At DSST, our teachers meet high standards for subject matter qualification, including having a degree in their content area or passing a rigorous test to demonstrate robust content knowledge as required by ESSA. Furthermore, each DSST teacher undergoes a rigorous, multi-step application and interview process that exceeds employment application requirements of surrounding districts and CDE requirements. Based on a waiver in the DSST charter provided by the state, DSST does not require teachers to pay additional fees associated with becoming certified by

the state of Colorado as they are already required to demonstrate qualification through academic and application requirements for employment.

You may obtain information about your students teachers qualifications by emailing DSST's Human Resources team at [humanresources@scienceandtech.org](mailto:humanresources@scienceandtech.org).

## 5. Student Health

All DSST schools operate under the supervision of a certified nurse. If your student has a health care management plan of any kind, including for an allergy, diabetes or another condition, please provide that plan and any other information to the front office team when you register your student. Students who are ill or injured during the school day will be assessed by our staff and parents will be called to pick up ill or injured students who cannot stay at school. In emergency situations, school staff will call 911 and the parents/guardian immediately.

- I. **Medications:** Students requiring medications to be administered at school, including rescue inhalers and Epi-Pens, must complete the district required paperwork, and must provide the medication **in its original packaging and with student name and dose information**. Medications will be kept on campus until they expire or are returned at the end of the year.
- II. **Immunizations:** Please provide a record of immunizations for your student during the registration process each year before the start of school. The State of Colorado does require certain immunizations for school attendance by law. Parents seeking exemption from required vaccinations must follow the State of Colorado's exemption process. This process is completely independent of DSST and its partner districts, and must be completed by the parent or guardian. Students not vaccinated in accordance with state law and do not have an approved exemption will not be permitted to attend school until appropriate documentation is received, and will be considered absent and unexcused.
- III. **Nutrition and Foodservice:** DSST provides meals for students as part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and all meals comply with Federal nutrition guidelines established by the USDA. The NSLP subsidizes the cost of student meals through the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) process. Families are strongly encouraged to complete a FRL application each school year, and need only complete the application once for their entire household, unless they have students in multiple districts, in which case one application must be completed for each district of attendance. As part of the NSLP program, students must not bring food to school to sell or trade to other students. Food brought to school from home must be for the student's immediate use only.

## 6. Mandated Reporting of Suspected Abuse and Neglect

All school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, and are expected to complete the requisite Mandated Reporter training annually. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child – a student under 18 years old –has been harmed, or is in danger of being harmed, physically, sexually, emotionally, or through neglect. All school personnel will follow required protocols for reporting suspected abuse or neglect.

## 7. Media Release

DSST maintains a website, keeps a social media presence and periodically publishes promotional materials. We do this to effectively share the wonderful stories of our students, staff, and school communities, and capturing authentic moments makes this exponentially more impactful. On occasion, DSST may receive media requests to highlight the

schools and students. DSST may also wish to display or publish student artwork, photos taken by the student, or other original work on the school's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the school (such as a classroom website) and in school publications.

DSST will apply each family's opt-in/opt-out decision from the "Parent Permission for Media, District Marketing, Web and Internal Use of Photos and Video" form completed during registration and annual family update processes to the sharing of a student's image or original work. Families may update this selection at any time by contacting their school's Front Office team.

## 8. Distribution of Published Materials or Documents

**School Materials:** With prior approval by the Director, Advisor or teacher, publications prepared by students may be posted or distributed to the greater community. Such items may include school posters, brochures, murals, etc. The school newspaper, the yearbook and all school publications available to students are supervised by staff members and may be edited or taken down at the sole discretion of the school.

**Non-School Materials:** Unless a student (or parent/guardian) obtains specific prior approval from the Director, written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters or other visual or auditory materials may not be posted, sold, circulated, or distributed at school or on campus.

## 9. Commerce

Students (or parents/guardians) may not sell any articles on school property without the permission of the Director. Money or materials for personal purposes or for an outside organization may not be collected without prior permission from the School Director.

## 10. Enrollment

DSST operates public charter schools open to all students via the Denver Public Schools SchoolChoice process. All DSST schools manage their enrollment through the DPS SchoolChoice process as independent entities. Students who require enrollment in a Center based program will not be placed through the SchoolChoice process and are placed directly into Center programs via DPS Special Services.

Acceptance into a DSST school does not allow the student to transfer to another DSST Public School location. Transfers between DSST schools will be approved for rare, extenuating circumstances and must be coordinated between the Directors of both schools with final approval by the DSST Home Office.

