



Colorado STEM Academy Student Handbook 2024-2025

Preparing Today's Students for Life!

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

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Colorado STEM Academy
Irving Street Building
7281 Irving St.
Westminster, CO 80030
Attendance Line: 303-429-STEM
Office Hours: 8:00-4:00 p.m

Union Building
3455 W. 72nd Ave.
Westminster, CO 80030
Attendance Line: 303-487-2865
Office Hours: 8:00-4:00 p.m.

STUDENT HOURS

Students should plan to arrive at school between 8:00 and 8:15am. There will not be supervision before 8:00am. Students are tardy after 8:15 am.

<u>Regular Schedule</u> Classes begin: 8:15 a.m. Classes end: 3:30 p.m.	<u>Early Release Schedule</u> Classes begin: 8:15 a.m. Classes end: 1:30 p.m.
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<u>Late Start Schedule</u> Classes begin: 10:15 a.m Classes end: 3:30 p.m

Colorado STEM ACADEMY

Welcome to another exciting and challenging school year at Colorado STEM Academy. I am so excited to be joining the CSA team this year! I look forward to partnering with you and the amazing STEM staff in supporting your child as they continue their education and personal development.

Our staff holds high expectations for the success and achievement of all our students, as we believe that a good education is the most important gift that we can give our children. At Colorado STEM Academy, we strive to give each child this gift every day. We see our goal as maximizing learning in a safe environment, and ensuring that each child is well prepared for the transition to high school and beyond. We believe that achieving this goal is a shared responsibility between the home and the school. Please join us by getting involved in the day to day life of the school.

While each year in a child's education is important, it must be remembered that a child's public school education begins in preschool or kindergarten and ends at graduation. It is over this thirteen year period that a child receives the education that will make it possible to achieve success in personal life and a changing society.

By choosing to enroll your child in Colorado STEM Academy, parents and guardians have accepted the responsibility to provide proper interest, encouragement, guidance, and a home environment to foster the best possible learning situation. We would like to make sure you have a full understanding of the support we are able to provide you and your student as well as the support we will require from you.

Our commitment to you and your student:

1. Your student will receive a high quality education and upon matriculating the 8th grade will be prepared for high school.
2. The school will make every effort to make sure your student is safe at all times in the building, on the grounds, and at school sponsored activities.
3. You and your student will be treated with dignity.
4. The school will maintain clear, consistent, and timely communications with you regarding your students and his/her progress.

Your commitment to the school:

1. I understand that as a parent I must be supportive of my child and his/her school. I will commit to supporting the school including but not limited to: attending PTA and/or BAAC meetings, volunteering in the building, supervising field trips, participating in after-school and/or evening events, and/or other activities sponsored by the school.
2. I understand that my child is expected to attend school every day, to arrive promptly, and to remain throughout the scheduled hours. I commit my child will not miss more than 10 days during the school year, and have no more than 10 tardies or 10 early removals from the school. Excessive tardies and/or absences will result in my child being placed on attendance probation.
3. I understand that my child is to adhere to the student code of conduct and discipline policies. Failure to follow school rules and requirements may result in my child receiving behavioral counseling, being placed on a behavior contract, and/or may result in dismissal from the Academy.
4. I commit to ensuring that my student has a quiet place and allotted time every day to complete homework as needed. I understand it is my responsibility to review, sign and return all homework and communications when requested.

5. I will read the school and teacher newsletters and be responsible for knowing the information contained in them.
6. I will be available for conferences with teachers/administrators as necessary. If I have circumstances that prevent me from meeting in person, I will work with the school to identify alternative (phone, video/web conferencing, etc.) forms of communication.
7. I understand that my student is to adhere to the uniform policy of Colorado STEM Academy.

STUDENT CONTRACT

In order to be successful at Colorado STEM Academy, our students need to follow certain guidelines and expectations around behavior, attendance, and academics. I have read and discussed the following student expectations with my child.

