

**Downingtown Cyber Academy**  
**Downingtown Area School District**



**Middle School**  
**Student/Parent Handbook**

**2022-2023**

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# Introduction

The Downingtown Cyber Academy's online curriculum includes self-paced, rigorous classes using the latest instructional tools in a vibrant virtual classroom. DASD teachers, skilled in online instruction, help students master the skills they need to succeed.

Downingtown Cyber Academy students are still considered students in their local elementary schools. This allows the students to participate in our wide variety of activities, music lessons, clubs, and after-school programs.

## **DASD Mission**

The mission of the Downingtown Area School District, proud of our tradition of excellence, is to educate all students to meet the challenges of a global society by providing an individually responsive learning environment characterized by outstanding academic and personal achievements in partnership with family, students, and community.

## **DASD Vision**

For our future, we want our students to be career and/or college ready upon graduation. In order to be prepared for this challenge, our students will:

- Be self-directed, reflective learners who use data to foster learning and growth;
- Exhibit critical thinking and problem solving skills;
- Utilize technology in an appropriate manner to maximize learning;
- Act in a respectable manner as responsible, contributing citizens of the local, national and global society;
- Be innovators who use a wide range of techniques to elaborate, refine, analyze, and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and make the best use of their creative efforts;
- Collaborate with peers and communicate efficiently and effectively across a variety of situations and environments;
- Be conscientious and informed consumers, who are fiscally aware of and responsive to current economic situations;
- Demonstrate an appreciation of an economically and culturally diverse community.

## **Purpose**

The Downingtown Cyber Academy aims to provide the best online learning environment to meet the individual needs of all K-12 Downingtown Area School District students through innovative, flexible, and engaging student-centered virtual learning experiences. Further, the Downingtown Cyber Academy empowers students to achieve academic and personal excellence.

## **Core Values**

The Downingtown Cyber Academy values:

- Diversity
- Alternative learning environments, spaces, approaches
- Self-determination, student choice
- Empowerment
- Pursuit of happiness
- Individuality
- Teamwork among staff to support students
- Student flexibility

## **The Downingtown Cyber Academy Secondary Program**

The Downingtown Cyber Academy provides course offerings for students in grades 6-8 that allow for self-paced and structured learning.

Full-time students in the secondary program will be required to participate in synchronous (Zoom) meetings as determined by the teacher and will have time to work on days and times convenient for them, but they must complete their schoolwork by the end of each week. All Downingtown Cyber Academy students have online calendars that allow them to see their coursework for the day, week, and marking period to stay on pace.

As students become more independent and responsible in grades 6–8, parents “step back” a bit, and subject-specific teachers “step in” to provide expert online instruction and support in math, language arts, science, social studies, and an array of electives. As they get older, online students start to take charge of their education by setting goals, working independently, and exploring their future options.

Parents can encourage their students’ growing independence as they:

- Monitor students' attendance.
- Ensure that students work for approximately 5 hours of work *per course per week*.
- Verify that lessons and assignments are completed.
- Communicate with teachers or refer students to teachers for help when needed.
- Monitor student grades and attendance in the Parent Portal.
- Communicate with the DCA Administrative Team and any additional support staff when needed.

# Registration and Eligibility

## **Registration & Eligibility for the Downingtown Cyber Academy Grades 6-8**

All Downingtown Area School District students in grades 6-8 have the option to enroll in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. The Downingtown Cyber Academy requires registration each year. Students will automatically be enrolled in their home schools each year and must reapply for the DCA. Parents of students who will be in 6th-8th grades will register on the DCA registration page-[dc.dasd.org](http://dc.dasd.org).

## **Registration For Grades 6-8**

Students who wish to enroll in the Downingtown Area School District must complete registration at the District Office.

For admission to any grade level, parents must present:

1. Birth certificate
2. Immunization record
3. Verification of residency
4. Transfer card (if coming from another school)
5. Academic records (report cards, IEP's, etc.) are appreciated at the time of enrollment so that correct assignments can be made.

## **Application for the Downingtown Cyber Academy**

**Students who wish to be full-time cyber should complete the following steps:**

1. No administrative approval is required for students to be full-time cyber students. Fill out an application for the DCA at [dc.dasd.org](http://dc.dasd.org).
2. Contact your school counselor to make course selections for the DCA.

**Students who want to be part-time cyber should do the following:**

1. Students who wish to be part-time DCA students in middle school must have administrative approval. Fill out an application for the DCA at [dc.dasd.org](http://dc.dasd.org).
2. The following conditions or situations constitute acceptable reasons for enrollment into the cyber program part-time in grades 6-8:
  - Documented medical issues that necessitate a cyber course
  - Transfers from a cyber charter school
  - Documented participation in intensive outside athletics or arts programs that will result in lost instructional time during school hours
  - IEP, GIEP, or 504 team recommendation
3. Contact your school counselor to make course selections for the DCA.

Parents must re-register their students in the DCA each year by filling out the DCA application found on the DASD website at [dc.dasd.org](http://dc.dasd.org) .

## **Continued Enrollment in the Downingtown Cyber Academy**

Students are in a probationary period if they enroll after the add/drop period at the beginning of the school year. During the first two weeks of the enrollment, students will be expected to login to the courses, participate in the student orientation, and begin their coursework.

Once students are past the probationary registration period, they are expected to stay on pace in all of their classes and to maintain passing grades. Students who are behind the expected pace by more than an average of 10% in all of their cyber courses, who have not logged in or who are not passing all of their courses will be evaluated by the DCA Admin on a weekly basis. Appropriate interventions will be assigned, which may require students to come to a district building to work on their courses.

If students are successful during this intervention period, they may continue in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. If the academic expectations are not met during this period, the student may be removed from the cyber program and returned to their home school for more support. This is not a “punishment,” but a plan for greater success for the student.

## **Online Instructional Model**

The Downingtown Cyber Academy provides course offerings for students in grades 6-8 that allow more flexibility through the week. At the secondary level, teachers will provide synchronous sessions and asynchronous work for direct instruction, group work, extra help, and community building.

Students in the secondary program will attend synchronous Zoom sessions and can work during days and times that are convenient for them. All coursework is assigned on Monday and is due by the end of the day on Sunday. There are no coursework due dates during the week.

In 6th - 8th grades, Zooms will occur 3x per **6-Day Cycle** for a core class and 1x per cycle for a specials class.

If courses are taught by a DASD adjunct teacher, Zooms will be held one time per week for 60 minutes for a 1-credit or core class and one time per week for 30 minutes for a .5 credit, .33 credit, or encore class. Students and parents will be notified about courses taught by DASD adjunct teachers.

# Personalized Learning Plans

At the Downingtown Cyber Academy, we believe in a personalized approach to learning versus a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. We offer personalized learning plans for students regarding synchronous learning (Zooms). Students in the DCA and their parents/guardians will have two plans from which to choose:

**Plan 1 (default option):** Zoom meetings are required, and students must attend. Attendance will be taken for each Zoom class by the teacher. Students MUST have their cameras on and be visibly present during the class.

**Plan 2:** Students and parents can sign an agreement with the DCA Administrative team that allows students to optionally attend Zooms as long as they maintain good standing in all of their classes. Students can still attend Zooms if they wish. Students and parents who are interested in this plan should complete the [Downingtown Cyber Academy - Personalized Learning Plan Agreement -SY 2022-23 FORM..](#) (Must be completed separately for each student.) All Zoom meetings will be recorded.

Note: Zoom meetings will be required until the DCA Administrative team has approved the application.

***Additionally, students will develop student agency by creating academic, social-emotional, and personal goals for the school year. This will enable students to take more ownership of their learning.***

# Online Course Requirements

## Daily Coursework

Cyber classes are entirely online and include both asynchronous and synchronous components. Our Schoology Learning Management System will contain the lessons students must complete for the week to remain on pace.

