

Downingtown Area School District Student Handbook



STEM ACADEMY

335 Manor Avenue

Downingtown, PA 19335

Phone: 610- 269 -2420

Fax: 484 – 694 - 5590

[DASD STEM Academy](#)

[Mr. Art Campbell](#), Head of School

[Mr. Mike Sheehan](#), Dean of Curriculum & Instruction

[Ms. Katherine Cole](#), Dean of Academics & Student Life

[Ms. Susan Boardman](#), Internships & Partnerships Leader

[STEM 2023-2024 Staff](#)

Counseling Office: Phone: 610-269-2420, ext. 43031

Follow us on Instagram [@stemcounseling](#)

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, 2022. You can also complete your request here: [FERPA 2023-2024 Opt Out Form](#) Please email or mail all requests to opt-out directly to your child’s school.

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

Central Administration:

540 Trestle Place Downingtown, PA 19335 Phone (610)-269-8460

Dr. Robert O’Donnell	Superintendent
Dr. Robert Reed	Assistant Superintendent Operations and Programs
Dr. Louis Chance	Assistant Superintendent Academics and Pupil Services
Justin Brown	Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Ann Berrios	Director of Pupil Services
Dr. Caroline Duda	Director of Human Resources
Dale Lauver	Director of Facilities
Dr. Gary Mattei	Director of Technology
David Matyas	Business Manager
Jennifer Shealy	Director of Communications
Corey Sigle	Director of Athletics

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.

Change of Address/Telephone

It is important to the health, safety, and welfare of each student that the school be notified as soon as an address or telephone number has changed during the school year. Please direct your calls or emails to the Counseling Secretary/Registrar, Ms. Stephanie Rockowitz at (610) 269-2420 x43031 or srockowitz@dasd.org

- **Two forms of documentation with the new address must be presented**, one of which must be a mortgage, lease or deed (all pages must be included).

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

- Counseling services are available for educational planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational information, career information, study strategies, social concerns and home or school concerns. Appointments may be made through [Ms. Rockowitz, Counseling Secretary](#) at any time.
- [Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#)
 - The Downingtown Area School District has a Student Assistance Program (SAP) which is available to all students. The SAP team is composed of faculty members who have received training and who have expressed an interest in helping students deal with personal problems related to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and mental health issues that pose a barrier to school success. The primary goal of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) is to help students overcome these barriers in order that they may achieve, remain in school and advance.
 - The team is available to all students for assistance with problems of an immediate, non-academic nature. Students, parents, teachers and staff may refer anyone to the team. Each referred student periodically meets with a team member. While these meetings remain confidential, parent involvement is encouraged whenever possible. If you would like to refer a student to the SAP team, fill out a referral form with the student's name, grade level, your name, and the observable behaviors that concern you. Once completed, submit the form to one of the following locations – main office or guidance office.

Health Information

[Ms. Jennifer Mikulich](#), Certified School Nurse 610-269-2420 x43020

- [DASD Health Services Parent Handbook](#)
- [Authorization for Medication Administration \(210-AG\)](#)
- [Physical/Immunization Form](#)
- [School Vaccination Requirements for Attendance in Pennsylvania](#)
- [Headlice Guidelines](#)
- Latex: Due to increased latex sensitivity among students, latex balloons and latex gloves are not permitted on school premises.

Attendance Procedures

The Pennsylvania Department of Education recognizes a limited number of reasons as legal excuses for missing school. They include illness, quarantine, death in the immediate family, impassable roads, student court appearances and exceptionally urgent reasons that affect the child. In the belief that attendance is closely related to good class work, and that academic performance usually suffers when students are late or absent frequently, the following procedures have been adopted with regard to excuses for vacations, trips, or special reasons.