As a student at Colorado STEM Academy:

1. I understand that I am to follow the student code of conduct. Violations of the code may result in being placed on a behavior contract and/or dismissal from the school.
2. I understand that I am to follow the directions of adults at the school.
3. I understand I am to keep up on homework and classwork and use the time before and after school to stay on top of my studies.
4. I understand I must attend school every day and be on time and ready to learn.
5. I understand I must wear the approved school uniform.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Colorado STEM Academy focuses on a well rounded education for all students and relies on providing challenging and intriguing assignments for all of its students. It is an expectation at CSA that students will complete and turn in all assignments to the best of their ability. The Westminster Public Schools approach to learning is referred to as CBS (Competency-Based System) where the entire educational system is organized around engaging students in 21st century skills, working at their developmental levels, and advancing only when they have demonstrated proficiency or mastery. Westminster Public Schools uses an approach to learning that is based on these core beliefs:

- Learning is the constant
- Time is the variable
- Personalized Delivery
- Systemic and Systematic

In addition to this, Colorado STEM Academy is committed to providing a STEM education through the use of project based learning that is engaging and provides opportunity for growth for all of its students.

WIN (What I Need) Block: Our goal at CSA is to personalize learning for each of our students. Our WIN Block is designed to give students the opportunity to work on target recovery and/or enhance their academic skills in order to meet learning targets. Students also self-assess and monitor their progress through the use of data notebooks. During this time, all students also receive Personal and Social Leadership Lessons that focus on bullying prevention, nutrition and wellness, making positive choices, etc. These lessons help create and foster a more positive climate and culture.

TEACHER/PARENT COMMUNICATION

Weekly Thursday Folders: Each elementary homeroom teacher will maintain a folder of work that will be sent home on a weekly basis including notes and work samples. Middle school teachers will be sending home parent information with students on Thursdays as well through student planner.

Student Reports: Progress reports can be accessed at any time through our ***Empower system***. Parents are always encouraged to contact or visit with teachers if they have questions about their students' progress.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Quality education requires close and open communication between parents and teachers. In order to support educational excellence, formal scheduled conferences will be held twice a year. At these conferences, student level, achievement, behavior, and effort will be discussed. This contact is also a time for parents to ask questions about progress, share information, or help make plans to further the education of your child. If a parent would like, they may contact a teacher or team to set up a conference that is outside of the regularly scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Schoolwide Weekly Updates: Emailed messages are sent home each week to notify families of upcoming events and important dates. Please make sure your email address is up to date in our Infinite Campus system to ensure you are receiving these important messages.

STUDENT SERVICES

Our Mental Health Interventionists are available to assist you. In addition to meeting with students individually, our interventionists meet with groups of students, conduct classroom and other small group activities, and consult with teachers and parents. Our interventionists assist in making educational plans, understanding test scores, exploring career options, learning effective study skills, further developing academic skills, Gifted and Talented, resolving conflicts with friends, family, teachers, and understanding yourself and others. If you or your child wish to see an interventionist, please call or stop by the main office to arrange an appointment. During the school day, a pass from a staff member is needed to visit with our interventionists. Appointments can be requested before and after school or, if time permits, during passing periods.

We also have a part time, Community Reach School Based Therapist, that provides individual, family and parent therapy sessions at no cost for STEM students that meet criteria for therapy services. If you are wanting to see if your student or family meets criteria, please contact our Mental Health Interventionist so that an intake form can be completed and submitted. The School Based Therapist will then reach out to schedule an intake and provide you specific details of the process from there.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Building Accountability Advisory Committee (BAAC): BAAC is a school accountability committee made up of teachers, staff, parents, and community members that serve to advise the principal concerning school improvement. Meetings are held four times each year and members of the public are always welcome and invited to attend.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA): The PTA at Colorado STEM Academy is made up of parents, and teachers to serve to organize community events and our school fundraisers that directly supports the following:

- Student Recognition
- Student Field Trips
- Educational Assemblies
- Project-based Learning
- Teacher appreciation and conference meals
- School Improvements

At our back to school night, and during the beginning of the year; the PTA will be holding a membership drive and all are welcome to attend. ***Please support our students by joining PTA!***

School Visitation and Volunteering: Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, at special programs, activities, or some of the committees listed above. Students appreciate seeing their parents involved in their school and a cooperative effort between school and home can only enhance each student's educational experience. Please inquire in the office if you are interested in volunteering on a regular basis in the classroom. You will also need to complete a volunteer form and sign our CSA volunteer guidelines form as well. We do ask that you coordinate volunteer efforts directly with classroom teachers ahead of time. We look forward to seeing you often, in and around Colorado STEM Academy.

