



**STEM SCHOOL**  
**HIGHLANDS RANCH**  
*Never Stop Innovating*

**2024-2025**

# **Student Parent Handbook**

## **Our Mission**

**Never Stop Innovating**

## **Our Vision**

We envision a world of exponential possibilities where every child develops the innate knowledge, skills, creativity and character to thrive, lead and succeed in an ever-changing future.

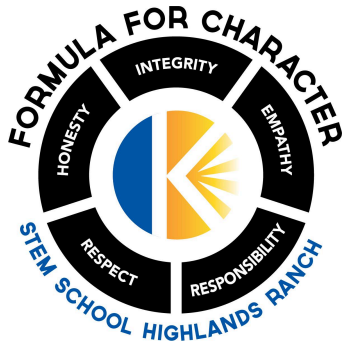
2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook

**KOSON Schools**

**STEM School Highlands Ranch** | 8773 Ridgeline Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129 | Office 303-683-STEM (7836)

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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, & 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:

- Be polite and attentive.
- Bear the responsibility for his or her personal conduct.
- Attend school consistently, be on time, and take responsibility for making up any work promptly when absent.
- Respect the school's atmosphere of learning by attending class and being prepared and
- Be punctual and adhere to the dress code.
- Follow all reasonable requests made by adults on the premises with a positive attitude, and show respect for self, others and property.
- Cooperate with and respect the faculty and staff, including administrators, teachers, administrative staff, custodians, and any other people working in the school.
- Communicate in an acceptable tone of voice using an acceptable choice of words.
- Follow all lunchroom, gym, field-trip, lab, and individual classroom rules.
- Respect others by not threatening or intimidating any other person.
- Respect the health and safety of others, safety rules, and not use tobacco, alcohol, or other illegal substances.
- Be dismissed by the teacher, not the bell or the clock.
- Students must sign in and/or out of the office prior to leaving school at the scheduled end of the day.
- Not bring electronic devices other than cell phones, i.e. iPods, games, etc. unless permitted by the teacher as part of the academic environment of the classroom. (Such items will be confiscated until the end of the year. Acceptability of electronic devices, games or other toys is at the discretion of the teachers and administration.)

## 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 doing. 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](#)

### 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. "Bullying, harassment, or intimidation" means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, cyber-bullying within social media, texting, sexting, or sharing of pictures, that meets all of the following characteristics:

- a. Is intentional, repeated or likely to be repeated, and marked by an imbalance of power, including physical, social, or socio-economic power; and

- b. Is intended to coerce, intimidate, or cause any physical, mental, or emotional harm to any student; and
- c. Is sufficiently severe that it has the effect of:
  - 1. Creating an intimidating, hostile, or significantly offensive environment for the learning or performance of school-sanctioned activities of any student; or
  - 2. Unreasonably interfering with or disrupting the educational performance or participation in any other school-sanctioned activity of any student.

~~Nothing in this policy requires the affected student to actually possess a characteristic that is a basis for the bullying, harassment, or intimidation, “other distinguishing characteristics” can include but not limited to:~~

- ~~● Physical appearance, clothing or other apparel;~~
- ~~● Socioeconomic status;~~
- ~~● Race, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability, or other distinguishing characteristics; or~~
- ~~● Marital status.~~

~~“Intentional acts” refers to the individual’s choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the actions(s). This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the education environment. 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.~~

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student, parent, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel to harass, bully, or discriminate against any person based upon any of the differences listed above. It shall also be a violation of the policy for any teacher, administrator or other school personnel to tolerate such harassment, bullying, or discrimination of any person by a student, teacher, administrator, other school personnel, or by any third parties subject to supervision and control of STEM School Highlands Ranch.

This policy is a component of STEM School’s responsibility to create and maintain a safe, civil, respectful and inclusive learning community and is to be implemented 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.

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 of the victim. This includes appropriate interventions(s), restoration of a

positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitutes violations of this policy.

## Inappropriate Behaviors

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we are committed to optimizing learning for all students. STEM students are expected to be well behaved at all times, to respect themselves, others, and property. Unfortunately, sometimes students behave inappropriately. Our philosophy towards discipline is one that provides guidance and direction to acceptable behavior in order to develop a young person's own sense of self-discipline. Teachers, administrators, and parents will work together to remedy problematic behaviors once a student has exhibited them. In any case, when a student creates problems for him or herself, there will be consequences based on DCSD and STEM responsibility expectations.

## Roles in the Disciplinary Process

### Dean of Students

The goal of any meeting between a student and the 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 Dean's office. The primary goal of the choice of consequences by the Dean is to require the student to take responsibility for the infraction. The goals of a parent conference with the 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 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 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 takes place.

### Counselor

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 the 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.

## **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.

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.

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. The following action may be taken when students go beyond their fourth disciplinary referral:

“A minimum of a two-day suspension will be given for every Office Level Infraction over four. When a student is issued over four infractions he or she will be considered a habitually disruptive student. If a student is issued over four Office Level Infractions, STEM School may request the Douglas County School District Board of Education to expel that student from school. Any student expelled from STEM School would also be expelled from the Douglas County School District. Colorado State Law clearly states that

a student can be expelled for “continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority.”

