STEM SCHOOL
HIGHLANDS RANCH



STUDENT / PARENT
HANDBOOK
2026-27





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HANDBOOK OVERVIEW

The STEM School Highlands Ranch Student and Family Handbook contains a summary of the expectations, policies, and procedures that guide our School. Any reference in policies to a student's "parent" also includes the legal guardian of a student. Students and parents are responsible for knowing and following all school policies and procedures. The policies contained in this handbook are intended to be a guide and summary and are not necessarily all-inclusive of the School's policies, procedures, or practice. The rules in this handbook are subject to interpretation and modification at any time by the School.

Students and parents will be notified via email of any material changes to the contents of this handbook via updates to the handbook on the School's website.

DISTRICT AUTHORIZER POLICIES

As a public charter school the School is subject to the policies of its authorizing school district, unless those policies are not applicable or are waived. This handbook attempts to note where a district policy applies, but there could still be instances where a district policy applies to a given circumstance or situation, especially if it is not covered by this Handbook. If a parent is uncertain about the applicability of a district policy, he or she may contact the School to inquire.

LEGAL SUPREMACY

This handbook is not intended to violate any local, state, or federal law. The laws regulating Schools change on almost an annual basis, and at times more frequently, with new statutes, regulations, and court rulings interpreting, changing, or adding to the applicable body of legal rules with which Schools must comply. No provision or policy of the School applies or will be enforced if it conflicts with or is superseded by any applicable legal requirement or prohibition. This handbook supersedes any previous handbook or policy statements, whether written or oral, issued by the School.

EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY NOTICE

The educational programs, activities and employment opportunities offered by the School are offered without regard to any protected class status, including disability, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, religion, ancestry, age, genetic information, need for special education services, or any other applicable status protected by federal, state, or local law. Accordingly, no otherwise qualified student, employee, applicant for employment, or member of the public may be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination under or in any District program or activity on the basis of any legally applicable protected status.

In compliance with the Colorado Crown Act, any references in any handbooks or policies of the School or practices related to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of an individual's race shall include a person's hair texture, hair type, hair length, or a protective hairstyle that is commonly or historically associated with race; specifically, without limitation, such hairstyles as braids, locs, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, Bantu knots, Afros, and headwraps.

TITLE IX NOTICE

The School does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the School's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.
To learn more about the Complaint and Whistle Blower Policy, please click here.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX. The School's Title IX Coordinator is the STEM School Executive Director.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups, as required by law. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the School's non-discrimination policies:

Executive Director
8773 S. Ridgeline Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129
(303) 683-7836

Chief Executive Officer
8920 Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129
(303) 683-7836



STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS - MCKINNEY VENTO ACT

The McKinney-Vento Act was enacted to address the numerous barriers homeless children face in obtaining an education. The Act ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Students may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which includes without limitation if a student lives in any of the following situations: in a shelter; in a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation; in a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station; doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship.

Eligible students have certain rights, including without limitation, the ability to enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment; the ability to attend classes while the school gathers needed documents; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is their preference and in their best interest, and receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.

If you believe you may be eligible, contact the Director of Student Support Services to find out what services and supports may be available.

STEM FORMULA FOR CHARACTER

STEM School Highlands Ranch expects all students, parents, faculty, and staff to abide by the STEM Formula for Character: Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, and Empathy. Failure to abide by the STEM Formula for Character may result in disciplinary action.

- Honesty: Telling the truth, even when it's not easy
- Integrity: Doing what is right, even when no one is watching
- Respect: Treating everyone--staff, students, volunteers, oneself, and property with kindness
- Responsibility: Being accountable for one's actions and decisions
- Empathy: The capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within the other person's frame of reference

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH STUDENT HONOR CODE

Students will:
• Honor Others
• Respect Property
• Preserve the Learning Environment

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS- ELEMENTARY

STEM School Highlands Ranch believes in high expectations for students of any age. At the elementary level we follow a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support system in which we place a large focus on the positive behaviors our students are exhibiting. STEM School Highlands Ranch elementary staff will continuously, throughout the year, teach and model behavior expectations for our students. Our students will be rewarded for demonstrating Spartan Characteristics: honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility, and empathy, that align to the behavior expectations. For more information on behavior expectations and the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support system click here.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS- SECONDARY

STEM students are the best and brightest students in Colorado and we are honored to partner with parents in their character and identity development. We have high expectations for student behavior, but understand that personal growth occurs through trials, errors, and consequences. Students will receive ongoing support and coaching during Access and through discussions with School leaders when appropriate.

ASSEMBLY BEHAVIOR - ALL STUDENTS

STEM School Highlands Ranch is a performance-oriented school. Students are expected to respond positively to all programs. There are a variety of acceptable audience responses such as applause, laughter at humor that is presented, and responding vocally to direct questions that may be asked. Members of the audience are not to interfere with stage performances. Students are not allowed to insult or intimidate guests and/or performers by rude behaviors such as yelling, whistling, standing up, moving around, or calling out people's names. Students who insist on this type of behavior will be dismissed from the program and referred to an administrator for disciplinary action.

At all performances, Students MUST:
• Enter the program venue calmly and go directly to their seats
• Remain seated throughout the entire program
• Treat guests with respect

Performances and school-wide programs at STEM School Highlands Ranch are an integral part of the curriculum. Students learn to demonstrate an understanding and respect for all guests and program visitors through appropriate audience response.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION

STEM School Highlands Ranch is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors free from bullying, harassment, or intimidation. STEM follows the DCSD Code of Conduct which includes their Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Policies.

DCSD Board Policy JICDE

Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, may still be prohibited by other district policies or building, classroom, or program rules. In accordance with Policy JICDE, STEM will utilize the Screening Tool to Identify Bullying and the district notification procedures.

It is the responsibility of STEM School Highlands Ranch to create and maintain a safe, civil, respectful, and inclusive learning community in conjunction with comprehensive training of staff and volunteers, including the education of students in partnership with families and the community. The policy is to be implemented in conjunction with the Comprehensive Safe Schools Plan that includes prevention, intervention, crisis response, recovery, and annual review. Employees, in particular, are expected to support the dignity and safety of all members of the school community.

Bullying is prohibited against any student for any reason, including but not limited to behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of their academic performance or any basis protected by federal and state law, including disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, national origin, religion, ancestry, or the need for special education services, whether such characteristics are actual or perceived.

All administrators, teachers, classified staff, and students share the responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur during school hours or school-sanctioned activities or events, or off school property when such conduct has a nexus to school or any curricular or non-curricular activity or event. Toward that end:

• All students who believe they have been victims of bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately report it to an administrator or teacher at their school. Reporting documents are also available at both school offices.

• All students who witness student bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately report it to an administrator or teacher at their school.

Depending upon the frequency and severity of the conduct, counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact to the victim. This includes appropriate intervention(s), restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. False reporting or retaliation for harassment, intimidation, or bullying also constitutes violation of this policy. Discipline for student bullying may include suspension, expulsion, and/or classroom removal.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we are committed to optimizing learning for all students. Our students are expected to show respect for themselves, others, and property. When these expectations are not met, we implement appropriate consequences that promote restorative practices and support school-managed discipline. Our approach to discipline is rooted in guidance and personal growth. All stakeholders—students, staff, and families—work collaboratively to address behavioral challenges and foster the development of responsible and compassionate citizens within our community.

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

At times, younger students may experience moments of emotional dysregulation that result in elevated behaviors. When this occurs, STEM School Highlands Ranch follows procedures aligned with Douglas County School District (DCSD) policies to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff.

These procedures may include, but are not limited to:

- Clearing a classroom,
- Holding students in their current classrooms to secure the area,
- Temporarily closing hallways or stairwells as needed.

Our school is supported by multiple staff members trained in Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI), who are available to assist during these situations.
All disciplinary responses are handled in accordance with school and district guidelines, with a strong emphasis on restorative practices that help students reflect, repair, and grow from their experiences.

DCSD Board File: JKA
DCSD Board File: JKA- R



PROHIBITED STUDENT CONDUCT TOWARD STAFF

The School prohibits any assault upon, disorderly conduct toward, harassment of, the making knowingly of a false allegation of child abuse against, or any alleged offense under the "Colorado Criminal Code" directed toward a teacher or School employee, or instances of damage occurring on the premises to the personal property of a School teacher or School employee by a student.

If this prohibited conduct occurs, the teacher or School employee may file a complaint with the School administration. The School administration will, after receipt of such report and proof deemed adequate to the School administration, suspend the student for three days, in accordance with School policies, and will initiate procedures for the further suspension or expulsion of the student where injury or property damage has occurred, as deemed appropriate by School administration.

The School administration will report the incident to the district attorney or appropriate local law enforcement.

PERSONAL SALES

To help maintain a focused and respectful learning environment, students are not permitted to sell items on campus for personal gain. All sales and fundraising activities must be approved by school administration and must directly benefit a school-sponsored club, team, or event. This includes things like snacks, drinks, or other personal goods. Unauthorized sales or solicitation may result in disciplinary action.

ROLES IN THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL/DEAN OF STUDENTS

The goal of any meeting between a student and the Assistant Principal/Dean is that of a learning opportunity for the student in order to implement a positive change in behavior. The process will involve a discussion of honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility, and empathy. In most instances parents will be notified of the student's visit to the Assistant Principal's/Dean's office. The primary goal of the consequences by the Assistant Principal/Dean is to require the student to take responsibility for the infraction.

The goals of a parent conference with the Assistant Principal/Dean include:

- To exchange accurate information about the student
- To determine how the parent-school partnership can best work together to lead the student to reform his behavior

The Assistant Principal/Dean will preserve the integrity of the disciplinary process at STEM School Highlands Ranch by modeling the values of the STEM School Highlands Ranch honor code and consistently treating students and their families with respect and professionalism.

The Assistant Principal/Dean is an extremely valuable and accessible part of a student's character development and education at STEM School Highlands Ranch. Our goal is to create a safe, respectful, and responsible environment, where learning can take place.

COUNSELORS

When necessary, students may be referred to the school counselor for problem solving, mediation, peer relationships, and social/emotional support.

TEACHERS

Teachers will have the authority to implement discipline in their classrooms that is consistent with the Principles of Discipline. Teachers will utilize the Dean to implement discipline whenever appropriate and most especially when disciplinary action by the teacher would take away from maintaining an effective learning environment in the classroom. Disciplinary procedures may also involve other designated STEM staff besides those mentioned.

PROPERTY DAMAGE/VANDALISM

STEM School Highlands Ranch is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage of items brought to school. Fines will be levied on parents for vandalism or theft of school property committed by their students. Fines will also be levied for lost or damaged school property. Students may also be required to be involved in the maintenance or repair of damaged property.

GANG ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-32.109.1(2)(a)(F), the School is committed to keeping the School free from the harmful influence or effects of street gangs or similar organizations that advocate or promote illegal drugs, violence, or other criminal activity. The presence of any apparel, signs, symbols, activity, accessories, appearances, colors, or any other attribute that denotes membership in street gangs or that advocate or promote illegal activities are prohibited on school grounds, in school vehicles, and at school activities or sanctioned events.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

The activity of learning requires students to be attentive and polite. Students are expected to uphold the values of honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility, and empathy as citizens in the STEM School Highlands Ranch community. If a student does misbehave, the consequences for the infraction will be immediate, relevant, and effectual. In evaluating consequences, teachers and Directors will determine if the act is a "first time," a "repeated," or a "habitual" offense.

Students' misbehavior will not be used to "teach" the class a lesson. At no time will a student's disciplinary record be discussed with another student or parent. However, other students or parents may be consulted regarding an incident in an attempt to discern truth.
STEM School desires to educate all students who enter our School, expecting nothing less than the best from each one.