STUDENT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Other After School Clubs: Colorado STEM Academy offers a variety of after school clubs at each level. Students are encouraged to participate in as many, or as few after school clubs as they would like. Sometimes, there is a small fee that goes towards paying for the club. Club announcements will come home in students' Thursday Folders and in weekly updates throughout the school year. If you decide to sign your student up for an after school club, please make sure that you inform the club leader if your child will be absent for a session.

Field Trips: Field trips are scheduled to provide students with learning experiences not readily available in the normal classroom. A charge to cover operating expenses for the bus is made by Westminster Public Schools. Some trips may require additional money for entrance fees or activities. As part of the registration process, a signed electronic form is necessary and teachers will send home additional permission slips or opt out forms for each experience.

Birthdays: Students can celebrate their birthdays at school by coordinating a timeframe with the teacher. Students have the option to bring in a healthy, pre-packaged snack as an alternative to sweets treats. Please notify your child's teacher of any dietary restrictions.

Colorado STEM Academy BOTS: At Colorado STEM Academy, we participate in the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support programs (P.B.I.S). Our school mascot is a STEMBOTS, and we use this as a reminder of how our behavior should be each day and what types of behavior we should be practicing each day. **B.O.T.S** represents the habits of a scholar. They are **Behavior, Ownership, Teamwork, Safety**. A student being caught going above and beyond these expectations by any staff member will be rewarded. There are many positive activities planned throughout the year to recognize and honor students, who consistently demonstrate their ability to conduct themselves in a responsible and caring manner. At CSA, we celebrate academic progress and good behavior. We want everyone to be proud of themselves, their accomplishments, their school, and their community.

Library: Classrooms will no longer be taking regularly scheduled trips to the Irving Street Library but we encourage you to read with your child at home. The Irving Street Library has great reading programs to keep your child engaged in reading.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance Guidelines:

All students, regardless of age, are expected to maintain appropriate attendance and meet academic performance standards as part of their promotion through the levels. As a courtesy and an extra safety measure, we will call you at home or at work if we have not heard from you by 8:45 a.m.

In addition to this, parent and student responsibilities relative to Westminster Public Schools' attendance Policy, Procedures and Colorado State Statutes include: that more than four (4) unexcused absences in a month, or ten (10) absences, of any type, in an academic year are considered excessive, and subsequent absences may require necessary documentation from medical personnel or prior approval from administration in order to be considered excused. At fifteen (15) absences, an attendance meeting with administration will be requested. The purpose of this meeting would be to determine the reasons for continued absences and, if necessary, place the student on a building-level contract.

Excessive Absences: When a student has 20 combined unexcused or excused absences it is deemed as Excessive Absenteeism. Once this occurs, the student and parent will be referred to the Student Services office of Westminster Public Schools.

Tardiness: Without proper excuse, tardiness is considered a form of unexcused absence.

- Students who are late to school must check in with the Main Office. Students who are late to class and are unexcused will receive consequences from their teacher for time and work missed.
- Tardies are dealt with by each teacher unless they become excessive, in which case they will be referred to the administration and may result in an administrative referral and may result in further disciplinary actions.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Clinic: The clinic is available for students who are ill, injured, or have a health concern. Students **MUST** have a pass from a teacher to come to the clinic, except in the case of an emergency. Parents must be contacted through the main office for permission to leave school. **(Students who are ill may not call parents to take them home from their cell phone or classroom phone).**

Medication: Whenever possible, your child should take their medicine at home. We cannot give any medication (prescription or any over the counter types) at school unless a Medication Permission Form has been completed and signed by you and your doctor. This includes but is not limited to cough drops, sunscreen, and inhalers. In these cases, medicines will be kept in the office and your child will take it there. The medication must be in the original prescription container and properly labeled with the date, child's name, name of the medicine, directions for taking the medicine and the name, and telephone number of the doctor who prescribed the medicine. These forms are available in the office.