### **Suspension/Expulsion**

A Director or designee has the authority to suspend students as appropriate. Suspensions last from one to ten days depending on the severity of the infraction. All suspensions will require a parent - administrator conference. The conference will occur before the student is readmitted to class. The school level administrator may require the parent to attend a full day of class with the student upon return.

According to Colorado statute, a student may be declared habitually disruptive after being suspended three times in one year on the grounds set forth in CRS 11-33-106 for causing a material and substantial disruption in the class, on school grounds, on school vehicles, or at school activities or events because of behavior that was initiated, willful and overt on the part of the student, and the suspensions were made for:

- Continual, willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority
- Willful destruction or defacing of school property
- Behavior on or off school property, which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel
- Serious violations in a school building or on school property
- Repeated interference with a school’s ability to provide educational opportunities to other students
- And other grounds found in CRS 22-33-106(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), and (e).

### **Expulsion from STEM School will be recommended to DCSD for the following violations:**

- The carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon in accordance to DCSD code of conduct;
- The sale or distribution of a drug or controlled substance; or
- The commission of an act that, if committed by an adult, would be robbery or assault other than third-degree assault.

### **Items Not Allowed at School**

- Weapons of any kind.
- Illegal Substances (example: drugs, alcohol, 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.
- Cameras are not permitted in classrooms without permission of teachers for use as part of a lesson for a specific class. Cell phones with cameras are NOT to be used for taking photos without permission of the teacher.

## 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, 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, backpacks, 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 Director 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 cause 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. 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 of parent/guardian.

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not a 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.

## Office Procedures and Support

### Health and Medication

#### **MEDICATION POLICY - Elementary**

1. The use of medication at school is discouraged in most instances. Most medications are available in long acting form and parents are encouraged to administer such medication at home.
2. Medication to be given at school (prescription medication and over-the-counter) must have a completed Student Medication Request and Release Agreement and Provider Authorization form on file.
3. All prescription medication must be furnished in the original pharmacy labeled container, with the student's name, medication, dosage, and physician on the label.

Over-the-counter medications must be in an original container (these requirements are state regulations). Medication in baggies will not be accepted.

## **MEDICATION POLICY - Secondary**

### **Middle School ( 6 - 8 )**

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students may assume responsibility for bringing to school and administering their own medication providing they carry only enough for one day and have the "Permission to Self-Carry and Self-Admin Medication"

form on file in the school office. Students using poor judgment in carrying and taking their own medication will have such medication confiscated by school personnel, and parents or guardian will be notified. A structured plan will then be developed for the administration of the medication. Any parent or guardian who chooses not to sign the permission to carry medication form may request that a structured plan be devised for his or her student.

### **High School ( 9 - 12 )**

High school students may assume the responsibility of bringing to school and administering their own medication, providing they carry only enough for one day. Students who appear to be using poor judgment in carrying and taking their own medication will have such medication confiscated by school personnel, and parents or guardian will be notified. A structured plan will then be developed for the administration of medication. Any parent may also request that a structured plan be devised for their student. On an overnight field trip, students may bring enough medication for the duration of the field trip.

## **Over-the-counter Medications**

Students at the secondary level may carry over the counter medications such as acetaminophen, cold preparations, or vitamins, but should carry only a one day supply as per above policy. A permission to carry form is not required for these products.

Students who have emergency medication for life threatening health conditions should report to the office that they carry such medications in the event that an

emergency renders them unable to respond as planned. The school nurse will contact such students to work out an emergency plan for the administration of this medication.

### **Returning Medications**

A parent or guardian will need to plan to pick up your student's medication at the end of the day on the last day of school. Any medication left at school after the school year ends will be disposed of per CDPHE Rules and Regulations Governing Schools section 6.13 H -- "medications acquired by the school or abandoned by parents shall be disposed of in accordance with 6 CCR 1007-2, Part 1, Regulations Pertaining to Solid Waste Sites and Facilities and 6 CCR 1007-3, Parts 260-268, and Parts 99 and 100."

### **Medication Forms**

All forms that you may need are available at the STEM Website under "Health Room," the STEM Office or the Douglas County Website under Health Services/Medication and Policy Forms.

## **Student Fees**

View and download the student fees [here](#).

## **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, 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 front 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. This may be accomplished via text or voicemail if available or can be arranged with the front office staff.

**\*\* Food Delivery and retail delivery services (such as UberEats) are not permitted at STEM for any reason.**

## 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 before entering.

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 school 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 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 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 Chris Damour)
- 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: \$50 (includes fee for a year-long parking pass) (\$25 additional fee goes toward HS Student Government)
- Each student must complete the Art Work Submission Form and submit a sketch in color by Wednesday, July 17, 2024, to be approved by the High School Director. The High School Director 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
- Ryan Alsup, High School Director, 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

We have contracted DR Photo to photograph students for individual pictures. Those photographs will be printed onto a Student ID during the Fall Photo Day session. School pictures will be taken during school at the beginning of the year. There will be an opportunity to retake pictures some time 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 via the Student ID Replacement Request Form. The first replacement is free. Any additional replacements are \$5 each and will be charged to the student's MySchoolBucks account.