Although students have some freedom to work through the material at their own pace throughout the week, they must complete assignments by the end of each week. ***Work will be due on SUNDAY at 11:59 PM of each week. Students should plan to spend approximately 5 hours on each core class and 2.5 hours on each encore class per week.***

## Zooms

There will be a synchronous component of each course. Students MUST have their cameras on and be visibly present during the class. Most core courses have 45-minute Zooms three times a cycle during school hours or 60 minutes once a week after school hours. For maximum flexibility, students who cannot participate in the Zoom meetings can select the Personalized Learning Plan - Plan 2 to complete their required participation through additional asynchronous activities required by the teacher, including watching the Zoom recordings.

## Class Requirements - Middle School

According to PA Code 4.22, all middle school students must have planned instruction through the cyber program or a combination of courses with the district middle school. PA Code 4.22 requires every student to take classes in language arts, mathematics, science/technology, social studies, health/physical education, information skills, career education, family and consumer science, and the arts every year.

## Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Full-time students in the Downingtown Cyber Academy are still required to take state-mandated tests, such as the PSSAs, in their home school.

## Keystone Exams

Keystone Exams are state-mandated end-of-course tests. Students are required to take the Keystone exam if they complete Algebra I while in middle school.

# Attendance

22 PA. CODE CH. 11 sets forth the requirements for student attendance in public schools. Except as otherwise provided by law, compulsory school age is the period of a child's life from when the child enters school (which may be no later than at the age of 8 years) or until the age of 17 or graduation from a high school, whichever occurs first. Students in any PA cyber school must adhere to these minimum attendance requirements.

Attendance law defines truant as "3 or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year by a child subject to [the] compulsory school attendance [law]." Habitually truant is defined as "6 or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to [the] compulsory school attendance [law]." If a student is under the age of 17 and absent without an excuse for three days within any one academic year, a letter will be sent out detailing the three unlawful absences, inviting the parent/guardian into school for a meeting explaining the consequences of habitual truancy.

If a student accumulates six unexcused absences (or more) within any one academic year, the student will be referred to a school or community-based school attendance program or referred to Chester County's Children, Youth, and Families Department. A truancy citation may also be filed with the District magistrate.

Parents can view their student's attendance through Infinite Campus.

## **Attendance Procedures - NEW for 2022-2023**

Attendance is a combination of measures that indicate a student is demonstrating adequate participation. This includes the following:

1. 6th - 12th grade students must log their attendance every day in Infinite Campus.. Forgetting to log attendance is *not* a Board-approved acceptable excuse, so the absence will remain unexcused if students forget. We encourage students to set a reminder each school day to log attendance.
2. Please note: All DCA students are required to complete at least one assignment in every course per week to count as present. If students do not complete any work in their course by the Sunday due date, they will be retroactively marked absent in the class for the week.
3. If a student is absent due to illness or another Board-approved acceptable excuse, parents/guardians must send an excuse note to [cyber\\_attendance@dasd.org](mailto:cyber_attendance@dasd.org) within three school days.

If a student is marked absent, parents must send an excuse note to [cyber\\_attendance@dasd.org](mailto:cyber_attendance@dasd.org) within three days.

See <https://dc.dasd.org/resources/school-day> for directions on how to log attendance.

### **School Day Schedule**

*DCA Part-Time Students will find their Zoom time(s) in their DCA Schoology Course(s) and in Infinite Campus. If there is a conflict with another class, the student should inform the DCA teacher.*

#### **Grade 6 - Full -Time**

8:50 a.m. ....Official Start of Cyber Classes  
Student schedules vary during the day.  
Advisory periods vary and occur during periods 3, 5, 7, or 9  
3:30 p.m. ....Official End of Cyber Classes

#### **Grades 7-8 - Full-Time**

7:40 a.m. ....Official Start of Cyber Classes  
Student schedules vary during the day.  
2:03 p.m.....REACH (Activity/Support Period)  
2:40 p.m. ....Official End of Cyber Classes

#### **Two Hour Early Dismissal**

Grade 6: 8:50 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Grades 7-8: 7:40 a.m. to 12: 40 p.m.

#### **Two Hour Late Opening**

Grade 6: 10:50 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
Grades 7-8: 9:40 a.m. to 2: 40 p.m.

#### **PSSA /Keystone Testing Attendance**

Excuses will not be granted for students during State mandated PSSA/Keystone testing as listed on the school calendar each year. Parents are also urged to encourage their employers to hold the “Take Your Child to Work Day” during the summer months so that students do not have to miss a day of school.

#### **Excuse Procedures for Vacations or Trips**

If students are traveling but can maintain their attendance in Zoom classes and complete their coursework, no further action is required. If students cannot attend Zooms or complete course

work because of educational trips not sponsored by the school district or planned vacations (family trips), they may be excused provided prior written notification is received from the parents/guardians and approval is granted by the DCA principal. Since regular class attendance is a critical component of a student's educational program, the educational benefits of the trip should outweigh the negative impact of the disruption of the student's academic program.

A request for an educational/family trip is subject to the following conditions:

1. Parent/Guardian must submit a written request (Board Policy Form 204 AG 11) to the DCA principal on the district form, which will indicate the days of absence, the destination of the trip; adult supervision; and educational value of the trip.
2. If more than one child in a family is taking the trip, the request for all the children must be included in the trip request.
3. Parents must request at least three (3) days before the date of the trip.
4. No more than ten (10) school days each school year per student will be approved for an educational/family trip, which may be extended at the principal's discretion.

#### [FORM for Educational/Family Trip](#)

Requests for students to be excused for more than one (1) family trip will most likely not be honored during a school year. The principal will notify the parent/guardian of approval or denial of the request. The principal has the right to deny a request during the first ten (10) days, the last ten (10) school days, and during standardized testing (PSSA, etc.).

The principal has the right to deny a request during the school year when, in the principal's judgment, there is a pattern of excessive absence from school or the student is in poor academic standing. Unauthorized absences will be recorded as illegal, and students will not be permitted to make up work unless authorized by the principal. Work missed due to approved educational tours or family trips may be made up, but the responsibility for the completion of that work will remain with students and parents/guardians.

After the return of an approved educational/family trip, the teacher will work with the student and parent/guardian to "bridge the gap" of missed instructions. For logistical reasons, teachers cannot prepare individual daily lesson plans for each student on an educational/family trip. The student will be responsible for submitting all completed assignments to teachers upon return to school or as indicated on the assignment sheet.

Parents/Guardians are discouraged from making vacation plans during the school year on a regular or yearly basis. It is understood that there is occasionally the necessity of taking a family trip during the school year. Still, it is believed that frequent trips are an unnecessary detriment to the education of the student.

## **School Calendar**

Students in the Downingtown Cyber Academy will follow the Downingtown Area School District school calendar, including vacations, snow days, and holidays. The Downingtown Cyber Academy will also follow DASD's marking period schedule.

# **Student Services**

## **Instructional Core Team**

The Instructional Core Team consists of general education classroom teachers, School Counselor, Psychologist, the ESL teacher, Prevention Specialist, DCA/school principal, and school nurse. When students experience difficulty academically, socially, and/or behaviorally, they are recommended to the Instructional Core Team by a classroom teacher, parent, or member of the Instructional Core Team.

The Instructional Core Team process involves the following steps:

1. Evaluate data that identify a student's need for academic, social, and/or behavioral support;
2. Determine the strategies needed to assist the student;
3. Plan and implement the intervention strategies through a continuum of services;
4. Monitor the effectiveness of the intervention strategies.
5. Continue intervention plan if student experiences success as determined by the expected rate of improvement OR

Alter intervention plan if student does not experience expected rate of improvement.

