

Dear Parents and Students,

The staff at Doherty High School are so excited to welcome you to a new school year filled with opportunities to learn and engage!

As a school and the entire district, we are working to make our school environment a place where everyone can be connected, safe, healthy, and learn. We plan to do our best to listen and partner with you so that our students have a successful year. We hope this letter finds you committed to **being engaged** with your student's learning, helping your student maintain **strong attendance**, and supporting your student's **positive behavior choices**. Additional information may be found on D11's website in the [D11 Student Conduct, Discipline, and Attendance Code Policies and Handbook](#). Please, do not hesitate to reach out at any time with questions or concerns.

Engagement:

Please make sure we have your correct email and the best phone numbers where we can reach you. You can provide us with your current information by calling our registrar, Jody Crawford, at 719-328-6406.

In addition to the updated information, I acknowledge the importance of being engaged with my students' learning. As a supportive and encouraging adult, I understand there are committees, volunteer opportunities, and various communication platforms that can help me stay connected to support my student learning and school experience. Please call the school's main phone line at 719-328-6400 to connect and explore ways to support your students' learning and our broader school community.

Attendance:

Colorado Springs School District 11 is committed to increasing student attendance rates and will be focused on efforts to have students in classes and engage on an elevated level this year. We need your help to make school and learning a top priority for all students! **This year our goal, with your support, is to have students attend at a 92% per period attendance rate, launching their academic success.** Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances, but we also know that when students miss too much school — regardless of the reason — it can cause them to fall behind academically. Schools have been encouraged to ask for doctor's notes, validating the need, after students have missed more than 3 consecutive days of school. We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Your child is less likely to succeed if they are **chronically absent**, which means missing 18 or more days over a school year.

Research shows:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence is a proven early warning sign for students at risk of dropping out of school.
- By 9th grade good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8th grade test scores.

Showing up for school has an enormous impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, **families play a key role in making sure students get to school** safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life. If the conditions and expectations listed above are not met, your student may receive school-based consequences and be recommended for truancy court.

We want your child to be successful in school, let us know how we can help! The staff will see that your student will have the tools and resources necessary to give your child the best opportunity for success. The staff will communicate with the parent/guardian about academic progress and attendance. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the school. Please call us if you need help with attendance. Simmy Palmer at 719-328-6414 or Megan Kasten at 719-328-6413.

Behavior:

As a school, we believe it is imperative to have a learning environment that is safe, conducive to learning and free from distractions. We are committed to supporting students in learning respectable and safe behaviors while at school so that teachers can educate, and all students are able to learn.

Students will be held to a high behavioral standard to promote an environment where all students can excel and learn. Students and parents will need to be committed to and supporting positive choices to have access to all the learning possibilities that District 11 has to offer.

District 11 has a Student Code of Conduct [LINK HERE](#) that outlines current policies and expectations for students. To explore more behavioral, social and mental health supports, we have D11 staff and community partnerships to help students succeed at school. Please call us if you would like to partner and explore possibilities for your child, Trevor Needham at 719-328-6404 or trevor.needham@d11.org. There are also community resources that we can provide for you as a family to explore and commit to fostering the most successful student.

In addition to the commitment of supporting your students' positive behaviors, we also are acknowledging that a **new Cell Phone Policy has been adopted by the School District 11 School Board - [LINK HERE](#)**. Our school is committed to safety and any necessary communication between students and parents/guardians.

We are excited to have your student at our school this year and look forward to strengthening our partnership with parents, guardians and community members to make this a memorable and successful school year for your student!

Sincerely,

Principal Hillary Hinton