## 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.

## Standards Based Learning

Standards Based reporting 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, we will report grades as follows:

- K-8 will be reporting out final grades as a 4,3,2,1
- 9-12 will report converted final grades using A-F

## 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.

Parents must pick up students promptly after field trips, following our standard pick up expectations. Parents attending field trips must be cleared through a background check and receive a Raptor badge from the school, before doing so. Please see Volunteers and Chaperones, for additional information.

## 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 Director 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.

## 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.” Yet, 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 (2) 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 (2) or higher. One “D (1)” grade will constitute suspension of practice and game privileges until the grade is brought up. A combination of “F (1)” grades and “D (1)” 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 (2) 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.

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 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.

Canvas Links for Parents and Students:

- [Students](#)
- [Parents](#)

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
- 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.

### For 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.

### For 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

## 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 transcribed 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 Director for the student's grade level;
6. Demonstrate behavior (during the semester prior to graduation) deemed by the Building Director 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 (Middle School Policy)

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.

### Honor Roll

Middle School students who attain Honor Roll status will be recognized at an Awards Ceremony each semester. Honor roll status will be at three levels: Honors, High Honors, and Highest Honors. 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.

Students that attain "Honor Roll" status will be recognized in published form. "Honor Roll" status will be at two levels, Honor Roll and Director's Honor Roll for the student's grade level's Scholar. Honor Roll will be defined as any student receiving a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or above for a semester grade. Director's Honor Roll for the student's grade level's Scholar will be defined as students that achieve a GPA of 3.80 or above for a semester grade. Honor roll will be published each semester.

### Academic Letter

STEM School Highlands Ranch is focused on rewarding Academic Excellence among students. We are excited to announce that 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

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.

STEM purchases equipment to be used by K-6. It is the responsibility of the parent for any damages that are incurred by your student.

## Cell Phone Policy

The respectful, non-disruptive use of cell phones is permitted in the school cafeteria during lunch period. As soon as the threshold of the classroom or any prohibited area is crossed during the school day, cell phones need to be put away in the cell phone pocket of the classroom or the student's backpack in the cafeteria and made undetectable (i.e., silenced without vibration).

### Guidelines:

- The use of cell phones during the school day is a privilege and its use is at the discretion of administration.
- Cell phones and all functions within the cell phone (i.e. cameras and all other applications) are **prohibited** in the following areas unless expressly permitted by a staff member for educational purposes: **Classrooms, Restrooms, all Physical Education Areas, Counseling Offices, and all School Office Areas.**
- Upon entrance to each class, students must turn off their cell phone and place it in the designated cell phone pocket. Upon entering the study hall, students must turn off their cell phones and place them in their backpack.
- Students using cell phones in any manner that disrupts the educational environment, from within or from outside the classroom, or violates the rights of others, including, but not limited to, using the device in violation of our academic honesty policy, violating school conduct rules, harassing or bullying staff or students, photographing or video recording, or using their device for unlawful purposes will be subject to more severe disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion and may, if applicable, be reported to the DCSD Sheriff's Department.

Violation of the cell phone rule as stated above will result in the confiscation of the device according to the following ladder of disciplinary action:

**First offense:**

1. The student's cell phone will be confiscated by a staff member and the staff member will have a restorative conversation with the student. The conversation which will include a review of the cell phone policy.
2. The phone will then be held in the front office until the end of the day.

**Second offense:**

1. The student's cell phone will be confiscated and held in the main office cell phone jail until the end of the week. The student must check the phone in and out each morning/afternoon or leave it at home.
2. The student's parents will be contacted and informed of the refusal to follow the school's policy.

**Third offense:**

1. The student's cell phone will be confiscated and held in the main office until the student's parents are able to come to pick it up.
2. The student will receive detention.
3. The student will be prohibited from bringing their phone to school OR required to check their phone in/out for two weeks.

**Fourth offense:**

1. The student's cell phone will be confiscated and held in the main office until the student's parents are able to come to pick it up.
2. The student will receive two days of detention.
3. The student will be prohibited from bringing their phone to school OR required to check their phone in/out for the remainder of the semester.

**Additional :**

- Cell phones are prohibited from use in classrooms and any other area in which academic work is being done unless otherwise instructed by the teacher.
- Cell phones and other devices are not permitted to be charged in the school.
- Headphones and other Bluetooth enabled devices are not permitted to be worn in class and must be put away securely by the student in any academic area, unless specifically directed by the teacher.
- Cell phones are not to be used in bathrooms.

- If a cell phone/ electronic device rings, vibrates, or is used for any reason without teacher permission, or is visible anytime during class time or if you are caught using it on campus during class time, a staff member may confiscate the device.
- Texting and cell phone use is permitted in halls during passing and during the lunch period in the cafeteria.
- All cell phone use must be respectful and non-disruptive to students and staff.
- Phones must remain on silent at all times throughout the school day. Parents/Guardians, please note you can contact your child via their cell phone during the lunch period. In the event of an immediate emergency, please call the school's main office at (303) 683-7836.

The staff of STEM School Highlands Ranch requests your FULL cooperation with our policy.

It should be noted that, the school nor any of its employees are responsible for the loss or damage to any student's phone or electronic device whether that device is in the student's possession or confiscated by the staff. It is the responsibility of the student to adhere to this policy and to secure their belongings at all times. Classes and or instruction will not be stopped to deal with or search for lost phones/devices.