1. Act as a liaison to communicate with other district and/or community services as needed.
2. Communicate progress regularly with parents.

## **EL (English Learners)**

The Civil Rights Act – Language Minority Compliance Procedures, requires all school districts to identify and serve limited English proficient students. Part of this federal law requires that a Home Survey is completed and placed in the cumulative file for every student. If the parent indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home, the child will be identified for screening by the ESL teacher. The screening will determine the need for direct instruction from the ESL teacher.

## **Gifted Support Program**

The Downingtown Area School District offers a variety of special programs to meet the needs of

students. The Gifted Support program has been developed to provide specialized learning experiences for students qualifying for such services under Pennsylvania Code Chapter 16 and DASD requirements.

The Downingtown Cyber Academy is available to students who are identified as gifted as part of their regular education programming and/or to meet their needs as gifted learners. When the Downingtown Cyber Academy is utilized to provide enrichment, acceleration, or a combination of both as part of a GIEP, it is considered a change of placement, and the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT) must determine the student's readiness for online learning, the appropriateness of cyber instruction to meet the student's demonstrated needs, and the recommended course(s) before the student may begin. A Gifted Written Report (GWR) will be completed before the GIEP is revised to include cyber education as the district-provided gifted education service to meet the student's identified gifted needs.

### **Special Education Services**

All DASD students may consider participating in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. Students who receive Special Education services to meet their needs met through specially designed instruction must discuss cyber education at an IEP meeting where the team will determine the support needed to provide access to the student's program of study before beginning any cyber coursework. The student's IEP will be provided to the cyber teachers who will ensure compliance with all required modifications and accommodations. The students will continue to have a DASD case manager if they transfer into the cyber program.

Each school has certified special education teachers to instruct students who require specially designed instruction to assist them with varying learning needs. In addition, select schools also provide specialized classes for Autistic Support, Life Skills Support, Emotional Support, and Multiple Disabilities Support. Special education services are provided in accordance with Pennsylvania Code Chapter 14. Your child's Homeschool-based Counselor can provide information about available support services and qualification procedures.

### **Student Assistance Program (SAP) or Student Assistance Service (S.A.S.)**

School Board Policy #236 provides the guidelines to be followed by District schools in their implementation of Student Assistance Programs. The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a systematic process using effective and accountable professional techniques to mobilize school resources to remove the barriers to learning and, when the problem is beyond the scope of the school, to assist the parent/guardian and student with information so they may access services within the community.

**The Student Assistance Program/Service (SAP/S.A.S) shall provide assistance in:**

1. Identifying issues that pose a barrier to a student's learning and/or academic achievement.
2. Determining whether or not the identified problem lies within the responsibility of the school.
3. Informing the parent/guardian of a problem affecting the student's learning and/or academic achievement.
4. Making recommendations to assist the student and the parent/guardian.
5. Providing information on community resources and options to deal with the problem.
6. Establishing links with resources to help resolve the problem.
7. Collaborating with the parent/guardian and agency when students are involved in treatment through a community agency.
8. Providing a plan for in-school support services for the student during and after treatment.

The S.A.S. team is composed of faculty members who have a special ability in relating to young people and who have expressed an interest in helping students deal with personal problems. In addition, members of the S.A.S. team have taken special training to assist them in providing these services to students. To contact any S.A.S. member, talk with your teacher or contact your school counselor.

**Multi-tiered System Of SupportS (MTSS)**

A District initiative includes the implementation of Multi-Tier System of Supports or MTSS. This is a process used for identifying those students at specified grade levels who are struggling in school and then providing differentiated instruction and intervention to address their needs. Part of the process involves screening all students three times per year to identify students who are at grade level (Benchmark or Tier 1), slightly below grade level (Strategic or Tier 2), and those well below grade level (Intensive or Tier 3), as measured by screening assessments such as AIMSweb or Review 360.

Following the screening assessments, students' individual Tiers are identified and an instructional plan is implemented for them. Tier 2 and Tier 3 students will be grouped for additional teacher guided instruction designed to improve their skills.

Over the course of the intervention plan, Tier 2 and Tier 3 students are progress monitored to determine if growth is occurring as a result of the intervention. During and following the intervention program, results from the progress monitoring will be reviewed to determine the success of the intervention. Following a specific intervention period, students may move to a different tier, remain in their current tier and continue to receive the same intervention plan, or

remain in their current tier and receive a different intervention program. The decision will be based solely upon the results of the progress monitoring data that has been collected over the intervention period.

Parental involvement is key to a student's individual success. Therefore, communication with the parent/guardian will be made as deemed necessary to insure student success and progress.

### **School Counseling Services**

The Downingtown Cyber Academy will coordinate with a middle school student's designated school counselor to deliver services to students in the program. The purpose of school counselors is to assist students in their social, educational, and personal development. In addition, the school counselors help students to adjust to middle school life. Our counselors are especially trained to help young people in viewing their problems clearly and in taking appropriate steps toward workable solutions. Counselors are available from 7:25 to 2:55 p.m. daily. To schedule an appointment with a school counselor, please call the School Counseling Office at your child's homeschool building. In addition to the counseling services, the School Counseling Department is also responsible for standardized tests, collecting and interpreting educational and occupational information, and maintaining student records.

**Withdrawal Procedures:** When moving from the district, please give at least one week's notice to the School Counseling Office. Adequate notice is necessary to complete withdrawal forms and to prepare your child's school records.

### **Services From Outside Agencies**

**CHESTER COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT** – Vision and hearing assistance is provided through teachers/therapists from the Chester County Intermediate Unit.

**AUSTILL**– Students who require services in speech, occupational and/or physical therapy receive assistance from Austill. Specially trained therapists provide instruction according to the needs of the child. Students with speech and expressive language, OT and/or PT concerns are referred to the Instructional Support Team. This referral can originate from the school or home.

### **Recording Devices**

To accommodate special needs as required by State and federal law, certain students in your child's classroom might have the right to audio record, or to receive teacher- made audio recordings of discussions that occur during instructional activities. These recordings could include the voice of your child. The child making the recording or for whom the recording is made will use the recording solely to support his or her ability to access and retain educational

information. The recording will be destroyed when it is no longer necessary for that purpose. Recordings shall not be maintained by or otherwise considered educational records of the District for any purpose. The use of audio recordings in the classroom will be limited to students with disabilities who are unable, as a result of their disabilities, to record information independently in written form when such information is required to aid memory or learning and when audio recording is identified as an adaptation or accommodation on the individualized educational programs (“IEPs”) or Section 504 accommodation plans of such students. The audio recording device shall only be used when necessary to capture spoken or written information in the classroom that nondisabled peers would be expected to record in written form. The use of audio recordings shall be for the sole use of the student for the educational use stated in his or her IEP and shall not be shared with any third party. All recordings are the property of the Downingtown Area School District, and the use of such recordings for any purpose or in any manner other than as described in these guidelines is strictly prohibited. All recordings will be erased or destroyed when no longer necessary for educational purposes and shall not be maintained as, or otherwise considered, educational records of the District for any purpose.

Please note that this is in addition to the daily/class Zoom recordings that will be provided to students in their Schoology course for a limited period of time.

### **Adapted Physical Education**

Special classes are available for students with identified needs.

# Grading & Reporting

## Grades

Students and parents can check grades in Schoology or Infinite Campus. Students' letter grades will be calculated using the Downingtown Area School District's grading scale.

<u>GRADES</u>		<u>OTHER MARKS</u>
A	90-100	O = Outstanding
B	80-89	S = Satisfactory
C	70-79	U = Unsatisfactory
D	60-69	M = Medical
F	0-59	X = Excused
		I = Incomplete **
		WP = Withdraw Passing
		WF = Withdraw Failing

\*\*Incomplete - It is the joint responsibility of the student and the teacher to make provisions to remove the "I" within the specified time, generally 2 weeks from the end of the marking period.