Immunization Record: A complete immunization record is required by the State of Colorado for all students and the school must keep on record a copy of the original immunization record from the doctor's or clinic's office.

Lockdown/Lockout Drills: Two lockdown/lockout drills are conducted each school year. These are conducted by District personnel who come to the building to take us through the process of what to do in the case of an intruder or an emergency in the school vicinity. During these drills, students will not be released to parents for an early appointment until the drill is completed. These drills have become necessary in recent years to educate students and staff in what to do in the case of an unforeseen emergency.

DRESS CODE

All students at the Colorado STEM Academy are expected to wear the designated uniform. This consists of Colorado STEM Academy attire that has the school's logo and has been provided by the school. The STEM Logo should be shown at all times. If students are not in proper STEM attire, students may borrow a STEM approved shirt from the office for the day. If not returned by the next school day, parents will be notified and charged for the shirt. Students should wear appropriate bottoms based on district policy. Shoes and socks should be appropriate to the weather. Students will need closed toed shoes for PE and technology education classes. Students should dress appropriately for the weather so that they are comfortable and able to complete school work without disturbing others. In the winter, this includes items such as a coat, hat, gloves and boots. While students are allowed to wear hooded sweatshirts and jackets outside during recess, hoods are not allowed to be worn on student's heads while students are within the school building. **Hats are not allowed within the school building, but can be worn outside during recess.** Good personal grooming and clothing habits allow students to be more productive on a consistent basis, and in addition, boosts their self esteem. For any questions regarding the dress code, please refer to the Westminster Public Schools Dress Code Policy. Repeated dress code violations will be considered insubordination and may result in further discipline or suspension.

Lockers: Lockers are distributed to middle school students upon the return of a locker agreement form.

- Lockers are issued to students by the main office. Students must keep their original assigned locker.
- Lockers and backpacks may be searched with "reasonable suspicion" at any time. Keep your locker clean, inside and out. Keep your locker combination to yourself and do not share it with anyone else.
- The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. **Leave valuables at home.**
- **All backpacks must be kept in your locker until the end of the day.**
- Lockers will be assessed a fee to repair any damages that occur to the locker.

Planners: Students who are in Levels 4-8 will receive a school planner upon payment of school fees and charges. Planners are a great way to keep students organized and up to date as well as a great form of communication for parents.

- **Students are expected to have their planners with them every day and in every class. Students may be asked to write down information requested by teachers and use their planner as a way to keep in communication with parents.**
- In order to leave class for any reason, students are required to have their planner signed by their teacher. This includes using the restroom, coming down to the main office, seeing the school's interventionists, or any other time they are not in the classroom.

HALLWAY AND RESTROOM PROCEDURES

Hall Behavior:

- Hallways are designated as a "quiet zone" during class times.
- Students are permitted in the hall during class periods only if they have their planner hall pass signed by their teacher. You may be requested to show this hall pass to a staff member when out of class.
- No student may leave the classroom without his/her teacher's permission AND a pass in hand. This applies to the lunchroom as well.

- Headphones may be used in class at teacher discretion and with specific teacher permission. For safety reasons, headphones are not allowed to be used during passing periods.

Restroom Behavior:

- Students are permitted in the bathroom once they have their planner signed or given a hall pass provided by their teacher.
- Students are not to bring writing utensils or cell phones to the restrooms
- Students will behave respectfully in the bathroom towards both other students and the bathroom equipment.

Entering the Building (Before School):

- Students may come to school at 8:00 a.m. at which time we have supervision in the gym at the middle school and on the blacktop at the elementary school. Students should not be on campus before 8:00 a.m.