Douglas County School District is the sole arbiter of expulsions. STEM School may only recommend expulsion of a student to DCSD. The expulsion process and proceedings will follow all DCSD policies that apply. When students are expelled, they are expelled from the Douglas County School District.

STEM School cannot and does not tolerate students who disrupt class. STEM School requires all students to be respectful of the learning environment. Students who disrupt class may be sent to the office for a disciplinary meeting. When behavior incidents occur, students, staff and admin collaboratively discuss the concerns and problem solve through the use of restorative practices and a verbal warning. If the behavior is repeated a detention and/or parent phone call may occur in addition to the second restorative conversation. Detentions and/or suspension may be issued for any and all subsequent infractions.

DRESS CODE EXPECTATIONS

Special note about dress code violations: Students in violation of the dress code will be sent to the office and must call a parent or guardian. Parents will either bring acceptable attire, or students will be sent home. These absences are NOT excused.

STEM School Highlands Ranch respects students' rights to express themselves in the way they dress. All students who attend STEM School Highlands Ranch are also expected to respect the school community by dressing appropriately for a K-12 educational environment. Student attire should facilitate participation in learning as well as the health and safety of students and the adults who supervise them. The purpose is to provide and maintain a safe school environment that is conducive to student learning. The primary responsibility of the student's attire rests with the student and their family. This policy is intended to provide guidance for students, staff, and parents.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

1. Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs. Rips or tears in clothing should not exceed 3 to 4 inches in length.

2. Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment (bedroom shoes or slippers shall not be worn, except for school activities approved by the principal).

3. See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meets the minimum requirements of the dress code.

4. Head accessories including hats, caps, and scarves are allowed. Eyes and ears must be visible at all times. (Cultural and religious exemptions may apply.) Hats must not be worn in conjunction with a mask so as to obstruct the face.

5. Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms, closed-toe shoes, or safety gear.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Clothing may not depict, imply, advertise, or advocate illegal, violent, or lewd conduct, weapons, ammunition, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.

2. Clothing may not depict or imply pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.

3. Clothing may not display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene language or images.

4. Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.

5. Sunglasses may not be worn inside the building.

6. Clothing and accessories that endanger student or staff safety may not be worn.

7. Apparel, jewelry, accessories, tattoos, or manner of grooming that, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior is prohibited.

8. Students must wear their student ID badges throughout the school day. Student ID's are considered a vital part of the dress code and are to be on the student at all times. Once lanyards are issued to students, the lanyard will be required to be visible on the student. It may be worn around the neck or on the belt, with the ID card attached and visible from the front view. The first replacement badge is free. Each additional replacement badge is $5 each and will be charged to the student's account. Replacement badges can be requested through the Secondary Front Office.

STEM reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate dress. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines will be required to change in order to attend class. Parents will be called if appropriate clothing is not available or the student refuses dress-code appropriate clothing.

In compliance with the Colorado Crown Act, nothing in this dress code shall be construed such that it is discrimination on the basis of an individual's race and shall not prohibit any hair texture, hair type, hair length, or a protective hairstyle that is commonly or historically associated with race; specifically, without limitation, such hairstyles as braids, locs, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, Bantu knots, Afros, and headwraps.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

The school principal or an administrator designated in writing by the principal, is delegated the authority to suspend a student for not more than five school days on the following grounds:

1. Continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority

2. Willful destruction or defacing of school property

3. Behavior on or off school property that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other pupils or of school personnel, including behavior that creates a threat of physical harm to the child or to other children

4. Repeated interference with a school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students

Or not more than ten school days on the following grounds:

1. Committing one of the following offenses on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or at a school activity or sanctioned event: possession of a dangerous weapon without the authorization of the school or the school district; the use, possession, or sale of a drug or controlled substance as defined in section 18-18-102(5), C.R.S.; or the commission of an act that, if committed by an adult, would be robbery pursuant to part 3 of article 4 of title 18, C.R.S., or assault pursuant to part 2 of article 3 of title 18, C.R.S., other than the commission of an act that would be third degree assault under section 18-3-204, C.R.S., if committed by an adult.

    A. "dangerous weapon" is defined as a firearm, as defined in section 18-1-901(3)(h), C.R.S.; any pellet gun, BB gun, or other device, whether operational or not, designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air; a fixed-blade knife with a blade that exceeds three inches in length; a spring-loaded knife or a pocket knife with a blade exceeding three and one-half inches in length; or any object, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, that is used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury

2. Carrying, using, actively displaying, or threatening with the use of a firearm facsimile that could reasonably be mistaken for an actual firearm in a school building or in or on school property

3. Declaration as a habitually disruptive student, when and if expulsion is being pursued

4. Making an intentionally false accusation of criminal activity against an employee of an educational entity to law enforcement authorities, school district officials or personnel, or both

A student may be suspended on any of the grounds stated above, or in C.R.S. 22-33-106, for not more than another ten school days. The School's executive officer may extend a suspension to an additional ten school days if necessary in order to present the matter to the next meeting of the board of directors, but the total period of any suspension must not exceed twenty-five school days.

As an alternative to suspension, the School may consider allowing the student to remain in school by having the student's parent agree, with the consent of the student's teachers, to attend class with the student for a period of time specified by the School. If the parent fails to attend class with the student, the student will be suspended in accordance with this policy.

A student suspended for a period of ten days or less will receive an opportunity to be heard (i.e. tell his/her side of the story) to the principal or the principal's designee prior to the student's removal from School, unless an emergency requires immediate removal from School, in which case the opportunity to be heard will follow as soon after the student's removal as practicable. Any student suspended for more than ten days will be given the opportunity to request a review of the suspension by the Executive Director, unless an expulsion recommendation is pending, in which case the student will have an opportunity to be heard at a formal expulsion hearing.

HABITUALLY DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

A "habitually disruptive student" means a student who has caused a material and substantial disruption on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or at a school activity or sanctioned event three or more times during the course of a school year. The student and the parent must be notified in writing for each disruption counted toward declaring the student as habitually disruptive, and the student and parent must be notified in writing and by telephone or other means at the home or the place of employment of the parent of the definition of "habitually disruptive student".

PARENT CONTACT FOR SUSPENSION

If a student is suspended the School will immediately notify the parent of the student that the student has been suspended and of the grounds for the suspension, the period of the suspension, and the time and place for the parent to meet with the School to review the suspension.

EFFECT OF A SUSPENSION

Upon suspension, the student will be required to leave the school building and the school grounds immediately, following a determination by the parent and the school of the best way to transfer custody of the student to the parent or an authorized designee of the parent. The student will not be readmitted until a meeting between the parent and the School has taken place or until, at the discretion of the School, the parent has substantially agreed to review the suspension with the School.

If the School cannot contact the parent or the parent repeatedly fails to appear for scheduled meetings, the School may readmit the student. The readmission meeting between the School and the parent will address whether there is a need to develop a remedial discipline plan for the student in an effort to prevent future disciplinary action.

The School will make every reasonable effort to meet with the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the student during the period of suspension; and will not extend a period of suspension because of the failure of the School to meet with the parent during the period of suspension.

MAKE UP WORK FOR SUSPENDED STUDENTS

To provide an opportunity for the student to reintegrate into the educational program of the School and to help prevent students from dropping out of School because of an inability to reintegrate into the educational program following the period of suspension, the School will provide an opportunity for a student to make up school work during the period of suspension for full or partial academic credit, as determined by the School, to the extent possible.

Expulsion from STEM School may be recommended to DCSD for the following violations:

1. Continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority

2. Willful destruction or defacing of school property

3. Behavior on or off school property that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel, including behavior that creates a threat of physical harm to the child or to other children

4. Repeated interference with a school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students

5. Committing one of the following offenses on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or at a school activity or sanctioned event: possession of a dangerous weapon without the authorization of the school or the school district; the use, possession, or sale of a drug or controlled substance as defined in section 18-18-102(5), C.R.S.; or the commission of an act that, if committed by an adult, would be robbery pursuant to part 3 of article 4 of title 18, C.R.S., or assault pursuant to part 2 of article 3 of title 18, C.R.S., other than the commission of an act that would be third degree assault under section 18-3-204, C.R.S., if committed by an adult.

    A. A "dangerous weapon" is defined as a firearm, as defined in section 18-1-901(3)(h), C.R.S.; Any pellet gun, BB gun, or other device, whether operational or not, designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air; A fixed-blade knife with a blade that exceeds three inches in length; A spring-loaded knife or a pocket knife with a blade exceeding three and one-half inches in length; or Any object, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, that is used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury.

6. Carrying, using, actively displaying, or threatening with the use of a firearm facsimile that could reasonably be mistaken for an actual firearm in a school building or in or on school property.

7. Declaration as a habitually disruptive student.

8. Making an intentionally false accusation of criminal activity against an employee of an educational entity to law enforcement authorities, school district officials or personnel, or both.

The procedures for expulsion, including any due process or rights to a hearing, will be in accordance with DCSD policies on expulsion. Click here for DCSD policies on expulsion and suspension.

STUDENT STATEMENTS

Except as provided in School policy a School employee will not use in an expulsion hearing a student's statement concerning an act alleged to have been committed by the student regarding:

1. Possession of a dangerous weapon without the authorization of the school or the school district; The use, possession, or sale of a drug or controlled substance as defined in section 18-18-102(5), C.R.S.; or The commission of an act that, if committed by an adult, would be robbery pursuant to part 3 of article 4 of title 18, C.R.S., or assault pursuant to part 2 of article 3 of title 18, C.R.S., other than the commission of an act that would be third degree assault under section 18-3-204, C.R.S., if committed by an adult.

    A. A "dangerous weapon" is defined as a firearm, as defined in section 18-1-901(3)(h), C.R.S.; Any pellet gun, BB gun, or other device, whether operational or not, designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air; A fixed-blade knife with a blade that exceeds three inches in length; A spring-loaded knife or a pocket knife with a blade exceeding three and one-half inches in length; or Any object, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, that is used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury.

A statement may be used in the expulsion hearing only if it is signed by the student and a parent is present when the student signs the statement or admission; or if a reasonable attempt was made to contact the parent to have the parent present when the student signed the statement. The School will be deemed to have made a reasonable attempt to contact the parent if the School calls each of the phone numbers the parent provides to the school and all phone numbers the student provides to the School for the parent

Further, the student and his or her parent may expressly waive the requirement that the parent be present when a student signs a statement or admission. This express waiver must be in writing and must be obtained only after full advisement of the student and his or her parent of the student's rights prior to the signing of the statement or admission by the student.

The requirements of this policy do not apply if the student makes any deliberate misrepresentations affecting the applicability or requirements of this policy and a School official, acting in good faith and in reasonable reliance on such deliberate misrepresentation, obtains a signed statement or admission of the student that does not comply with the requirements of this policy.

Nothing in this policy will prevent or interfere with a fact-finding or information-gathering investigation by a school or school employee.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

- Weapons of any kind
- Illegal Substances (example: drugs, alcohol, vaping, tobacco, pornography, etc.)
- Valuables/large amounts of money/expensive jewelry
- Scooters/skates/skateboards/Heelys cannot be ridden on property and should be kept in student lockers, or in racks provided by the school
- Laser pens/pointers
- Lighters/matches/fireworks
- Flammable liquids/sprays
- Any potentially dangerous item
- Facsimiles- including toy guns, 3D printed guns etc.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

It is the policy of the STEM School to maintain school property to assure the safety and enjoyment of students, school employees, and the general public and to extend the useful life of the school facilities.