## Progress Reports

At mid-quarter, all students' progress reports will be available via the Infinite Campus Backpack. Parents should note these dates on the school calendar and expect that their children share the information on the report.

## Downingtown Area School District Report Cards

Report cards grades are loaded into Infinite Campus at the end of each nine-week session. Letter grades are used to designate a pupil's progress. Honor Roll Qualifications: Students earn placement on one of the Honor Rolls by meeting these criteria:

- **Distinguished Honors** - A's in all courses
- **High Honors** - A's in at least 2 majors and more than half of all courses B's in the remaining courses. No C grades are permitted.
- **Honors** - A's in at least two courses A maximum of one C, and the remaining grades must be B's.

## Promotion Policy

Students are promoted to the next grade if they pass all academic subjects. Students who fail

two or more academic subjects or the equivalent must repeat one of the courses the following academic year.

A student may receive credit for subjects failed by satisfactorily completing an approved summer school program. This would allow the student to move to the next grade. The expense of summer school and/or tutoring belongs to parents / guardians.

## **Characteristics of a Successful Cyber Student**

With the freedom and flexibility of blended and cyber courses comes responsibility. The online process takes real commitment and discipline to keep up. Students should be willing to log in to class every school day.

Before they enroll in the Downton Cyber Academy, students should have the following characteristics (or be willing to work on them). They should:

- Be a self-motivated and self-disciplined individual.
- Enjoy working independently.
- Be willing to ask for help.
- Have good time-management skills.
- Be able to meet deadlines for schoolwork.
- Communicate any questions or concerns to the teacher, either online or face-to-face.
- Feel comfortable expressing themselves in writing using standard English.
- Like to get things done today and not tomorrow.
- Not miss the daily face-to-face interaction with instructors and classmates.
- Not give up easily, even when confronted with obstacles.
- Be willing and able to commit to five hours per week per course.
- Agree that online courses can be more challenging than face-to-face classes.
- Have reliable Internet access.
- Be comfortable in a "virtual environment" - email, sending attachments, online discussions, etc.
- Not be afraid to try new things.

# Student and Parent Expectations

## **Communication**

One of the critical components of a successful online experience is good communication. Parents need to know the best avenues to address concerns they feel are essential concerning their child(ren)'s total educational experience at school. Solutions to problems can usually be quickly addressed when communication channels are straightforward, and the communication itself is confidential.

The students and parents/guardians should contact the online teachers and immediately discuss technical problems or coursework questions.

Any issues related to course selection should be communicated to the DASD school counselor.

If issues cannot be resolved with the teacher or counselor, students should contact the DCA Administrative Team as soon as possible.

## **Phone Messages**

Parents who wish to speak with teachers over the telephone should call and leave a message on their extension, which will be provided at the start of the school year. Teachers will be notified electronically and will return the call as soon as possible. A general rule of thumb is that a response will be provided within 24 hours.

## **Email Messages**

Parents are encouraged to send teachers emails with questions or concerns, however, be aware that an immediate response is seldom possible. Teachers check their emails during the day when possible. A general rule of thumb is that a response will be provided within 24 hours.

## **Conferences**

A conference may be initiated by either the parent or the teacher. When requesting a conference, please call the teacher, or send an email directly to the teacher. In this manner, a mutually convenient time can be established for the conference. Please do not expect a discussion with a teacher unless prior arrangements have been made.

In addition, "Parent-Teacher Conference Days" are scheduled at various times during the year. However, you may request a conference in the spring if deemed necessary.

## **Acceptable Use**

All students are required to follow DASD's acceptable use policy.

## **Discipline**

Students are expected to behave in an orderly and respectful manner. Routine discipline matters will be handled by teachers or other responsible adults (aides, monitors, etc). Consequences for breaking established rules or procedures could include isolation, missing a fun activity, or loss of certain privileges or special events, or detention. Serious behavior problems will always be referred to the principal and could result in suspension from school. Our school-wide rules are as follows:

1. Be respectful of yourself and others by using kind language, online etiquette and appropriate behaviors.
2. Be responsible for your materials and work and follow directions.
3. Be safe with digital tools and online use.
4. Be a leader of yourself through achieving personal and academic goals.

## **Code Of Student Conduct**

Please access the Downingtown Area School District Code of Student Conduct through [www.dasd.org](http://www.dasd.org). The Code of Student Conduct provides District information regarding attendance, bus and playground rules, internet policies, and student discipline and can be found in Board Policy 200 Series under the Policies section of School Board ribbon on the District website.

## **Academic Honesty**

The Downingtown Cyber Academy's success relies on all community members' combined efforts: teachers, students, administrators, and parents. Nowhere is this combined effort more important than ensuring the school's academic program's integrity and fairness.

Academic integrity is the pursuit of learning conducted fairly and ethically. All community members share responsibility for creating an environment in which academic integrity is expected.

Academic dishonesty occurs when a student attempts to gain academic credit or recognition to which they are not entitled or assist others. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- copying, or allowing the copying of, any portion of someone else's work.

- gaining or giving unauthorized prior knowledge of assessments (tests, quizzes, etc.) or providing such knowledge to others.
- transmitting or receiving information related to graded work content, whether through text, voice, images, or another medium.
- copying or allowing someone to copy answers on a test or quiz.
- allowing another person to complete assignments or assessments.
- preparing or using outside information during a test or quiz without authorization.
- misrepresenting situations for academic gain, including as a ploy to receive additional time to complete graded work.
- falsifying data or sources in graded work.
- collaborating with others beyond what a teacher allows.
- committing intentional or unintended plagiarism--the stealing or using others' words, original ideas, or work by:
  - a. Using three or more words of another source, including those obtained from the Internet, in a research assignment or any writing task, without quotation marks and a citation indicating the source of the words.
  - b. paraphrasing or summarizing the ideas of another source without a citation.
  - c. copying any part of another student's work, including homework.
  - d. including someone else's diagrams, illustrations, figures, music, audio, videos, photographs, models, mathematical statements, tables, images, or other media without proper citation.
  - e. Using online translators or interpreters, or translating or interpreting software in completing your work without proper acknowledgment.
  - f. copying the structure or organizational pattern created by another writer.

Any form of academic dishonesty in the Downingtown Cyber Academy will cause a student to be subject to disciplinary action. A failure to follow these principles may result in a student being removed from the Downingtown Cyber Academy and returned to the home school building.

### **Consequences for Academic Dishonesty**

Whenever a student violates the Downingtown Cyber Academy Academic Integrity Policy, these procedures will be followed:

1. The teacher will document the violation and report it to the DCA Administrative Team.
2. The DCA Administrative Team will review the student's disciplinary record and determine whether the violation in question is the student's first (or subsequent) offense.

3. The teacher will confer with the student and will contact the student's parents. The purpose of the teacher-student conference is to review the Academic Integrity Policy, clarify why the work or behavior in question constitutes a violation of it, and help prevent future violations.
4. An appropriate penalty for the offense will be imposed. Consequences for first-time and subsequent offenses may include (but are not limited to) an assignment for the student to review academic resources to avoid plagiarism or other academic violation. As a condition of completing the assignment, students may redo the assignment for credit.

Consequences for subsequent violations may include (but are not limited to) any of those above and the following:

- The student will earn a zero for the assignment with no opportunity to make it up.
- A teacher may decline to write a letter of recommendation or report it in a letter. A teacher may also rescind a recommendation after it has been sent.
- The DCA Administrative Team may request a conference with the student, teacher, parent, and counselor to discuss removal from the DCA.
- The administration may take additional disciplinary action.