Exiting the Building (After School):

- All students will be dismissed via driveline from 3:30-3:50pm.
- Driveline requires that the vehicle that is being used to pick up a child has the proper number (distributed at the beginning of the year) displayed so that a student can be notified to exit the building. The pick up number assigned to each family should be prominently displayed to ensure the driver of that vehicle is approved to pick up the children associated with the number.
- After Driveline, at 3:50pm, elementary students walk to the designated exit accompanied by their teacher.
- Students who are walking will be allowed to exit the building and walk home at 3:40pm.
- All teachers wait outside at their designated location until all students have been picked up or, if walking, have left school grounds.
- Elementary students who have not been picked up by 3:50pm. will be escorted by their teachers to the main office and can be picked up by parents from the main office. Parents should try to pick up their children as soon as possible after 3:30pm. release. While we work hard to work with families running late, there is no supervision after 4:00pm and students may be released to authorities if tardiness becomes excessive. We recommend that families sign up for Boys and Girls Club programming if students will be picked up after our scheduled dismissal time.
- Students who need to re-enter the building for after school activities, water, pencils, notepads, etc., must enter through the front door. Those students will be escorted back into the school by a teacher at 4:00pm to begin their after school club.
- Colorado STEM Academy has several after school options for our students and families. We have partnered with Hyland Hills to offer on site supervision until 6pm for a small fee. We also have the Boys and Girls Club available and located on our campus until 8pm. Both are wonderful options for our families. Both options do require pre planning and paperwork. Additional information is available through the main office.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS

- Breakfast is free to all Colorado STEM Academy students through a state funding grant. Free/reduced lunch applications are completed by all families for us to qualify for this funding source. Applications are available in the school office and online. Students eat breakfast in their classrooms at the beginning of the school day.
- Students who choose not to eat the hot lunch provided by the school may bring lunch from home. Each student is assigned a lunch number code to credit their lunch account on the computer. To help maintain a safe lunch room, students are not allowed to share food per school board policy.

LUNCHROOM RULES

Student courtesy and politeness are expected at all times and each student must practice good table manners while in the cafeteria. The following rules must be followed:

- Students must follow the directions from the cafeteria supervisor;
- Students should talk softly in a conversational tone;
- Students should not share food;
- Students should leave the lunch table area clean and neat;
- Students should not leave their seat until they are dismissed
- Students must have a pass to go back to the classroom or hallway.

Eating with your peers in the lunchroom is a privilege that is guided by rules of courtesy, cleanliness, and appropriate manners. If you choose to disregard the above expectations, your parents and the administration will need to make alternative lunch arrangements.

RECESS/PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS

- Please make sure that your student is prepared every day to go outside for recess in all types of weather. Students will go outside for recess unless the weather indicates that the windchill feels below 20 degrees or the weather conditions are too harsh for outdoor play. If this is the case, students will have inside recess.
- Students are to be cooperative, kind and inclusive of everyone during inside and outside recess.
- Students are also expected to follow the rules of staff for inside and outside recess.
- There are several staff members available for recess to assist students in problem solving.

BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS, BULLYING, AND STUDENT REDIRECTION

CSA teachers and staff believe in a positive approach to prevent negative behaviors. No student shall engage in bullying, intimidating, or harassing behavior. This includes behaviors in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at school activities or sanctioned events, or that happen outside the school day but affect another student's sense of safety.

Bullying is defined as any written or verbal expression, or physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students.

A reasonable balance between the severity and pattern, if any, of the behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Administration will refer to the WPS Discipline Matrix for all incidents involving bullying and/or mean behavior.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

A student's personal property should be kept in the school desk or locker with one exception. Money should remain in a student's pocket or purse at all times. We recommend that students bring only small amounts of money to school if purchasing lunch or t-shirts. All coats, jackets, tennis shoes, hats, gloves, boots, etc. should have the student's name clearly marked on the inside.

- Toys, iPods, radios, electronic games, Laser pointers, stuffed animals, etc. are **NOT** to be brought to school and can be confiscated;
- All personal and family valuables should be left at home (any items that a student brings to school become their responsibility; including their cell phone);
- Any hazardous items such as knives, guns, water pistols, matches, lighters, explosives, tobacco or drug-related items will be taken away immediately and the student will be dealt with in accordance with district policy and state law;
- Colorado STEM Academy is not responsible for any lost or stolen money, property, including their cell phone.