Students possess the right of privacy as well as freedom from unreasonable search and seizure as guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This individual right, however, is balanced by the School's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all its students in order to ensure compliance with school rules. School authorities may conduct searches of property or persons when they have reasonable suspicion that the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff may be endangered. To maintain order and discipline in the School and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, School authorities may search a student, student lockers, backpacks, bags, desks, or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. Searches of these kinds are normally conducted by two appropriate members of the staff. A student's failure to permit searches and seizures as provided in this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

GUIDELINES FOR SEARCHES AND SEIZURE

Desks, lockers, textbooks, and other materials or supplies loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school, and may be opened by school employees for cleaning, maintenance, or emergencies. When prohibited items are found in the course of routine cleaning or maintenance, or in the case of emergency, they will be confiscated and a report will be made to the principal who will determine whether further investigation is warranted. A school administrator may search school property whenever a school authority has reasonable grounds to believe that a law or school policy is being violated.

Searches of students' persons, personal effects, or vehicles may be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that such search will produce evidence of a breach of school policy or law. Search of a student's person will be conducted in the presence of another school employee whenever possible. Search of the student shall be reasonable in scope. During a search, students will turn off their cell phone and place it on the desk or table in front of them. They will not have access to their phone until returned by an administrator or parent/guardian.

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. The School retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of the exteriors of student automobiles on School property. The interiors of student vehicles may be inspected whenever a School authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside. Such patrols and inspections may be conducted without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Searches of these kinds are normally conducted by two appropriate members of the staff.

ANONYMOUS REPORTING

STEM School Highlands Ranch uses Safe2Tell as the anonymous reporting option for students and their families.

Safe2Tell Colorado wants every student to know - telling isn't "snitching." Telling is when you need to keep yourself or someone you know safe from threats, harmful behaviors, or dangerous situations.

Not sure if you should use Safe2Tell? If you don't, who will? We need your help to improve our school and community. By calling, you can help stop a friend from committing suicide, get another student off drugs, or stop a bully from making other people miserable. If you have information about these topics, please call (877) 542-7233.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

At STEM School Highlands Ranch we prioritize student health and wellness through the following health policies. The School follows all applicable DCSD policies to help maintain a safe and supportive community.

ILLNESS PROCEDURES

Students will be sent home if there is an indication of illness or they are too ill to carry out daily activities. To ensure the health and wellness of our community we ask that parents and staff monitor symptoms of illness at home prior to arriving at school.

HOW SICK IS TOO SICK?

Determination for sending students home is made by using Guidelines for Determining Student Attendance, developed by Douglas County School District Health Services using guidelines from the Colorado Department of Health and Environment. Students must stay home or will be sent home with the following symptoms:

- Unexplained skin eruptions/rashes
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Severe abdominal pain
- Fever of 100.0 or higher
- Decreased activity - droopy, tired appearance
- Irritable behavior
- Sore throat/swollen glands
- Runny nose/cough
- Loss of sense of taste or smell

If a student presents with sick symptoms, parents will be notified to pick up their child within 30 minutes. Students who are sent home cannot return until symptoms improve and/or they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. Families with questions regarding illness procedures can reach out directly to the school nurse or review CDPHE guidelines here.

Parents must notify the school nurse if their child contracts a communicable disease that could

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Parents must notify the school nurse if their child contracts a communicable disease that could impact others at STEM. STEM strictly follows all current CDC guidelines for illnesses such as measles, chicken pox, strep, respiratory viruses and influenza. STEM will automatically adopt any updates or changes made to CDC protocols.

MEDICATIONS

Medications can be administered to students during school hours in compliance with Douglas County School District Policy. Medication policies per grade level & medication forms can be found here. Medications given to students by the school nurse/health staff require a completed Medication Authorization Form. All medication must be in the original container with a pharmacy - generated label.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS

The School will conduct hearing and vision screenings required and at the grade levels specified by C.R.S. 22-2-116. The school will make a record of all sight and hearing tests given during the school year and record the individual results of each test on each child's records. The parents or guardian will be informed when the testing results show a deficiency in the student's hearing or vision. A parent or guardian may opt-out of the screenings on religious or personal grounds.

STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS

Colorado Law C.R.S. 25-4-902, and any applicable DCSD policies, requires students to be vaccinated against certain diseases unless an exemption is on file at the school. Vaccines required to attend school (K-12) can be found here. Per CDPHE the following documentation is required before the student's first day of school:

1. An immunization record showing that the student has received school-required vaccines and is up to date according to their age; or

2. An in-process plan signed by the student's health care provider showing that the student is in the process of catching up on missing vaccine(s) following the minimum intervals between doses described in the catch up schedule; or

3. A certificate of Medical or Nonmedical Exemption for any missing doses of school required vaccine(s).

   A student who does not have the required immunization documents on file can be denied attendance in accordance with the law.

STUDENT FEES

View and download the student fees here.
All student fees will be created and collected in accordance with applicable laws and policies, including CRS 22-32-117.

LOCKERS

Every secondary school student has the option of renting a student locker. These lockers are issued clean and it is the student's responsibility to keep them clean and neat during the year. If, during the course of the year, a locker becomes in need of repair, the student should contact the office. Combination locks will be issued to students who pay the rental fee. Lockers and locks will be assigned and registered with the front office. It is the student's responsibility to keep the combination secure. Students should NEVER give their combination to a friend. Lockers will be checked at the end of the school year and fines assessed for any damage. All lockers are the property of the School and may be opened by School authorities at any time for reasonable suspicion that a violation of law or School policy has occurred. Locker sign-up is shared at the start of the school year via a direct message to families.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles found in and around the School should be placed on the table outside the cafeteria for each School, where the owners may claim their property. High value lost property (cell phones, etc) should be taken to the front office. Students can claim their property through identification.

**Unclaimed clothing items are donated after Fall Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, and at the end of the year.

MESSAGES AND ITEM DROP OFF

Items for students may be dropped off at the front office. A table will be made available in the lobby for parents to drop off items such as lunches, homework, projects, etc. for students to retrieve during the day. Items of significant value such as cell phones or laptops should be taken directly to the front desk (and not left on the delivery table). Once an item has been placed on the "drop off table" parents should notify their students via email or text. Students' phones are required to be in cell phone pockets during class, but can be checked during passing periods.

** Retail delivery services are not permitted at STEM for any reason.**

Food Delivery is ONLY available to High School students. Food orders may be ordered and picked up during passing periods and may not interrupt any class time.

Food ordered by Middle School students will be held in the front office until the school day is over. Any student needing emergency food or lunches will need to communicate with an administrator or member of our office staff.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

STEM School Highlands Ranch is a School of choice. As such, STEM recognizes the value of parental involvement in the School and wishes to provide avenues for parents of STEM students to contribute to the success of STEM. Teachers will provide meaningful opportunities for parents to participate in the classroom.

Please see the STEM policy for parent volunteering.

VISITORS

All visitors must report to the main office before going to any other part of the School. All individuals wishing to enter the School will be required to submit their driver's license or proof of identification to be scanned through the Raptor system prior to entering the building.

Students may not bring a visitor to school for the purpose of attending classes with them. Students who may have a visiting guest in their home and want to show them their school may invite them to have lunch during the regular lunch period.

At times, students may visit our school as prospective students from other schools. The school administration will coordinate the arrangements for these visits with teachers.

PARKING

Student parking permits are available in the main office for a $50 fee to students who qualify. Students may only park in the Student Parking Lot if they have paid for a parking pass and registered their car with the Secondary Front Office. STEM reserves the right to have any vehicle removed that has not been properly registered. Due to limited parking on site for students, parking passes will be awarded on a lottery basis with upperclassmen getting priority for the parking spots. The Parking Pass lottery will be sent out in July of each year for families to sign up. Parking Passes will be distributed prior to the start of school. Cars parked in unauthorized locations are subject to ticketing. Parking on campus is a privilege and can be revoked at any time.



SENIOR PARKING SPACE PAINTING

Painting of senior parking spaces occurs the week prior to when school starts and is organized by the High School Student Government.

Requirements to paint your parking spot:

- Students must purchase their own paint and supplies and be able to paint spots on assigned days
- Approved paint only (details to be shared by the Facilities Director)
- Spots will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis after student check-in
- On painting day, students will check in and wait in line until the parking lot is opened for students to choose their spaces
- Painting cannot take place at any other time
- Cost: $75 (includes $50 fee for a year-long parking pass, $25 additional fee goes toward the Art Honor Society)
- Each student must complete the Artwork Submission Form and submit a sketch each July, to be approved by the High School Principal. The High School Principal will approve all sketches and notify students.
- While a student has painted the parking space, it will be difficult to enforce this, so we cannot guarantee that a student's space will not be parked in from time to time. If someone parks in a student's painted spot, they can check in with the front office to see if the car's owner can be contacted to have it moved.
- Students who paint a spot should always use their painted spot

Design Criteria:

- No offensive language or gang symbols
- No double meanings
- No nicknames, girlfriend/boyfriend names, etc. (ONLY your own name; if a name is painted on the spot, the student must paint over their name at the end of the school year)
- Must be school-appropriate
- STEM's High School Principal must approve the design in advance via the Artwork Submission Form (sent out over the summer)

- Prohibited items will be painted over in black at the administration's discretion, and disciplinary action may be taken

- You are not permitted to deviate from your submitted design nor alter your design at any time without official approval

WAY TO GO (SCHOOL CARPOOL)

The STEM School Highlands Ranch is partnering with Way to Go: Schoolpool to assist families that are interested in carpooling, walking, and/or biking to and from school with other families. If you are interested in this program please use the secure link that is on our Driveline page of our website.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Annual school profile pictures will be printed onto a Student ID during the session. School profile pictures will be taken during school at the beginning of the year. There will be an opportunity to retake pictures in October of the school year. Elementary students will also have class pictures taken in the spring. Athletics photos will be taken in the Fall and Spring and coordinated by the Athletic Director.

STUDENT ID CARDS

While on campus, Middle and High School students are REQUIRED to wear their student identification cards at all times. Middle and High School students are issued photograph identification cards at the beginning of each school year. Identification cards are used for student identification purposes, such as entrance to special events, evening activities and sporting events, checkout of materials, etc. Students not wearing ID badges are subject to consequences determined by the Secondary Administration.

Replacement Cards are available at the Secondary Office. The first replacement is free. Any additional replacements are $5 each and will be charged to the student's MySchoolBucks account.

Students not wearing their ID badges are subject to school disciplinary action.

CURRICULUM AND ACADEMICS

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

Problem Based Learning is the core of our program model because it drives the students to engage in real-world solutions that do good in the world, ultimately helping shape their identity as they discover their strengths and passions.

Throughout their instruction, students learn about a problem, ask questions, research, brainstorm solutions, test, analyze and take action, all while learning the state standards.
Students access background knowledge and investigate standards, which are aligned concepts that help solve the problem.

STEM's Instructional Model encourages peer collaboration, critical thinking and creativity, all while learning responsible use of technology. Students learn content as they investigate real problems. They engage in a rigorous, extended process of posing questions, finding resources, and applying information to develop realistic possible solutions. Students share these solutions to the public and take action outside of the classroom to make meaningful change.
Working with industry leaders, students find new ways to collaborate and seek new solutions.

GRADING

ELEMENTARY GRADING

Standards Based grading is the process of reporting a student's status on each priority standard based on proficiency scale levels. Standards Based reporting occurs by figuring a summative score for each priority standard that is taught during a reporting period. In Standards Based reporting a student may or may not be proficient in all the priority standards when they progress to the next grade level or course.

At STEM School Highlands Ranch Elementary, we will report final grades as follows:

- K-5 will be reporting out final grades as a 4, 3, 2

SECONDARY GRADING

Philosophy

Grades at STEM School Highlands Ranch will reflect student learning and mastery of standards. Responsibility and work habits will be reinforced through consistent systems and expectations rather than heavily weighted grading penalties.

