



## **Family Handbook 2025-2026**

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**Principal – Micah Klaver  
Assistant Principal – Karen Hoppis**

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## Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to Explore Pk-8. The faculty and staff have written this handbook to answer any questions you might have about how our school works. After you have read it, please let us know if you have any other questions or concerns.

We have developed these policies and procedures to support our mission and vision. It is our goal to build integrity, trust and respect among members of our school community. These common expectations of conduct, academic responsibility and communication will help us create a healthy academic and social community.

All parents and students are expected to read this handbook before the first day of school and to abide by its policies. This Handbook is the most current at this time and supersedes all previous policies, manuals or handbooks issued by Explore. Further, the provisions of the Handbook are subject to modification at any time, at the sole discretion of Explore, with or without notice.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission Explore Pk-8 is to provide all students with a high-quality education that fosters academic excellence, character growth, and a passion for lifelong learning.

### **Vision Statement**

Explore PK-8 envisions a vibrant academic community where students and educators strive for excellence and lifelong learning, guided by the values of craftsmanship, integrity, compassion, and collaboration—empowered to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the world.

### **Explore Pk-8's Character Traits**

**Craftsmanship** - Students bravely engage in pursuit and application of skill, care, and attention to detail in the creation of work, where quality, precision, and pride in the outcome are paramount. It reflects a deep commitment to excellence, often combining technical mastery with an aesthetic sensibility, regardless of the medium or discipline.

**Integrity** - Student conduct is consistent adherence to moral and ethical principles, demonstrated through honesty, responsibility, and fairness in all actions. In academics, it means upholding standards of truthfulness and originality in one's work. In personal conduct, it reflects a commitment to doing what is right—even when it is difficult or when no one is watching.

**Compassion** - Students work to deepen awareness of the needs of others, coupled with a genuine desire to help. It is expressed through acts of kindness, empathy, and support, fostering a sense of connection and

responsibility within a community. Compassion motivates individuals to take meaningful action that uplifts others and contributes to the common good.

**Impact** - Students work to understand the meaningful and lasting influence one has on others and the world, achieved through intentional actions rooted in kindness, ethical conduct, and social awareness. It reflects a commitment to service, the promotion of well-being, and the creation of positive change—whether through small daily choices or larger community efforts.

**Collaboration** - Students engage in the act of working together with others—sharing ideas, responsibilities, and strengths—to achieve common goals. It thrives on mutual respect, open communication, and a shared vision. As students and global-citizens, collaboration empowers us to combine our unique perspectives and talents to solve problems, uplift communities, and create a more compassionate and connected world.

## **School Operations**

### **School Hours**

The Main Office is open Monday-Friday, 7:00-3:50

Student Hours are 7:45-2:50

Teachers, SSP's, Support Staff are available upon request for an appointment.

The school building opens and breakfast is served for students at 7:25am. Please make sure your student arrives at school with time to settle into the classroom. Students and parents who arrive after 7:50am should ring the Explore bell for entry. The student must check in with the main office before proceeding to his or her classroom. It is preferred parents check-in with their students, if possible.

### **School Administration**

**Principal** - Micah Klaver - [klaverm@mapleton.us](mailto:klaverm@mapleton.us)

**Assistant Principal**: Karen Hoppis - [hoppisk@mapleton.us](mailto:hoppisk@mapleton.us)

**Dean of Culture**: Kurt Dennis - [dennisk@mapleton.us](mailto:dennisk@mapleton.us)

**TOSA**: Jeffrey Sparrow - [sparrowj@mapleton.us](mailto:sparrowj@mapleton.us)

**Instructional Lead**: Allison Casillo - [casilloa@mapleton.us](mailto:casilloa@mapleton.us)

### **Operational Staff**

Secretary: Dana Young - [youngd@mapleton.us](mailto:youngd@mapleton.us)

Registrar: Tessa Crooks - [crookst@mapleton.us](mailto:crookst@mapleton.us)

School Nurse: Raylene Romero - [romeror@mapleton.us](mailto:romeror@mapleton.us)

School Psychologist: Heather Gorey - [goreyh@mapleton.us](mailto:goreyh@mapleton.us)

Facility Manager: Maria Luna - [lunam@mapleton.us](mailto:lunam@mapleton.us)

Mapleton Bus Transportation: 303-853-1024

Mapleton Main Telephone: 303-853-1000

## **Front Office Protocols**

The main office serves as the welcome center of Explore. Our front office staff will assist you with checking in / out your child, attending appointments with administrators, counselors or other school personnel, dropping off missing assignments/lunches, etc. Visitors are asked to refrain from being on their phone while in the main office. Please have your ID when checking out your child.

### **Adults/Visitors on Campus**

Your child's safety is our top priority. Any non-staff adult entering our campus must enter through the main doors, sign in at the office and wear a visitor badge while on campus. The badge serves as a visual ID that allows staff to immediately determine if a visitor has permission to be in the building. Please have your ID, as we will ID all visitors coming into the building.

### **Parent Visit to Classrooms**

Parents who wish to visit their student(s) classrooms should communicate directly with the classroom teacher to set this up. We will not typically allow classroom visits without teacher or administrator consent so as not to disrupt the learning of all students in class.

### **Unscheduled School Closings**

Unscheduled school closings will be reported to local news outlets and posted on the Mapleton website. Mapleton Website: <https://www.mapleton.us>

## **Student Absences and Tardies**

### **Attendance Policies**

At Explore, we believe that every day counts. Regular attendance helps students stay connected, succeed academically, and build strong relationships. We're here to support students and families in making school a positive and consistent part of life.

Colorado Compulsory Attendance Laws apply to students ages 6-17. The policy applies to all enrolled students who are enrolled in Preschool-12th grade. All students must attend school daily and be present for all scheduled classes

Excellent attendance is highly valued at Explore. Because excellent student attendance is correlated to high levels of student success, we encourage students to be in every class, on time, every day of the school year. The school will contact parents regarding student attendance problems and will respond with the appropriate consequences when non-attendance becomes problematic. Parents/Guardians can request their student's attendance report in the Main Office and an attendance report can be obtained from the student's Portal account.