**\*\*The administration reserves the right to adjust these consequences on a case-by-case basis if needed. For example, extreme behaviors that break the law or engage in bullying or harassment of other students may result in suspension.**

### Netiquette (Internet Étiquette)

Appropriate Internet and/or electronic communication is imperative in today's professional and personal wireless environment. Here are a few of the basics:

- Don't SHOUT in all caps. Remember: The person on the other end of a digital communication can't see your expression or hear your tone of voice.
- Cool off before responding to messages in anger.
- Check messages for misspellings or misstatements.
- Respect others' privacy and your own (for example, be cautious when giving your phone number to that new Facebook friend).
- Use a clear and understandable email subject line.
- Adjust your tone and style to the situation (for example, don't use IM-speak or all lowercase letters in an internship application).
- Don't forward private messages to people to whom they weren't intended
- Don't copy others on replies to personal messages.

- When you receive an email which says to send it to everyone you know, please don't. If you receive a nasty email do not respond to it. Notify your parents or teacher. Do not forward jokes, chain letters or unimportant e-mails without the recipient's permission.

*Remember: Email is never really private and a copy may exist in cyberspace . . . forever.*

Students: Students are subject to the following specific rules related to social media:

- Do not Plagiarize - Do not copy the work of others. Give proper attribution for quotations and ideas. Write to develop and express your own thoughts.
- 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.
- Only Use School Media to Communicate with Teachers - Teachers are not permitted to use non-school media to communicate with students and this restriction applies to students as well. Do not attempt to "friend" a teacher on any non-school social media site (such as Facebook) and do not accept a friend request from a teacher.

## Consequences

Consequences for behavior inconsistent with this policy may range from warnings and counseling, through requiring a written apology all the way to expulsion of students, or banning parents from school media and grounds. It is the administration's decision as to which consequence is most appropriate. Consequences apply to the individual who is not complying with the policy requirements. Never have we nor would we ever punish students for parents behavior.

Parents: Parents are asked to respect the following related to social media:

- 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 personnel 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.

### Technology – Acceptable Use Policy

**Policy Purpose** - This policy was 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.

[Click here to view and sign the Acceptable Use Policy.](#)

### 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 school-provided network, and internet. Students who intentionally misuse technology to trigger monitoring software, which then requires administrative and/or other staff support to intervene, will face disciplinary action.

**Acceptable Use** - Students are expected to use all technology not only lawfully, but also with respect, responsibility, honesty, and integrity. Guidelines for use include but are not limited to:

- STEM expects students to follow the Formula for Character when using technology.
- Students must use appropriate language and images in all electronic or digital communication or posting. Profanity, vulgarity, or other inappropriate language, gestures, or images are forbidden.
- Students are not permitted to harass, bully, intimidate, stalk, demean, ridicule, deride, or threaten under any circumstances, through any medium or any resource, including but not limited to STEM's technology resources, personal or home computers, personal cell phones, and other personal or home electronic devices, as well as social network sites and internet sites.
- Students are not permitted to search for, retrieve, save, download, forward, text, or display hate-based, offensive, pornographic, or sexually explicit material.
- Students are not permitted to engage in electronic or digital activities that reflect negatively on themselves, or defame or disparage other students, teachers, the community or the school.
- Students will follow all guidelines set forth by their teachers for classroom use of electronic devices. Devices used outside of those guidelines may be confiscated by the teacher and turned over to the Director for the student's grade level at the teacher's discretion.

- Students are not permitted to copy information and present it as their own work without proper citation. Students will abide by all copyright, trademark, licensing, and other laws governing intellectual property, including those that apply to music, film, and video.
- Students will protect their own personal information and images, and that of others.
- Students are not permitted to pretend to be someone else when posting. This includes, but is not limited to, sending out email, creating accounts, or posting messages, images, or other online content in someone else's name or without permission to post.
- Students are not allowed to attempt to use one another's login or give out their own login information to others.
- Students will conserve STEM's technology resources by printing only school-related material, limiting information stored on the network or in email, and refrain from sending or forwarding junk mail, spam, or group emails.
- Students are not permitted to access or alter—or attempt to access or alter—parts of STEM's technology resources that they have not been given express permission to use, including but not limited to bypassing security settings or internet filters, or interfering with the operation of the network by installing illegal software, shareware, or freeware on school-owned equipment.
- Students are not permitted to damage or disrupt—or attempt to damage or disrupt—school equipment, the network, or the property of others, including but not limited to modifying or destroying equipment, programs, files, or settings on any computer or other technology resource, creating and propagating viruses. If a student has been found to have damaged another student's property or the property of STEM School Highlands Ranch, that student and their family will be financially responsible for the damaged property.
- Students are not permitted to download or install software on or over STEM's technology resources without clear and express permission, including but not limited to games.
- Students are not permitted to use or install anywhere on campus personally owned devices such as hubs, switches, routers, wireless access points and servers or server services.
- Students are not allowed to "friend" teachers or invite teachers via a social network site, nor should they accept a "friend" invitation from a teacher unless it relates to official school business—class, athletic team, or student organization.

## Technology Misuse

Inappropriate or unapproved use of technology may result in a loss of technology privileges and/or disciplinary action, as determined necessary by the administration.