Rationale for the Guidelines

This policy balances two priorities: ensuring grades accurately represent learning while maintaining clear expectations for responsibility. It prevents grade distortion caused by excessive penalties or zeros, provides consistent expectations for students and families, and reinforces accountability through structured systems rather than punitive grading practices.

To promote consistency, the following guidelines will be used across all classrooms:

Assignment Point Values

• Each assignment will be assigned a point value determined by the teacher.
• Teachers have the autonomy to decide how many points an assignment is worth, based on its complexity and purpose.

Assignment Categories

All assignments must be organized into two required categories that are used consistently across all classes:

• **Learning Opportunities**
Includes: homework, classwork, daily practice, and other formative activities Purpose: Designed to support skill-building and reinforce understanding

• **Demonstrations of Knowledge**
Includes: PBL deliverables, presentations, quizzes, tests, and summative assessments Purpose: Intended to measure student mastery of skills and content
(Note: These two categories are unweighted, meaning both contribute to the final grade proportionally based on the points assigned.)

Final Grade Reporting

A single overall grade will be reported for each course. Grades will not be reported by individual standard.

Retake Policy

The retake policy will remain established by each department.
Departments may revisit and revise their retake procedures as needed, but policies should remain consistent across the department and aligned with the principles of standards-based learning.
The goal of any retake policy should be to support student mastery through reflection and revision.

Late Work Expectations

Students are expected to complete and submit work by the assigned due date. Work submitted after the due date will be considered late.

Late Work Window

- Work submitted on time receives full credit.
- Work submitted within three school days after the due date will receive a 10% deduction.
- After three days, late work may only be accepted with teacher approval and may require intervention.
- All assignments will have a clearly defined end-of-unit cutoff ("lock date"), after which work will no longer be accepted.

***Late work-any assignment, assessment, or academic task submitted after the teacher-established due date and time, excluding circumstances approved by the school such as documented illness, excused absences, disability accommodations, or other teacher-approved situations.

Grading Approach

Academic grades will reflect mastery of content and standards. Late penalties will be limited and consistent and will not significantly distort a student's ability to demonstrate learning.

Accountability Systems

To reinforce responsibility, late work will require additional steps rather than simply a grade deduction. These may include completing work during lunch, access, or study hall, meeting with the teacher before submission, and/or completing a reflection on why the work was late and how to improve.

Response to Missing Work Patterns

- If a student has two or more missing assignments, parent communication will occur.
- If a pattern continues, a meeting or intervention plan will be implemented to support the student.

Student Responsibility

Students are expected to check assignments regularly, use Canvas and classroom communication tools, seek help when needed, and complete work on time. Expectations around "good faith effort" should be clearly defined and consistently reinforced.

Consistency Across the School

This policy will be implemented across all departments to ensure clarity and fairness. Teachers will follow the same general structure for late work, deadlines, and grading practices.

Middle School Consideration

Middle school students will receive additional support, recognizing that executive functioning skills are still developing. The focus will remain on building responsibility while ensuring students have opportunities to demonstrate learning.

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR EXTERNAL RESEARCH

STEM School Highlands Ranch recognizes that meaningful learning can occur through approved university research opportunities, industry experiences, and other authentic learning environments outside of the traditional classroom setting.
Students may earn academic points (no greater than a total of 5 final grade points) for approved external experiences. Details can be found in each course syllabus

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GUIDELINES

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we embrace innovation and recognize the potential of AI as a powerful tool for creating, problem solving, and learning. We believe that AI, when used ethically and effectively, can help to foster critical thinking and academic achievement in an AI driven world. In order to be competitive in the workforce, students must be proficient in AI usage. We believe it is our responsibility to equip students with rules and expectations for responsible, ethical usage of AI. This policy outlines the ethical and responsible use of AI tools within our school community, ensuring that technology enhances, rather than diminishes, the learning experience

i. Students at STEM School Highlands Ranch are expected to use AI tools ethically and responsibly by adhering to the following:

- Understand AI as a Tool: View AI as a powerful assistant for learning, research, and problem-solving, not as a substitute for your own thinking, effort, and understanding.
- Maintain Academic Integrity:

  - Original Work: All assignments, projects, and assessments students submit must show their original understanding and effort. AI should help students learn, not do the work for them.

  - Cite Everything: When using AI to help generate ideas, drafts, code, or any content for school work, students must properly acknowledge and cite the AI tool according to their teacher's instructions. (Think of AI as a research tool – one wouldn't copy from a book without citing it, and the same goes for AI.)

  - No Plagiarism: Submitting content generated by AI as if it were entirely original, without proper acknowledgment, is considered plagiarism. This will lead to disciplinary action as outlined in the student code of conduct.

  - Understand What Is Submitted: Students are responsible for the accuracy and validity of any information or content they include in their work, even if an AI tool helped generate it. Always review, verify, and understand the AI's output.

    Use AI as a Learning Tool, Not a Replacement for Thinking:

- Aid, Not Authority: Use AI for brainstorming ideas, getting different perspectives, drafting initial content, or explaining complex concepts. Do not rely on it to replace your critical thinking or problem-solving skills.

- Verify Information: Always critically evaluate information or answers provided by AI. AI can sometimes generate incorrect, biased, or nonsensical information ("hallucinations"). Double-check facts using reliable sources.

- Data Privacy: Do not input personal, sensitive, or confidential information (e.g., your name, address, student ID, or private school data) into public AI tools unless specifically instructed and approved by a teacher for a secure, school-vetted application.

- Responsible Content Creation: Do not use AI to create or disseminate harmful, inappropriate, biased, or misleading content.

Seek Guidance and Clarification: Students are expected to seek clarification from their teacher if they are unsure when or how AI tools may be used for an assignment or activity.

ii. Parents play a vital role in supporting the ethical and responsible use of AI. We ask parents to:

- Review and Discuss: Familiarize yourselves with this policy and discuss its principles with their students.

- Reinforce Expectations: Support the school's expectations regarding academic integrity and responsible AI use at home.

- Monitor Home Usage: Be aware of the AI tools your student is using at home and encourage ethical practices.

- Communicate Concerns: If you have questions or concerns about AI usage at school or home, please communicate with school staff.

iii. Our educators will:

- Provide Instruction: Teach students about AI literacy, including how AI works, its capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications.
  - (The Social Institute - Lesson Library)

- Model Responsible Use: Demonstrate and model ethical and responsible AI usage in their teaching practices.

- Set Clear Expectations: Provide clear guidelines for AI use on specific assignments and projects, including citation requirements.

- Integrate Critically: Select and integrate AI tools that enhance learning outcomes and align with pedagogical goals.

STEM School Highlands Ranch is committed to:

- Professional Development: Providing ongoing professional learning for educators on AI best practices, ethical considerations, and effective integration strategies.
  - (The Social Institute - Professional Development Courses for educators)
- Tool Vetting: Carefully vetting AI tools and platforms to ensure they meet our standards for privacy, security, and educational efficacy.
  - DCSD uses Khanmigo (by Khan Academy): This is consistently cited as a top-tier, school-vetted AI tool. Developed by the trusted educational non-profit Khan Academy, Khanmigo acts as a personalized tutor and teaching assistant. It guides students to find answers themselves rather than just giving them, aligning with active learning principles. It's integrated with Khan Academy's vast content library and is designed with student data privacy in mind, having a 4-star Common Sense Media rating.
- Policy Review: Regularly reviewing and updating this policy to adapt to the rapidly evolving landscape of AI technology.

Consequences of Misuse

Violations of this AI Usage Policy, particularly those related to academic integrity, will be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences may include, but are not limited to: redoing assignments, forfeiture of grade on assignments, suspension, or other disciplinary measures as deemed appropriate by school administration.

- 1st Offense: Forfeiture of grade on assignments and a teacher conference.
- 2nd Offense: Forfeiture of grade on assignments and a parent/teacher conference.
- 3rd Offense: Forfeiture of grade on assignments and an administrator conference.
- All additional offenses will be handled by administration.

Policy Review and Updates

As AI technology continues to evolve rapidly, this policy will be reviewed annually by school administration and faculty to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. Updates will be communicated through the parent and student handbook and other official school channels.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS (GRADES 6–12)

Administration, faculty, and staff at STEM School Highlands Ranch are committed to ensuring that grades accurately reflect a student's demonstrated learning and performance. Grade appeals are intended to address errors or inconsistencies in grading practices, not to renegotiate academic outcomes.

Students receive grades based on two categories of coursework:

• Learning Opportunities, which include homework, classwork, and practice

• Demonstrations of Knowledge, which include assessments, projects, and presentations

Final grades are reported as a single percentage and converted to a letter grade as follows:

• A: 90–100% | B: 80–89.9% | C: 70–79.9% | D: 60–69.9% | F: 0–59.9%

Grade appeals may be considered only under the following circumstances:

• A calculation or recording error has occurred

• Established grading policies, such as late work or the retake policy were not followed

• A rubric or grading criteria was misapplied

• A documented accommodation was not implemented

Grade appeals will not be considered for the following reasons:

• Requests based on effort, eligibility, or proximity to the next grade

• Missing work that was not submitted prior to the due date lock date

• Requests for extra credit or additional assignments

• Disagreement with a teacher's professional judgment when policies have been followed

• Violations of academic integrity

If a student wishes to appeal a grade, the following process must be followed:

• The student must first contact the classroom teacher in writing to review the concern. This must occur within five (5) school days of the grade being posted.

• If the concern is not resolved, a written appeal with supporting evidence must be submitted to administration within ten (10) school days of the grade being posted.

• Administration will review all relevant materials and determine the outcome. Decisions are final unless a procedural error is identified.

All communication throughout the appeal process must remain respectful and focused on evidence and established school policies.

FIELD TRIPS

Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of field trips. Most field trips are for one day, but there are grade level overnight field trips. Students who ride the bus to a field trip location must return to School on the bus, unless a parent chaperone is in attendance and follows School policies related to sign out procedures.

Students must represent STEM School Highlands Ranch with safe, respectful, and responsible behavior. Field trips are a privilege. Students struggling to regularly demonstrate STEM's character values may not be permitted to attend class, grade level, and team field trips. Teachers may, at their discretion, permit these students to attend a field trip provided that the student's parent(s) accompany him/her on the field trip.

Students who will not be participating in a field trip activity, whether it is a one-day field trip or an overnight field trip, are still required to attend School. Teachers will arrange for students who are not attending a field trip to work in an alternate classroom during the school day. Students who do not attend on the day(s) of a field trip will accrue unexcused absences for the day(s) that they miss.

When field trips occur midday, students must attend classes before and/or after the trip. When field trips return after the end of the school day parents must pick up students promptly after field trips, following our standard pick up expectations. Parents attending field trips must receive a Raptor badge from the School prior to attending.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Administration, faculty and staff at STEM School Highlands Ranch strive to provide diverse opportunities in a safe, caring, and challenging environment. Our School community encourages respect and responsibility, fosters creativity, and promotes stewardship and a commitment to excellence. Students are expected to turn in work that is their own. When students turn in work that is not their own, assist others in doing so, or deliberately hinder their classmates' learning, they violate the integrity we strive for as an academic community.

These types of dishonesty are not only counterproductive to our mission, but are also illegal in certain circumstances. Understanding that the following may not illustrate every possible circumstance of academic dishonesty, STEM School Highlands Ranch defines academic dishonesty as the following:

- Plagiarism, which is defined as the presentation of another person's language, ideas, or thoughts as one's own work in the preparation of a paper, laboratory report, examination, oral presentation, or homework. This includes information downloaded from the Internet or otherwise shared electronically, as well as the use of AI bots.