EXCUSE PROCEDURES

- A. **Reporting Absences** - When a student is absent from school for any reason, an excuse note must be submitted within three (3) days of the absence. If a student is absent for longer than (3) days, a physician's excuse will be required.
- B. **Absence Notes:** Please include the student's name, grade, and reason for absence. Parents/guardians should submit all absence notes to stemattendance@dasd.org.
- C. **Illegal Absences:** Any student *not* bringing an excuse note within three (3) days after his return to school automatically receives an illegal/ unexcused absence.
- D. **Advanced Excuses:** Students requesting advance excuses are to report to the attendance office prior to homeroom period. A note from a parent/guardian is required before a student can obtain an Advance Excuse Form from the attendance office. Advance Excuse Procedures are as follows:
 - 1. **Educational tours and family trips may be excused by the principal if permission is sought ahead of time. Student academic records will be examined prior to any approval. Requests are to be submitted no less than three (3) days in advance.**
 - 2. 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/or parents. Teachers will work with students and parents, but not necessarily send work for the days of excused absence. In some cases, requests for work present an unfair burden upon the teachers, who may not have future lessons completely ready.
- E. **Early Dismissals** – Every effort should be made to schedule appointments for doctor, dentist, etc., after school; however, when it becomes necessary for a student to be excused from school, the following procedures must be followed:
 - 1. Requests for early dismissals should be emailed to stemattendance@dasd.org in the morning and must be from a parent/guardian. Please note the nature of the appt and time of dismissal on the request. Students should report to the main office to check out for the day and should not leave the building through any exit other than the main office.
 - 2. **College Visits:** Official Documentation from the College/University is required. Information will be verified through the parent, and a letter from the institution should be returned to the attendance office upon completion of the visit.

TWENTY DAY RULE

A student who has accumulated more than 20 unexcused absences in an academic year will be required to appear before the Board of Directors for a disciplinary hearing where expulsion may be imposed.

ABSENCE AND TRUANCY

A. General Procedure Relating to Student Absence

1. The Pennsylvania School Code defines three types of student absence.
 - a. **Excused:** Absences for clearly established mental, physical or other reasons.
 - b. **Unexcused:** Absences for which acceptable evidence is lacking. Only students who have reached the age of 17 may be considered to have unexcused absences.
 - c. **Illegal:** Absences for which acceptable evidence is lacking and in which case the child is less than 17 years of age.
2. A physician's excuse will be required for any consecutive absence of more than three (3) school days.
3. Students whose absence/tardiness is unexcused/illegal will not be permitted to make up work; however, the building administrator may consider extenuating circumstances beyond the students' control.

B. Acceptable Reasons for Excused Absences

1. **Observance of religious holiday or religious instruction:** permission must be obtained prior to the holiday/absence.
2. **Trips:** Absences for trips to exhibitions, colleges, places of interest, and planned vacations considered educational in nature may be excused provided:
 - a. *Prior permission* is obtained from the principal before the absence begins. A maximum of three days will be approved.
 - b. The educational development of the student is not likely to be hindered seriously. *Please note that students will not be permitted to take mid-term or final examinations early due to trips or vacations. Each trip will be given individual attention by the principal.*
3. **Health care/life event:** Absence for a portion of the school day may be excused for medical or dental appointments, which cannot be arranged after school hours; illness of recovery from an accident; death or serious illness in the immediate family.
4. **Legal:** Court appearance

D. **Unacceptable Reasons for Absence:** *babysitting, missing the school bus, running errands, car trouble, shopping, etc.*

E. **Makeup Work due to Absence** - It is the students' responsibility to plan to make up work missed while absent. The student must make up all work within two (2) days of the absence/tardiness. Students will have the same number of days as absences to make up the work. **Students will not be permitted to make up tests or other work missed when unexcused absences occur.**

F. Corrective Measures and Penalties

1. **Illegal absences.**
 - a. When a student has accumulated three or more days of absence without a lawful excuse, an official written notice shall be mailed to the parents or guardians.
 - b. After the warning has been mailed, each additional time during the school year that the pupil is illegally absent, a citation will be served on the parent/ guardian by the

District Justice.