## Protecting Student Information

STEM School Highlands Ranch requires middle (with the exception of 6th graders who will be issued STEM owned devices), and high school students to bring laptop computers to school.

Because students bring their own laptops to school, this is considered a BYOD, or Bring Your Own Device, educational organization. Because of this, students may be bringing technical devices to school that contain not only school-related information, but personal information as well. Thus, teachers and staff are not allowed to scan, review, or in any way collect information that could be considered personal in nature. When in doubt, assume the information is personal and it should not be reviewed.

If information on a student's 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 of course correct the situation. If a teacher or staff member believes that such information has been collected either intentionally or unintentionally they must inform the Director 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.

### Appropriate Media Policy

Images, songs, language and content displayed openly on technology devices must be non-discriminatory, non-violent and not objectify any race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. The following are considered unacceptable: Video games rated M or higher and movies rated R or higher. Students who display or view any of the above media will be referred to the Dean and be entered into the referral/discipline system.

## Information Technology

### I. PURPOSE.

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.

For information reference [Student Data Privacy Policy](#)

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.

Because all STEM IT is owned or licensed by STEM, STEM is responsible for all content stored or retained on any STEM-owned IT device or on the STEM's networks (together referred to as "STEM IT activity"). STEM therefore has the right to monitor all School IT activity and students have a limited expectation of privacy in any information they access, receive, or create using or on STEM IT.

STEM IT may periodically fail or be interrupted, leading to loss of data or service interruption, and the School therefore makes no warranties of any kind related to its IT. STEM shall develop and maintain operational policies addressing (1) student use, rights and responsibilities relating to computers used at STEM; (2) an "instructional technology" policy regarding use of technology in learning, including integrating technology for collaborative purposes, consistent with the STEM mission; and (3) the training of STEM staff with respect to student laptops and privacy, and the administration, oversight, and enforcement of such policies and regulations.

## II. POLICY

- A. The Board authorizes the Executive Director to develop rules and procedures ("Administrative IT Policies") for staff and student use of technology which are consistent with this policy and the following standards.
  - a. All Administrative IT Policies shall comply with this policy.
  - b. Before adoption of monitoring software of any nature, STEM shall specifically identify the need for such software and whether there are less intrusive alternatives that can accomplish the same goal or need.
  - c. Student generated computer data ("SGCD") is data generated by a student while using a computer. Information or data contained on any such computer is "personal computer data" or "PCD". PCD includes specific "user logging information" ("ULI"). "Logging" is the process by which a system collects data about a computer network and the individuals using the network. STEM shall

treat both SGCD and PCD as “records” as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”).

- d. Software that has the ability to collect PCD or SGCD shall not be used or implemented prior to the adoption of Administrative IT Policies governing use of such software.
  - e. STEM shall obtain informed consent from each student’s parent or guardian prior to the installation of any software on any student-owned computer and prior to implementation of any technology which has the ability to collect or monitor PCD, so that prior to the giving of such consent students and their families are fully informed of the ability of any such software or technology to collect and monitor such data and to protect such data.
  - f. Any technology which permits viewing or collecting of PCD shall not permit such monitoring or collection beyond any legitimate educational interests.
  - g. Keystroke monitoring technology shall not be used or implemented in the absence of a specific legitimate educational purpose which cannot be achieved without this technology and without specific consent from each student’s parent or guardian.
  - h. STEM shall not log or access PCD or SGCD other than for legitimate educational purposes. STEM shall maintain a record or log of all access or logging which records each instance of access, the data accessed, the identity of the accessing party, and the legitimate educational purpose for such access.
  - i. The exceptions allowing STEM staff to access PCD, other than where consent is given, shall be limited to situations where there is a reasonable suspicion of violation of either a law or school policy where there is a risk of harm to another.
  - j. STEM staff shall complete training regarding technology and technology policies prior to use or implementation of any such technologies.
  - k. For computers issued by STEM, students and their parents shall be required to sign acceptable use agreements, which will detail appropriate and inappropriate use of STEM-owned computers.
  - l. Remote monitoring of any kind, including activation of webcams, screen shots, audio, and video, shall be prohibited.
  - m. All procedures shall comply with applicable state and federal law.
- B. In addition to rules specifically concerning IT, general policies, regulations, and rules governing student conduct apply to the use of IT. Violating such policies, regulations, or rules may result in the loss of the privilege to use some or all of the School’s IT, discipline (which can include suspension and expulsion), reimbursement to the School for unauthorized charges or costs, civil legal proceedings, and referral to law enforcement authorities. The School may provide examples of prohibited uses of IT in handbooks or Administrative IT Policies.

Sources:

20 U.S.C. 1232, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

47 U.S.C. 201 et seq., Communications Decency Act of 1995  
47 U.S.C. 231 et seq., Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 2000  
C.R.S. 22-87-101 et seq., Children’s Internet Protection Act  
DCSD Policy JICD, Student Use of District Information Technology

## 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.

[Click here to](#) learn more about STEM’s Student Support Team

## Enrichment

STEM Enrichment operates separately from STEM School Highlands Ranch. STEM School Highlands Ranch contracts with STEM Enrichment to offer a variety of Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) after-school, during the 3 p.m. (2:45 p.m. for Elementary) to 5 p.m. time-slot.