COMPUTER ETHICS

Chromebooks: Each child in Levels 2-8 will have a designated Chromebook checked out to them each day. Students are responsible for any damages that may occur to their device.

All students are asked to follow a simple set of rules which are intended to make the technology experience as pleasant as possible for everyone, while making sure the equipment is protected from any careless behavior. The following are the basic rules we ask of all students:

- No food or beverages are allowed around devices.
- No stickers on Chromebooks as they are school property.
- Make sure all equipment is in working order at the beginning and end of each class.
- Log-in with their own username and password.
- Downloading of videos, music, games, or playing network games is prohibited.
- Viewing videos, music, games, or playing network games is prohibited.
- Log out when finished with the computer.
- Students who intentionally access inappropriate sites or vandalize either the hardware or files will receive disciplinary action that may result in loss of computer privileges.
- It is strongly recommended that families purchase the District's Chromebook Protection Plan, failure to do so will result in a \$250 replacement fee if Chromebook is damaged.
- Because electronic information is so volatile and easily reproduced, respect for the work and personal expression of others is especially important in the computer environment. Violations of authorial integrity, including plagiarism, invasion of privacy, unauthorized access, cyber-bullying, and copyright violations are grounds for disciplinary action.

No expectation of privacy

District computers and computer systems are owned by the District and are intended for educational purposes at all times. Students shall have no expectation of privacy when using the Internet or electronic communications. The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store (at any time and without prior notice) all usage of District computers and computer systems, including all Internet and electronic communications access and transmission/receipt of materials and information. All material and information accessed/received through District computers and computer systems shall remain the property of the school district.

CELL PHONE USE

Cell phones are **not** permitted in the classroom unless it is being used for academic purposes and approved by the teacher. Students may use the student phone in the front office for an emergency only. The following are not considered to be emergencies and should not take office personnel time away from more important duties:

- Forgotten homework;
- Forgotten musical instruments;
- Notifying parents of regularly scheduled after school activities; and
- Arranging with a parent to visit a friend's house after school.

If a student has a phone at school, it should always be turned off and out of sight/sound during school hours. This includes all school activities and field trips. **CSA will not investigate nor be held liable for inappropriate use of, damage to, theft of, or loss of any and all electronic devices.**

- If a device rings, vibrates or is in use during class or while at school, it may be confiscated and brought to the administration.
 - If it is the **first offense**, the student will receive a warning and ask to put away the phone

- If it is the **second offense**, the student may reclaim the phone at the end of the school day from the main office. Infraction is logged in the main office.
- Upon the **third offense**, parents will be notified and parents will need to pick up the student's phone from the main office. Infraction is logged in the main office.
- Upon the **fourth offense**, parents and students will meet with administration to discuss the disruption to the learning environment and additional consequences. Infraction is logged in the main office.

Further or repeated offenses may result in additional discipline. Students are reminded that use of technology, during or after school hours, on or off school property, may result in discipline at school if it interferes with school safety or academic integrity. This includes but is not limited to texting, social media and email.

Behavior Referrals: Consequences will be given for misbehaviors. Our teachers follow a progressive system of discipline. They first try to correct the behavior using Restorative Justice Practices within the classroom and in cooperation with you, the parent or guardian. If this does not produce better behavior, your student may receive a minor or major Office Discipline Referral. Minor infractions are handled immediately by the adult in charge; major misbehavior results in a visit with the dean of students, assistant principal, and principal and further consequences.

Parents and students, your signature informs us that you have read and understand the expectations of CSA, agree to abide by school and District rules, and pledge to work together with the school to ensure a safe and positive educational environment for all our students.

Parent _____ Date _____

Student _____ Date _____

Students and parents are responsible for reviewing and knowing the behavior expectations outlined in both this student handbook and the WPS [Student and Family Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#) published by the District and provided during online registration.