2. **Excessive Absences:** The district's Home & School Visitor and building administrator(s) will review students' attendance records. Due to the signing of Act 138 by Governor Wolf in November 2016, the following changes have been implemented by DASD:
 - a. Parents of a student who has accumulated 3 unexcused or illegal absences will be notified by letter of the school's concern regarding the student's attendance. This letter will be a warning that a meeting will be required when a student accumulates 6 unexcused or illegal absences.
 - b. If a student accumulates 6 unexcused or illegal absences, a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) meeting will be scheduled by school administration.
 - c. It is imperative that an excuse note is submitted within 3 days of the student's return to school. If an excuse note is not submitted within that time frame or if an excuse is provided that is not one of the 8 reasons for an acceptable excuse, the absence(s) will remain illegal or unexcused.
 - d. Parents of a student who has accumulated 10 absences (3 unexcused) will be notified by letter of the school's concern regarding the student's attendance; the letter will serve as a warning that after 10 absences, only a doctor's note will be accepted for future absences. Parents of a student who has accumulated 10 absences will be notified by letter that only a doctor's note will excuse any further absences.

SCHOOL DAY

- A. All students must be in their first period class promptly at 7:40 a.m. Any student reporting to school after 7:40 a.m. must report to the attendance office for admission. Any student who does not report to attendance upon late arrival will be marked absent.
- B. Students are expected to arrive to classes on time; four minutes are allowed for passing between classes.
- C. Students arriving late to school, due to illness, will be excused if they have a note. ***After a student reaches 8 late days (excused or unexcused), they must have a doctor's note for each additional late.***

HOMELESSNESS

For more information, please visit [DASD Pupil Services](#)

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:

- A. 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;
- B. 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;
 - C. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
 - D. "migratory children" who qualify as homeless under federal law because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (A) through (C) 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
 - E. "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.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE PRIOR TO A SCHOOL ACTIVITY OR ATHLETIC EVENT

- A. Students MUST be in school by 10:00 am on the day of the scheduled activity or athletic contest in order to participate.
- B. A student/athlete may not participate in or attend any school activity on a day the student has an absence.
- C. School events (concerts, field trips, dances, etc. and athletic contests scheduled on Saturday require proper attendance on the previous Friday.

ATHLETICS AND MARCHING BAND PARTICIPATION

Any STEM Academy student participating in athletics or marching band must do so at the high school based on residence as defined by the district attendance boundaries.

DISTRICT DISCIPLINE /DRESS CODE POLICIES

The Downingtown Area School District Code of Student Conduct may be found on the district's website: [Student Code of Conduct](#). All policies must be adhered to at all times, and will be strictly enforced.

DETENTION PROCEDURES

- A. Students must come prepared with their charged laptop to be used for educational purposes.
- B. There is to be no sleeping, eating/drinking. Students may not communicate with each other in any way.
- C. Students are to use the lavatory before entering and make all phone calls before coming to detention. Students WILL NOT be permitted to leave detention.
- D. Failure to attend results in further consequences.

ILLEGAL DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

A copy of the Drug and Alcohol Policy is contained in the District Code of Discipline, and can be found on our district website [Student Code of Conduct](#). Students are responsible to read the Code and to be knowledgeable about its contents.

CLASS PREPARATION POLICY

Homework at the Academy is called ***Class Preparation***. We believe that all assignments are important components to the success of students.

- o Curriculum assignments are necessary in order to fully participate in the lessons and class activities
- o Support assignments are intended to support the student's skills and provide extra practice in a given area
- o Preparation Assignments are not graded but will be recorded in eS+ with a zero weight
- o Lack of class preparation will result in consequences determined by the instructor.

CONDITIONS FOR ASSESSMENT REVISION/RETAKE

Students may retake any assessment (as determined by the teacher) no more than one time. Second assessment grade replaces the first grade. In order to be eligible for an Assessment Revision or Retake, he or she must take the following steps.