STEM Enrichment will be open to all students in the South Metro Denver area. 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 a 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. For an updated listing of current program choices along with volunteer opportunities, [click here](#).

# School Safety

Needs to be completed this summer

## Arrival and Departure

### Secondary Students

Please refer to the Bell Schedule for arrival and departure times. Please do not arrive before 7:30 a.m. unless enrolled in a first period activity. Students will NOT be allowed in the lobby until 7:30 a.m. If students are dropped off earlier, they need to access the middle school cafeteria which opens at 7:15 a.m. Middle and High School staff members are on duty from 7:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. 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 3:15 p.m. unless under the direct supervision of a staff member. Please see the Late Pick-Up Policy below.

### Elementary Students

Elementary students may be dropped off starting at 7:10am. Elementary staff members are on duty from 7:10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Elementary students must line up in their designated class area. Teachers will pick up their students at 7:30am from the driveline. Elementary students arriving after 7:40am 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. Students riding home in a car must be picked up at school by 3:15 p.m. Students who remain after 3:15 p.m. will be subject to the late pickup fees and policy. 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 over 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.

Parents, who are not picking up a secondary student, are required to pick up children within 20 minutes of dismissal. Our Elementary School dismissal is at 2:25 p.m. for Kindergarten and First Graders. **Any Kindergarten or 1st grade students, without a secondary sibling, will be charged \$1.00 per minute after 2:45.**

Our Second through Fifth Graders are dismissed at 2:35 p.m. **Any 2nd through 5th grade students, without a secondary sibling, will be charged \$1.00 per minute after 2:55.**

Any elementary students with a secondary sibling must be picked up by 3:15, or will incur a \$1.00 per minute charge in their myschoolbucks account.

Any middle school student not picked up by 3:15, 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 closing time. 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) up 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 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. 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:

- Personal illness
- Family emergency (death, serious illness)
- Funeral
- Dental or medical appointments that cannot be made on Saturdays or after school hours
- School sponsored activities
- Prearranged absence by the parent. 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.

- Any absence where the student is accompanied by the parent.
- Absences when a student is in custody of a court or law enforcement authority.
- Other absences approved by the Director for the student's grade level.

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 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.
- An absence that the school does not accept as legitimate.
- Missed work for unexcused absences may not receive full credit.
- Four (4) unexcused absences during any one month or a total of ten (10) unexcused absences during any school year will qualify the students "habitually truant" 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 3 or more consecutive days out of school. STEM will excuse up to 10 consecutive days for travel, medical, etc. Any time more than 10 consecutive days will not be excused and is highly discouraged. Extended must be approved by the building level Director. Extended absences will not be approved between September 15th - October 10th and the student will be unenrolled. Extended absences are also highly discouraged during iReady testing windows and state testing in April. You will continue to receive school truancy communication.

Here is the process to be followed when requesting a prolonged absence:

- Contact administration with the dates of the absence
- 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

## 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 an 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 10th-12th will be granted open campus privileges.

## Leaving School

Students are not permitted to leave school grounds at any time during the school day. The only exception to this rule is students who are participating in off campus lunch privileges. 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.

# Emergency Closing, Delayed Openings and Early Dismissals

The following procedures are used to close school or to delay the opening of school due to inclement weather. STEM School Highlands Ranch may follow the closing and/or delay procedures set forth for the Douglas County Highlands Ranch Feeder Area. If the Highlands Ranch Feeder Area is not mentioned, please plan for the school to operate on a regular schedule. The Douglas County School District website and telephone hotline will continue to be your best resource in the event of delay and closure. ([www.dcsdk12.org](http://www.dcsdk12.org); or 303.387.SNOW (7669)). Also note that in the event of nearby lightning, students may be kept inside for delayed dismissal following the Douglas County School District [lightning protocols](#).

## Delayed Opening

If Douglas County Schools calls a Late Start day, STEM implements a Virtual School Day with 20% of the learning in each class will be synchronous. Elementary school students will have 20% of math and ELA synchronous. The school building will be closed to students. Parents will be notified via IC. Additionally, please monitor local news sources for updated information.

## Early Dismissal

Students may be dismissed early from school to ensure their safety home due to inclement weather. The decision on after-school activities will be made by Douglas County School District no later than 1:30 in the afternoon. Changes in school schedules will be posted on the website and announced on local television stations. We will also try to send an IC message to all parents.

## Closing School

If Douglas County Schools calls a school closure, STEM will be closed to students.

