



DELTA
STEAM
ACADEMY

STUDENT & FAMILY

HANDBOOK

DELIBERATE EXCELLENCE LEADS TO ACHIEVEMENT

Academic Year: 2024-2025

Executive Director/Founder: Ms. Nikki Grier

<http://www.deltasteamacademy.org> • (470) 729-2692

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A LETTER FROM OUR LEADER

WELCOME TO THE PANTHER PRIDE!!!

It is my esteemed honor and pleasure to welcome each of our new families into the D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy family. I am equally excited to welcome back all of our returning families for another year of growth and excellence the DSA Way! We have grown a lot in a short period of time, but we will continue to preserve our brand and build our legacy upon the solid foundation that has been laid.

One of the many reasons I entered education 18 years ago was to make a difference in the lives of the children in a community because as Frederick Douglass shared “it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men (adults)”. I firmly believe that schools should not “happen” to communities, but rather, schools should engage in deep partnership with a community to provide a safe and nurturing environment to stimulate the minds of our future. I take the responsibility of educating every child that crosses our threshold seriously. Holding high expectations while simultaneously providing the necessary supports for success is the foundation of DSA. To undergird that foundation, we embody and practice the core values of EXCELLENCE, PERSEVERANCE, INTEGRITY, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY. ALL children are brilliant in their own way and I desire to foster that brilliance every day we meet.

A key tenet of our partnership is communication. To that end, we are sharing this student/family handbook to keep our closest stakeholders informed and educated around our school policies and rules. The content within is not exhaustive, but designed to be a reference and serve as a guide.

You should always feel free to reach out to the school directly about any matter and it will be our pleasure to serve you.

As we embark upon this exciting journey together as the “DREAM TEAM” of DSA, I invite you to join in and support our efforts. My primary role is serving your children and our staff, but my door is always open to parents as well. I welcome your ideas and your active participation in your child’s education. TOGETHER, we can do amazing things! I am because YOU are...

Yours in Education,



Ms. Nikki Grier, M.S.

Founder/Executive Director
D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy

Disclaimer

This student/family handbook is a living document and subject to change with/without notice over the course of an academic year. The most up-to-date version of this handbook will always be located on our website – www.deltasteamacademy.org/parents.

DSA OVERVIEW

D.E.L.T.A STEAM Academy is a K-8 tuition-free public charter school serving students in Douglas, South Fulton, South Cobb, Paulding and Carroll Counties. D.E.L.T.A stands for “Deliberate Excellence Leads To Achievement”. Our instructional model is a full immersion STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) project-based learning environment. Our art of choice is performing arts - focusing on dance, theater, music, and voice – infused throughout our curriculum. We endeavor to prepare students to diversify STEM fields, where less than 9% of employees are of African American or Latino descent. As such, our students are taught daily through the engineering design process and intentionally focus on 21st century skills of collaboration and critical thinking. While learning to think deeply and creatively, students are also developing the character and habits of mind that will enable them to be not only academically successful but also socially and emotionally adept.

VISION

DELTA STEAM Academy is the BEST in the country at producing the next generation of culturally conscious, critical and creative thinkers.

MISSION

Our students are CHANGE agents equipped with a world class, rigorous education in STEM and Fine Arts prepared to pursue college degrees and subsequent careers in these fields.

Their strong sense of CULTURAL IDENTITY and strive towards DELIBERATE EXCELLENCE allows them to PERSEVERE as they break barriers. They operate with INTEGRITY as ambassadors of their COMMUNITIES using their agency to blaze trails for those that will come after them. They are instrumental in and essential to diversifying and enhancing the science and arts career fields.

VALUES

Our Values are EPIC²!!

Excellence

Perseverance

Integrity

Culture

Community

*We will be **EXCELLENT** – giving our personal best each and every day.*

*We **PERSEVERE** – working hard and never giving up on ourselves or each other.*

*We have **INTEGRITY** – being who we say we are, doing what we say we will do, and representing our families and communities well.*

*We preserve our **CULTURE** – embracing our individual heritage and history as important parts of our identity.*

*We are a **COMMUNITY**– creating positive relationships and giving back with gratitude.*

HISTORY

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy was born out of our Founder's vision to immerse children into an environment that sparks their curiosity and encourages deep thinking at a young age. Continuous and deliberate exposure to scientific processes coupled with confidence building performing arts ultimately produces critical and creative thinkers that are poised to diversify the STEAM fields.

Currently, only 9% of all STEM jobs in the United States are occupied by African American or Latino persons. The reasons for this are wide and varied, but one constant is the lack of exposure and creation of a solid foundation in the subject areas that lead to expertise in these fields. DSA endeavors to continue teaching children in the natural way they learn from 0 to 4 years - through discovery and collaboration.

During the summer of 2018, our Founder, Nikki Grier, was selected to participate in the Georgia Charter Schools Association Incubator Program. This program supports leaders from across the state in the process of opening high quality charter schools in Georgia. Over the course of 10 months, Nikki crafted the model for our school and researched the many ways to bring it to fruition. Our Founding Board of Directors was created in October of 2018 and consisted of 6 community stakeholders, including our Founder, across multiple sectors of industry including healthcare, finance, budget management, legal, and educational leadership. October 2018 - April 2019 was a 6 month sprint to completing our petition. This time period included immersing ourselves in the community while pre-enrolling students, locating facility options, securing community partnerships, and building our credibility. In April of 2019, Nikki submitted the completed petition to the State Charter Schools Commission that outlined our school model's core pillars - project-based learning coupled with STEAM immersion, teacher looping coupled with mastery learning, and intentional character development that honors and preserves African American history and culture. Submission of the petition began a rigorous process of approval from the state. The Founding Board engaged in an intensive interview process that ultimately led to our successful approval on July 31, 2019 by a unanimous vote from the State Charter Schools Commission Board.