A student who is officially enrolled at a DSST for the 2022-23 school year will be automatically re-enrolled for the following year unless the student participates in the SchoolChoice process to attend a different school. Beginning in 2023-24, every 8th grader who wishes to attend the 9th grade at the same campus should complete a SchoolChoice form in Round 1 as part of their Intent to Return confirmation to DSST. If a current DSST student participates in the 2023-24 DPS School Choice Round 1 or Round 2 process and is assigned to a new school, enrollment at their current DSST school will cease at the end of the current year. If the student then changes their mind and wishes to then stay at their current DSST school, the student will need to re-apply for admission during Round 2 of the SchoolChoice process and may be placed on a waitlist.

## 11. Transportation



Families are responsible for getting their student(s) to and home from school. Any daily to/from school transportation that may be provided is managed by the Denver Public Schools Transportation system. Parents must give written permission for any person, including a DSST staff member, to transport their student to and from school. Parents should contact DPS Transportation for any questions about specific routes and services that they may be eligible for through the district at 720-423-4600. RTD has a discounted student fare, and RTD pass products can be purchased at numerous locations across the metro area, including at most grocery stores. If your family is unable to afford a bus pass or is experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, please contact the front office team at your school to find out about support opportunities available.

## 12. Informal Parent/Guardian Grievance Process

DSST's informal grievance process provides an opportunity to express and resolve grievances. The informal process provides neutral facilitation and mediation, with the goal of informal resolution, restitution and relationship repair within the context of DSST's core values.

To encourage prompt resolution of grievances, community members are asked to address disputes directly with the other individual(s) involved and to allow reasonable time to reach a solution.

- Where possible, meetings between the disputing parties should take place within ten business days of the request.
- If conflict resolution is not achieved, the grievance should be brought to the School Director for further mediation.
- The School Director will reach out via phone call or message to the parent within 5 working days and investigate the grievance and within 10 days:
  - Contact all parties involved in the grievance,
  - Request that the parent attends a meeting to provide more information and further discuss the grievance, and/or
  - Inform the parent of the action taken to remedy the grievance.

The School Director, Community members, and school staff are all expected to act in good faith to best resolve any conflict. During the informal and formal Grievance Process, DSST's ability to achieve deadlines depends on timely responses from the person filing the grievance—DSST may pause the grievance process if the parent/guardian is unresponsive.

## 13. Formal Parent/Guardian Grievance Process

This policy is in place to address any grievance that is not resolved via the informal process or is significant enough, in the mind of the grievant, to require a formal investigative and resolution process that is documented in writing.

Step One: To initiate process, parents shall complete and submit a signed and dated *Parent Grievance Form* (template below) to the School Director and to the school's Managing Director at DSST Public Schools Home Office at 3401 Quebec St #2000, Denver, CO 80207, Attn: [school name] Managing Director.

Step Two: The Managing Director will acknowledge receipt of the written grievance via phone call or message to the parent within 5 working days and will launch a formal investigation of the grievance. The Managing Director will provide a copy of the written grievance to the individual(s) named in the grievance, and to their direct supervisors. By the 15th working day following receipt of the *Parent Grievance Form*, the Managing Director will inform the parent of the proposed action taken to remedy the grievance.

Step Three: If the issue remains unresolved after step two, the parent may request, in writing, that the Managing Director provide a copy of the written grievance to the DSST Public Schools Home Office at 3401 Quebec St #2000, Denver, CO 80207, Attn: Aaron Massey.

Within 10 working days of receiving the grievance at the Home Office, DSST Public Schools will appoint a Resolution Team that includes members of the school staff and the DSST Public Schools Home Office team. Any person who is directly named in the grievance or who is deemed to have a clear conflict of interest may not be a member of the Resolution Team. The team will conduct an internal investigation by conducting interviews with all relevant parties, reviewing pertinent documents and reviewing policies.

Within 40 working days of receiving the grievance at the Home Office, the Resolution Team will issue a written resolution that may include plans for facilitated conflict resolution meetings, recommendations for change in policy or procedure, and suggested next steps to the appropriate member of DSST's Senior Leadership, who will then inform the parent of the recommended actions to remedy the grievance within 45 working days of receiving the grievance.

Final Appeal: If a grievant is not satisfied with the recommendation of the Senior Leadership Team member, the matter should be appealed to DSST Public Schools' Board of Directors by contacting the Board Chair or Vice Chair at 3401 Quebec St #2000, Denver, CO 80207, Attn: Board Chair, who will formally respond to the grievant.

It is important to the integrity of our school that grievances be handled in an informed, direct, fair and equitable manner. The administration, DSST Public Schools, and the Board of Directors share responsibility for ensuring the integrity of the vision and its implementation through the system of due process as described in this policy.