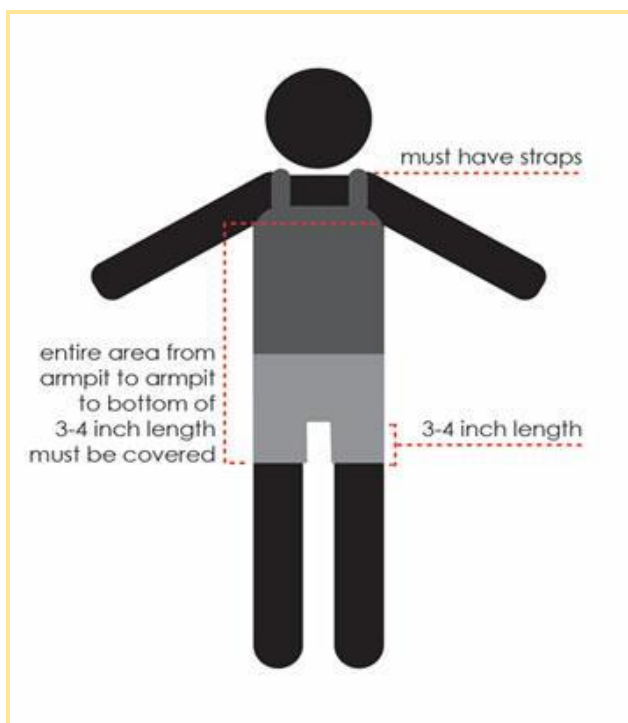
## Emergency Protocol

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. Please watch this [video](#) by DCSD about the Standard Response Protocol that our school follows.
- Information regarding a lockdown or other emergency at the school will be posted on the school's social media and website ([www.stemk12.org](http://www.stemk12.org)) as soon as possible. However, our main priority will be the safety of the student 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.

# Dress Code Policy

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 families. 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. Tops must have shoulder straps. Rips or tears in clothing should be lower than the 3 to 4 inches in length.
2. Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment (pajamas, bedroom shoes or slippers shall not be worn, except for school activities approved by the director).

3. See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meet 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. We are instituting the wearing and use of student ID badges as an additional safety measure. Students will receive an ID badge and a break-away lanyard. 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 going to be free. Each additional replacement badge will be \$5 each and will be charged to the student's account. Replacement badges can be requested through the Secondary Front Office.

We understand that this is going to be a learning process for all of our students so we will be rolling this out slowly. We appreciate our families in supporting this important safety measure.

***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.

## Communication Pathways

STEM School Highlands Ranch recognizes the importance of appropriate communication pathways. STEM School Highlands Ranch will maintain a web page and update it regularly with information on events and issues of importance to the community. Email news and announcements will be sent as needed to augment and emphasize items on the web page. It is very important that parents read the Weekly Parent Newsletter so that they remain informed on all of the events happening at STEM. Communication between the school and parents is also vitally important to the proper operation of the school. Often misunderstandings can arise when events in the classroom are interpreted through the eyes of our students. Effective communication pathways can reduce or eliminate the impact of these events. The following are provided as a guide for communication within the school and between the school and our community.

- Parents or community members with questions about the conduct of school should make every attempt to contact the appropriate teachers first. Contact may be via phone call, email, or meetings with the teachers.
- Teachers are to make every attempt to respond to email and phone messages within two business days of receipt of the question.
- If parents or community members have questions that do not involve specific teachers, they should arrange a meeting with the Director for the student's grade level to discuss issues of broader concern. Appointments can be set up by calling the office (303-683-STEM).
- In the event concerns are not satisfactorily met, parents or community members have the option to present the concerns to the STEM School Highlands Ranch Board of Directors. Inquiries to the Board will be routed through the STEM Executive Director (or the highest ranking school official). Please follow the grievance procedures outlined below.

Link here for the [Communications Pathways](#). This will help guide you to the right person for your questions and/or concerns. You may reach the communications department directly by emailing: [communications@stemk12.org](mailto:communications@stemk12.org).

## Change of Contact Information (Address, Phone Number, etc.)

Please inform the main office of any change in address, telephone number, and/or emergency number. This will enable us to contact parents in a timely manner when necessary. Upon

2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook

**KOSON Schools**

**STEM School Highlands Ranch** | 8773 Ridgeline Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129 | Office 303-683-STEM (7836)

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enrollment, the parent(s) enrolling the student will be considered the “primary contact.” In cases of joint custody, the primary contact parent is expected to share student/school information with the other parent. The parents should provide the school with a written request if both parents’ request mailings, along with a supply of self-addressed, stamped envelopes. 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.

## Grievance and Complaints

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 appropriate Director of the student’s grade level and/or the Executive Director 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.

### **A. Step 1 – Director of Elementary, Middle, or High School (for appropriate grade level)**

A student, parent or guardian wishing to invoke the grievance procedure shall make a written request for a conference with the respective Director for the student’s grade level to discuss the grievance and seek resolution. The request shall describe the grievance and name the specific policy, rule or law believed to have been violated. The following additional guidelines shall be observed in Step 1:

- A grievance shall be filed as soon as possible, but no longer than thirty (30) days after disclosure of the facts which give rise to the grievance.
- The Director for the student’s grade level may grant the conference within five (5) school days following receipt of the request.
- The Director for the student’s grade level may state in writing his/her position on the question to the student, parent or guardian within five (5) school days following the Director for the student’s grade level conference.
- Only the parent, guardian, or someone acting in loco parentis shall be permitted to join or represent the student in the conference with the Director for the student’s grade level. If a teacher is involved, he or she must also be present.

### **B. Step 2 – Appeal to Executive Director**

If the grievance is not resolved by Step 1 or, if the grievance involves the Director, the student, parent or guardian may appeal the Executive Director's decision in writing to the Executive Director. A written notice of Appeal to the Executive Director must be made within ten (10) school days following the action of the Director that gives rise to the grievance, or receipt of the written response from the Director. The Executive Director may review the prior decision within five (school days) following receipt of the request. If the Executive Director needs more information on the matter, he or she may schedule a conference within five (5) days following the receipt of the request. Only the parent, guardian, or someone active in loco parentis shall be permitted to join or represent the student in the conference with the Executive Director. The Director may be present as well in this conference. The Executive Director may state in writing his/her position on the question to the student, parent or guardian within five (5) days following the receipt of the grievance or following the conference.