- Dishonest conduct during a quiz, test, exam, or other assessment
- Copying another student's work or allowing another student to copy your work (except when told to do so by a teacher, i.e. notes from a missed class)
- Taking another student's computer or personal item without permission
- Taking a non-circulating book out of a classroom without permission
- Altering a file on a "groups" server folder, therefore potentially interfering with another student's ability to complete an assignment

If a student participates in any of the above actions or other action deemed a violation by a teacher, the following disciplinary action(s) may be taken:

- A meeting with the Principal of the School most appropriate for the student's grade level, student, the student's parents and teacher to discuss the violation
- Students may be required to re-do the assignment
- Students may be required to re-do copied work
- Students may be assigned to detention for taking books and materials without permission
- Students may be required to retake a quiz, test, exam or other assessment
- Students may lose technology privileges if they interfere with server folders, access inappropriate sites, or interfere with any Infinite Campus application
- For high school students, a second offense of academic dishonesty in an academic year may result in an "F" in the course for the semester
- Please note that in extraneous circumstances, additional action may be taken as determined by the STEM administration

STATE ASSESSMENTS AND OPT-OUT

State and federal law requires students to take standardized assessments in the instructional areas of English language arts, math, and science. State law also requires students in elementary and middle school to take standardized assessments in the instructional area of social studies. Accordingly, the School will administer standardized assessments pursuant to these state and federal legal requirements.

Pencil and Paper Testing Option

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-7-1013(6), the School may determine that a specific classroom or school will use pencil and paper to complete the computerized portions of a state assessment.

Factors that will be considered in making this determination include: the technological capacity and resources of the particular school/classroom; the students' previous experience with computerized and written assessments; whether the instructional methodology of the particular school/classroom is consistent with the use of computerized assessments or written assessments; and the logistics of administering the state assessment in different formats in a particular school or classroom.

Prior to making this determination, the Executive Director will consult with the Principal as well as parents/guardians or other relevant parties.

For students with disabilities, the use of pencil and paper instead of a computer to complete a state assessment will be determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or Section 504 team, in accordance with applicable law.

PARENT OPT-OUT

A parent may opt-out his or her student from a particular state assessment by notifying the School Principal in writing or by completing an opt-out form available in the front office. A parent will not be required to state the reason for opting-out. The opt-out may apply to all or specific state assessments administered to the student during the school year. Any opt-out will be valid for one school year. Parents/guardians are encouraged to submit their requests for exemption at the earliest possible date each school year so that the School may plan accordingly.

This opt-out process applies only to state assessments administered pursuant to C.R.S. 22-7-1006.3 and does not apply to other School or classroom assessments.

In accordance with C.R.S. 22-7-1013(8)(b), the School will not impose a negative consequence on a student who is opted-out of state assessments. Students will not be prohibited from participating in any School activities, extra-curriculars, or similar; or from receiving any other form of reward that the School provides to students for participating in the state assessment. The School will not impose an unreasonable burden or requirement on a student that would discourage the student from taking a state assessment or encourage the student's parent to opt-out the student from taking the state assessment

ASSESSMENT NOTIFICATION

The School will annually distribute to the parents of students an assessment calendar. At a minimum, the assessment calendar will specify the estimated hours each testing day that specific classes or grades will take each assessment and identify whether the assessment is required by federal law or state law or selected by the School.

In addition to the calendar, the School will provide written information to parents that describes the state and local assessments that the School will administer during the school year, identifying the assessments that the School is required by federal law to administer, any additional state assessments that the School is required by section 22-7-1006.3 to administer, the assessments that the School is required by other state law to administer, and the additional assessments that the School chooses to administer; the anticipated calendar for administering the state and local assessments during the school year; and the purposes of the state assessments administered pursuant to section 22-7-1006.3 and any additional local assessments that the School administers and the manner in which the department of education and the local education provider uses the assessment results.

The provisions of this policy do not apply to course-specific assessments that are not adopted by the state board of education pursuant to section 22-7-1006 or to nonstandardized, classroom-based assessments that individual educators choose to administer to students.

The calendar and additional assessment information will be available to parents at the beginning of each school year in the front office and posted on the School's website.

SCHOOL RELATED STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

The School recognizes that in any of its school sponsored publications, like a school newspaper, that students, with certain limitations prescribed herein, are free to express their views. The School encourages and teaches students to observe the rules for responsible journalism, and requires compliance with this policy and applicable laws. If a publication written substantially by students is made generally available throughout the School, it will be considered a public forum for students.

Students are prohibited from publication or distribution in any the following:

1. Expression that is obscene
2. Expression that is libelous, slanderous, or defamatory under state law
3. Expression that is false as to any person who is not a public figure or involved in a matter of public concern

4. Expression that creates a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, the violation of lawful School regulations, promotion of street gangs, or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the School or that violates the rights of others to privacy or that threatens violence to property or persons.

The School may further provide for appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions on student expression within the School.

Student editors of school-sponsored student publications are responsible for determining the news, opinion, and advertising content of their publications subject to the limitations of this policy. The teacher/advisor of the school-sponsored student publications will supervise the production of such publications, teach and encourage free and responsible expression and professional standards for English and journalism.

If participation in a school-sponsored publication is part of a school class or activity for which grades or school credits are given, the provisions of this policy should not be interpreted to interfere with the authority of the teacher/advisor for such school-sponsored publication to establish or limit writing assignments for the students working with the publication and to otherwise direct and control the learning experience that the publication is intended to provide.

No expression made by students in the exercise of freedom of speech or freedom of the press shall be deemed to be an expression of School policy, and no school district or employee, or parent, or legal guardian, or official of such school district shall be held liable in any civil or criminal action for any expression made or published by students. Such publications shall contain a disclaimer that expression made by students in those publications is not an expression of School policy, that the views expressed are not necessarily shared by the School and that the School and its employees are immune from any civil or criminal action based on any expression made or published by students.

ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY

Enrichment, clubs, activities, and athletics are a privilege for students. Participation in these is not guaranteed. Students must follow these guidelines:

- They must be in attendance during the school day that the club or team is meeting
- For all non CHSAA clubs, grade checks will be every 6 weeks. Any students with 2 or more F's will not be allowed to participate in the club until they have a signed letter from the teacher stating that they have raised their grade
- For CHSAA athletics, please see the Athletic Director for the CHSAA requirements
- If a student becomes ineligible, fees will not be refunded

ATHLETICS

At STEM, our focus is on academics, just as “student” is the first word in “student athlete.”

Any STEM CHSAA activity may adopt stricter standards for academic eligibility with the permission of the Athletic Director and STEM Administration. These standards will be communicated to the team prior to the start of their competitive season.

Athletics and activities are privileges that students are encouraged to participate in. In order for each student athlete to be eligible to participate in his or her chosen sport/activity, he or she must maintain a grade of at least “C” in all core classes (Science, Computer Science, Engineering, Mathematics, English, Social Studies) and cannot be failing any class that student is enrolled in. Weekly grade checks will be completed based on the process included below, and any academically ineligible students will not be allowed to participate until the next grade check occurs AND the grades are all “C” or higher. One “D” grade will constitute suspension of practice and game privileges until the grade is brought up. A combination of “F” grades and “D” grades may result in the suspension/dismissal from the team until the grades are brought up or for the remainder of the season.

Eligibility will be checked weekly during the season. The Athletic Director, or a representative, will contact teachers to inquire about any students on the team who do not have at least a grade of “C” in a class. The student will remain ineligible until he/she can prove to the coach and/or Athletic Director that he/she is passing the class. This can be provided by each respective teacher in the form of an email or handwritten note, and must be received by the coach prior to the student’s reinstated eligibility. “Word of mouth,” and notes or emails from parents or the students themselves are not acceptable forms of proof. Student academic eligibility must be established or regained prior to participation in interscholastic competition, and on-going eligibility will be checked weekly during the season. The Athletic Director or representative will conduct these reviews. Should a student be found ineligible, the student, parent and their coach will be notified via email and the student will also receive an appeal form. Should their recorded grade not accurately reflect their class performance, the student may return the form to the Athletic Director or representative with the signature and grade correction from their teacher. An ineligible student will remain ineligible for interscholastic activities until the next scheduled eligibility review.

In the event that a student cannot participate in an activity due to academic ineligibility, there will be no refund of fees for that activity.

A team’s Coach, the Athletic Director, or School Administrator shall have the authority to declare a student ineligible based on inappropriate behavior, detention, excessive absences, suspension, or expulsion.

CANVAS

Canvas is STEM's Learning Management System. STEM educators use Canvas to create assignments, assessments, and record student progress. Canvas provides academic feedback to our students and parents.

Parents can use Canvas to stay informed of their student's grades and missing assignments. Grades for completed work, and indications of missing work will be posted on the Canvas site. Please allow teachers sufficient time to assign grades for each assignment. Once an assignment has been turned in, or the test is taken, the grades should be posted within two business days depending on the length of the assignment.

Elementary classrooms will communicate major assignments, projects, and problem based learning experiences, to students and parents.

Not every assignment will necessarily be posted as hands on learning experiences may not have the ability to be uploaded. Please reach out to the classroom teacher if you have questions.

Kindergarten, First and Second Grade classrooms utilize Google Classroom in place of Canvas.

HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS

Homework is designed to provide students with an important opportunity to practice and to extend what they are learning. The amount of homework will vary based on the grade level, unit, the student's own work habits, and the appropriate use of class time. Here is a general guideline:

- Elementary- 20-30 minutes per day
- Middle School- 20 minutes per class per day
- High School- 20-30 minutes per class per day

Honors/accelerated, concurrent enrollment and AP classes may have additional requirements as determined by the instructor.

If a middle school student is enrolled in a high school level course (or a high school student in a middle school level course) the homework expectations are for the level of the class, not the grade level of the student.

MAKE UP WORK

For excused absences, students have two full days for every day missed to turn in their assignments. This means that if a student is excused and misses on a Tuesday, they can catch up on their work on Wednesday and Thursday, and all assignments are due as their classes meet on Friday. If a student is excused and misses on a Thursday, their assignments are due as their classes meet on Tuesday (weekend days are not counted.)

Students have the responsibility to remind their teachers that they were excused and absent, and to check their teachers' Canvas pages for assignments and assessments that were due during their absence. Students have the responsibility to work with their teachers to set times and dates to make up specific tests and quizzes, and to arrange for alternate assignments if appropriate.

Teachers have the responsibility to inform the student about the assignments, quizzes and tests given during excused absences by maintaining this information on their class websites or Canvas calendar.

Teachers may modify assignments and due dates at their discretion.

Parents are encouraged to pick up work assignments from their child's teachers so that students who are home sick can begin to catch up as soon as possible.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Completing assignments on time is not simply to keep the course moving on schedule; it is to ensure that students have done the work to learn the current content of the class, before they move on to the next topic. When students fall behind they are not always able to learn the new material as effectively or efficiently. Late assignments are graded with the typical expectations of the assignment.

REGULAR ASSIGNMENTS

Regular assignments should be submitted by the due date to ensure the understanding of material prior to moving on to more complex tasks.

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

Problem based learning activities sometimes culminate in presentations, evaluation by professionals, or other events. In these cases students may be required to present on specific days without the opportunity for extended due dates, or make arrangements with the teacher.

EXCEPTIONS: AP AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

All classes at STEM may follow these policies except for courses taken for Concurrent College Credit, such as Concurrent Enrollment courses through Arapahoe Community College or other institutions of higher learning and AP classes, in which case the instructor may provide alternatives in keeping with the college-level work of the course. Courses taken under the direction of another institution will follow that institution's policies. Extenuating circumstances, either from the teacher's perspective or from the student's may occur which require adjustments to these policies on a rare and case-by-case basis.