The final forum for conflict resolution, after a grievant has followed the steps outlined above, will be the Board of Directors who will deliver a written communication to the grievant. If an individual or group initiates a complaint at a public meeting of the Board of Directors or to individuals on the Board, the Board is not be required to respond to the substance of the complaint, but will instead thank the individual or group for their time and direct them to the grievance process outlined above.

## Parent Grievance Form

### Parent Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Grievance

Name(s) of staff member(s) or parent(s) involved in grievance:

Please describe your grievance. Be as detailed as possible; include relevant dates, times, and locations, as well as information about the incident, background, participants, allegations, policy or contract breached, discrimination, etc.

What steps did you take to resolve the conflict? For example, did you request a consultation with the involved staff member(s) or parent(s)? If so, please share who was present at the consultation, how it went, and the date and time the consultation took place.

### Suggested Solution

Describe what you think should be done to solve the problem. Please be specific.

“I certify that this information is correct to the best of knowledge.”

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Social Media Policy

As members of the DSST Public Schools community, students and families are welcome to participate in interactions with the school online on our social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. Students and families are expected to employ responsible behavior, and any content that is egregious, inappropriate or illegal, and unbecoming of the core values of a DSST student to the school or to other community members will result in disciplinary action or reporting to proper authorities, if necessary. Posting photos of students without their consent will absolutely not be tolerated. Such posts/messages will be immediately deleted and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

## VI. Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

### 1. Participation

DSST encourages students to get involved with athletics and extracurricular activities. These activities are a valuable part of a strong liberal arts education. However, participation in competitive athletics and games is a privilege, and not a right. Students will be deemed eligible to participate as long as they are in good academic standing, are passing all of their classes and have consistently abided by the school's core values. Eligibility shall be determined by the school. A student may be removed from a team or club activity at any point if not in good academic or behavioral standing.

All school policies and rules apply to athletic and club activities, practices, games and transportation. At all times, students are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of sportsmanship and exemplify the school's Core Values.

All students participating in athletics are required to provide a physical exam at the beginning of the year or before the start of the athletic season. Please contact your campus athletic director for any questions or to share any important medical information.

Please refer to the Athletic Handbook for more details. [HERE](#)

### 2. After-School Clubs

A collaborative environment where all students have the opportunity to develop a healthy lifestyle, creative initiative, intellectual curiosity and civic awareness.

The After School Program gives support to DSST Mission by supporting urban public education by providing a non-traditional way of learning in a safe and supportive environment. Extracurricular activities will expose students to opportunities to learn new things outside of the classroom; helping bridge the gap of educational inequity and preparing ALL students to be well rounded and successful in the future.

For more information please refer to the activities handbook. [HERE](#)

### 3. Science and Tech Parent Group (STP)

Through volunteer efforts, the STP, composed of Parents/Guardians, supports the school's staff, students, and families; provides opportunities for parents/guardians to ask questions, express concerns and seek answers about school-related issues. All parents/guardians are welcome at each STP meeting, held monthly at the school. There are

no fees, qualifications or requirements associated with membership. All parents/guardians are considered voting members at each meeting they attend. Officers of STP are elected yearly with no previous qualifications required.

## VII. Weather and Emergency Procedures

### 1. Accident or Medical Emergency

If a medical emergency occurs at school, first aid will be administered and the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, an emergency contact or the family physician will be contacted. If necessary, the school will call Emergency Medical Services (911).

### 2. School Closings

DSST adheres to Denver Public Schools' and Aurora Public Schools' weather school closing decisions. If DPS or APS closes or has a delayed opening, DSST will do the same. The school-closing announcement will be posted at [www.dsstpublicschools.org](http://www.dsstpublicschools.org). When DPS or APS is NOT closed or on a delayed schedule, DSST will be open. Should DSST need to close school early for other emergency reasons, every attempt will be made to inform parents/guardians in order to arrange for transportation. Please always check your DSST school's social media and website for updates on weather closures.

### 3. Fire Alarms and Building Emergencies

Should an emergency require evacuation of the school, fire alarms will sound. Students will proceed to designated areas with their teachers. Individuals will remain in their area until a member of the administrative staff gives the "all-clear" signal. All fire alarms are treated as real and require immediate evacuation of the building. The school shall conduct periodic emergency response drills during the school year.

Evacuation procedures are as follows. Students who fail to follow this procedure will be issued an appropriate consequence.

1. Silently follow staff directions and proceed out the nearest exit.
2. Do not bring backpacks or any other belongings.
3. Meet in the designated area with your teacher.

Faculty and staff undergo emergency management training and yearly review. An emergency manual is available in each classroom for quick reference purposes.