### **Student Tardies**

Students are considered tardy to class if they arrive after the official start time of class or their class period. Students who come to class late without a pass will be marked as an unexcused tardy.

### **Excused Absences**

- Leave a message on the Explore attendance voicemail at 303-853-1175
- Email the Explore attendance email - [crookst@mapleton.us](mailto:crookst@mapleton.us)

Absences are excused for the following reasons:

- Illness or injury
- Family emergencies
- Medical/dental appointments
- Religious observances
- Court appearances
- School-sponsored events
- Other administrator-approved absences

Requests for any other reason may need approval by the school administration. Requests for continued excused absences may require a note from a doctor.

If a student is unable to participate in any subject class (including gym), a note signed by the parent/guardian must be given to the class teacher or main office in advance. If a student fails to participate in a class 2 or more consecutive times, a doctor's note is required.

The school encourages family vacations to be scheduled to coincide with school vacations. In the case of all absences, but specifically extended absences, students are responsible for notifying teachers of their absence in advance and making up any assignments, quizzes or tests by an agreed-upon date.

### **Unexcused Absence**

An attendance referral may be made for one or more periods of unexcused absence (truancy), and will always be made in response to escalating or concerning periods of unexcused absences. Examples of unexcused absence per Mapleton Policy are as follows:

1. Truancy or skipping school without valid cause
2. Absences without notification from parents/guardians
3. Absences that do not meet the criteria for an excused absence regardless of parent or guardian permission
4. Vacation or travel

### **Chronic Absenteeism (Truancy)**

All absences, Excused or Unexcused, count toward student truancy. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of school days (approximately 2 days per month or 17 days per academic year. At Explore, we monitor attendance patterns to identify at-risk students and report to the district and Colorado Department of Education on chronic absenteeism data. Continued absences will result in the activation of the Attendance Concern Response which includes and may not be limited to:

- The school develops personalized attendance plans for chronically absent students
- Support services may include counseling, mentoring, family services referrals, and academic support
- A re-engagement plan is created for students returning from truancy-related absences
- Truancy Notice
- Filing in Juvenile Attendance Court

Mapleton Attendance Policies: [JH-R.pdf](#), [JLIB.pdf](#), [JKBA.pdf](#), [JKBA-R.pdf](#), [JKA-R.pdf](#), [JJA2.pdf](#)

## **Morning Drop-Off and Afternoon Pick-Up**

Students can be dropped off in front of the building in either one of Explore's two drop off lanes. Students should not be dropped off prior to 7:20 AM and will not be allowed into the building until 7:25 AM. Staff will be onsite supporting traffic and drop off beginning at 7:25am and then pick-up in the afternoon. Staff will be wearing safety vests and have traffic signs to communicate traffic expectations. In order to support the safety of our staff and students we ask that you:

Pre-K

- Drive slowly and respectfully through traffic lanes.
- Obey traffic signs from staff.
- Park in the first lot in front of the school.
- Wait with your student until you sign in to their classroom.
- Parking in the bus lanes is prohibited at ALL TIMES.

K-8th Grade

- Drive slowly and respectfully through traffic lanes.
- Obey traffic signs from staff.
- Do not unload students from vehicles until the "Unload" sign has been given.
- Do not proceed through the traffic lanes until the appropriate sign has been given.
- Parking, for any period of time, during drop-off or pick-up times is prohibited.
- Parking in the bus lanes is prohibited at ALL TIMES.

## **Early Dismissal**

If you need to pick up your student for early dismissal, the front office staff will locate your student and have them meet you at the main office. You will be asked to record the time and reason for early dismissal on the check-out sheet. If an adult other than the student's parent/guardian (or other persons on their approved list) is to pick up a student, we need to hear from the parent or guardian or we will not release the child for dismissal. You must have your ID in order to pick up your child.

Please be aware of the following policies:

- Do not call ahead and ask that your child be waiting in the office when you arrive. The office staff will only call for a student when the parent/guardian is in the main office. This is to ensure that students do not miss any more class than is needed.
- We do not release students for early dismissal after 2:30pm.

## **Early Dismissal on Student Activity Days**

Explore frequently hosts students' activities and celebrations of learning in which we encourage families to join. On these occasions, we strongly encourage parents to have students remain in class for the duration of the school day. In the case families do choose to take students home for the day we ask that families follow typical check out procedures in the office to account for student attendance and safety.

## **After School Supervision**

All students who are not participating in a school-sanctioned activity or are under pre-arranged staff supervision must leave campus by 3:10 pm every day. If a student cannot depart campus by 3:30 pm,

they will need to report to the office and wait until their ride arrives. Mapleton Safety and Security will be called for those students who have not been picked up or for whom no communication has been received regarding a plan for pick-up.

### **Bus transportation, rules and regulations**

Bus routes are set by the Mapleton Transportation Department. Bus rules and regulations are included in the Student Behavior Standards Booklet that is prepared by Mapleton Public Schools. Parents are required to read and electronically sign off on this booklet each year. Please refer to this for bus rules and regulations. If for some reason your student is not to ride the bus home on any given day, please call the office or send a note with the student stating so. **If your student does not have a note stating that they are not to ride the bus home, they will be put on the bus.**

Students need a Paw Pass to ride the bus. Lost Paw Passes can be replaced at the District Transportation Office. Find more information at this [link](#).

Any questions concerning this service including information regarding late buses, or other bus inquiries call transportation at:

Director of Transportation at (303) 853-1027  
Mapleton Bus Transportation: 303-853-1024  
Mapleton Main Telephone: 303-853-1000

### **Enrollment Policies**

Explore Pk-8 is a full participant in the Mapleton Public Schools School Choice process. Mapleton functions as a "District of Choice," allowing students who live within district boundaries to select any school within the district, regardless of their residential location, based on availability. Students can choose from schools designed around different learning philosophies and unique educational programs. The district has established a Welcome Center to help families navigate school options. New students, those beginning their schooling, or those considering switching schools should contact the Welcome Center for guidance on school choices and assistance in the decision-making process. The Welcome Center can be reached by phone at 303.853.1780 or email [Welcome@mapleton.us](mailto:Welcome@mapleton.us).