## **Dress Code**

The Downingtown Area Schools are primarily concerned with three important issues:

1. **Safety Standards** - Personal appearance styles and all items of wearing apparel and accessories must conform to minimum safety standards as to not endanger the well-being of any pupils or any person within the school environment.
2. **Health and Cleanliness** - Clothing and dress should be conducive to promoting personal health and cleanliness. The children are permitted to wear shorts of a conservative length. "Short-shorts" and midriff tops are unacceptable. Straps on tank tops should be as wide as an adult finger.
3. **Non-interference with the Educational Program** - Apparel and accessories must be appropriate to the time and place, in that a pupil's total appearance does not result in any degrading or distracting consequences that would interfere with the educational process within the school environment. Shirts, hats, etc. with inappropriate, obscene, or suggestive language or graphics cannot be worn to or at school or during online classes. On special occasions, such as field trips or Field Day, we may request specific clothing appropriate for the event. A breach of the Dress Code, as outlined above, may result in any of the following: 1) Parent called to

address appropriate clothing; 2) Child dismissed from synchronous online learning for remainder of day; 3) Suspension.

### **Role of the Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians play a vital role in the student's learning in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. The parents/guardians are responsible for many academic aspects of the student's virtual learning program that contribute to a student's success, including but not limited to

- viewing Parent Portal every week to check attendance for full-time students.
- establishing an appropriate location for learning.
- helping students to establish a daily routine for working on the lessons for their subject.
- keeping students motivated.
- monitoring student comprehension and grades.
- frequently communicating with the teachers or the DCA Administrative Team.
- encouraging students to complete assignments and to turn in work.
- notifying online teachers and the DCA Administrative Team when students are struggling or experiencing academic or personal issues that might inhibit academic achievement.

# Additional Information

## **Transfers to Buildings**

Students who wish to join the DCA or return to the brick-and-mortar from the cyber program will only be allowed to do so at the beginning of a marking period. There are no transfers allowed after the start of the third marking period, except for extenuating circumstances.

## **Course Materials & Obligations**

Most of the course materials for the cyber courses are digital and available within a student's course. Teachers will direct students to pick up any necessary analog material for a course (books, equipment, etc.) at a student's home building or the Central Administrative Building.

- Textbooks are issued in usable condition. Students are expected to cover all textbooks. Reasonable damage is expected as a result of daily use; however, unreasonable damage will result in fines. Students must pay for all lost or defaced books.
- Obligations: An obligation is a debt owed to the school by a student for a variety of reasons, such as, unpaid charges or library fines, lost or damaged textbooks. Students are expected to fulfill all obligations immediately upon notification from the teacher. Students will be banned from participating in any school activity (sports, dances, concerts, etc.) until all obligations are met.

Students must return the material upon completion of the course.

## **Equipment**

Students will need internet access at home to complete their cyber courses. Our middle school students should use the iPad provided by the Downingtown Area School District's 1:1 program. Students may also use home devices.

## **Home and School Association / DCA Parent Liaisons**

The Home and School Association is similar to other parent/teacher organizations such as PTO or PTA, however, all families of students are eligible for membership without payment of dues. We welcome your participation in any way that fits into your schedule. The purpose is to enhance all students' school experience.

The Home and School Association provides homeroom parents for classrooms, sponsors beautification programs, conducts non-profit "fun" activities for children, and also generates fundraisers to financially support student activities such as field trips, assembly programs,

scholarships, family fun activities, special grade level activities, field day, and donations of books and equipment to the school.

Please check with your child's home building to find out about meetings and activities. You will receive information regarding communications directly from the HSA. Dates and times of our meetings are posted on the school's website.

We encourage you to engage in your child's Home and School Association and consider serving as a DCA Parent Liaison to share information with other parents/guardians whose children are enrolled in the Downingtown Cyber Academy. The DCA Parent Liaison Group will host meetings to share information and/or plan DCA activities for students.

### **Volunteers and Visitors**

**THE DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT WELCOMES ALL VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS TO OUR SCHOOL WHO HAVE BEEN INVITED BY THE PRINCIPAL OR BY THE PRINCIPAL'S DESIGNEE.**

#### **Volunteer Policy**

The School Board recently approved a new policy (Policy 916) regarding required background checks for all school volunteers. This applies to anyone who offers more than one day of volunteer time. The goal of this policy is to ensure that all who come into contact with our students have successfully obtained the required safety clearances.

The new volunteer policy will apply to parents and all other members of the DASD community who volunteer in our schools or serve as field trip chaperones. The new policy states:

- 1) Background checks are required for all volunteers.
- 2) Volunteers are now required to obtain background checks every five years. Valid clearances must be dated within one year from the date of submission. If you obtained both the child abuse and criminal history clearances within the past one year, you would have another four years of eligibility remaining before having to re-submit new clearances.
- 3) Volunteers must now present proof of a tuberculosis exam. The cost of the examination will be the responsibility of the volunteer unless a financial hardship can be established. Examination costs for senior citizens serving as volunteers shall be at the expense of the district. The district also strongly recommends our volunteers obtaining a pertussis vaccine.

- 4) All volunteers must sign a Volunteer Disclosure Form each year.

Volunteer clearances are free. Please be assured that no parent will be denied the opportunity to volunteer at his or her child's school because of financial need. If the ability to pay for the reports becomes a barrier, the District will assist in making sure the necessary clearances are acquired. More information about clearances can be found on our website.

**Many school districts nationwide are instituting similar policies as our entire educational system focuses on safety. We recognize that our volunteers make valuable contributions to our educational, athletic and extracurricular programs. Please see Board Policy #916 for the new policy and guidelines.**

### Volunteers

The presence of volunteers in the classroom creates issues of sensitivity and confidentiality for all volunteers. To uphold the credibility of this valuable program, it is imperative that volunteers:

- Do not discuss the performance and behavior of individual children either inside or outside the school.
- Avoid discussing teachers and/or teaching methods.
- Discuss any concerns with the Volunteer Coordinator or Principal.
- Act in a professional manner.

We ask that all volunteers:

1. Sign in and out every time they enter and leave the building via the building Raptor system. (This is for safety in case of fire, as well as knowing who is in the building at all times, for safety purposes). **Please have your state issued ID card to be scanned into our Raptor system. Any visitor without a state issued ID card will not be permitted access to the building.**
2. Wear a designated ID while in the building and turn it in when leaving.
3. Call the school office as soon as possible if unable to volunteer on the assigned day.
4. Be consistent and reliable with time.
5. Avoid visiting or wandering through instructional areas that could distract children and teachers.
6. Do not bring younger children to school when volunteering.
7. Classroom volunteer time is at the teacher's discretion.
8. Wear appropriate, tasteful attire that will not interfere with the educational focus.
9. Never interrupt teachers or instruction in the classroom.
10. Keep the Faculty Room reserved for staff members, please. Contact classroom teachers to receive instruction on the use of any classroom equipment and see the Volunteer

Coordinator (or building aide) for instruction with other school equipment. Please give staff members priority when operating the copy machine or other office equipment.

11. Check with the assigned teacher for specific instructions for the day.
12. Become familiar with school policy as outlined in this handbook.
13. Expect respect and appropriate behavior from students. Please report any problems to the teacher in charge.
14. Be an example to children by observing all school rules in a professional manner.
15. Avoid disruptive talking in the hallways.
16. Communicate with the teacher if uncomfortable with a specific task. We want your experience to be positive and rewarding.
17. Have fun working in our school.

### **Visitors**

Visitors, including parents, must secure permission and make arrangements with the principal or teacher prior to any visit in an area of the building or school grounds. Visitors, including parents, are also required to check in with our Raptor computer system and wear a visitor badge, which is maintained in the office, before reporting to an area of the building or school grounds.