Not all 504 or IEP accommodations transfer over to ACC and other institutions of higher learning. Students and parents must provide ACC and other institutions of higher learning a copy of the student's accommodations.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATION EXERCISES

In order to graduate, and also to participate in graduation exercises students must meet all of the following:

1. Successfully complete all of the "academic requirements," as in the Academic Planning Guide, including correspondence and other out-of-school coursework no later than forty-eight hours prior to graduation exercises;

2. Be a full time student (as defined as taking the equivalent of six classes per semester which are transcripted through a district school)

3. Completion of 20 hours of community service

4. Completion of ICAP

5. Wear, without alteration, the designated cap and gown and must have appearance and dress that conforms with standards established by the Board of Education and/or building Principal for the student's grade level, except students are allowed to wear objects of cultural or religious significance as an adornment at a graduation ceremony unless it is likely to cause substantial disruption of, or material interference with, a graduation ceremony

6. Demonstrate behavior (during the semester prior to graduation) deemed by the Building Principal for the student's grade level, to be compatible with the district's Responsible Citizenship Expectations and, as described in IKF-R-1;

7. Cooperate fully with the School's staff during all school sponsored senior activities, including graduation exercises; and,

8. Return all school/district property and clear all outstanding debts owed the School.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Reports of academic progress will be issued by teachers as a tool to both inform parents and students on student class performance and to encourage communication between parents/students and teachers. At a minimum, parents will receive progress reports during parent conferences (October/March). Parents and students are encouraged to use Canvas to regularly monitor student performance in all classes.

PROMOTION/RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

If a middle school student does not pass three or more core classes (Science, English, Social Studies, Engineering/Technology and/or Math) they are at risk of retention. Retention warnings will be issued at the end of the second and third quarters. The administrative team of the STEM School Highlands Ranch makes final retention decisions. High school students must retake or otherwise fulfill coursework as needed to meet STEM Graduation Requirements. Students at risk of retention should be brought to the attention of the Student Support Team for further intervention discussion.

READ ACT REQUIREMENTS

If within forty-five days before the end of any school year prior to a student's fourth-grade year, a teacher finds that a student has a significant reading deficiency, the School will provide to the student's parent written notice that there are serious implications to a student entering fourth grade with a significant reading deficiency and, therefore, under state law, the parent, the student's teacher, and other personnel of the School are required to meet and consider retention as an intervention strategy and determine whether the student, despite having a significant reading deficiency, is able to maintain adequate academic progress at the next grade level. The School will work with the parent to schedule a date, time, and place for the meeting and if the parent does not attend the meeting, the teacher and personnel of the School will decide whether the student will advance to the next grade level in the next school year.

If, after making documented attempts to schedule the meeting with the parent, School personnel are unable to schedule the meeting, or if the parent does not attend the scheduled meeting, the teacher and personnel selected by the School will decide, based on the student's body of evidence, whether the student will advance to the next grade level for the next school year.

To learn more about Read Act Requirements, please click here.

HONOR ROLL

- For a Middle School student to attain Honor Roll, the student's GPA must be between 3.25 and 3.50.
- For a Middle School student to attain High Honors, the student's GPA must be between 3.50 and 3.75.
- For a Middle School student to attain Highest Honors, the student's GPA must be between 3.75 and 4.0.

ACADEMIC LETTER

STEM School Highlands Ranch is focused on rewarding Academic Excellence among students. Students will be recognized through the Academic Letter Recognition Program. The criteria for earning an Academic Letter is as follows:

Students must achieve a grade point average of 3.8 or above for two consecutive semesters while attending STEM School Highlands Ranch. The recipient of the award will receive an Academic Letter after the first year of earning this accomplishment. A student that achieves this accomplishment for a second year will receive an academic pin. Academic bars are given for subsequent years.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

APPS AND RESOURCES

Teachers utilize a variety of instructional technology applications and websites to support student learning within classrooms. Apps and web resources are vetted through a School process and in accordance with HB 16-1423. Additional information related to this can be found on the School website under Student Data Privacy. Each year, teachers will communicate and provide families with information regarding apps and or websites utilized as part of our School wide instructional model.

SCHOOL ISSUED COMPUTERS

STEM purchases computers to be used by 1st-8th graders. School issued computers are expected to be used in accordance with the policies set forth in this document.
Students are expected to meet the following expectations:

- Bring devices to school fully charged.
- Computers must not be left unattended.
- Any found computers should be returned to the main office.
- Students must contact IT staff for repairs and not attempt to do so on their own.

Parents/guardians will assume fi nancial responsibility beyond items allotted under the coverage provided by the technology fees. Additional information is provided in the 26/27 Student Fees Document.

STEM CELL PHONE POLICY

STUDENT COMMUNICATION DEVICES (CELL PHONES AND SMART WATCHES)

STEM School Highlands Ranch recognizes that communication devices, including cell phones and smart watches, are a part of daily life. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations for the possession and use of these devices during the school day to ensure a focused and respectful learning environment.
Student communication devices are defined as cell phones, smart watches, or personal devices capable of making or receiving calls, sending messages, or accessing the internet. School-issued laptops and tablets are not included in this policy.
Student Communication Devices Policy

GUIDELINES

Elementary School (K–5):

• All communication devices must be silenced (no sound or vibration) and stored in the student's backpack or designated classroom area for the entirety of the school day.
• Devices may not be used or visible in classrooms, hallways, common areas, or restrooms.
• Devices may only be used with express permission from a staff member for educational purposes.

Middle School (6–8):

• All communication devices must be turned off and stored in a designated location (e.g., backpack, locker, or classroom storage system) for the entirety of the school day.
• Devices may not be used or visible in classrooms, hallways, common areas, or restrooms.
• Devices may only be used with express permission from a staff member for educational purposes.

High School (9–12):

• Communication devices must be silenced (no sound or vibration) and stored during instructional periods.
• The respectful, non-disruptive use of cell phones is permitted during passing periods and in the cafeteria during lunch.
• Smart watches may be used in a respectful, non-disruptive manner.
• Upon entering any classroom or restricted area, devices must be silenced and stored in the designated location.
• The use of communication devices during the school day is a privilege and is subject to the discretion of school administration.

PROHIBITED AREAS AND USE

Cell phones, smart watches, and all associated functions are prohibited in the following areas unless expressly permitted by a staff member for educational purposes:

- Classrooms
- Restrooms
- Physical Education areas
- Counseling offices
- School office areas

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions may be made under the following circumstances:

- Staff permission for instructional purposes
- Documented needs (IEP, 504, medical conditions)
- Urgent situations

MISUSE OF DEVICES

Students using devices in a disruptive or harmful manner may face disciplinary action up to suspension or expulsion and possible referral to law enforcement.

VIOLATION OF POLICY

First Offense:

1. Device confiscated; restorative conversation
2. Returned at the end of the day (MS)- Returned at end of class (HS Only)

Second Offense:

1. Device held in main office
2. Parent notified

Third Offense:

1. Parent must retrieve device
2. Detention assigned
3. Device restriction/check-in
4. Documented in Infinite Campus

Fourth Offense:

1. Parent retrieval required
2. Increased discipline
3. Device restriction for semester
4. Documented in Infinite Campus

LOSS OR DAMAGE

The school is not responsible for lost or damaged devices.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION

Administration may adjust consequences as appropriate.

NETIQUETTE (INTERNET ÉTIQUETTE)

Appropriate Internet and/or electronic communication is imperative in today's professional and personal wireless environment.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Students are subject to the following specific rules related to social media, to the extent there is a nexus between the social media use and School:

- Use Appropriate Language - Obscene, insulting, threatening, derogatory, inflammatory and bullying language is not appropriate and almost always detracts from your ideas.
- Respect the Power of Public Media - Honor the wishes of fellow students that information (e.g., compromising stories) be kept private. Always remember that posted information may seem private, but is highly public.
- Do Not Spam - Meaningless, mass and repetitive messages are not appropriate.
- Read, then Reply - Do not skim statements and respond. Understand the thoughts of another before you comment on them.
- Do Not Hack - Never access another person's identity or account, or restricted sources of information.
- Communication with Teachers - Teachers are not permitted to use non-school media to communicate with students and/or parents about school related matters.

- Discourage Rumors - Do not rely upon or pass on unsubstantiated information or gossip. If information seems unlikely and inflammatory, it is most likely untrue and inflammatory. When in doubt, go directly to the source.

- Respect Confidentiality - Many personal issues and many issues involving other families and students are legitimately confidential (and many are confidential by law). If you would not want information about your job or your child made public, do not make or expect to see in public such information about others.

- Debate Issues Constructively - Schools often face legitimate controversies. STEM School Highlands Ranch respects and solicits parent voices in addressing such issues. Effective arguments are usually civil, measured, well-supported and take into account the legitimate reasons for opposing views. Ineffective arguments are abusive, disrespectful of others, and marked by hyperbole or factual carelessness.

CONSEQUENCES

If it is determined that social media behaviors, at any time, are affecting the learning environment then consequences may be administered.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE EXPECTATIONS

These expectations were developed in accordance with the STEM School Highlands Ranch effort to graduate students of honor and integrity and to encourage those students to use resources in an ethical and responsible manner. It is the intent of STEM to provide the student with guidelines on appropriate use of the school network, the Internet, and e-mail. Students are expected to use all technology not only lawfully, but also with respect, responsibility, honesty, and integrity. Inappropriate or unapproved use of technology may result in a loss of technology privileges and/or disciplinary action, as determined necessary by the administration.

CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY MONITORING

The use of educational technology is central to the mission of the STEM School Highlands Ranch. In order to optimize on-task time in the classroom and facilitate better teacher oversight of usage, STEM may utilize technology-monitoring software. Each student enrolled at STEM will be required to have technology monitoring software installed on any device used to access the school-provided network and internet, and as a result students should have no expectation of privacy when utilizing those resources. Students who intentionally misuse technology to trigger monitoring software, which then requires administrative and/or other staff support to intervene, will face disciplinary action.

If information on a student-owned device is relevant to activities at the School or Enrichment, meaning that it supports the assignments, assessments, projects, and other classroom activities or related homework, or is related to clubs, or Enrichment programs, then the material can be considered relevant to the School or the Enrichment and it can be reviewed, monitored, assessed, collected, and stored by teachers, staff, and Enrichment coaches for only so long as School or Enrichment policies require.

While in the classroom or other parts of the School and Enrichment, student devices may be monitored to ensure that the student is attending satisfactorily to the classroom or program activities at any given time. Teachers and staff may only monitor the student's activities to ascertain that the student is or is not appropriately focused. If the student is not, the teacher should correct the situation. If a teacher or staff member believes that such information has been collected either intentionally or unintentionally they must inform the principal of the student's grade level immediately so that the situation can be reviewed and corrected. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

To support its educational mission, STEM School Highlands Ranch may provide information technology ("IT"), such as computers, networks, Internet access, and electronic-mail accounts, to its students. The STEM Board believes that IT should be used at STEM as a learning resource to educate and to inform, and that STEM and parents have an obligation to teach our students to be responsible IT users.

Subject to this policy, STEM staff shall be free to select and implement IT which STEM, deems best furthers the STEM mission.

While parents and students themselves are ultimately responsible for student behavior at school and student use of STEM IT, the School will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students use STEM IT appropriately and responsibly. To this end, the School has implemented content filtering measures that direct student learning and restrict student access to inappropriate material, in accordance with applicable law. Administrators, teachers, and staff have a professional responsibility to work together and with parents to help students develop the intellectual skills needed to evaluate and choose information sources, to identify information appropriate to the age and developmental levels of the students, and to evaluate and use information to meet their educational goals.