### **Transfer Students**

Transfer students will be accepted to Explore Pk-8 on a space available basis during the school year.

### **Custody Agreements**

In the case of specific or court ordered custodial agreements, it is the families responsibility to ensure a formal and updated copy of the custodial agreement is on file with the main office. The school will comply with written and active orders of the court.

### **Withdrawing a Student**

Parents must notify the school in writing at least one week prior to withdrawing their student. Upon withdrawal, all instructional materials/technology must be returned and all school fees paid in full.

## *School Instruction and Organization*

### **Organizational Agreements**

- Those who take up the responsibility of leadership roles in Explore Pk-8 do so in the spirit of servant leadership, guided by the principle of service and responsiveness to the entire community.
- Explore Pk-8 exists by virtue of the support of a wide community of parents, students, community members, political representatives and members of Mapleton Public Schools. The health and growth of our school depends on the strength of these relationships.
- The School Accountability Committee or SAC has the responsibility to provide oversight of the school and the administration in accomplishment of the school's mission.
- The faculty and administration hold responsibility for making the mission of the school a reality.
- The organizational and operational affairs of the school are carried out by the administration in service of the Explorer's vision of the school.
- The faculty and administration decide matters of pedagogical principle.

### **Expectations of Teachers and Staff at Explore**

*All classrooms and instruction at Explore Pk-8 will be:*

- Well-planned
- Engaging
- Rigorous
- Standards-Based
- Data-Driven
- Incubators for creativity and risk-taking

*All Staff at Explore Pk-8 will:*

- Ensure a safe and orderly learning environment for all students
- Communicate regularly and effectively with families
- Collaborate and work as a team
- Reflect and be open to coaching
- Make customer service a top priority
- Be positive and have fun

### **School Administration and Responsibilities**

The school's administration is composed of:

**Principal:** Micah Klaver - [klaverm@mapleton.us](mailto:klaverm@mapleton.us)

**Assistant Principal:** Karen Hoppis - [hoppisk@mapleton.us](mailto:hoppisk@mapleton.us)

**Dean of Culture:** Kurt Dennis - [dennisk@mapleton.us](mailto:dennisk@mapleton.us)

**TOSA:** Jeffrey Sparrow - [sparrowj@mapleton.us](mailto:sparrowj@mapleton.us)

**Instructional Lead:** Allison Casillo - [casilloa@mapleton.us](mailto:casilloa@mapleton.us)

The administration is responsible for the leadership of the school and for the actualization of the school's mission. The administration is responsible for:

- Determining the guiding principles of the school.
- Developing curriculum and program changes.
- Hiring, retention, and dismissal of teachers and staff.
- Mentoring, coaching and evaluating teachers and staff.
- Retaining or matriculating students.
- Planning and implementation.

## **EL Education**

Explore PK-8 partners with EL Education to provide an active, integrated, and participatory approach to learning called “expeditionary learning.” EL Education is a proven school design that combines high-level academic content and real-world projects with rigorous teaching and character development.

*Some EL Education vocabulary and terms that might be helpful:*

**Expedition/Modules** – Learning Expeditions or Modules feature linked projects that require students to construct deep understandings and skills and to create products for real audiences.

**Case Studies** – Smaller units of the expedition in which students study a topic for 4-6 weeks. Students engage in rigorous research, reading, and writing activities to fully explore science and social studies questions. Each investigation culminates with a final writing product that is taken through all steps of the writing process. Please see the writing process below.

**Fieldwork** – Purposeful and directed learning that takes place away from a student’s desk. Any fieldwork away from campus and/or for extended hours requires a parent permission slip.

There are also times when fieldwork happens in our neighborhood. Students can walk and so we ask that you sign one permission slip, at the beginning of the year, to cover all walking fieldwork. Any field work experiences requiring a bus will have separate permission slips.

## **Crew**

Crew is a school structure used to support our students in developing both character and positive social emotional tools for life and learning. With crew we try to be responsive to the lived experiences of our students taking time to listen but also support them both individually and collectively with where they are in relationship to achieving their goals.

## **Instructional Curriculums**

### **Expeditionary Learning -**

The EL Education curriculum is based on the Science of Reading, including structured phonics, which empowers all students to read complex grade-level texts and master literacy standards, providing all students with an equitable outcome. This curriculum builds deep knowledge by using content-rich, authentic texts on real-world topics in social studies, STEM, and literature. Students leverage their learning for social justice and environmental stewardship while building habits of character that help them contribute to a better world.

### **Bridges -**

Bridges in Mathematics is a comprehensive PK–5 curriculum that equips teachers to fully address state standards in a rigorous, engaging, and accessible manner. Students gain a deep understanding of concepts, proficiency with key skills, and the ability to solve complex problems. The curriculum is composed of three distinct but integrated components: Problems & Investigations, Workplaces and Number Corner.

### **Envision -**

enVision Mathematics for grades 6-8 combines problem-based learning and visual learning to deepen students' conceptual understanding. enVision packs a unique one-two punch. Lessons start with Problem-Based Learning (PBL), where students must think critically about a real-world math problem, evaluate options, collaborate, and present solutions. This is followed by Visual Learning to solidify the underlying math concepts and to help kids better understand math ideas.

### **Inspire -**

Inspire Science sparks students' curiosity through fascinating real-world phenomena. Explore the program and see how students investigate, problem-solve, argue, and discuss scientific phenomena to make sense of the world from their perspective.

### **TCI -**

TCI is a newly adopted Social Studies curriculum for grade levels 6th-8th. ***Social Studies Alive!, History Alive!, Geography Alive!, Econ Alive!, and Government Alive!*** programs use hands-on activities, inquiry-based learning, and multimedia resources to bring history, geography, civics, and economics to life.