Approval of our petition and granting of our initial charter was only the beginning of what is still an amazing adventure. Fall of 2019 was filled with many milestones, the largest of which was securing our facility at 7131 Mt. Vernon Road in Lithia Springs, GA. Our Founder located the facility in September of 2018 and set out to build and maintain a relationship with the previous owners - Colonial Hills Baptist Church. She learned about the great work that Colonial Hills Christian School had accomplished over many years and how the recession impacted their student enrollment causing them to have to shutter their doors. Over the course of a year, the Founding Board held a number of events with the blessing of the church on site including community information sessions, board meetings, and board retreats. This relationship continues today as the church maintains its services on weekends. The partnership between the two entities is one of mutual respect and trust and we are grateful to be able to start a new legacy on the shoulders of a great school.

The Founding Board of Directors transitioned into the Governing Board of Directors and in January of 2020, our Founder was officially hired as our School Leader. She then hired our Founding Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Katrina

Cordell. This pair, affectionately known as the “Dynamic Duo” or our administrative team worked tirelessly to lay a solid foundation for our staff and families. Spring 2020 came with some unexpected surprises that dramatically shifted our approach to preparation for school opening. The COVID-19 pandemic swept the nation leading to nationwide shelter-in-place orders that closed schools for the remainder of the academic year and digital learning became the norm for students. DSA was faced with unique challenges to our student and staff recruitment efforts as several major events had to be canceled for the safety of our community and families.

Despite these obstacles, we didn’t give up. Instead, we leaned on our core values of EXCELLENCE AND PERSEVERANCE, and we found creative ways to continue the work. Afterall, families were counting on us to bring DSA to the community and our INTEGRITY would not allow us to disappoint them. We embraced our new virtual world and continued to hold community information sessions, virtual teacher interview days, and launched multiple social media campaigns. During this time period, we still managed to hire 4 of our Founding Staff members and we closed our enrollment window extending 115 acceptance letters to our very first Panther Families! Executive Director Grier personally called every family to congratulate them and welcome them into the Panther Pride. The remainder of Spring 2020 was spent continuing to enroll students and rounding out the DREAM team with our amazing staff.

Fall 2020, we anticipated receiving 175 students, however, only 90 students showed upon August 24, 2020, the first day of school. Now faced with the challenge of operating a school on only 51% of the anticipated revenue, we persevered and pushed through. Unfortunately, this meant making some very difficult decisions, including a reduction in force of approximately 40%, moving to a 100% virtual platform for cold/flu season and foregoing furniture orders.

Fall 2021, we enrolled 254 students! With this exponential growth, we saw a lot of change, yet we maintained our culture and community. We added new programming in our exploratory classes including STEM, gardening and Big Thinkers Science.

Fall 2022, we enrolled 300 students! In our third year, we saw stability increase and we felt like a “real school” with a full grown elementary school in place serving grades K-5th. We added a new partnership with Kids Next Code, had our first off-Broadway musical (The Wiz, Jr), and promoted our first 5th grade class!

Fall 2023, we enrolled 384 students! Year four was packed with a continued rise in excellence including our first PBL night, targeted interventions for students, launching of our middle school and a new partnership with Valley Ranch, our equestrian program.

Fall 2024 is on the horizon...to be continued...

HOURS OF OPERATION

School Days:

Elementary School: Monday - Friday, 8am - 330pm

Middle School: Monday - Friday, 830am - 4pm

Breakfast: Monday - Friday, 730am - 750am

Aftercare: Monday - Friday, 330pm - 6pm

Phones are answered in the main office: 730am – 4pm

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please reach out to our team if you have any questions or concerns.

School Phone - 470.729.2692

School Email: info@deltasteamacademy.org

School Website: www.deltasteamacademy.org

Administrative Team

Executive Director/Founder - Nikki Grier: ngrier@deltasteamacademy.org

ES Assistant Executive Director – Robert Whigham: rwhigham@deltasteamacademy.org

MS Assistant Executive Director - Denice LeSure: dlesure@deltasteamacademy.org

Dean of Academics – Katrina Sorrells: ksorrells@deltasteamacademy.org

Dean of Campus Pride – Antoine Blanton: ablanton@deltasteamacademy.org

UNIFORM POLICY

Our student uniform policy is designed to promote the celebration of both unity and individuality. As such, students are only required to be dressed in full uniform according to the guidelines below.

Elementary School:

- **Monday:** Assigned polo, solid black slacks, and solid black slip-resistant shoes (sneakers are okay for K-2nd only)
 - K-2: Purple polo
 - 3-5: Gold polo
- **Tuesday - Thursday:** Students are permitted to wear any outfit of their choice that is school appropriate (see student dress code). They will wear their lab coats on top of these outfits during class. Lab coats will remain at school throughout the week for two week periods. Lab Coats will be sent home every other Friday for laundering and should come back on Mondays. Please be sure that students wear slip-resistant shoes for safety.
- **Friday:** School spirit shirt and choice of bottoms. Please ensure students wear slip-resistant shoes for safety.

Middle School:

- **Monday- Wednesday:** Red polo, khaki slacks, and solid black dress shoes
- **Thursday:** Clothing of choice appropriate for school
- **Friday:** Spirit shirt and choice of bottoms

- **Special Days:** There will be times during the year when students will be out of uniform altogether. Those will include Picture Days, Honor Assembly Days, Spirit Weeks, and others to be determined. Specific guidelines on dress code will be sent home in advance.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP

DSA welcomes parents to take an active role in the education of their children as well as in support of school-wide initiatives. All families are asked to **commit to 10 hours per student of service to the school**. For the safety of all of our students, basic background checks will be conducted as volunteers sign up for various events. Note that volunteer hours can be spread across the family and do not have to be completed just by parents – grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc over the age of 18 may also help fulfill the hours' requirements.