# APPENDICES FOR THE CURRENT ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR

## APPENDIX A

### School Hours

- Monday to Friday arrival: 7:30am (Homeroom starts promptly at 7:45am)
- Dismissal: 3:15 pm with the exception on Wednesdays at 1:15 pm
- 2nd dismissal (Interventions) 4:05pm

### Office Hours

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 am – 3:00 pm
- Wednesday 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

## APPENDIX B Student Dress Code (school specific)

### Middle School Dress Code/Uniform Policy

Uniform Type	Acceptable	Not Acceptable
<b>Tops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any <b>school issued</b> t-shirt or sweatshirt is permitted. DSST Noel/ Elevate logo must be the top article of clothing. This includes school issued uniform polos, DSST Noel or Elevate T-shirts, DSST Noel or Elevate Sweatshirts, or other tops issued by DSST Noel or Elevate. Gym shirts and spirit wear are acceptable as well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-DSST polos. Must have DSST logo.</li> <li>• Non-DSST jackets or sweatshirts- must be placed in locker, backpack, or advisory classroom. Cannot be tied around the waist or carried.</li> <li>• If a student wears their hood up indoors, the hoodie will be confiscated for the remainder of the day.</li> </ul>
<b>Headwear</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious headwear or coverings</li> <li>• Headbands that are not distracting to the learning environment (should not be more than 1in above scalpline)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bandanas</li> <li>• Do rags</li> <li>• Hats</li> <li>• Hoods</li> </ul>
<b>Bottoms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any non-sweatpant/non-legging bottoms are appropriate (jeans, colored jeans, black pants, khaki pants, khaki skirt (no shorter than two inches above knee)</li> <li>• Ripped jeans must have leggings underneath</li> <li>• Skirts (meeting color requirements above) may be worn with the hem or slit no shorter than two inches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pants with excessive rips, pajamas, sweatpants, cotton-jersey leggings, or biker shorts</li> <li>• Shorts of any kind</li> <li>• Athletic shorts are not</li> </ul>

	above knee. Solid black, khaki, or dark denim leggings may be worn underneath skirts	permitted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sagging is never permitted.</li> <li>• Leggings are never permitted</li> </ul>
<b>Shoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may wear ANY closed toed, hard soled shoes or boots of any color.</li> <li>• Vans, Converse, Toms, athletic shoes, ballet flats, and Uggs (or similar shoes) are permitted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open toed shoes (sandals, slides, Crocs, slippers(with/without socks), or house shoes.</li> <li>• Shoes with heels or platforms over 2 inches.</li> </ul>
<b>College Wear Wednesdays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may wear any top that represents a college/university</li> <li>• Students may wear jeans (no skin showing through rips/holes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joggers, leggings, sweatpants</li> <li>• Open toed shoes or house shoes; shoes with heels over 2 inches</li> </ul>
<b>Dress Down</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may dress in clothes of their choice, avoiding all items listed in the “Not Acceptable” column.</li> <li>• Non athletic, fingertip lengths shorts are ok for dress down days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletic shorts</li> <li>• Pajamas or sweatpants</li> <li>• Jeans/Pants with excessive rips</li> <li>• Tank tops, low cut tops, see through or lace tops, tops that show the stomach</li> <li>• Any clothes with writing or images that are inappropriate for school.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C Make-up Work Policy

Students have two weeks to complete missing work. Students should work with their advisor to stay on top of missing assignments and can not make up assignments outside the two week make up window unless there is extenuating circumstances that is communicated to the Elevate leadership team and your student’s advisor.

## APPENDIX D Student Technology Use Summary

The technology given to students at DSST is a privilege, and along with that privilege, comes responsibility on the part of all students.

What students should know:

- Not using DSST technology appropriately at home or off campus will lead to disciplinary action or fines.
- DSST has the ability and the right to view anything on your computer at any time.
- In classrooms, technology can only be used as directed by a teacher or staff member.
- If you damage your computer, you and your family are responsible for paying for the damage.
- DSST has the right to take back the laptop of any student if they do not use it and care for it appropriately.

Do's – Student Responsibilities

- **DO** back up all of your data. You are responsible for having every file on your computer backed up. There is NO excuse for loss of work or documents due to computer or network failure.
- **DO** report any damage to your computer to the helpdesk right away.
- **DO** transport your laptop to and from class and school in a padded carrying case at all times.
- **DO** backup all files on a jump drive. If a laptop is confiscated, students are still responsible to have any digital work.
- **DO** only visit websites whose content is educational and ethical. Visiting any site that is not intended for academic purposes may result in your laptop being taken away.

Don'ts

- **DON'T** download ANY software to your laptop...ever.
- **DON'T** leave your laptop in your car, unlocked locker, or an unattended classroom.
- **DON'T** have a cell phone or other handheld electronic device out of your backpack without explicit instruction from a teacher or staff member.
- **DON'T** give any of your passwords to ANYONE.