For reasons of liability, elementary aged children are not permitted to visit unless accompanied by their parents, and only with the approval of the teacher(s) involved, as well as the principal.

## **Homelessness**

In 1987, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, (subsequently renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) to aid homeless persons. The Act defines the term "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was enacted, amending McKinney-Vento. Categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of the federal law are as follows:

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals;
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- (iv) "migratory children" who qualify as homeless under federal law because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii) above. The term "migratory children" means children who are (or whose parent(s) or spouse(s) are) migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain (or accompany such parents or spouses in order to obtain) temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work; and
- (v) "Unaccompanied homeless youth" including any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for any other reason.

If you believe that you fall under one of the above-mentioned categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of the federal law, contact your school counselor or the district's Home and School Visitor / Homeless Student Liaison.

(Basic Education Circular, December 2016)

## **Student Records / Transfer Of Records**

The official student records are maintained in the students home school office and are the property of the school district. Typically, these folders contain documents for which parents have copies: report cards, attendance, conference reports, and samples of children's work. In the event that a parent wishes to review the contents of their child's cumulative record folder, they may do so by arranging for a conference with the guidance counselor or principal. Prior to changing schools, a transfer of records card must be completed by the school office. Please provide the school office with adequate advance notice in order that correct forms will be available. Upon notification from the receiving school, we will immediately forward copies of all student records to the new school.

**ONLINE REGISTRATION VERIFICATION: The online student registration verification portal will open some time in July. Parents will receive an email notifying them that the portal is open. Please verify information ASAP. If there are changes to residence or legal custody agreements, these documents will need to be scanned in and submitted to the school for filing purposes.**

## **Food Service**

DASD Food Service provides meals to students for breakfast and lunch. The cost for the breakfast is \$1.50 and it does not need to be pre-ordered. You may qualify for Free or Reduced Meals. Read this [form](#) to determine eligibility.

The cafeteria provides a varied lunch menu for students. The middle school lunch price is \$2.80 and payment is required to complete the on-line transaction. If you prefer to pay for your child's lunches on a daily basis, your child will also use the PayCentral System.

If you are not present-in-person in a DASD school building during a meal period, you are still eligible for the free meals you missed! If you're interested in receiving these, email us at the address below and we'll coordinate on an individual basis.

A lunch meal includes an entrée, a fruit and/or vegetable, and a milk.  
A breakfast meal includes an entrée, a fruit/juice, and a milk.

We will be using our POS this year to track student meals, so we encourage students to remember their PIN to use when checking out in the lunchline when present in a school building for meal service.

Link to Website with More Information:

<https://www.dasd.org/departments/food-services>

Questions Related to Food Service:

[FoodServiceInformation@dasd.org](mailto:FoodServiceInformation@dasd.org)

## **Wellness Policy**

The Downingtown Area School District School Board Policy No. 246-AG-9 ([http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/down/Board.nsf/files/9YEUCB72C433/\\$file/NO246-AG-9%20Nutrition%20Standards%20for%20Competitive%20Foods%207.8.15.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/down/Board.nsf/files/9YEUCB72C433/$file/NO246-AG-9%20Nutrition%20Standards%20for%20Competitive%20Foods%207.8.15.pdf)) on Student Wellness addresses concerns around student obesity, nutrition, exercise, and overall wellness. A summary of the Policy is below. For more detailed information and questions and answers, please refer to the Health and Wellness page on the District web-site: <https://www.dasd.org/departments/pupil-services/wellness>.

### **The DASD Wellness Policy has established the following guidelines relative to food:**

- Food MAY NOT be used as a reward.
- Food items MAY NOT be provided for birthday celebrations.
- Food MAY be used as part of the curriculum using the following nutritional guidelines:
  - Water, 100% fruit juice or milk.
  - Are moderate in sodium content.
  - Provide minimal to no trans fatty acids.
  - Provide items that contain >2 grams of fiber/serving.

## **Athletics**

### ***Intramurals and Clubs***

#### **Marsh Creek Sixth Grade Center**

DCA students in grade 6 are permitted to participate in any MC6 extracurricular programs/activities.

The faculty of Marsh Creek recognizes that educating students is only part of our job. Our school follows the Whole Child approach, which recognizes that we must fulfill the students' physiological and safety needs, as well as their need for a sense of belonging, before they can be expected to learn in the classroom. Students will have many opportunities to make friendships based on similar interests at our school. Extracurricular activity is important in our community, whether it be sports, music, drama or other interest-based activity. Marsh Creek will offer a robust extracurricular program that will feature after school activities on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

## ***Interscholastic - Grades 7 and 8***

### **Downingtown & Lionville Middle Schools**

All students participating in any interscholastic sport must be covered by the student accident insurance or provide evidence of satisfactory coverage. Student insurance forms can be obtained from the office. Parents must pay the cost of this insurance. Each student who makes the interscholastic team will be addressed an activity fee prior to the start of the season. All athletes are required to have a physical examination that is dated after July 1 of the active school year, and have the P.I.A.A. athletic packet fully completed by their medical practitioner.

DCA students may participate in the following sports for the 7th and 8th grade students at their home schools.

**Fall:** Field Hockey, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Football, Soccer, Volleyball

**Winter:** Basketball, Wrestling, Cheerleading

**Spring:** Baseball, Softball, Lacrosse, Track and Field

**Eligibility for Interscholastic Sports** - Our student-athletes recognize that their first responsibility is to academics. They know that success on the field depends on the success in the classroom. Therefore, student athletes:

1. Student athletes failing two or more classes (of any kind) as of each Friday during the marking period will be academically ineligible for the following week (Sunday through Saturday).
2. Student athletes failing two or more classes (of any kind) during the previous semester will result in the loss of eligibility for the first twenty school days of the next marking period. Ineligibility days begin from the date that report cards are issued.
3. The Athletic Director and Principals will make all eligibility determinations in accordance with the PIAA and Downingtown Area School District academic policy.

### **Field Trip Policy**

A **field trip** is defined as any trip by students away from school premises. Students on field trips are subject to the rules and regulations established in the Code of Student Conduct, including the Dress Code. Fees for participation in field trips may be assessed by the district. Credit card payments shall be accepted in accordance with Board policy.

### **Field Trip Chaperones**

Parents/Guardians, other adult volunteers, and/or district employees who serve as chaperones

on field trips are subject to Board policies, administrative guidelines, and rules and regulations pertaining to their conduct and responsibilities.

When serving as a chaperone for district field trips, all adults are prohibited from using tobacco products in the presence of students, consuming alcoholic beverages, and using illicit drugs during the duration of their assignment as chaperone. For the safety of all children leaving school premises and in accordance with Board policy, the Superintendent may direct that appropriate screening processes be applied to assure that adult chaperones for field trips are free of criminal history and convictions for any offenses involving children.

**As per Downingtown Area School District Policy 121 - Field Trips and 231 – Social Events,** chaperones leaving school premises shall be required to provide the following:

1. An original criminal history report (Act 34) – every 5 years
2. An original child abuse history clearance (Act 151) – every 5 years
3. Proof of a Tuberculosis Exam (one time only)
4. Self-Reporting forms submitted annually

To access the necessary forms, please refer to the district web site: [www.dasd.org](http://www.dasd.org) – Human Resources – Employment.

Obtaining clearances does not guarantee a parent or guardian will be selected to chaperone a field trip. Field trip supervision requirements will be followed as indicated in Downingtown Area School District Administrative Guideline #4 of Policy #121 – Field Trips. Examples of chaperones include parents or guardians of students who attend field trips and are not Downingtown Area School District employees.