- Level 1 - Basic background check required for all parents prior to service at school
 - Activities that are one-time or limited opportunities (ex. Field day, occasional cafeteria support, first day of school support, serving at school-wide events, storytime, etc.)
- Level 2 - More comprehensive background check required for working with students in smaller settings
 - Activities are ongoing and include students other than your own (ex. Weekly service in media center, cafeteria, room parents, assistance to teachers, etc.)
- Level 3 - Comprehensive background check, including fingerprinting
 - Activities are overnight or include access to confidential information (ex. Overnight field experiences, front office support, etc.)

Please note that the type of background check required to participate in activities at the school is at the sole discretion of the school, however, parents will be informed prior and have the ability to opt out. Opting out of the background check

also means you may not participate in the activity.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

D.E.L.T.A STEAM Academy is committed to equity in all of our policies and practices. We serve all students regardless of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or disability.

Title IX Coordinator Information: Antoine Blanton, Dean of Campus Pride; 7131 Mt. Vernon Rd, Lithia Springs, GA 30122; ablanton@deltasteamacademy.org; 470-729-2692

GRIEVANCE POLICY – PARENT/STUDENT CONCERNS

At DSA, we strive to maintain an atmosphere of harmony, but also recognize that misunderstandings and disagreements happen. To that end, we have outlined the process below by which matters can be disputed that honors all parties involved.

Step 1: Start with a conversation with the other party involved. If not resolved, proceed to step 2.

Step 2: Address complaints in writing to the other party and allow a response time of 2 business days. If the matter is not resolved, proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: Address complaint in writing to the manager of the other party. This information can be obtained via our directory. Allow a response time of 2 business days. If the matter is not resolved, proceed to step 4.

Step 4: Escalate complaint in writing to School Leader, noting all previous steps taken that have not led to resolution.

Allow 2 business days for a response. If the matter is still not resolved, proceed to step 5.

Step 5: Escalate complaint in writing to Board Chair, noting all previous steps taken that have not led to resolution. Allow 5 business days for a response. The resolution given at this step is considered final.

Please note that any member of the Administrative team may opt to mediate conversations at each of these levels.

Parents are also entitled to share any concern with the administrative team, but know that we will always first encourage resolution directly with the other party.

Students Reporting Misconduct of Adults: For students who wish to report allegations of misconduct of a teacher, administrator, or other adult at DSA, the following procedures are in place. The student should report the professional misconduct to an administrator or other trusted adult. They may also do this through their parent/guardian. Upon receiving the report, the administrator or trusted adult will follow a formal investigation process including but not limited to interviewing parties involved, taking witness statements, and notifying the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate. DSA is committed to investigating allegations of professional misconduct with fidelity to the state mandates set forth in GA Code 20-2-751.7

TECHNOLOGY USAGE AGREEMENT

Any and all technology issued by D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy remains the sole property of the school. Students may be issued chromebooks for enhancement of their instruction. Only school work is to be conducted on these devices.

Appropriate firewalls have been set to maintain the safety of students online. A more detailed user agreement will be shared and signed by parents upon issuance of tech devices.

For all technology within the school, the expectation is that students are treating the devices with care and respect.

Damage caused by mistreatment of technology will be dealt with on a case by case basis and is subject to a fine that will be absorbed by the family of the offending child(ren). Students will be properly trained on how to handle technology prior to independent usage.

ACADEMICS

Curriculum Overview

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy will provide a full STEAM immersion academic program that is rigorous and cross-curricular to prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. We will ensure this preparation by providing a fully integrated STEAM curriculum that includes expeditionary based literacy, conceptual mathematics, hands-on science, social studies through an African American lens, and performance arts instruction daily. Each subject will be taught through the engineering design process of ASK, IMAGINE, PLAN, CREATE, IMPROVE.

The academic program of D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy is designed to challenge every student to achieve on or above grade level performance in all academic subjects. While students may enter the school below grade level in many areas, our school is prepared for the challenge of equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary for success in an academically rigorous college preparatory high school. D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy's curriculum is based upon the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) but is accelerated and taught rigorously to ensure that students are prepared for middle school, high school, college and the competitive world beyond our doors.

To this end, the academic program of D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy is geared towards immediately assessing and addressing any unfinished learning with which students may be entering the school. Throughout their time at D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy, students spend more time in all core academic subjects, providing them with sufficient time to complete any unfinished learning that may exist.

Our Curriculum

Literacy

EL Education's language arts curriculum is a Harvard School of Education and Outward Bound partnership-derived, research-based literacy approach rooted in problem-based learning, a key component to STEAM education. The EL curriculum is built upon the belief that academic achievement, character, and high-quality work go hand in hand. The curriculum consists of 3-4 modules per academic year that pose anchor topics for the entire module. Students go through a series of learning exercises, field experiences, and collaborative problem-solving opportunities to create an integrated experience in all subject areas. A good number of the modules presented to students have non-fiction, science-related anchor texts. Our 120 minutes of literacy each day will allow for the maximum success of this program in elementary grades K-7. All lessons will be taught through the engineering design process of ASK, IMAGINE, PLAN, CREATE, IMPROVE.