### **C. Step 3 – Appeal to CIO**

If the grievance is not resolved by Step 2 or, if the grievance involves the Executive Director, the student, parent or guardian may appeal the CIO's decision in writing to the CIO. A written notice of Appeal to the CIO must be made within ten (10) school days following the action of the Executive Director that gives rise to the grievance, or receipt of the written response from the Executive Director. The CIO may review the prior decision within five (school days) following receipt of the request. If the CIO needs more information on the matter, he or she may schedule a conference within five (5) days following the receipt of the request. Only the parent, guardian, or someone active in loco parentis shall be permitted to join or represent the student in the conference with the CIO. The Executive Director may be present as well in this conference. The CIO may state in writing his/her position on the question to the student, parent or guardian within five (5) days following the receipt of the grievance or following the conference.

### **D. Step 4 - Appeal to Board**

If the grievance is not resolved by Step 3 or, if the grievance involves the CIO, the student, parent or guardian may appeal the CIO's decision in writing to the Board of Directors. A written notice of Appeal to the Board must be made within ten (10) school days following the action of the CIO that gives rise to the grievance, or receipt of the written response from the CIO. The Board may review the CIO's decision in a Grievance Committee meeting or at the next regular Board meeting which occurs more than four (4) school days after receipt of the Grievance Notice from the parent and shall provide notice and an opportunity to be heard to the parent, guardian or student invoking the grievance written response to the student, parent, guardian, Director, Executive Director, an CIO within ten (10) school days following the review by the Board. (There will be a 20-minute time limit for each party to present their case. The Board may grant a ten-minute extension.)

## Questions, Suggestions, and Informal Grievances

The School is committed to welcoming, encouraging and supporting parents and guardians (jointly referred to in this Policy as “Parents”) as key partners in the education of our students. We value Parents’ ideas, opinions and concerns, knowing Parents understand how issues and events affect their students and families.

Parents and students should share their feedback, questions and suggestions regarding the School and its operations with the correct person who can answer their questions and receive their feedback. The School’s Communications Pathways document provides guidance for how to provide feedback and get questions, minor concerns and informal grievances addressed.

The School’s informal grievance process is intended to provide parties an opportunity to express and resolve grievances at the lowest level possible. The informal process provides neutral facilitation and mediation, with the goal of informal resolution, restitution, and relationship repair. If students or Parents have concerns that involve classroom teachers, they are strongly encouraged to contact the teacher directly to resolve such matters informally whenever possible. The “Grievances and Complaints” section of the School’s Student/Parent Handbook outlines the reporting and escalation procedure for informal grievances.

## Formal Complaints

The School fosters an “Open Door Policy” and encourages Parents, students, employees, school board members and community members to share formal complaints regarding the School and its operations with someone who can address them properly. Please reference the “Complaint and Whistleblower” Policy.

## School’s Compliance Officer

The Chief Innovation Officer will act as the school’s compliance officer. The school’s compliance officer is responsible for conducting or directing the investigation and resolution of allegations concerning violations of school policy, law or regulatory requirements. Reports of any illegal or unethical conduct should be made directly to the school’s compliance officer. The below table describes investigation responsibility and resolution reporting requirements for certain allegation sources and involved parties.

The school’s compliance officer is responsible for reporting to the School Board of Directors the status of compliance matters on no less than a quarterly basis. This report will include the number of investigations currently open and number of investigations closed since prior report and other matters deemed appropriate.

## Accounting and Auditing Matters

The school's compliance officer shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing and shall immediately notify the School Board of Directors Compliance Committee Chair of any such complaint and work with the School Board Compliance Committee until the matter is resolved.

## Requirement of Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a suspected violation of School policy, law or regulatory requirements must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

## Confidentiality and Anonymous Complaints

Formal complaints may be submitted on a confidential basis or may be submitted anonymously. Details of formal complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

## Handling of Reported Violations

The school's compliance officer, or the person responsible for carrying out the Compliance Officer's role with respect to a reported violation, will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing to the complainant within five business days (e-mail is acceptable). All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

The School shall keep the Douglas County School District ("District") apprised of interim and remedial measures taken in response to complaints forwarded to the School by the District by notification to the Choice Programming Office. The School shall notify the District of the resolution of the complaint within thirty (30) business days of resolution by notification to the District's Choice Programming Office.

## Posting of Policy

This policy must be prominently displayed on the School's website and promoted to students and parents through email once per year.

# Whistleblower Policy

## Purpose and Policy

STEM School Highlands Ranch (the “School”) requires School board members, employees, students and parents to observe high standards of professional and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. All School board members, employees, students and parents must comply with all School policy, applicable laws and ordinances, regulatory requirements and Douglas County School District (referred to in this policy as “District”) policies applicable to charter schools, except to the extent that the School has obtained waivers from state law and District policies in accordance with the charter school contract.

It is the School’s policy to promptly investigate any complaint about the School as appropriate to the nature of the information in the complaint. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable persons to raise serious concerns within the School prior to seeking resolution outside the School.