*Although the items listed below are the most important things for students to know, it is important for students and their families to read this entire document before signing it.*

### DSST Public Schools Technology Acceptable Use Policy

DSST provides students and staff with a variety of technology resources for the purpose of supporting our educational mission. This acceptable use policy is intended to explain the responsibilities and limitations of technology use at DSST. **Additional rules may be added as necessary.**

It is important that all users of DSST technology remember that access to these resources is a privilege, not a right. Access to DSST technology resources is only given to students who act in a considerate and responsible manner. Users of technology are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior and care in the use of computers and school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school library. Still, as technology is integrated into the fabric of virtually all instruction at DSST, and appropriate use is critical to ensure learning happens for all, **violation of these policies will be treated as a disciplinary issue.**



## Policies

1. Inappropriate usage of technology will lead to serious disciplinary consequences. We expect students to apply the same core values of responsibility, integrity and respect that govern their conduct in their life at DSST to also govern their use of DSST's computers at home and off-campus.
2. DSST staff reserves the right to define inappropriateness in this context and to check any student's laptop at any time.
3. General school rules and expression of core values apply to all use of technology.
4. Reference to laptops also includes tablets or other kinds of Technology provided or authorized by DSST.
5. All work created on or by or stored on any DSST equipment belongs to DSST and may be reviewed and/or retained for any purpose in line with its educational mission.
6. Computer and network storage areas may be accessed by network administrators as needed for school purposes. All files (including email and internet) viewed and stored on DSST servers or computers will be considered public, and may be viewed by a DSST staff member at any time. Within reason as determined by the deans and director, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored.
7. At school and/or during school hours, students will use computers and other technology resources for **school related purposes only**, unless they receive specific permission to do otherwise. In classrooms, students will use technology **only as directed by the teacher**.
8. **In the event of damage to the computer or its peripheral parts, either payment for replacement/repair of the damage or the cost of the deductible will be charged.** If financial hardship is an issue, contact the student's dean or the business manager.
9. **DSST reserves the right to withhold technology resources from the student responsible for unpaid damages until appropriate arrangements have been made.**
10. Additional consequences may be levied in the event of multiple damage incidents by a given student.

## Student Appropriate Use

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the following:

1. **IMPORTANT: It is the student's responsibility to see that all work is backed up.** There is **NO** excuse for **loss of work or documents due to computer or network failure or loss due to disciplinary action.** Students shall always maintain at least two copies saved; one on the local hard drive, and one on at least one of the following: flash drives or on the server (the H drive). Applications should be set so that work is saved at least every 5 or 10 minutes. Generally, in the event of disciplinary actions (like computer re-cloning) due to computer misuse, **NO opportunity for backing up work will be given.**
2. No cell or multimedia devices are allowed out of your backpack during class unless directed by the teacher.
3. Materials printed at school are to be academic in nature. Documents not pertaining to school are not to be printed from the DSST laptop and teacher permission is required to print.
4. Students will respect the intellectual property of others by using appropriate citation, refraining from all forms of plagiarism, and abiding by federal copyright laws.
5. All students must log on with their own username and password. **Passwords must be kept confidential.** Users are responsible for all actions that occur with their user account and computers. Users should change their password from time to time and guard it carefully. **It is ALWAYS appropriate to ask someone to step away while one enters a password, and courteous to do so without being asked.**
6. Students must not attempt to access or tamper with files, folders, programs, drives or any equipment on the network that do not belong to them.