To learn more about STEM's IT Board Policies, click the links below.

Student Data Transparency
Student Data Privacy

STUDENT SUPPORT

The mission of the Student Support Team at STEM School Highlands Ranch is to provide every student with the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive in an environment that is safe, challenging and nurturing. We are dedicated to helping the entire student body reach their full potential while feeling empowered, respected and supported.

The Student Support Team at STEM School Highlands Ranch is made up of highly trained and licensed professionals dedicated to serving our students across a range of areas to include Special Education, Section 504, English Language Development, Mental Health, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and academic support.

Our diverse team includes Learning Specialists, Educational Assistants, Counselors, Speech-language Pathologists, English Language Development teachers, an Occupational Therapist, a Behavior Specialist, a Social Worker, a Psychologist, an IEP & Assessment Specialist, and an MTSS Coordinator. Together, we collaborate to empower every student to achieve their highest potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

As required by applicable federal and state laws, the School is committed to provide appropriate educational opportunities to students with disabilities. If a parent believes that their child may have a disability that qualifies for special education services he or she is encouraged to contact the School in writing, and confirm the School is in receipt thereof, to request an evaluation for special education services.

Any student identified as qualifying for special education services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (the IDEA) until age 21 if the student has not been awarded a regular high school diploma and graduated from high school has the right to a free appropriate public education. Eligible students with disabilities shall be provided individualized programs that offer a Free and Appropriate Public Education, as determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

The School will develop additional policies or utilize the policies of its Administrative Unit, DCSD, in meeting its obligations under IDEA.



MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we implement the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), a proactive framework centered on collaborative, data-driven problem-solving to enhance student outcomes. Through partnerships with families, schools, and the community, MTSS leverages a tiered continuum of evidence-based practices.

Our MTSS approach at STEM identifies student challenges early and employs research-backed interventions to foster improved academic and behavioral outcomes. Led by our dedicated MTSS Coordinator, in collaboration with teachers and intervention specialists such as our Behavior Interventionist, we strategically plan and deliver interventions tailored to student needs.

STEM School Highlands Ranch offers comprehensive special education services tailored to mild to moderate disabilities, encompassing Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech or Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and more.

At the elementary level, our team includes learning specialists and educational assistants dedicated to providing specialized learning support. Additionally, we have a speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, social worker, and behavior interventionist to ensure holistic care and development.

At the secondary level, our resources expand to include learning specialists for middle school and high school, as well as three educational assistants. We continue to provide essential services through a speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, and a social worker/psychologist, ensuring comprehensive support throughout students' educational journeys.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with applicable state and federal laws, the School is committed to providing educational opportunities to those students with limited English proficiency. The School will provide appropriate, research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in accordance with the requirements of applicable laws and regulations.

The School will identify students as English language learners by administering a home language survey and using the state-approved assessment for English language proficiency. Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language. The School will certify to the Colorado Department of Education each year those students identified as English language learners and provide additional information as required to comply with applicable law.

The School will also comply with all applicable laws and regulations to ensure meaningful communication with limited English proficient parents, including providing interpretation or translation services as necessary.

English Language Development (ELD) is a systematic method designed to equip English Language Learners with the essential skills required to achieve proficiency in English. This encompasses fostering proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, alongside supporting their academic advancement across various subjects.

SECTION 504

In compliance with the federal law known as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the School will provide to each student with a qualifying disability, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related supplementary support services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the person's abilities and to the extent required by applicable law.

In order to qualify as a student with a disability, the student must have a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more life activities, as defined under applicable laws and regulations, or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. In addition, one who in the past has had such a disability or is perceived by others as having such a disability may also be protected by law from discrimination on the basis of disability.

Even students who are not eligible to receive services under the traditional special education programs, which are provided pursuant to the IDEA, may be eligible to receive supplementary support, services, and accommodations, if they fall within the definition of disability under Section 504.

For further information about the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to students with disabilities, contact the Director of Student Support Services.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

The School is dedicated to providing comprehensive programming for the identification and education of gifted students who are between the ages of four and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment qualify him or her in one or more of the following categories:

1. General or specific intellectual ability
2. Specific academic aptitude
3. Creative or productive thinking
4. Leadership abilities
5. Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities

Once a student is identified an individualized Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) will be developed. The ALP will describe the type of programming services that will be provided to meet the unique educational needs of the student.

The School will develop additional policies or utilize the policies of its Administrative Unit, DCSD, in meeting its obligations under applicable laws and regulations related to gifted and talented students.

COUNSELING SERVICES

STEM is proud to employ dedicated Professional School Counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to support students' academic success and well-being.

At the secondary level (middle and high school), Professional School Counselors play a vital role in implementing a comprehensive counseling program focused on three key areas: academic development, career readiness, and social/emotional growth. They guide students in creating a graduation pathway and preparing for post-secondary opportunities. Additionally, they serve as a key point of contact for responsive support during crises or student emergencies.

At the elementary level, the Professional School Counselor primarily supports students' social and emotional development. This includes classroom guidance lessons, small group sessions, and individual counseling.

In addition to our school counselors, STEM also employs a College Counselor and Career Discovery Professional who are essential members of our Comprehensive Counseling Team. Together, they help students explore interests, set goals, and prepare for success beyond high school.
For additional information and/or support with your child's needs, please contact their teacher, administrator or the Director of Student Support Services.

ENRICHMENT

STEM School Highlands Ranch has a robust enrichment program that extends student learning opportunities after the traditional school day.

STEM Enrichment is open to all students in the South Metro Denver area with priority placements given to students at STEM School Highlands Ranch.

Students who are participating in any before or after school activity MUST:

- Register for the activity and have parents' permission
- Report promptly to the activity
- Bring all personal items to the activity with them
- Not leave the building unless signed out of the activity
- Leave the building promptly at the conclusion of the activity

In accordance with STEM School Highlands Ranch policy, STEM School Highlands Ranch students will not be allowed to stay in the school building after school or before school if they are not enrolled in an enrichment class, BASE (Before and After School Enterprise) or STEM Enrichment activity. Students who are not participating in an after-school activity must leave the school building immediately at the end of the academic day. See Arrival and Departure below.

An ever-changing slate of programs is being offered to meet the needs and desires of STEM students and feedback is always welcomed and encouraged.

SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

SECONDARY STUDENTS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Please refer to the Bell Schedule for arrival and departure times.. Secondary Students arriving prior to 7:40 am may access the building through the Secondary Entrance beginning at 7:20 am. Students will not be permitted into the hallways until 7:40 am. The Athletic Entrance will open at 7:40 am each morning. Middle and High School staff members are on duty from 7:30 am – 3:45 pm Please note that some teachers may be on an "alternative schedule" meaning that they either teach a first or tenth period class. In this event, please contact that teacher directly for their designated office hours. Students are expected to leave campus after the final bell sounds unless they have permission to remain on campus (e.g., Office Hours, Homework Club, BASE, Enrichment activity, or class, etc.).

Middle and High School students are not to remain on campus past 3:45 pm unless under the direct supervision of a staff member. Please see the Late Pick-Up Policy below.

BEFORE SCHOOL OPEN GYM

Open Gym is offered Tuesdays and Thursdays before school. All students are welcome to participate, but please remember that proper basketball shoes are required for safety and to protect the gym floor.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Elementary students may be dropped off at the Elementary driveline starting at 7:40am. Elementary staff members are on duty from 7:45 am – 4:00 pm Elementary students must line up in their designated class area. Teachers will pick up their students at 8:00 am from the driveline. Elementary students arriving after 8:10 am will need to be signed in by their parent and/or guardian and are marked as tardy. Elementary students must be picked up when their grade levels are released and at the designated pick up times. (Kindergarten and 1st grade will be dismissed at 3:00 pm; second - fifth grade students will be dismissed at 3:10 pm) Student pick up time is based upon the oldest sibling attending STEM. If the student does not have a sibling they must be picked up at their designated dismissal. Students who are not picked up at their designated dismissal time will be subject to the late pickup fees. See Late Pick-Up Policy below. Parents should remain in their vehicle when picking up their student(s) and must follow all driveline procedures in order to ensure and maintain safety protocol.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Student safety is the highest priority of the STEM School in Highlands Ranch. Therefore, we make every effort to ensure that all students are under appropriate supervision until they return to you at the end of their school day.

For that reason, we are concerned about students who are left after dismissal time or who are dropped off early in the morning. The school is not, and cannot, be staffed to provide supervision for students in these situations; hiring extra personnel to supervise is beyond our financial resources. In addition, children can feel confused and apprehensive when they are not picked up on time. We recommend that families utilize the BASE program, a state-licensed after school program for students under the age of 12.

Elementary students without secondary siblings must be picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal.

Kindergarten and First Graders are dismissed at 3:00 pm. Any Kindergarten or First grade students, without an older elementary or secondary sibling, will be charged $1.00 per minute after 3:15 pm.

Second through Fifth Graders are dismissed at 3:10 pm Any 2nd through 5th grade students, without a secondary sibling, will be charged $1.00 per minute after 3:25 pm.

Any elementary students with a secondary sibling must be picked up by 3:45 pm, or will incur a $1.00 per minute charge in their Myschoolbucks account.

Any middle school student not picked up by 3:45 pm, or in a designated supervised club will be directed to Middle School After School Care and will incur the fees outlined by the Aftercare Program.

Any students staying after school for any reason (i.e. Enrichment offerings, working with classroom teachers, BASE or After School Care) are required to be in the appropriate location immediately upon dismissal of school. The school is not responsible for students not adhering to this policy.

Please note that all late fees will be added to the parent's MySchoolBucks account.

If a parent has not arrived to pick up their child and cannot be reached by phone within 15 minutes after dismissal time, we will call the emergency contact(s) listed on their enrollment forms. The Department of Social Services and/or the Douglas County Police Department will be contacted if parents cannot be contacted or do not arrive within 30 minutes of dismissal. Thank you for your assistance in this safety matter.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, TARDINESS, AND TRUANCY

ATTENDANCE

State law requires that all students from age six (6) to age seventeen (17) regularly attend school. The basic responsibility for regular school attendance lies with the students and with the parents. The role of the school in attendance matters is one of cooperation, counseling, and reporting to parents and the school district. The law expects parental cooperation. It is the duty of the school officials to know the whereabouts of students during the school hours.

Students may be excused for specific purposes only when signed out appropriately through the main office. Attendance is taken during the first 10 minutes of each class period and a record is kept of absences from each class. Hours of absence will be accumulated and recorded on report cards and on permanent school records at the end of each school year.

Excessive absence (excused or unexcused) of 5 days or more may require a conference with administration to ensure that the student's academic and health needs are being met. Once a student has been absent (excused or unexcused) from a class 7 days or more, the student may be in jeopardy of failing that class, per the discretion of the teacher and STEM administration.

ABSENCES

Absence from school during regularly scheduled school hours.

- If a student is expected to be absent, parents may excuse the absence by calling STEM between 7:30 am and 9:30 am within 48 hours of the absence. A written excuse is not necessary if the parent has made a phone call.
- A student shall not leave the school during the school day without reporting to the appropriate school office and obtaining permission, unless off campus lunch privileges apply. Failure to report to the office shall result in being charged with an unexcused absence or truancy.
- If a student becomes ill while in school, he/she shall report to the main office. An attempt will be made to contact a parent before allowing the student to go home. All students will be asked to list two (2) additional people whom the school may call if contact cannot be made with either parent. The student will be retained until contact can be made with a responsible adult who will take charge of the student.
- Students who are excused must leave the school and/or be off school grounds.
- A student must be in attendance during the day of an evening activity in order to participate in the evening activity, unless he/she has an excused absence.