### **Project Lead the Way -**

Young learners are naturally wired for discovery. PLTW Launch is designed with activities that let them see what they can be and build skills to discover what they can do.

Students are immersed in hands-on activities, projects, and problems that build upon each other and relate to the real world. They experience integrated learning that blends computer science, engineering, biomedical science, and more. Throughout the modules, even the youngest learners apply their math and English Language Arts (ELA) skills, learn science to standards, and adopt skills that are foundational across disciplines.

## **Academic Refocus Program**

Not doing an assignment or failing grades are not permitted at Explore. In lieu of “failing” students, Explore requires that students get their work done during refocus blocks. Refocuses may be given for:

- missing or incomplete assignments.
- submission of work that is of low quality
- refusal or failure to complete work during time given by teachers.

### **Lunch - Academic Refocus**

Teachers may offer, request or require students to return to class following lunch to complete or get caught up on missing or incomplete work. Teachers prioritize the student's need for movement, exercise, and free-play but at times students may need to forgo these opportunities to fulfill their academic responsibilities.

### **After School - Academic Refocus**

Students may be assigned an After-School Refocus which would occur from 3:10 - 4:10pm on specific days after school supported by admin and school staff. Parents and guardians will be communicated with prior to an After-School Refocus by school administration in order to ensure students can stay and have transportation home following the refocus at 4:10pm.

## **Lunch, Recess and After School Activities**

## Schedules

Students have a supervised 35-minute lunch/recess every day which occurs according to the following schedule:

Grade	Lunch	Recess
K	11:15-11:35	11:00-11:15
1/2	10:40-10:55	10:55-11:15
3/4	12:10-12:25	12:25-12:45
5/6	12:45-1:00	1:00-1:20
7/8	11:35-11:50	11:50-12:10

Students may bring their lunch or eat the hot lunch provided by Mapleton. All food must be consumed in the cafeteria. Lunches and snacks brought to school must be properly stored with their teacher until the appropriate time of day.

## Outdoor Recess Rules

The following rules apply to recess and the time before and after school.

- Respect your classmates.
- Stay out of the streets, parking lots and adjoining private property
- Get permission before re-entering the school. Respect our building and grounds.
- Do not climb trees.
- Do not throw snow/ice, rocks, or wood chips.
- Return all balls to the recess supervisor at the end of recess.
- Use the field for playing ball. The courts are reserved for basketball or futsal.
- Students may play touch football or rugby (no tackling allowed).
- Line up by class when the whistle is blown, and enter the building by walking quietly and slowly.

## Indoor Recess Rules (Inclement Weather)

On extreme cold, snowy or rainy days, students may have to remain indoors for recess. Students may be assigned to their pod, library, cafe or gym. Students are not to be in either location without adult supervision. No food, drink or gum is allowed outside of the cafeteria on these days.

## **Student Standards of Student Conduct**

At Explore, we hold high expectations for student behavior, believing that positive behavior is cultivated through strong relationships and clear teaching of behavioral expectations. Students will learn to embody the Explore Crew Character Traits in Action:

***Craftsmanship*** - Students bravely engage in pursuit and application of skill, care, and attention to detail in the creation of work, where quality, precision, and pride in the outcome are paramount. It reflects a deep commitment to excellence, often combining technical mastery with an aesthetic sensibility, regardless of the medium or discipline.

**Integrity** - Student conduct is consistent adherence to moral and ethical principles, demonstrated through honesty, responsibility, and fairness in all actions. In academics, it means upholding standards of truthfulness and originality in one's work. In personal conduct, it reflects a commitment to doing what is right—even when it is difficult or when no one is watching.

**Compassion** - Students work to deepen awareness of the needs of others, coupled with a genuine desire to help. It is expressed through acts of kindness, empathy, and support, fostering a sense of connection and responsibility within a community. Compassion motivates individuals to take meaningful action that uplifts others and contributes to the common good.

**Impact** - Students work to understand the meaningful and lasting influence one has on others and the world, achieved through intentional actions rooted in kindness, ethical conduct, and social awareness. It reflects a commitment to service, the promotion of well-being, and the creation of positive change—whether through small daily choices or larger community efforts.

**Collaboration** - Students engage in the act of working together with others—sharing ideas, responsibilities, and strengths—to achieve common goals. It thrives on mutual respect, open communication, and a shared vision. As students and global-citizens, collaboration empowers us to combine our unique perspectives and talents to solve problems, uplift communities, and create a more compassionate and connected world.. Throughout the school year, we will recognize students who demonstrate excellence or growth in these traits in various ways.

As part of the enrollment process, parents and students must read and sign the "[Mapleton Student Behavior Handbook](#)." ([Spanish version](#)) Explore's discipline procedures are detailed below. We view discipline not merely as a means of enforcing consequences, but as an opportunity for teaching and growth. Our goal is to support students in making better choices and learning how to behave appropriately within a community. We are committed to working collaboratively with students and families when Explore occurs to foster understanding and promote positive behavioral change.

### **Student Expectations/School Rules/Behavior Policy**

These rules are designed to promote school-wide harmony, and apply to all students:

- Physical fighting is not allowed.
- Students are expected to be respectful of one another's property as well as school property and resources. Any lost property should be turned in to the main office. Theft and vandalism (graffiti, defacing of school property) are serious offenses. Tampering with school computer files or computerized data may be construed as either vandalism or theft.
- Students are expected to leave the classroom clean and pick up after themselves and/or others. All students are expected to participate in an end-of-day clean-up as requested or assigned.
- Students are expected to maintain a kind and inclusive social environment throughout the day. Behaviors that are both developmentally inappropriate and or promote social exclusion or harm are not acceptable behavior in school.
- To promote a safe, clean and healthy school environment ***Gum, Candy and Carbonated Soft Drinks are prohibited*** anywhere on the school premises during school hours.
- Students are encouraged to leave distractions from learning at home. We ask that students not bring toys, Airpods, earbuds, trading cards or handheld electronics to school. This includes fidget toys, puzzles, mechanical toys, dolls, computerized games, alarms, video games, MP3 players, etc. Faculty or staff members may confiscate these items at their

discretion. Use of cell phones or handheld devices distract students and disrupt the Explore learning environment.