*Procedures:*

**Clearances must not be dated more than one (1) year prior to the date of submission.**

Clearances will be submitted directly to the building principal for review and approval.

Clearances with any remarks from the reporting agency must be forwarded to the Superintendent's designee for final review:

No individual will be approved to serve as a chaperone if the criminal history or child abuse reports/clearances required by these guidelines evidence an offense which would preclude such individual from being employed in a Pennsylvania public school under Act 34 or Act 151.

### **Medication/Medical Condition**

If a student with a specified medical requirement is participating in a field trip, arrangements shall be made in advance to transport, dispense and/or administer approved medication. All medications and supplies must be sent from home. Send only a single dose of medication for the trip in the original container, and give it to the teacher for your child to self-administer.

### **Health and Medical**

#### **Emergency Contact Information**

At the beginning of each school year, every student will receive an Information Verification sheet which must be verified by a parent and returned to the School's Office. Addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts will be asked to be verified for accuracy. **If during the year, changes occur with telephone numbers or persons to contact, please notify the school. Your cooperation is appreciated.**

#### **Physical Examinations**

Physical examinations are given by the school physician to any new Pennsylvania students. Parents will be notified of examination dates. Parents may elect to have these examinations done by a family physician. A Commonwealth of Pennsylvania school examination form may be obtained from the school nurse for this purpose.

#### **Administering Medications (For In-person Learners)**

Medication of any kind, including prescriptions, aspirin, and over the counter products are not to be in the possession of students, but maintained and dispensed from the nurse's office. It is important that medications be in the original containers. **Parents must bring medications to the nurse's office rather than giving students that responsibility.**

**NON-PRESCRIPTION and PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS** must be in the **original container** and requires an accompanying note from the parent **and** the physician stating:

1. Student's full name, grade and teacher
2. Name of medication and dosage with a current date
3. Time(s) that medication is to be administered
4. Date(s) that medication is to be administered
5. Illness / condition requiring medication
6. Signature of parent/guardian **and** health care provider.

### **First Aid And Illness (For In-person Learners)**

Injuries occurring at home cannot be treated by school personnel. First Aid is defined as immediate temporary care given in case of accident or sudden illness. First Aid will be given by the school nurse or nurse's assistant. Children should not be in school when they are ill or when they are not well enough to participate in class. Fever and vomiting should have subsided for at least 24 hours to prevent spread of infection.

When a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should be kept at home. Some general guidelines are:

#### **For Fevers:**

- A child running a fever of 100 degrees or higher should stay home.
- A child running a fever of 99+ degrees may have trouble keeping up with normal activities and may well become sick before the day is over.
- A child with a low-grade fever (99+ degrees) combined with other symptoms and discomfort should stay home.
- The rule of thumb is: "Fever free for 24 hours without medication"

#### **Other reasons to keep a child home:**

- Severe OR persistent coughing
- Very congested
- Very runny nose
- Unexplained rash
- Contagious disease/infection
- Contagious skin disorder
- Head Lice

Please alert staff if your child has been exposed to chickenpox, head lice, or any other communicable diseases. **Children with communicable diseases will be excluded from school.** Please be reminded that school health services do not include medical diagnoses. A private physician must make these.

If it should become necessary to contact you about your child, the procedure is to first attempt to contact someone at your home phone number. If there is no answer, then the work and/or cell number will be called until you are notified. **Please remember to update your work, cell or home phone number in case of changes. Also, make sure you add an alternate person to be called in case you cannot be reached.**

### **Head Lice Guidelines (For In-person Learners)**

The school nurses in the Downingtown Area School District will follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of School Nurses, and the Centers for Disease Control concerning the treatment and containment of head lice by implementing the following procedures in the event that a confirmed case of head lice for a student.

#### **Guidelines:**

1. Upon report or discovery of live head lice, the School Nurse will privately check the affected child's head for live head lice.
2. If live head lice are found, the School Nurse will call the child's parent and request that they take their child home.
3. The School Nurse will advise on evidence-based treatment options and/or refer them to their health care provider.
4. The affected child may return to school after treatment of live head lice, and will report to the school nurse to be approved for school attendance.
5. Children may not remain in school if a significant number of live head lice are found, but they are permitted to remain in school if nits (head lice eggs) are found.
6. If the student has siblings in the school district, the School Nurse will check the siblings for any live head lice.
7. At the elementary level, a letter will be sent home to parents in the child's homeroom alerting them that a case of head lice was discovered and advising them to check for head lice and to treat if live lice are discovered.
8. Instructions in the letter should ask that if child is treated for head lice at home, the parent should contact the school nurse. The school nurse will then check that student's head upon return and follow the recheck policy.
9. The School Nurse will re-check the affected child's head a week after treatment and follow the aforementioned guidelines if live head lice are found.

### **Latex Allergies (For In-person Learners)**

Our schools are "latex safe" environments. As such, latex products, particularly latex balloons and latex gloves are not permitted in the school.

### **Nut Allergies (For In-person Learners)**

For students who have serious allergies to peanuts or other nut products, we provide a "nut free" table in the cafeteria. It is the child's responsibility to select this table for lunch. **Please do not send unshelled nuts to school with your child. As nuts are removed from the shell, they may release material in the air that could trigger an allergic reaction.**

### **Accident Insurance**

Special Student Accident Insurance may be purchased by parents for students attending Downingtown Area Schools. Details of this policy are sent home at the beginning of each school year.

### **Transportation (For In-person Learners)**

School bus service is provided through the contractors in accordance with the transportation policies of the DASD. Policy and Administrative Guidelines #810 provides details regarding walking zones, procedures for requesting a transportation change, alternate bus assignments due to child care and bus stop and bus riding rules.

Students are assigned to a bus and bus stop location as part of the registration process. Confirmation of bus number and stop is emailed to parents in late August. Long term requests for changes in bus stop or bus route must be directed, in writing, to the Supervisor of Transportation, in the DASD, 540 Trestle Place. These forms may be obtained in the school office.

**Due to the capacity of each assigned bus, we cannot give open permission for students to ride a bus to or from school other than the one to which they are assigned. Emergencies are the only exception and need to be approved by the Principal in advance.**

### **Bus Rules And Regulations (For In-person Learners)**

1. Children should arrive at the assigned bus stop 5 minutes before scheduled pick-up times. Parents are responsible for their child's conduct at the bus stop both before and after school.
2. Children should exhibit orderly and appropriate behavior while at the bus stop and on the bus.
3. Children should respect the property adjacent to the bus stop, respect the safety and property of other students, and follow all directions and guidance provided by the bus driver. The bus driver has the same authority as a classroom teacher.
4. Children may ride only their assigned bus and board and depart only from their assigned bus stop, unless the Principal has approved a change.
5. Children should enter the bus and take their seats without disturbing others.
6. Children should remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
7. Children should speak in a normal tone of voice while on the bus. No shouting is permitted.
8. Children should not throw items on the bus or from the bus.
9. Smoking, eating, drinking, or chewing gum on the bus is prohibited.

10. Children should keep the bus clean and orderly.
11. No items can be placed in the driver's compartment, doorway, or aisle of the bus, or under seats. These areas must be kept clear to exit in case of emergencies.
12. Animals are NOT permitted on the bus.
13. Large musical instruments or school projects are not permitted on the bus unless they can be held on the student's lap.
14. Objects that endanger other students are strictly prohibited. Such objects include, but are not limited to firearms, knives, metal stars, ice skates, glass objects, etc. Possession of dangerous objects may result in immediate suspension of bus privileges and other discipline.
15. Seatbelts must be worn at all times on those buses or school vehicles fitted with seatbelts.
16. Missing the bus and not attending school is NOT a legal absence or reason for being tardy.