Math

DSA will offer 120 minutes of daily mathematics instruction via Singapore Math in grades K-7. Singapore Math provides an in-depth, rigorous, discovery approach to mathematics that is aligned to the common core standards. Students begin with conceptual understanding and engage in problem solving and communication to arrive at the foundational skill and then apply that skill to real-world situations. Dimensions Math by Singapore Math Inc. uses the Singapore method of mastery of concepts through dynamic problem solving and communication. Singapore gives students a balance of procedural skill and fluency, conceptual understanding, and application – all aspects of rigor in the GSE for Math. The Singapore math method is focused on mastery, which is achieved through the intentional sequencing of concepts. Some key features of the approach include the CPA (Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract) progression, number bonds, bar modeling, and mental math. In the concrete phase, students interact with physical objects to model problems. In the pictorial phase, they make mental connections between the objects they just handled and visual representations of those objects. In the abstract phase, students use symbolic modeling of problems using numbers and math symbols. Instead of pushing through rote memorization, students learn to think mathematically and rely on the depth of knowledge gained in previous lessons. An attitude that math is important and approachable is also essential. Students perform at a higher level when their potential for understanding and success is assumed.

Science

EL Education's literacy curriculum lends itself to cross-curricular study, particularly in science. As such, DSA will supplement the existing EL Education literacy curriculum with in-house created materials that align to the GA Science Standards of Excellence and Next Generation Science Standards. Students will have 45 minutes of hands-on science twice a week dedicated to labs surrounding the standards-aligned lessons and concepts being studied. Using the engineering design process, students will have multiple opportunities to apply and demonstrate their scientific understanding of standards via lab investigation and presenting their findings in a grade-level appropriate manner. Our foundational science curriculum will be further supplemented by the daily STEM block. During the STEM block, students will learn about and discuss STEM-related topics past and present. It is designed to be an extension of the science curriculum to deepen our students' daily immersion in the sciences.

Social Studies

Social studies lessons will be developed in-house and aligned to the GA Standards of Excellence for Social Studies for grades K-8. The curriculum will be taught from an African American lens to address the cultural identity of the majority of our students using current and historical events. Research shows that teaching African American History as an integral component of American History leads to higher self-esteem and pride as well as provides all children with a more complete view of our state, country, and world. As students learn the standard elements of American History, we will intentionally and consistently illuminate the vast contributions that African Americans have made to the success of our great country.

Exploratory Classes

Equally important to our model is an immersion in the arts, with an emphasis on performing arts. All students will rotate through voice/chorus, Band, PE, Dance and Media Technology (library) in grades K-5. Middle school students will rotate through STEM, PE, Dance and Band. STEM is required for all MS students. They will be able to elect into a second exploratory class for a semester at a time. These courses are designed to further enhance and support the core curriculum by motivating and encouraging students and leveling the playing field for students of financially challenged backgrounds who might not otherwise have these opportunities. Research has shown a link between arts education and student development in areas of motor development (necessary for writing dexterity) to cultural awareness (our world is ever changing). As we grow, we will also add STEM related exploratory classes. This year we are offering a STEM class that will focus on Technology and Engineering and a Gardening Class.

Character Education

Our school day is extended by an additional 60 minutes to allow for community building and cultural preservation. DSA

has an intentional focus on character development. A student's community is the collective body of students in their class (elementary) or homeroom (middle school) that serves as a support system for the individual student throughout the year. Students will begin and end their day with their community. During this time they will focus on an in-house developed curriculum that explicitly teaches the DSA core values of excellence, perseverance, integrity, cultural identity, and community. Additional topics include book studies on the "7 Habits of Happy Kids" as well as character development lessons from other sources. The goal of this time is to promote unity and a welcoming family environment amongst students and staff. In its full manifestation, community time will develop young scientists and artists who are confident, willing to take academic and social risks, supportive of their peers, and be caretakers of their community. This time will allow teachers to really get to know their students both personally and academically and build relationships that lend themselves well to academic motivation and achievement. Grade level and school-wide assemblies will happen at regular intervals to acknowledge and celebrate members of the DSA family that demonstrate the traits being studied.

Assessment

At D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy, we believe that we must always have a deep understanding of our students' learning and areas for growth. Therefore, frequent and ongoing assessment is a fundamental part of our academic program. However, we will conduct these assessments in ways that are a part of the natural learning process so as not to create unnecessary stress for children that is often associated with testing.

Overview of Assessment Program

Assessment Name	Assessment Area	Students Assessed
GA Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)	ELA, Math, approaches to learning, personal and social development	Kindergarten Only
Georgia Milestones	Math, Reading, ELA	3 rd grade and up
Normed-Referenced Assessment (NWEA-Map)	Reading and Math	All Grades
Normed-Referenced Assessment (NWEA-Map)	Language Arts	3 rd Grade and up
STEP Literacy Assessment	Literacy	All Grades
Module and Unit assessments	All subject	All Grades
Project-Based Assessments	All Subjects	All Grades

Informal Assessment

All students will participate in weekly/bi-weekly assessments, unit assessments, or exit tickets. The assessment will be based on the instruction provided in class and will be used as data points for teachers to adjust their instruction to meet the needs of students through differentiation within the classroom and to track student progress against grade-level standards.

Homework Policy

Homework is a fundamental component of our program. The purpose of homework is not only to review and reinforce skills and concepts but also to devote a specific period of time to learning in the home environment. A home study period, including a specific time and place for students to complete assignments, should be established. Homework will be assigned daily at the teacher's discretion in all grade levels, K-7th. Parents are required to check all homework assignments and sign the log (K-1) or agenda (2nd - 7th) every night once the assignments are completed.

Project-Based Learning

Each subject area will be required to participate in Project-Based Learning. Project-Based Learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge. Students work on a project over an extended period of time – from a week up to a semester – that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. These projects culminate into a portfolio of work that a student will be able to take with them into middle school and high school.

Field Experiences

Learning has many modalities and our field experiences allow us to tap into all of them in multiple ways. These experiences are designed to deepen student understanding of concepts being learned in class. They provide a rich interaction with content that brings the lesson alive. Throughout the year, students will participate in multiple field experiences, some in-house, some within the Metro-Atlanta area, and some outside of the city.