- Smart Phones, Ear Buds and Smart Watches, as well as other smart devices, are not necessary at school and Explore encourages families to keep these items at home if at all possible. A growing body of research is clear that these devices pose significant harm to student learning and become a constant issue when they are frequently misplaced or lost. If a student does choose to bring a phone to school, please know that they are prohibited in the hallways, bathrooms, classrooms and at lunch and recess. *All cell phones will be collected at the start of the school day and secured in a lockbox. They will be stored out of sight and silenced and then returned to students at the end of the school day. If a student is found to be in possession of a cell phone after the start of the school day, the phone will be confiscated and returned only to the student's parent or guardian when they collect it in person in the main office.*
- Parents are encouraged to communicate any important messages to their students by calling the main office. We will ensure students receive these messages and have the opportunity to call parents back if needed. Otherwise, students can check their messages before and after school. Parents are encouraged to consider other phone options that may pose less of a distraction at school and less online risk (ie Light Phones, Gabb Phones, Pin Wheel Phones, Gabb or Apple Watches, etc.).
- Explore Pk-8 is not responsible for the loss or theft of any confiscated items. Additionally, if a student misplaces or loses one of these items at school, they will not be permitted to look for it during classes. Again, please consider keeping all of these items at home, Explore assumes no responsibility for lost, misplaced or stolen devices.
- Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok & Other Online Social Networks Explore Pk-8 faculty and staff do not accept invitations to join any social networking sites from students. Explore will not search out any student's personal page or website, unless there is a cause for concern and/or safety.
  - We encourage parents to refrain from allowing their students to use TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Ask.FM or any other type of social networking site. There is increasing research that these apps are not emotionally safe for this age group and pose countless mental health and physical safety risks. Parents should consider alternative phone or operating system options (such as Light Phone, Pinwheel, Gabb Phone), strictly limit what apps are downloaded, limit or disable notifications during the school day, and install and use monitoring software to ensure their children are using their phones safely.
- Explore will not spend time dealing with conflicts that arise between students that are inappropriately using social networking sites unless it presents a clear and present danger or risk to our students or community. Inappropriate use of social media to bully, intimidate or otherwise harm student safety should be reported to the Thornton Police Department for investigation.
- The possession of firearms or facsimiles or any other item reasonably perceived to be used as a weapon is prohibited on campus or at any school event. Historical or cultural items or props that are to be used as part of a presentation may be brought on campus only with explicit permission of the faculty member for whose course they will be used.
- Student sales of any product, candy, etc. must have expressed permission from school administration.
- Students are not allowed to order food to the school for lunch (Grubhub, DoorDash, etc.).

any food orders for students will be refused by office staff.

- Rude or foul language is not tolerated.
- The use or display of tobacco on or within school property is prohibited. Explore Pk-8 and the surrounding area is a smoke-free environment. This policy also includes all events occurring after school hours such as student dances, weekend rehearsals and performances, parent events and school trips. Students seen smoking or in possession of tobacco on or within sight of school property will face disciplinary action. Students seen smoking or in possession of tobacco on school trips may be sent home at their parents' expense

### **Bullying Behavior**

Bullying is a very serious issue and is not tolerated. Bullying behavior can include the following, when it is prolonged, persistent and deliberate:

- Physical abuse or hitting.
- Verbal abuse or name-calling.
- Stealing or disrespect of property.
- Malicious or hurtful name-calling, verbal threats or intimidation.
- Incitement or getting someone else to do any of the previous mentioned actions.
- Harassment, defined as repeated, unwanted and disrespectful attention and/or any behavior which has the intention or effect of harming or intimidating others. This includes social network posts and other communication forms that are harassing in nature.

### **Drug & Alcohol Policy**

Our educational mission is to nurture each student's capacities for clear thinking, sound judgment and conscience in action. The use of consciousness-altering substances is a hindrance to the healthy development of young adults and disrupts the culture of trust cultivated between students, faculty and parents. While students are enrolled at Explore Pk-8, the use, possession or sale/distribution of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is prohibited in school and at school functions. Any violation of this policy is cause for immediate suspension and potential expulsion. The sharing of medication is considered in violation of this policy.

Concerns or incidents regarding drug and/or alcohol use by students will be reviewed individually, involve professionals when needed, and will include an open and honest dialogue with students, parents/guardians and faculty members to develop a plan of action.

If a student comes forward with difficulty involving drug or alcohol use or concerns about another student, the faculty and staff are committed to helping. We encourage students to recognize the many different sources of support and remediation available to them in school and from outside professionals.

Explore Pk-8 reserves the right to initiate expulsion proceedings in response to a violation of the rules about drugs or alcohol.

### **Student Internet Use Policy**

School computers are provided and can be used with permission from the faculty. Students are expected to abide by generally accepted rules of Internet etiquette as well as by rules of school decorum. Explore Pk-8 disclaims all liability for the content of material that a student may access on the Internet, for any

damages suffered in the course of or as a result of a student's Internet use and for any other consequences of a student's Internet use.

All parents/guardians need to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement governing computer use at Explore. Failure to comply with any or all policy requirements may result in the loss of any or all computer use privileges.

## **Mapleton Disciplinary Policies & Procedures**

### **Behavior at Sports Events on other Mapleton Campuses**

(Please also refer to the *Explore Pk-8 Athletic Handbook* online)

- Students who leave the school building during athletic events may not re-enter.
- Attendance at after-school athletic events is a privilege and students who misbehave may be barred from these events.

### **Conflict of Interest**

A faculty or staff member will be excused from participating in any disciplinary process if he or she has a conflict of interest in the case.

### **Privacy**

All disciplinary processes are conducted so that the privacy and the rights of students involved are protected.