- Students who accumulate five (5) unexcused absences may be denied credit for the course
- Students who accumulate seven (7) total absences (excused or unexcused) per semester may be denied credit for the course

EXCUSED ABSENCES

An excused absence is defined as resulting from temporary or extended leave from school for the following reasons:

- A student who is temporarily ill or injured
- A student who is absent for an extended period due to a physical disability or a mental or behavioral health disorder
- A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of the school
- A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the administration
- A student who is suspended or expelled
- Religious accommodations
- A student who is absent due to therapy, medical, legal, or victim services related to an incident of harassment or discrimination, as defined by and in accordance with state law
- If a student is in out-of-home placement (as that term is defined by C.R.S. 22-32-138 (1) (h)), absences due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities will be excused. The student's assigned social worker must verify the student's absence was for a court appearance or court-ordered activity.
- Family emergency (death, serious illness)
- Funeral
- Dental or medical appointments that cannot be made on Saturdays or after school hours
- Prearranged absence by the parent with advance approval by the Director for the student's grade level. This will require advance make-up work except in emergencies, which will be evaluated and determined valid or invalid by the Director for the student's grade level.
- Absences when a student is in custody of a court or law enforcement authority

- Other absences approved by the principal for the student's grade level

The school may require appropriate evidence regarding the above excused absences before approval of the absence being excused (i.e. a doctor's note, etc.).

An absence from school without the authorization of the parents or the School for reasons not acceptable as defined above as "excused absence" is an unexcused absence and shall be considered towards habitual truancy.

Missed work for unexcused absences may not receive full credit. This decision is at the discretion of the teacher and administration. An unexcused absence is defined as:

- An absence that the parent/guardian is unaware of, and/or not accepting of the reason for absence
- An absence not excused within 48 hours and, therefore, unwilling to excuse, except to the extent required by law
- An absence for which there is not supporting documentation

Four (4) unexcused absences during any one month or a total of ten (10) unexcused absences during any school year will qualify the students as "habitually truant" and may result in court proceedings to enforce Colorado's mandatory school attendance law, according to DCSD policy.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

In the case that your student will not be at school for a prolonged period of time for travel, medical, etc., it is crucial that plans be made ahead of time to help students maintain success here at STEM. An extended absence is considered to be three (3)or more consecutive days out of school.
Here is the process to be followed when requesting a prolonged absence:

- Contact administration with the dates of the absence- Extended Absence Form
- Set up a conference or email the teacher(s) to develop a plan
- Make teacher aware of internet accessibility or other potential challenges
- Provide a physician's note (medical) to administration

Any student absent for over ten (10) consecutive days will be withdrawn per the DCSD attendance policy.

TARDINESS

Punctuality is one of the self-disciplines that students are encouraged to learn. Students are expected to be punctual for all classes throughout the year.

Being tardy is the failure to appear on time and is considered a form of absence. Tardiness is defined as not being in the student's designated seat, with all materials setup, when the bell rings. Teachers may further define a tardy policy in their course syllabus.

- Students will be disciplined in accordance with the STEM School Highlands Ranch discipline policy listed below.
- Students can earn an unexcused absence by acquiring three (3) tardies.
- Students who are more than 10 minutes late for class will earn a .5 unexcused absence.
- Students who accumulate five (5) unexcused absences may be denied credit for the course.
- Common problems such as car trouble, oversleeping, or forgetting materials in a locker are unacceptable reasons for tardy arrivals to school or class
- A tardy to a student's first class of the day can only be excused with a doctor's note

TRUANCY

Phase 1. Upon acquiring two (2) excused or unexcused absences within one month or upon acquiring five (5) excused or unexcused absences within a school year, STEM may notify the parent/guardian of the student in writing to alert them that their student is at medium risk of being qualified as Habitually Truant. This notification will include the number of excused/unexcused absences that have been recorded for the student and a summary of parental obligations regarding compulsory attendance policies and laws. An agent of the school will attempt to ascertain the reason for the student's high number of absences and counsel the parent/guardian and student about the importance of attendance from both an academic and legal perspective.

Phase 2. Upon acquiring three (3) excused or unexcused absences within one month or upon acquiring eight (8) excused or unexcused absences within a school year, STEM may notify the parent/guardian of the student in writing to alert them that their student is at high risk of being qualified as Habitually Truant. This notification will include the same information as the previous notice and add information about the school's legal responsibility to move toward legal action in case the student's excused/unexcused absences equal or exceed four (4) or more excused/unexcused absences with a month or equal or exceed ten (10) or more excused/unexcused absences in a school year. An agent of the school will organize a meeting with the parent/guardian and the student to develop a plan for the student with the goal of assisting the student to remain in school.

Phase 3. Upon acquiring four (4) or more excused or unexcused absences within a month or acquiring ten (10) or more excused or unexcused absences within a school year or calendar year, STEM may present to the Board of Directors Exhibit A, Exhibit B and Exhibit C as documentation of the school's enforcement of compulsory attendance. The Board of Directors shall notify the parent/guardian in writing that the student is now considered Habitually Truant and that the matter shall be reported to the Douglas County Truancy Review Board.

Phase 4. The Douglas County Truancy Review Board may pursue judicial proceedings to compel compliance with the compulsory attendance statute and/or to enlist community resources. Possible consequences of judicial proceedings may include, but are not limited to, contempt, jail or fines. The Board of Directors may combine the notice of Habitual Truancy to parents/guardians and summons. If combined, the petition shall state the date on which proceedings will be initiated, which date shall not be less than five days from the date of the notice and summons. The notice shall state the provisions of this article with which compliance is required and shall state that the proceedings will not be brought if the child complies with that provision before the filing of the proceeding (C.R.S. § 22-33-108(5)).

CLOSED CAMPUS

STEM School Highlands Ranch is a closed campus for students in grades K through 9. Once students have begun their school day, they are required to remain on campus until the completion of the school day unless appropriate arrangements have been made and/or approved by a parent or guardian. Students in grades 10-12 will be granted open campus privileges.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Upperclassmen (grades 10-12) are permitted off campus privileges during off periods. All other students are not permitted to leave school grounds at any time during the school day. If a student must leave because of illness, medical appointments, or family emergencies, a parent must sign their student out. Returning students must sign-in at the office. Individual teachers do not have authority to excuse any student from the school during the school day.



- Students will not be released to other minors during a lightning delay, unless permission is indicated in Infinite Campus.
- Families will receive communication updates through email, text, phone, and/or school communication platforms when delays occur.
- STEM administration will work closely with district safety, transportation, and emergency guidance to make decisions that prioritize student and staff safety.

WEATHER POLICY

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, the safety of our students, staff, and families is a top priority. In the event of inclement weather, the Executive Director has the authority to implement a virtual learning day, delayed start, or full school closure as needed. The Executive Director may choose to follow the closing procedures of the Douglas County Highlands Ranch Feeder Area vor make decisions independently to best support the STEM community.

During severe weather, including lightning, the school may implement a lightning delay or temporary shelter-in-place procedure.

- Outdoor activities and student dismissal may be delayed when lightning is detected within an unsafe distance of the school campus.
- High school students are permitted to leave at their own discretion
- Students grade K- and staff will remain indoors until conditions are determined to be safe.
- Parents/guardians may pick up students during a lightning delay at their own discretion. Students will only be released to approved adults listed in Infinite Campus.
- Students will not be released to other minors during a lightning delay, unless permission is indicated in Infinite Campus.
- Families will receive communication updates through email, text, phone, and/or school communication platforms when delays occur.

  STEM administration will work closely with district safety, transportation, and emergency guidance to make decisions that prioritize student and staff safety.

DELAYED OPENINGS & VIRTUAL LEARNING DAYS

If Douglas County School District announces a Late Start due to snow and/or icy road conditions, STEM may implement a Virtual Learning Day instead.

- On Virtual Learning Days, 20% of instruction in each class will be conducted synchronously (live online instruction).

- For elementary students, 20% of synchronous learning will take place specifically in Math and ELA.

- The school building will be closed to students on these days.

- Families will be notified via email and/or Finalsite text messaging.

If a Late Start is called due to cold temperatures, STEM may:

- Proceed with a normal school day (standard start and end times), or
- Implement a delayed start, depending on the specific circumstances.

We encourage all families to regularly update their contact information and follow school communications for timely updates during inclement weather.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Below you will find general information that you should be aware of in the event of an emergency. Please keep in mind that not all information is disclosed in order to protect the safety of staff and students.

- Staff members will not open doors during a lockdown
- Visitors will be allowed access to students only if the Douglas County Sheriff's Department (DCSD) determines the site is secure
- The school will adhere to all demands by the DCSD.
- Information regarding a lockdown or other emergency at the school will be posted on the school's social media and website (www.stemk12.org) as soon as possible. However, our main priority will be the safety of the students prior to parent communications. Therefore, we may not be able to answer the phones or return calls as quickly in the event of an emergency.
- Parents are asked not to contact the DCSD for information. This is a firm request of the DCSD.
- We will attempt to provide parents and guardians with accurate information as quickly as possible. However, please understand that events of this nature are very fluid and constantly changing. Also be aware that information from other sources, such as news media, Facebook or Twitter, may not be accurate. Should your child contact you during such an event, remind them it is important they follow the directions of school staff.

COMMUNICATION AVENUES

STEM School Highlands Ranch is committed to fostering a positive and collaborative relationship with our community. We recognize that misunderstandings may arise, and we have developed a clear process to address concerns and resolve conflicts. Effective communication is essential to the proper functioning of the school, and we encourage open, respectful dialogue.

If you have a concern related to a specific classroom event, please contact the appropriate teacher first. You may reach out via phone, email, or request a meeting. Teachers will make every effort to respond to your inquiry within two business days.

If your concern is not related to a specific teacher or involves broader issues, please arrange a meeting with the principal for your child's grade level. Appointments can be scheduled by calling the school office at 303-683-7836 or emailing the principal and/or teacher directly via email.

If your concern is still unresolved after meeting with the grade-level principal, you may escalate the matter to the STEM Executive Director. If matters still persist, you may elevate your concern to STEM's CEO and the STEM School Board of Directors. All inquiries to the Board must be routed through the STEM Chief Executive Officer or the highest-ranking school official, who will facilitate a timely resolution.

We encourage all parties to approach this process with respect and a collaborative mindset, ensuring that concerns are addressed constructively. Thank you for your partnership in maintaining a supportive learning environment.

Communications Avenues This will help guide you to the right person for your questions and/or concerns. You may reach out for guidance by emailing info@stemk12.org.

CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION (ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, ETC.)

Please inform the registrar of any change in address, telephone number, and/or emergency number by emailing registrar@stemk12.org. This will enable us to contact parents in a timely manner when necessary. Upon enrollment, the parent(s) enrolling the student will be considered the primary contact. If a restraining or other court order is in effect, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the school's administration with a copy of the order in a timely manner.



COMPLAINT AND WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

The grievance procedure may be used for any situation occurring within the operation or normal procedures of the school, which causes a student, parent or guardian to believe that a student has been wronged. A student, parent, or guardian may initiate the procedure when they believe that a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of school or Board policy or state or federal law or regulation has occurred. If students or parents have concerns that involve classroom teachers, the Board strongly encourages the concerned persons first to contact the teacher directly to resolve such matters informally whenever possible. If the concern is with the school administrators or support staff, the Board strongly encourages concerned persons to attempt direct contact with the Executive Director or appropriate principal for the student's grade level to reach a satisfactory resolution, if possible.

If a grievance is filed during the summer, the teacher will handle the complaint or grievance upon returning to school in August.

To learn more about the Complaint and Whistleblower Policy, please click here.

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

To learn more about the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), click here.
To learn more about the Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), click here.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

STEM SCHOOL
HIGHLANDS RANCH

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