7. Students will conserve the use of technology resources such as bandwidth, printing supplies, etc. Personal files, music, video, or other personal multimedia files unrelated to school may NOT be saved on the desktop or in My Documents (which is Windows default location, and gets synchronized with your H drive) or in the H drive. This also includes the background of your laptop – you must use one of the Windows backgrounds, and you may not use any other image for your laptop background. In the event your network (home) folder becomes filled with personal files, your whole folder may be emptied with no recourse for lost work. If you do not understand how personal files get in your home folder, ASK a teacher.
8. Students will find all approved software for download in the software center and **should not download or install anything found outside of that**. Students may not **download or install programs or inappropriate media or info**. If a program, or any portion of it, is on your hard drive without permission, it constitutes computer misuse.
9. **The Internet is available to students for academic pursuits**. Students may not use it in an inappropriate manner, or give out personal information about themselves or classmates over the Internet without specific staff permission. Students may not use their laptop for any streaming content unless it is specifically for an academic class.
10. The school will provide all students with access to the Internet and an e-mail account. These are privileges and may be rescinded if used in an inappropriate manner. Any student who uses inappropriate language or uses the Internet or his/her email to harass, attack or defame another person or send inappropriate pictures in any communications faces disciplinary action. Email is an educational tool provided for the express purpose of furthering DSST's educational mission. As such, DSST reserves the right to inspect any DSST email messages, to rescind or modify privileges in any way or at any time in the enforcement of this policy.
11. If students use DSST systems to communicate concern of harm to others or themselves, that communication is subject to monitoring and may be reported to and responded to by Denver or Aurora Public Schools' Safety teams, or in some cases to local law enforcement.
12. Students will follow DSST technology use protocols. For instance, Instant Messaging (or having IM programs on the student computer – see Downloading above), emailing during class, and playing music out loud during school hours are not acceptable.
13. Students may not subscribe to Listserv services on a DSST account, in which mail is automatically sent to a student account, without expressed written permission from the IT department.
14. Students will not use technology for illegal or commercial enterprise.
15. Students will take all precautions with their laptops to avoid damage or theft (see Laptop Care & Maintenance Document below), and report any damage, theft or malfunction immediately. This includes but is not limited to the use of a laptop bag or backpack with a built-in laptop sleeve.
16. So as not to unnecessarily burden DSST support staff, students will learn and exercise skills to undertake basic troubleshooting, including taking advantage of (in the following order)
  - a. online computer and web help sources
  - b. fellow students
  - c. teachers

Students will take precautions against viruses and other threats and will report all issues or infections immediately to prevent damage.

## **DSST Public Schools Laptop Care and Maintenance**

### **Physical Security (keeping your laptop physically safe):**

1. DO NOT leave your laptop in your car, an unlocked locker, or a classroom.

2. Your locker must have a lock on it, as you will need to return your laptop to your locker for lunch and for PE/Health.
3. DO NOT eat or drink near your laptop. You may not use the laptop in the lunchroom during lunch. You may not have a water bottle at your desk if you are using your laptop.
4. Be cautious about leaving the laptop unattended anywhere that there is a chance it could easily be knocked onto the floor, sat on, stepped on or otherwise damaged. Know that dropping, jostling, or bumping might cause damage to the hard drive.
5. Always hold the laptop by the bottom (keyboard half), **NEVER** the screen. Use two hands when carrying.
6. Never twist the screen on its hinges (could crack the screen).
7. DO NOT scratch or push on the screen.
8. Never close the lid on a pencil, pen, papers or other items left on the keyboard.
9. DO NOT slam the lid down.
10. DO NOT place the laptop near any electrical appliance that could generate a magnetic field, it can damage data.
11. **Always transport the laptop in a padded carrying case**, and never stack items on the lid of the laptop. **You must transport the laptop in your padded carrying case to and from class.** This means that when you are traveling from class to class, you are not carrying the laptop in your hands.
12. Use a luggage tag or other unique item to attach to your laptop case to help identify your computer.
13. Be careful when removing the power cord. Yanking it out of the laptop from afar will cause damage. DO NOT wrap the cord tightly around itself or tie it in knots. Instead, for storage, loosely wrap it in a circular or figure eight pattern. Secure it with a Velcro strap, twist tie or other means intended to secure the cord.
14. Remember as the thermometer lowers that cold is not your computer's friend. Do not leave it in the car. Do not store your laptop anywhere that is very cold or very warm.

#### **Internal Security (keeping dangerous data from harming your laptop):**

1. Do not download ANYTHING from the Internet without specific permission from the IT Department! Kazaa, Bonzi, Gator, WeatherBug, HotBar, WhenUSave, CommetCursor, WebHancer all appear to have legitimate useful functions. However, most of this software is, contains, or is a common conduit of viruses, spyware or adware, all of which will damage your Windows installation, waste resources, generate pop-up ads, download more garbage and report your personal information back to the company that provides that software.
2. Downloaded software and screensavers often cause conflicts that can cause your laptop to function very slowly and often crash. Remember that the laptop is a tool for learning and keeping it free of extras will keep it working efficiently and properly.

#### **When to seek help:**

1. Shut off the notebook immediately and bring it to the IT Department for servicing if you have the following problems:
  - When the power cord or plug is damaged or frayed.
  - If liquid has been spilled on the computer.
  - If it has been dropped or the case has been damaged.
  - Any physical damage is noticed.
  - The system has crashed/locked.

- 2. Bring your computer to the tech lab for any repairs, upgrades, or any problems.

**Cleaning your laptop:**

**Display/Screen**

- Soap can leave a residue on the computer, ONLY use a slightly damp to wipe the screen and case.
- When cleaning the screen, spray onto a soft lint free cloth and never spray the screen directly.