**Students not obeying the rules may lose the privilege to use bus transportation.**

### **Emergency Response Plan (For In-person Learners)**

All staff members are informed of the master emergency plan designed for all possible emergencies.

Emergency procedures fall into three categories: on-site evacuations, off-site evacuations and “take shelter” drills. Every school in the Downingtown Area School District has a detailed action plan for dealing with a variety of emergencies. The plan is reviewed annually with the staff. A key feature of the emergency plan includes periodic drills for each type of emergency response. The school schedules regular fire drills to comply with the Pennsylvania School Laws. In accordance with the law, the school will conduct no less than an average of one fire drill each month.

During the school year, drills are conducted with individual classes, making every effort to conduct the drill on the best day for temperature and weather conditions. Similarly, drills are conducted to practice the appropriate procedures for a severe weather emergency and safe school drills. Please note that during emergency procedure drills, access to the building may be temporarily denied until conditions are determined to be safe.

### **Integrated Pest Management (For In-person Learners)**

The Downingtown Area School District uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for managing insects, rodents and weeds. Our goal is to protect every student from pesticide exposure by using an IPM approach to pest management. Our IPM approach focuses on making the school building and grounds an unfavorable habitat for these pests by removing food and water sources and eliminating their hiding and breeding places. We accomplish this through routine cleaning and maintenance. We routinely monitor the school buildings and grounds to detect any pests that are present. The pest monitoring team consists of our building maintenance and office. Pest sightings are reported to our IPM coordinator who evaluates the “pest problem” and determines the appropriate pest management techniques to address the problem. The techniques can include increased sanitation, modifying storage practices, sealing entry points, physically removing the pest, etc.

From time to time, it may be necessary to use chemicals to manage a pest problem. Chemicals will only be used when necessary. When chemicals are used, the school will try to use the least toxic products when possible.

Applications will be made only when unauthorized persons do not have access to the area(s) being treated. Notices will be posted 72 hours prior to application and for 48 hours following the application. A schedule of pest control applications is posted on the front entry door of the

school. If you desire a list of pesticides to be used and their EPA registration numbers, please submit your request in writing. Parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school will be notified of specific herbicide applications made on school grounds, including athletic fields and recreational areas. If a chemical application must be made to control an emergency pest problem, notice will be given. Exemptions to this notification include disinfectants and antimicrobial products; self-containerized baits placed in areas not accessible to students, and gel-type baits placed in cracks, crevices or voids; and swimming pool maintenance chemicals.

#### **Change of Address / Telephone / Email**

Any change of address, email, or telephone number should be reported to the school office as soon as possible after the change.

#### **Bringing Toys To School /Synchronous Learning Sessions**

Students must have the permission of the teacher to bring toys from home. In general, the practice of bringing things from home is discouraged unless needed for instruction. In addition to detracting from the learning process, toys get in the way at lunch time and can be lost or damaged during recess or bus rides. The school assumes no liability for lost, stolen, or damaged items from home.

#### **Bringing Electronic Devices To School/Class For Non-Academic Use**

Students must have the permission of the principal to bring electronic devices such as electronic book readers (i.e. a Kindle, a Nook, etc.) to class. If these items are allowed for use during reading, they must be used for reading. Accessing games, music, or social media sites on these devices will not be permitted and will result in them not being allowed for the remainder of the year. Devices such as iPods, MP3 players, and electronic games are not permitted in school/class.

#### **Care of Textbooks**

Students are encouraged to properly care for books. They are reminded that the books they are using this year must be used by students in the future. It is the responsibility of each student to pay for books that are lost or damaged.

#### **Private Party Invitations**

Private party invitations are **NOT** to be handed out in school/class or on the school bus unless the **ENTIRE** class is invited. Many children have their feelings hurt and get upset when they find out they are not invited to a private party, particularly when it becomes the main focus of conversation during lunch and recess/activity times. In turn, this can develop into inappropriate behavior and lack of academic progress in the online classroom.

# Central Administration

Central Administrators may be reached through the Administration Office located at 540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, PA 19335 or by calling 610-269-8460.

Dr. Robert O'Donnell  
Dr. Robert Reed  
Dr. Lou Chance  
Dave Matyas  
Justin Brown  
Dr. Caroline Duda  
Meghan Dennis  
Dale Lauver  
Dr. Gary Mattei  
Jennifer Shealy  
William Van Patter  
Corey Sigle  
Richell Groff  
Dr. Jamie Nunery  
Cierra Martinez  
Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent  
Assistant Superintendent  
Director of Business Services  
Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion  
Director of Human Resources  
Director of Pupil Services  
Director of Facilities  
Director of Technology  
Director of Communications  
Director of Food Services  
Director of Athletics  
Supervisor of Transportation  
Supervisors of Student Services/Home &  
School Visitors

## Downingtown Area School District Board of Education

The Board of School Directors meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. School Board meetings are open to the public.

## **Notice of Non-discrimination**

Downingtown Area School District shall not discriminate in their educational programs, activities or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, ancestry or any other legally protected classification. This policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. Information relative to special accommodation, grievance procedure, and the designated responsible official for compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 may be obtained by contacting the Director of Human Resources, Downingtown Area School District, 540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, PA 19335, phone number 610-269-8460.

## **Notification of Rights Under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over eighteen years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Please review Board Policy 216-AG-3 on our website regarding the sharing of student directory information. If you would like to opt-out your child, you must notify the school district in writing by September 30, 2020. Please email or mail all requests to opt-out directly to your child's school.

# Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy

Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Bullying/Cyberbullying
Code	249
Status	Active
Adopted	November 9, 2011
Last Revised	November 11, 2020

## **Purpose**

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students.

## **Definitions**

**Bullying** means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:<sup>[1]</sup>

1. Substantial interference with a student's education.
2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

**Bullying**, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

**School setting** means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.<sup>[1]</sup>

## **Authority**

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained in accordance with applicable law and regulations, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith

reports of bullying.

Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.[2][3]

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative guidelines are reviewed annually with students.[1]

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[1]

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:[1]

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

### **Guidelines**

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to all students.[1][4][5]

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district website.[1]

### **Education**

The district may develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide district staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.[1][6][7]

### **Consequences for Violations**

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:1[5][8]

1. Student conference.
2. Parental conference.
3. Referral for counseling.
4. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
5. Detention.
6. Suspension.
7. Expulsion.
8. Referral to law enforcement officials.

#### Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A

2. Pol. 103

3. Pol. 103.1

4. 22 PA Code 12.3

5. Pol. 218

6. 24 P.S. 1302-A

7. Pol. 236

8. Pol. 233

20 U.S.C. 7118

Pol. 000

Pol. 113.1

# Chapter 15 Annual Notice



## **DOWNTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, PA 19335, phone 610.269.8460, fax 855.329.3273, [www.dasd.org](http://www.dasd.org)

ROBERT J. O'DONNELL, Ed.D. SUPERINTENDENT

### **Annual Notice to Parents**

**SUBJECT: Implementation of Chapter 15**

**22 Pa. Code Chapter 15**

In compliance with state and federal law, the Downingtown Area School District does not discriminate against protected handicapped students. Also in compliance with state and federal law, the Downingtown Area School District will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the building principal of your student's attendance area.

# **CHESTER COUNTY EMERGENCY RESOURCES**

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

911

### **Valley Creek Crisis Intervention (Mental Health Emergencies)**

877-918-2100

610-280-3270

### **Valley Creek Crisis (Warm Line – non emergencies)**

866-846-2722

### **Suicide Prevention Hotline**

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

### **CHILD LINE (Child Abuse Hotline)**

800-932-0313

### **Crime Victim Center (Sexual Assault Hotline)**

610-692-7273

### **Crime Victim Center (Information)**

610-692-7420

### **POISON CONTROL**

800-222-1222