1. Submit the Revision/Retake Assessment within two days of receiving the grade.
2. Schedule the assessment within one week of the application submission.
3. Develop an action plan for how to improve his or her grade for the assessment that includes the following criteria:
 - Fully answer/reflect on how he or she prepared for the first assessment.
 - Identify what he or she will do differently in preparation for the revision or retake.
 - List the specific areas for improvement from the first assessment.
 - Schedule a meeting with the teacher after completing the Academy Revision/Retake Application.
4. Parents must answer how they will support their child in preparation for the revision/retake of the assessment.

GRADING SYSTEM

STEM grading requirements can be found in detail here [STEM Program of Study 2023-2024](#)

- In order to pass a course, a student must have a minimum of a 59.5%, which is the average of the four (4) marking periods.
- The lowest grade a student can receive in a marking period is 45%.
- Any student who receives an “I” (incomplete) is required to remove the incomplete within two weeks of the end of the marking period. If the incomplete is not removed within that time, the “I” will be changed to “F”. Since an incomplete grade may be established any time during a marking period, it is the responsibility of the student and teacher to make provisions to remove the “I” within the specified time period.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

As per Downingtown Area School District Policy 214, and the associated administrative guidelines approved on June 12, 2013, DASD will use a Latin, college-style honors system and no longer use the designations of valedictorian and salutatorian. Such a system shall recognize all students with weighted GPAs of 4.40 or higher as summa cum laude, all students with weighted GPAs between 4.20 and 4.39 as magna cum laude, and all students with weighted GPAs between 4.00 and 4.19 as cum laude. This policy is subject to change.

RESEARCH GUIDELINES

Teachers and Students can visit our [LibGuides via Schoology](#) to directly access research databases. Use Access Code: 5GJF2-XRB7Q

HONOR ROLL

Distinguished Honors..... *A's in all courses

High Honors..... *A's in at least two majors and more than one-half of all courses taken. B's in remaining courses. No C's.

Honors..... *A's in at least two courses (one must be a major). A maximum of one C. All others must be B's.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued 4 times throughout the year, and can be accessed through the [Parent Portal](#).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The minimum district course requirements for graduation are outlined in School Board Policy referenced here: [Graduation Requirements STEM Academy 217.1](#)

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

All students regardless of IB diploma status are required to complete all IB internal and external assessments. All Students are also responsible for all fees associated with IB Testing.

PARKING PRIVILEGES

Parking permits will be reserved for Junior and Senior students who are in good standing and without obligations (i.e.: fines, textbooks, graduation project, etc.) based on availability. Students may lose this privilege as a consequence of disciplinary issues.

PROM

Attendance is required the day of the prom. Should the prom be scheduled for a Saturday, students must be in attendance the day prior. The District Code of Conduct will be followed and enforced. Students with obligations will not be permitted to attend the prom. Obligations include (but may not be limited to): graduation projects, textbooks or their replacement cost, library fines, borrowed lunch money etc. The District Code of Conduct will be followed at the prom.

[DASD 1:1 TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE/FAQ](#)

There are many research-based reasons to engage the school community in a technology initiative that provides a one student to one device ratio. Given the resources necessary to implement such an endeavor, it is important to prioritize these reasons in concise and understandable terms. *With this point paramount, here are five reasons why a 1:1 Technology initiative improves teaching and learning:*

1. It equalizes student access to technology
2. It increases engagement for students and teachers (*Engagement, Agency)
3. It customizes, differentiates and individualizes teaching and learning (*Agency, Rigor)
4. It increases executive functioning skills for students
5. It better prepares students for college and career

Please review the [DASD Fast Facts for Families](#) for all 1:1 details and fee information.

[Annual Technology Insurance Fee and Repair Information](#)

[Assist Me - Technical Assistance](#)

WEATHER EMERGENCY INFORMATION (School Closings, Delays, Early Dismissals)

Parents will be notified through the following channels of communication of a weather-related emergency:

- Blackboard, TV/Radio (Channels 3,6,10, WCHE 1530 and KYW 1060), District Website, Twitter, Facebook

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.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

To assist school personnel in maintaining a safe school environment, the school building and grounds are electronically monitored at all times.

LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found is located in the main office and the Knowledge Commons. Valuable items should be turned into the main office.