Grading

Grading Scales

- Kindergarten through 2nd grade does not have a summative assessment and thus we engage in mastery learning, which means that students do not move onto the next grade level until they have achieved proficiency on 85% of the standards for the grade level. The grades for these grade levels are based upon the proficiency levels of each of the standards.

Level 4 = Exceeding (I can do this on my own and I can teach others correctly.)

Level 3 = Proficient (I can do this on my own, but am not quite ready to teach others.)

Level 2 = Internalizing (I have partial understanding of this, but still have some questions.)

Level 1 = Commencing (I have many questions or do not know where to begin.)

- 3rd - 7th grades will utilize a traditional grading scale in alignment with Douglas County for all core content areas as well as elective courses.

A = 90 to 100

B = 80 to 89

C = 74 to 79

D = 70 - 73

F = 69 and below

- Conduct Grades: Student conduct will be assessed based upon both behavior and demonstration of our core values on report cards only.

S = Satisfactory

N = Needs Improvement

U = Unsatisfactory

Progress Reports

Informal progress reports will be sent home weekly on Fridays with students in the Panther Pocket. Formal Progress reports are sent home every 4.5 weeks (mid-quarter) with students in their Panther Pocket and require a parent/guardian signature. These reports are meant to give you an update on student progress and support you may want to provide for your student to maintain or change their trajectory. Following each progress report issuance, parents will have an opportunity to schedule a conference with the teacher to discuss their child's progress and plan of action for moving forward any time during the teacher's planning period prior to the end of the quarter.

Report Card Pickup

Report cards are issued every 9 weeks during our quarterly Report Card Pickup where **parent attendance is required**. The dates are published at the beginning of the school year so that you are able to plan accordingly. A State of the School Address will be recorded for parents and shared on our website. Parents will sign up for conferences at a time that works for them to meet with teachers and students have an opportunity to share their portfolio.

Special Populations

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy is a school for every child. It is the belief at DSA that every student is valued as a unique individual, and thus each student's unique gifts must be acknowledged. To that end, we understand that instruction and the school environment should be adjusted to meet these unique gifts as necessary.

Special Education - IEPs/504 Plans

Identification

Students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) already established will have them implemented immediately. A transition meeting will be conducted within the first 30 days of school. For students who do not have an IEP, but are having challenges (behavioral or academic), teachers will refer them to the MTSS team, which is composed of general education teachers, special education teachers, and an administrator. The team will review the referral and begin the observation process to identify needs and determine interventions, and determine progress monitoring. Students who move from Tier 1 up to Tier 3 without a return to Tier 2 will be referred to the special education team for testing.

Notification

Parents will be notified and given an opportunity to consent or decline testing according to GASBOE 160-4-7-.09-6. Should a parent decline testing, the student will remain in Tier 3 intervention until there is progress or indefinitely. If the parent consents to evaluation and a disability is diagnosed, as an LEA, we will make immediate adjustments to meet the needs of the student. It should be noted that a parent may request testing for their student at any time and we will honor the request. An outside psychologist will evaluate all areas of suspected disability and share the findings with the parents and school. The IEP Team will reconvene to review the evaluations, response to intervention documentation, and

any other evidence to determine eligibility for services. If a student is eligible, a special education team will develop an IEP or 504 Plan. Depending on the results of the functional behavioral assessment (FBA), the special education team may develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) as well.

Once the IEP is developed using the expertise of the parents, school staff, and evaluator, the agreed-upon accommodations and/or modifications will be put into practice immediately by any staff member that comes into contact with the student. In all cases, a student will be placed in the least restricted environment (LRE) that can support their needs and development. This ideally begins with inclusion in the general education classroom with instructional supports (pull out, small group instruction in the classroom, paraprofessional support, etc) as needed. A re-evaluation will be conducted, at minimum, every three years to ensure the needs of the student are still being met.

The school will hire an adequate number of certified Special Education Teachers and divide caseloads to address students' needs (writing and reviewing IEPs, ensuring adherence to identified accommodations or modifications). When possible, students will be in the general education setting. Special education and general education teachers will collaboratively plan lessons to meet the specific needs of SWDs. If there is a need for pull out services, a special education teacher will provide those. Any testing accommodations or modifications will be provided by the special education teacher. IEPs/504s will be shared with anyone that comes into contact with the student (teachers, discipline staff, etc) so that necessary accommodations and modifications can be made in their respective classrooms or spaces. As our own LEA, we will contract with a third-party psychologist to administer and review psychological evaluations for placement and to provide any necessary technical training as needed based upon student need. If needed, DSA will also contract with local entities to provide additional services such as occupational therapy or adaptive technology. DSA is committed to being able to provide the full spectrum of special education services to meet all students' needs.

Parents will be partners in the development and implementation of IEP/504 plans. Parents and teachers will have IEP review meetings at least annually and every three years for re-evaluation to ensure students' needs are met.

Special education teachers and the SST will utilize data regularly to determine if IEP modifications are needed sooner than the designated intervals. Parents are welcome to ask for an IEP amendment meeting at any time. For standardized testing and school-based assessments, the special education team will follow the guidance under GaDOE SBOE 160-4-7-.06 and make determinations about accommodations or modifications that should be made for each student in their annual meeting. Students will either receive the Standard GA Milestones test with or without accommodations or the GA Milestones Alternate Assessment. Any accommodations needed should be appropriate according to GADOE guidance that lists standard accommodations like small groups and non-standard accommodations like the use of an assistive device.

Facility Needs

Our Operations Team will ensure that the facility can accommodate any requirements of the IEP/504 plan such as ramps or elevator usage.