## **Uniform Dress Code & General Appearance**

### **Dress Code**

Explore students will follow the [Mapleton Student Dress Policy JICA](#).

Please note:

The Board of Education allows each school to establish their own dress code consistent with the school's individual identity as long as the dress code meets the minimum standards and expectations outlined in policy JICA.

The Board of Education recognizes that students and their parents/guardians are primarily responsible for determining the students' personal appearance.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that a student's personal appearance does not interfere with the health or safety of any student.

Non-Allowable Dress:

- Items that expose private parts of the body (genitalia, nipples, or buttocks)
- Items that are typically associated with activities that are outside of the school environment, such as swimwear or biking shorts
- Items with sexually suggestive language or messages

- Items that promote illegal or violent conduct, including but not limited to, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons and/or gang affiliation
- Items that depict hate speech, intimidation, or intolerance toward protected groups
- Items that are profane or legally libelous
- Items that make the students face unidentifiable such as dark sunglasses, cinched hoodies, or hats (religious and medical purposes are excepted)

Students at Explore may not wear hats, beanies or hoodies with the hood on their head while in the building. Hats, beanies and hoodies with the hood on their head may be worn outdoors for weather protection purposes. Sunglasses will also be permitted outside for weather protection purposes.

Students who are in violation of the dress code will have the following options to comply with the dress code for the remainder of the day:

- Wear their own alternative clothing, if available at school
- Wear school-provided clothing
- Call a parent or guardian to bring alternative clothing

Violation of this policy will result in parent/guardian notification and a possible parental conference. More severe consequences may result from repeated or serious violations.

***The faculty and staff of Explore reserve the sole right to interpret and enforce the student dress code. Students who violate the dress code will be required to take off the item and/ or change into and wear a school uniform for the day, call home for appropriate clothing to be brought to school for them, or be sent home. Repeat dress code violations may result in further discipline consequences.***

### **All-Weather Clothing**

All students should come to school prepared for rain or shine. At times, outdoor activities can be a major part of the daily schedule. Rain gear and cold weather gear (boots, gloves, and hats) should be brought to school when conditions necessitate.

### **Lost & Found/ Stolen Items**

If you are missing something, check the lost & found near the main entrance. The school is not responsible for replacing or reimbursing students and their families for lost or stolen items. All lost items will be bagged and donated at the end of each quarter.

## **Bridges Between Home, Community and School**

### **Parents/Guardians as Partners**

Parents and guardians of Explore Pk-8 students play an essential role in supporting the school’s vision, culture and climate. Parents and guardians have opportunities to actively participate in their students’ learning by:

- Thoroughly reading the frequent communications that they receive from Explore including weekly electronic newsletters from the leadership and teachers, progress updates from teachers, and information about how parents/guardians can help assist with learning opportunities at home.
- Taking advantage of volunteer opportunities including volunteering as chaperones for events or field trips, participating on the SAAC (School Accountability & Advisory Committee), supporting the school's fundraising efforts, and coaching, mentoring or tutoring Explore students.
- Attending Back-to-School Nights and communicating with teachers. Explore has a Back-to-School Night event in August and Parent-Teacher conferences. Parent participation sends the message to the student that his or her parent/guardian feels that learning is important, and it provides the opportunity for direct communication between the school and the home. Utilizing the Parent Portal in Infinite Campus to track your student's grades and academic progress. The Parent Portal allows parents to view student grades and assignment progress, to see if any assignments are past due and to easily contact teachers by email with questions or concerns.

Student Health and Wellness - Structure and routine are very important for all students. To support the student's classroom work, parents are encouraged to help their children develop healthy habits with regular routines for waking and sleeping, mealtimes, play, music/athletic practice and homework.

The adverse effects of television, movies, video games and other electronic media on an adolescent's ability to learn are well-documented. Parents need to encourage healthy alternative activities throughout the middle school years. The school strongly recommends that students not spend an exorbitant amount of time viewing movies or television or playing video games on school nights. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents limit children's total media time (with entertainment media) to no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality programming per day (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/107/2/423.full#sec-1>).

### **Notices & Newsletters**

School communications from staff and administration will be sent home via [Bloomz](#) and Blackboard. To ensure you are receiving all relevant information please ensure your updated contact information is on file with the main office or within the Infinite Campus Portal. On Bloomz, parents can view the schoolwide and classroom announcements, communicate with faculty and staff and check the calendar for upcoming events. If you are new to Bloomz check your email at the beginning of the year for a welcome email from Bloomz.

### **Person-to-Person Communication**

Teachers welcome conversations with parents concerning their children. Please contact a teacher via school email, Bloomz message, or voicemail. **Teachers will make every attempt to respond within 24 business hours.** If you have a more general question or observation or if you are unable to resolve your concerns with the teacher, please contact school administration. If you are not certain where to take your question, please contact the main office at 303-853-1170 or [youngd@mapleton.us](mailto:youngd@mapleton.us)

### **Parent Volunteer Policy**

Families are an essential part of our school community. We are partners in the education of all students. Parents, guardians, or community members who have a desire to volunteer in their child's classroom or

school on a regular basis, must complete a background check. This Mapleton policy ensures a measure of safety for children as they interact on a regular basis with an adult in a position of trust in the school setting. Click these links to access volunteer applications in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

## **School Events**

### **Back-to-School Night**

Every August, Explore has a Back-to-School Night. This evening, teachers review the curriculum, classroom expectations and activities along with time for parents to share and discuss their questions with the teacher. It will also be a time to get to know other parents. The date for this evening will be posted well in advance. Parents are encouraged to attend.

### **Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice during the academic year, typically Fall and Winter. Conferences will be primarily led by students with teachers providing input on student progress and observations. Additionally, parents may request a conference at any time by contacting the teacher directly via email.

### **Progress Reports**

Explore provides student evaluations four times a year, at the end of each quarter. Students in grades K-5 receive a standards-based report card, while students in grades 6-8 receive letter grades. In certain circumstances academic concerns are brought to the family's attention immediately.