**Keyboards and Case**

- To clean the keyboard, you can use a vacuum (suction or blower; small units are available at Office Depot or other computer/office supply stores) with a tiny extension nozzle to free dust and debris from the keys. Wipe down the surfaces/keys with a slightly damp cloth. Do not allow moisture to seep into any part of the keyboard.
- If significant cleaning is needed, use rubbing alcohol or a mild household cleaner (avoiding contact with the screen), applied to a lint free cloth. If water gets between the keys, do not use the laptop until the water has had time to evaporate.
- To clean the exterior casing of your laptop, wipe using a slightly damp cloth, allowing no moisture to get inside any openings or drives.

LAPTOP DISCIPLINE RUBRIC: severity and consequences of offenses		
Purpose of tracking offenses is to teach responsible computer usage, protect schools' property and to protect schools' infrastructure. This will also aid in prevention and parent administration/advisory meetings.		
Severity	Type	Consequence
1	Misuse of internet, emailing, gaming or standard DSST applications in class: this behavior should be included in house notes on behaviors so advisor can address behavior; teachers use standard discipline process before addressing as "excessive" issue.	RF: Contact Advisor first, and if issue persists, contact House leaders; if all agree this is a consistent, excessive behavior across classes, email can be limited for a defined period of time, and the Dean should be contacted for possible suspension
	Excessive, habitual emailing in class	RF: Contact Advisor first, and if issue persists, contact House leaders; if all agree this is a consistent, excessive behavior across classes, email can be limited for a defined period of time, and the Dean should be contacted for possible suspension
	Left equipment unattended (either the laptop is unattended or the backpack with the laptop inside is unattended) or carrying laptop from class to class without it being in a padded case or laptop bag.	RF: student is still responsible for all assigned work turned in by the due dates

	Laptop needs to be cleaned virus/adware/spyware	RF and Clone; student is still responsible for all assigned work turned in by the due dates
	loaded unauthorized files or website, (except porn & hate content - see below L3)	RF and Clone; student is still responsible for all assigned work turned in by the due dates
	H: drive abuse – using personal H drive to house non-school or academic related files.	Referral to Dean for possible suspension
2	Internet filter bypass	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for possible suspension (1-2 days) and Clone, Internet restrictions
	Defiance toward Teacher after two verbal warnings regarding laptop use during classroom instruction; or after two verbal warnings around use of laptop outside the classroom.	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for possible suspension (1-2 days) and Clone, Internet restrictions
	H: drive abuse second offense	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for possible suspension (1-2 days) and loss of H drive availability
	Repeat of Level 1 offense (# of RF)	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for possible suspension (2-3 days) & Clone
	detected and un-cleanable virus/adware/spyware	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for possible suspension (2-3 days) & Clone
3	Repeat of L2 offense, 3rd repeat of L1 offense	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for suspension, Parent Conference, Redo AUP, and Clone
	hacking computer password or computers (local admin password) + no damage	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for suspension, Parent Conference, Redo AUP, and Clone
	intentional load unauthorized files to server	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for suspension, Parent Conference, Redo AUP, and Clone
	Possession of porn (sexual or extreme violence) content on computer	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for suspension, Parent Conference, Redo AUP, and Clone
	deliberate or negligent damage (e.g. spilling liquids on laptop, drop or throwing laptops)	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for suspension, deductible, cost to replace (no insurance)

	Violent or sexually explicit gaming (e.g. First Shooter Gaming)	Laptop confiscated; Referral to the dean for suspension and Clone
4	Repeat of L3 offense, 3rd repeat of L2 offense, 4th+ repeat of L1 offense	Referral to the dean for suspension etc.
	hacking computer password or computers (local admin password) + damage	Referral to the dean for suspension, possible legal charges, etc.
	significant intentional load unauthorized files to server	Referral to the dean for suspension, possible legal charges, etc.
	student/staff abuse or bullying by means of technology	Referral to the dean for suspension, possible legal charges, etc.
	Possession of hate content on computer	Referral to the dean for suspension, possible legal charges, etc.
	Theft	Referral to the dean for suspension, possible legal charges, etc.
5	Repeated or severe student/staff abuse or bullying by means of technology	Referral to the dean for suspension, criminal prosecution, possible expulsion
	Hacking with intent to cause damage	Referral to the dean for suspension, criminal prosecution, possible expulsion

## APPENDIX E Family and Student Core Value Pledge

DSST was founded on six Core Values, which create common agreements to develop a strong, healthy community. Every individual has their own unique set of personal values and living a values-driven life is an ongoing journey for staff, students and families at DSST and beyond.

We commit to create a welcoming, values-driven environment for anyone that enters our school in order to create a vibrant and inclusive DSST Community. Healthy communities support individuals to become the best version of themselves in order to contribute to the human story. We create shared commitments, aligned to the following Core Values to create strong DSST communities which help us achieve our mission.