Student Discipline

Any student with an IEP will be disciplined according to the student handbook. If a student with a disability or a 504 plan is suspended for 10 days or greater cumulatively, a manifestation determination hearing will be held. The hearing is to determine whether the act committed is a manifestation of the student's disability or whether the school failed to implement the student's IEP appropriately. The hearing committee will consist of a member of the special education team, an administrator, and a general education teacher, at minimum. The findings of the hearing will be upheld by the school. Hearing decisions can be appealed to the State Board of Education.

Programming Disputes

Parents are our partners in their child(ren)'s education and will always be made aware of their rights. As such, we will always provide at minimum a free and appropriate public education for their child. We will collaborate with parents to determine what that looks like in practice. We will always use data to inform our decisions and present data to parents. Every effort will be made to resolve issues at the school level, however, if parents remain unsatisfied with programming decisions, they may begin the process as outlined in our student handbook and outlined below:

1. State complaint in writing to School Leader via US Mail or e-mail.
2. Within five business days of receiving the complaint, the School Leader will investigate, take any necessary actions, and inform the complainant of the actions taken.
3. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate their complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors within 10 business days of receiving the School Leader's decision.
4. The Chair of the Board will then convene a committee of the Board to investigate, make a determination on the matter, and share the decision with the complainant within 10 business days.
5. This decision is typically final. However, in the event that the committee cannot come to a decision or the nature of the complaint is such that it will interfere with the daily operation of DSA, the Chair will convene the entire board to investigate the matter and come to a final decision. This decision will be shared with the complainant.
6. If the complainant is still unsatisfied with the Board's decision, he/she may appeal to the State Board of Education pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160.

Confidentiality

All special education records will be kept in a locked vault/cabinet that is only accessible to the Special Education lead and the Executive Director. All other staff may gain access through one of these parties on a 'need-to-know' basis. We will comply with all aspects of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to protect the privacy rights of parents and children. We further comply with all Special Education laws that require anyone that comes into contact with the child to provide a service (teachers, related wraparound service providers, etc) to be knowledgeable of and implement all accommodations or modifications

Gifted

DSA will abide by all requirements for meeting the needs of students identified as Gifted and set forth by Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 beginning in 3rd grade.

Identification

Students in grades 3rd - 7th grade entering DSA with a current gifted eligibility report from the state of GA will receive gifted services in a resource format. Students in 2nd grade will be identified based upon their spring MAP assessment. Students must score in the 95th percentile in reading and/or math to initially qualify for gifted testing.

Notification

DSA will notify parents of identified students being considered to receive gifted education services in writing of information related to the gifted education program including, but not limited to the following:

1. Referral procedures and eligibility requirements adopted and applied by the LEA.
2. Notification of initial consideration for gifted education services and testing dates.
3. Evaluation guidelines and documentation of training procedures utilized and maintained by the LEA.
4. The type(s) of gifted services to be provided, academic standards to be met, the teaching methods employed, and how students will be evaluated annually.
5. Performance standards gifted students are to meet to maintain their eligibility and receive continued services in the program.

Students may receive modified homework and differentiated extension materials. During the Acceleration/Enrichment block on Wednesdays, gifted students may be grouped homogeneously with other gifted students and provided additional enrichment with additional access to technology.

Professional Development and training will be provided to teachers on the identification of gifted students, their unique needs, interventions available for gifted students, and how to support gifted students during whole group instruction.

English Language Learners

Identification

For any student that indicates there is a language other than English spoken by the child at home on the Home Language Survey, the school will conduct the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment to determine English language proficiency levels and progress of ELs in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing at the beginning of the year.

The results will guide our personnel decisions and the type of professional development teachers with ELL students receive. If the student is identified as ELL, they will be provided Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) instruction, which includes Sheltered Content Instruction (SCI) and Direct ESL instruction depending on ACCESS scores.

Notification

The results will be communicated with parents in writing in their preferred language. The notification will include an explanation for why the child was identified as ELL, current English proficiency, description of the program placement and method of instruction, how the program meets the child's educational needs, how the program will help the child learn English, requirements for exiting the program, and the parent's right to waive ELL services. A parent may request a follow up meeting at any time for further clarification. Services will be provided immediately post notification to parents. DSA will comply with all state and federally mandated services in accordance with GaDOE SBOE 160-4-6-.02.

Assessment of Progress

We will use the WIDA suite to progress monitor throughout the year and deliver the appropriate accommodations or modifications for students. Similar to Special Education, for standardized testing, ELL students will either take the Standard GA Milestones assessment with or without accommodations or the Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA). Students can be exited from the ELL program with appropriate ACCESS exam scores, evidence of general education progress, and classroom teacher evaluations. Once a student is exited, they will still be monitored for two years via the protocol in ACCESS and WIDA to ensure there is no regression. If regression is indicated, a student is eligible to begin receiving services again.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is key to learning, and all students are expected to be on-time and present for the entire school day. Each day is a valuable learning opportunity for your student, and it is imperative they do not miss a moment of their opportunity to grow their brains.

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy believes that only through daily participation in classroom activities can students achieve success and progress through their character, culture, academic and restorative excellence growth. Regular school attendance is the key to success in preparing students for success in middle school, high school, college and the competitive world beyond. The D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy team will work alongside families to ensure that students are prepared to live a choice-filled life. Families are held accountable for ensuring their student's daily attendance as well as ensuring students complete their daily assignments. For students experiencing homelessness, DSA will provide the necessary accommodations to ensure that all portions of the McKenny Vento Act are followed with fidelity.

General Attendance Procedures

Arrival

Elementary students may begin arriving at 730am for school. Those that choose to eat breakfast will report **first to the**

classroom to check in with their teacher. Breakfast is served from 7:30 - 7:50 AM. There will be no exceptions to this. Once a student reports back to the classroom, they may not return to breakfast at a later time. Upon arrival to the classroom, students should follow the morning procedures set forth by their teacher.