### **School-wide Community Meetings**

School-wide Community Meetings are held at the end of each month to celebrate student achievements, recognitions of character and to share any important information for the upcoming month. We will do our best to let families know when their student may be getting acknowledged so they might join in the celebration for that month.

### **Celebrations of Learning**

#### **8th Continuation**

This event honors the completion of 8th Grade and marks the transition from middle school to high school. The occasion celebrates the work of the students and recognizes the contributions and guidance of faculty, staff as well as 8th Grade parents.

#### **End-of-Year Bash**

Explore's End-of-Year Bash is a celebration held at the culmination of the school year to celebrate community and provide opportunities to connect with local programs offering summer programming for students around the region. 3

## **Get Involved**

### **Parent Family Involvement and Committees**

We encourage all families to get involved, stay connected, and contribute their time and talent to make a difference at Explore.

#### **The Explore NEST (<https://mapletoneducationfoundation.org/chapters/our-chapters/the-explore-nest.html>)**

The Explore NEST has been established to promote community involvement--business, families and neighbors working together to benefit ALL students at Explore PK-8. The Explore NEST is a chapter of the Mapleton Education Foundation. The Explore NEST serves as a means to foster strong connections between parents, community, staff and students. Our NEST community plays an essential role in the success of our students at Explore PK-8.

The Explore NEST is open to all interested parents/guardians, staff, teachers and community members.

#### **SAAC (School Accountability & Advisory Committee)**

The purpose of SAAC meetings is to provide a forum for families, teachers, and community members to confirm school goals, monitor the implementation of the school improvement process, and confirm that the school budgets align with the goals. Anyone interested in joining the SAAC should contact the School Director. SAAC meets once a month at 4:00pm, unless otherwise communicated.

### **Parent Volunteer Policy**

Families are an essential part of our school community. We are partners in the education of all students. Parents, guardians, or community members who have a desire to volunteer in their child's classroom or school on a regular basis, must complete a background check. This Mapleton policy ensures a measure of safety for children as they interact on a regular basis with an adult in a position of trust in the school setting. Click these links to access volunteer applications in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). You will need to bring your application to the main office along with your physical ID to finish the application process.

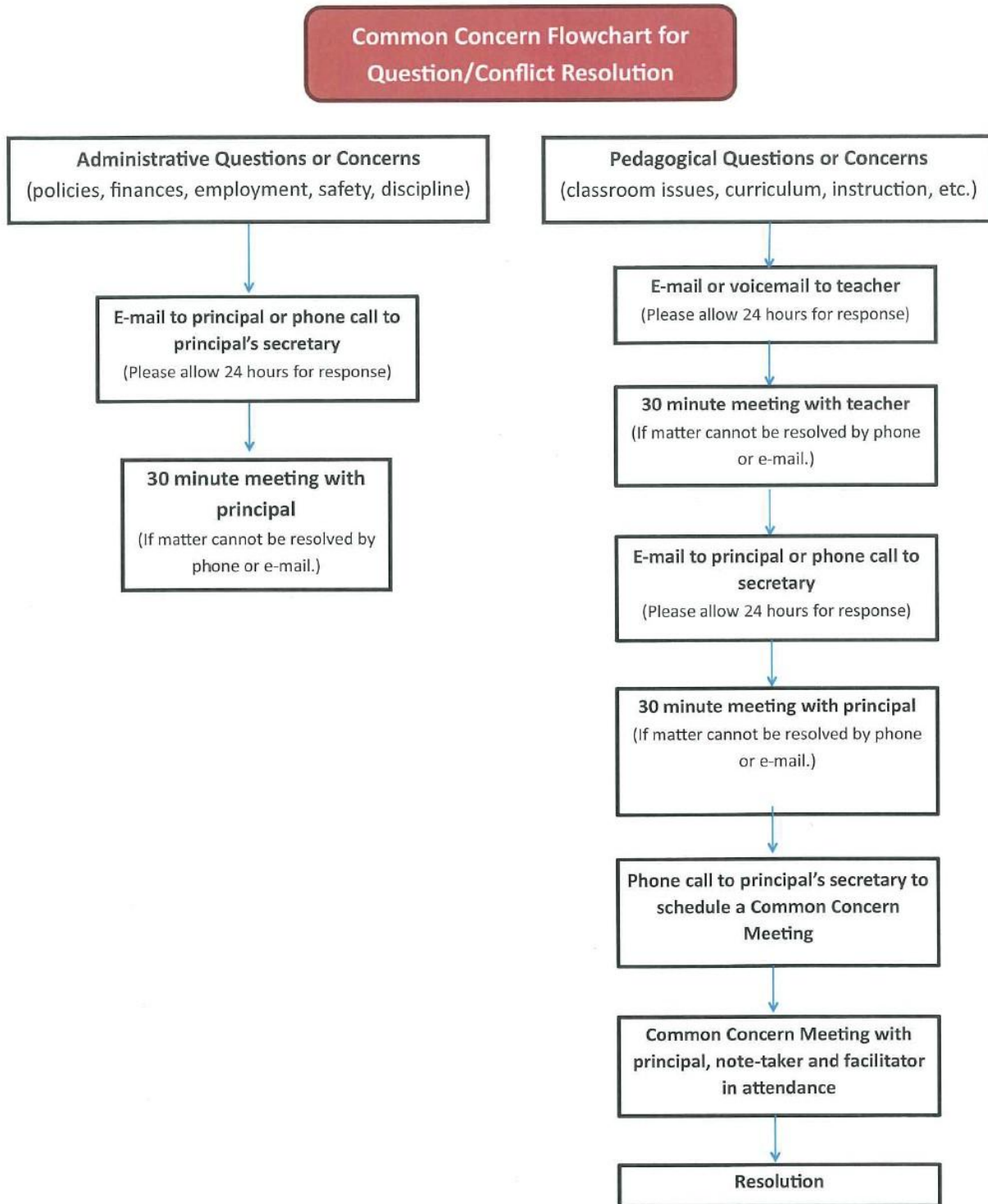
### **Parent/Guardian Expectations**

Explore Pk-8 expects parents to:

- Demonstrate respect in both what is said and how it is said.
- Focus on issues, not individuals.
- Demonstrate public support for one another. Convey the message that parents and teachers are on the same team.
- Keep an open mind. Be positive and flexible. Ask questions first.
- Adults in the community are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Common Concern Flowchart for Conflict Resolution (P.19).
- Raise concerns with the appropriate person.
- Schedule appointments if a discussion is needed instead of dropping in or raising concerns in public settings, especially before school, after school or when faculty and staff are outside doing supervision.
- Use good judgment about the amount of contact that is appropriate. Be mindful of the amount of time an individual concern may take.