Staff and students agree to live out the following Core Values for the purpose of creating a stronger community and sense of belonging:

**Respect:** We appreciate each person and their story through our words, actions, and attitudes. We value their unique perspective and treat others with dignity.

**Responsibility:** We acknowledge that our actions and choices impact ourselves and our community. We take ownership for what we do and how we choose to do it.

**Integrity:** We act and speak with honesty, fairness, and thoughtfulness. We consistently align our words and actions.

**Courage:** We possess the confidence and resolve to take risks, push ourselves, and persevere in the face of pressure, adversity or unfamiliar circumstances.

**Curiosity:** We are eager to learn, question, and explore. We have a thirst for knowledge, a love of investigation, and a desire to learn about ourselves, our community, and our world.

**Doing Your Best:** We put our best effort into everything we do. We know that individual and collective effort are required for our community to thrive.

## APPENDIX F Parent and School Shared Expectations

At DSST, we believe in the importance of all members of the school community, families, staff and students, working together in order to achieve our mission of preparing our students for success in college and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The following agreement outlines the responsibilities that the school and families have to support our students' success.

For Title I Schools Only: Please plan to attend our Title I parent meeting this fall, when we will discuss our school's use of Title I funding and use this commitment as a starting point to build a Parent-School Compact.

### PARENT & GUARDIAN COMMITMENT

Our parents are committed to supporting their students' growth and achievement at DSST, including supporting the systems and structures designed to promote their success. DSST parents are members of the DSST community and parents are responsible to:

- Make sure their child arrives at DSST every day on time and remains at school until the first dismissal at the end of the day. If their child is assigned the second dismissal, parents will make arrangements for a pick up at second dismissal.
- Ensure that their child attends school every day, unless sick or unable to attend because of a family emergency. Parents will notify the school before 7:30 a.m. if their child is going to miss school.
- Make sure their child follows the DSST dress code.
- Hold their child accountable when he or she falls short of an expectation. This includes making sure that their child follows through with College Prep, Mandatory Tutoring, Refocus Sessions, and other consequences that may be assigned.
- Express themselves appropriately by using professional and courteous language in school.
- Communicate directly and honestly and interact with others in productive and positive ways that build trust.
- Check their child's homework, as requested.
- Sign their child's planner nightly, as requested.
- Sign their child's weekly paycheck, as requested.
- Encourage their child to do his/her best daily.
- Encourage their child to follow up on any issues or concerns with his/her advisor.
- Give honest feedback in an appropriate and respectful way to make the school community stronger.
- Treat people appropriately with common courtesy; have empathy for others and treat them with dignity.
- Understand that their child must follow DSST's expectations and Core Values to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals at DSST.

### DSST COMMITMENT

DSST is committed to supporting student growth and achievement at DSST, including consistently upholding the systems and structures designed to promote their success. As DSST staff and members of the DSST community, we agree to:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the State's student academic achievement standards as follows.
- Hold parent-teacher conferences each trimester, during which this compact will be discussed with parents as it relates to their individual child's achievement.



- Provide parents with regular reports on their child's progress.
- Provide parents reasonable access to staff. Staff will be available for consultation with parents during parent-teacher conferences and by meetings arranged by contacting the student's dean or advisor.
- Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and to observe classroom activities, through participation in the SAC (School Accountability Committee) and STP (Science and Tech Parent Group).
- Ensure that attendance for all students is taken accurately and do everything within our power to ensure that all students attend school every day.
- Make sure that all students follow the DSST dress code.
- Hold all students accountable when they fall short of an expectation. This includes making sure that students follow through with College Prep, Mandatory Tutoring, Refocus Sessions, and other consequences that may be assigned.
- Model professional and courteous language and conduct in school for students and the DSST community.
- Communicate directly and honestly and interact with others in productive and positive ways that build trust.
- Encourage all students to do their best daily.
- Support all issues and concerns that students bring to their advisors.
- Give students direction and feedback in an appropriate and respectful way to make the school community stronger.
- Treat staff and students appropriately with common courtesy; have empathy for others and treat them with dignity.
- Follow DSST's expectations and Core Values to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals at DSST.



School Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G Student and Family Handbook Contract Signature Page

### Student and Family Acknowledgement of Understanding and Compliance

We are familiar with and will abide by all the contents, responsibilities and policies contained in this handbook. We understand that these policies govern student and family conduct in the school and will be enforced at school or on school grounds, at school-sanctioned activities or events (even if occurring off school property), or while being transported by school-approved vehicles. The school reserves the right to adapt and change policies during the year to serve the greater good of the school.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_