Middle school students begin arriving at 8am for school. Those that choose to eat breakfast report directly to the cafeteria between 8am - 820am. Breakfast will not be served after 820am.

Tardiness

When your child is tardy, he/she misses valuable instructional time, important school events, and necessary skills for academic success. Regular and prompt attendance is vital to your child's success in school. We encourage parents to call the school if they begin encountering difficulties getting their child to school. Students are late at 805am (ES) and 835am (MA). Late students must enter the building through the main office to receive a tardy pass prior going to class. **Every three unexcused tardies count as one (1) absence and is factored into the overall absences for the school year. Definition of 'excused' absences of any kind, including tardies is given below.**

Early Dismissal

We understand that life happens and there may be times you need to check your student out early. However, chronic early dismissals are disruptive to your child's learning trajectory. Please note that early dismissals, like tardies, factor into your child's overall attendance. Early dismissals should not be used for convenience. There must be valid reasons as indicated below for an early dismissal. **Every three unexcused early dismissals count as one (1) absence and is factored into the overall absences for the school year.**

Absences

In the event that a student is absent for the first part of the day, he or she is still encouraged to report to school. Students who report to school after 1145am, however, are marked absent for the entire school day. In addition, students who report to school but leave before 1145am are marked absent for the entire school day.

The Georgia Board of Education allows the following reasons to be marked as **excused absences** providing the family presents written documentation to the school. *All other absences not listed here are considered unexcused.*

- Personal illness
- Death or serious illness in the family
- Recognized religious holidays
- Absences caused by order of government
- Inclement weather or dangerous conditions

When a student is absent, a parent/guardian must communicate in writing to the school. This communication should clearly state the reason(s) for the absence. For extended absences of three (3) or more consecutive days, supporting documentation (i.e. doctor's note) is required. Furthermore, once a student has reached 10 absences for the year, parents/guardians must provide official documentation for any additional absences to be marked excused.

Any absence not supported with written documentation and/or does not meet the guidelines of excused absences as defined by the Georgia Board of Education will be marked unexcused.

In grades K-8, students with excessive absences of 18 days or more may be considered for retention. After 5 absences, a notice is sent home to the parent as a warning of truancy. If a student is absent more than 10 days, the school makes a formal inquiry and reports the issue to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Absences Due to Illness/ Illness during School Hours

If a student is sick in the morning, he/she should remain at home. Parents/guardians are expected make arrangements with their child's teacher to receive make-up work. After more than two (2) consecutive days out of school for illness, students must provide a doctor's note to the school on the first day back to school in order to receive an excused absence for missed days. If a student becomes ill or injured during the school day and is not well enough to stay in class, the parent/guardian is notified to immediately pick up the student. **Students may not return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours without the intervention of medication.**

Housing Insecurity Policy

The Homeless Education Program ensures access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children and youth experiencing homelessness in accordance with McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, Title VII- B, reauthorized in 2002 as part of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Program for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth provides the following services:

- Transportation
- Educational Support and Remediation Service
- School Supplies
- Community Based Resources

The D.E.L.T.A STEAM Academy Homeless Education Liaison acts as a link between family, shelter, school system and community resources to coordinate educational services for homeless students.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Program Overview

In accordance with the Education For Homeless Children and Youths: Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.), D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy adheres to the guiding principle that all eligible children and youth who reside within the D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy attendance zone are entitled to a free, appropriate public education. The Executive Director designates an appropriate staff person to be the D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy's liaison for homeless students and their families. Students identified as "homeless" or "in transition" will be given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards and will be included in state- and district- wide assessments and accountability systems. D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. Any information regarding each student's homeless status shall be handled in a confidential and professional manner by school and system personnel.

Definitions:

In accordance with the Act and State Board Rule 160-5-1-.28 (JBC), the term "Homeless Child and Youth" is defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodation;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Sleeping in primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations; and,
- Migratory or living in the circumstances described above.
- A child or youth shall be considered to be experiencing homelessness for as long as he or she is in a living situation described above.
- Unaccompanied youth - a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above.
- School of origin - the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Identification:

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the homeless liaison will identify children and youth experiencing homelessness within our school. The liaison will inform school Executive Directors on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as experiencing homelessness, and procedures for forwarding information concerning homelessness to the school homeless liaison. School registrars and secretaries will inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of students and forward information indicating homelessness to the liaison.

School liaison will train faculty and staff on this homeless policy and how to identify homeless students

School Selection:

Each child and youth experiencing homelessness has the right to remain at his or her school of origin, or to attend any school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend whichever is in the student's best interest as determined by the school. A student may remain at his/her school of origin the entire time of "homelessness", and until the end of the academic year in which he/she becomes permanently housed.

Enrollment:

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy personnel shall request proof of residency of all students enrolling in D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy. If a student is identified as homeless by definition, the school will enroll the student immediately. School personnel will contact the Homeless Liaison immediately upon enrollment of any student experiencing homelessness. Homeless students may be enrolled by a parent or the school's liaison. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to lack of any document normally required for enrollment including, but not limited to, the following:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records
- Immunization or immunization/health/medical/physical records
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth Certificate
- Any other document requirements
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of uniforms or clothing that conforms to dress codes
- Any factor related to the student's living situation

Services:

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy's Homeless Liaison (Robert Whigham) and the school's Parental Involvement Coordinator shall coordinate with any/all local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other local school systems on the transfer of student records; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. Children and youth experiencing homelessness shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including:

- Transportation - Homeless students are entitled to transportation to his/her school of origin or the school where he/she is to be enrolled.
- School Uniforms-contact your school Social Worker or the Homeless Liaison
- Title I Services- Educational services for which the student meeting eligibility criteria,including special education and related services and programs for English language learners
- CTAE education programs and extracurricular activities
- Gifted and talented programs
- School nutrition programs and automatic eligibility for free meals
- Before-school and after-school program when applicable
- Parental Involvement Activities

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy's Title I plan will be coordinated with McKinney-Vento services, through collaboration between the program directors, the Homeless Liaison, and the Parental Involvement Coordinator. Children and youth experiencing homelessness will be assessed, reported on and included in accountability systems, as required by law and U.S. Department of Education regulations and guidance.