- Keep in mind that voicemail and email are public documents, and that confidentiality cannot always be protected.
- Know that emails sent to Explore are considered ‘findable evidence’ in a court of law. A great rule of thumb is that you should not say or write anything that you wouldn’t want to be published.

**Questions and Conflict Resolution**



## Health and Wellness Policies

### Emergency Information

In the case of an emergency it is important that we have the most updated information regarding emergency contacts and information on file. Completing Mapleton's Annual Update is the best way to ensure this happens. Please notify the registrar if there is any change during the school year in address, telephone number or emergency contact person. The information you provide is used to contact you in the event of an emergency involving your student. In the event of an emergency threatening student health/safety, when a parent or designated emergency contact cannot be reached, school personnel may call the Thornton Police Department, 911 or Social Services as appropriate.

If changes to your student's health status arise during the school year, please notify the school nurse.

### Medical Examinations and Immunizations

Immunizations are an important part of our students' health. Colorado law requires that children attending school are vaccinated to prevent disease. A valid immunization record or exemption must be provided to your student's school annually. In addition to the vaccines required by the Colorado Board of Health, there are vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Certain vaccines will be required to attend school, with exemptions per HB:14:1288 for health, religious or personal purposes.

Mapleton school nurses follow the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment schedule to identify students with immunization needs. Parents or guardians will be notified if their child is missing required immunizations and vaccines. For more information on immunization schedules and state requirements, please visit [coloradoimmunizations.com](http://coloradoimmunizations.com) (<http://coloradoimmunizations.com/>).

Annual physical exams are encouraged for all students but are required students participating in school sponsored athletics, as well as for preschool enrollment. Sports physicals must clearly state that the student is "cleared for sports' to participate. Exam forms can be obtained from your school office or nurse. The results of this exam may be reviewed by your school nurse and results included in your child's school health record if important to your child's health and safety at school.

### Medications

Medication, including over the counter medication can be given at school only when a parent or guardian requests and completes the **Medication Authorization Form/Physician's Order for Medication**. This form provides the parental consent required for a nurse or delegate to give medication on school property. Medication must be provided in the original pharmacy container, labeled with your child's name, name of the medication, dosage and frequency, and date for the medication to be discontinued. Students may be permitted to carry their own emergency medications such as an asthma inhaler or epinephrine (epi-pen) **with the corresponding medical order and parental consent/self-carry contract**.

### **Sick and Injured Students**

Students who are ill should not be sent to school. **Students are not allowed to come to school if they have vomited, had diarrhea, or a fever of 100.4°F or more within the past 24 hours.** If a student becomes ill during the school day, parents will be contacted to pick them up. Because the purpose of our clinic is to provide first aid and to screen students complaining of illness, it is imperative that someone is prepared to pick up your student in the event of illness within 30 minutes of notification. Students with a temperature of 100.4° or more, or those with symptoms of contagious diseases will be sent home.

Minor injuries occurring at school can be treated by school staff, but if further care is needed 911 will be called and parents contacted immediately.

### **Contagious Diseases**

If a student contracts a contagious illness, please notify the school. Students should stay home until the illness is no longer contagious. Students who contract contagious diseases must be under professional medical treatment before returning to school. Please notify your nurse if your student is diagnosed with a contagious illness, as schools are required to report certain illnesses to the Health Department. In cases of a “reportable disease, a physician statement must be submitted to the school stating the student is no longer contagious and may return to school. Please refer to CDPHE’s [“How Sick is Too Sick”](#) for further guidance.

### **Social/Emotional Needs of Students**

We encourage our students and their parents to seek the support of doctors and therapists when the need arises. There may also be times that the faculty perceives that outside help is needed and will suggest that the student receive outside professional treatment.

If a student is in or begins a therapeutic relationship that is related to the student’s school life, we ask that a **Consent Form for Exchange of Information**, allowing communication between the school and the care provider, be completed and filed with the school psychologist and the secretary. We wish to support the student’s active engagement in the therapeutic process and believe that sharing appropriate information is helpful during treatment.

### **Mandated Reporter Status**

As educational professionals in the State of Colorado, all school employees recognize their role as mandated reporters. In all cases of reported or suspected abuse or neglect we are mandated to file a report with the appropriate agency and law enforcement. Teachers complete training to understand the requirements and procedures involved in making reports.

### **First-Aid & CPR**

Some faculty and staff receive an overview of first aid procedures annually and renew their American Heart Association First-Aid and CPR training at regular intervals. No medication can be administered orally by school employees unless fully delegated/trained by a Registered Nurse.

### **Student Support Services**

Information regarding Special Education and 504 Policy can be found on Mapleton’s Website under Academic Policies. (<http://Explore.Mapletonk12.org/academics/academicpolicies/>)



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

**2025 - 2026**

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the ExploreFamily Handbook.

I understand that the provisions of the Handbook are the most current at this time and supersede all previous policies, manuals or handbooks issued by Explore. Further, I understand that the provisions of the Handbook are subject to modification at any time, at the sole discretion of Explore, with or without notice to me. I agree to comply with any such modification upon publication.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed)

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

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed)

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

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

Please sign and return the completed form to the main office. Thank you.