An informal needs assessment will occur upon becoming McKinney-Vento eligible in collaboration with the Homeless Liaison through completion of the system's intake form. Additional needs addressed at a later date will be addressed promptly.

Disputes:

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth in transition shall be enrolled immediately to the

school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute. The student shall also have the same rights to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title I services while the dispute is pending. The parent or guardian shall be informed of D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy governing board's decision and the appeal rights in writing. The schools liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute. If the matter is not resolved at the local level, the parent may request to exercise the right for a review of the dispute and decision by the Georgia Department of Education in accordance with Dispute Resolution Guidelines and Procedures provided by the Georgia Department of Education which are available on the Georgia Department of Education's website.

Residency and Educational Rights:

Students who are in temporary, inadequate and homeless living situations have the following rights at D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy: Access to free meals and textbooks, Title I and other educational programs and other comparable services including transportation; Attendance in the same classes and activities that students in other living situations also participate in without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations.

Contact: Please contact DSA's McKinney-Vento Liaison for more information or to report a homeless student situation: Contact information: Robert Whigham, McKinney-Vento Liaison, D.E.L.T.A STEAM Academy, 7131 Mt Vernon Rd, Lithia Springs, GA 30122, email: rwhigham@deltasteamacademy.org.

Early Checkout

As much as possible, please refrain from picking your child up early. Medical and other appointments should be made during school breaks or after school hours. In the event that a student needs an early checkout, the parent/guardian or authorized pick up person must come into the front office and sign the student out of school. As in regular dismissals, students will not be released to anyone not on their authorized pick-up list and a valid photo ID will be required.

Due to preparations for school-wide dismissal, early checkouts will not be honored after:

- ES - 230pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
- MS - 3pm Monday through Thursday
- Wednesdays (ES) and Fridays (MS) are our club days in the afternoon. The entire building begins moving at 12pm, making it increasingly difficult to retrieve students in a timely manner as they are not with their homeroom teacher and sometimes not with their homeroom class, depending on the schedule. Thus early dismissal cut off time on Wednesdays for ES is 12pm and Fridays for MS is 1230pm.

Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 330pm for grades K-5 and their siblings and 4pm for grades 6th and 7th. For the safety of all students, parents are to remain in their cars in the car line and students will be escorted to the car by a DSA Staff Member. Parents will only be permitted to enter the building during dismissal if they have a scheduled meeting with a teacher or member of the administrative team.

Late Pick-Ups

We expect students to be picked up from school, aftercare, extracurricular activities, and other events on time. Students are expected to be picked up from the regular school day by 4pm (ES) and 430pm (MS) on Monday – Friday. If students remain at school after 4pm, they will be placed in aftercare. There will be a fee of \$15 for each drop-in. The parent/legal guardian or authorized person is required to enter the building, pay the late pick up fee and sign the student out. Parents using third-party transportation services are responsible for late fees, if the third party arrives after the dismissal period.

For after school extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, etc), parents are expected to pick up their children at the stated end time. If a student is not picked up by the designated end time, the school will make every effort to contact the parent/guardian first and will then enact our child abandonment protocol. In the event that a student has not been picked up after all attempts have been made to reach a parent/guardian or emergency contacts, the school will notify the local police department and the Department of Family and Children Services to take custody of the student.

Aftercare

Students participating in Aftercare must be registered. The cost of Aftercare is \$60/week or \$15/day. Parents with multiple children registered for weekly service receive a 20% discount for all children after the first according to the following schedule: 1st child = \$60/wk; 2nd child = \$48/wk; 3rd child = \$36/wk; 4th child = \$24/wk, etc. Aftercare hours are 330pm - 6pm Monday through Friday. Students are expected to be picked up no later than 6pm. Parents will be charged \$1/minute for late pickups after 6pm. The school will make every effort to contact the parent/guardian beginning at 555pm. In the event that a student has not been picked up after all attempts have been made to reach a parent/guardian or emergency contacts, the school will notify the local police department and the Department of Family and Children Services to take custody of the student.

Make-up Work for Absent Students

Students who are absent from school for any of the excused absences stated under “legally excused absences,” or suspension, shall be allowed to complete all tests and assignments upon their return. Students are given the same number of days they were absent to make up the missed assignments. Upon satisfactory completion, students will be given full credit for completed work. Please note that teachers are not required to proactively provide students with assignments for planned absences from school. This is a courtesy and strictly at the teacher’s discretion.

Withdrawal due to Excessive Unverified Absences (AWOL)

In rare circumstances, a student may be absent from D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy for **ten consecutive days without attempting to notify the school** of the absences and without responding to the school’s attempts to communicate about the student’s absence. In such cases, D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy may recommend the withdrawal of the student when consecutive absences are not validated. The decision to withdraw a student is made exclusively by the School Leader of D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy.

The process below is followed for recommending the withdrawal of a student with significant consecutive absences without verification to protect the student’s due process rights for maintaining enrollment at D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy.

Days 1-2: Family is contacted by phone and email with documentation in SIS each day

Day 3: Certified letter sent to family with documentation in SIS and call is made to family with documentation in SIS

Days 4 -5: Family is contacted by phone and email with documentation in SIS each day

Day 6: Certified letter sent to family with documentation in SIS and call is made to family with documentation in SIS

Days 7-8: Family is contacted by phone and email with documentation in SIS each day

Day 9: Certified letter sent to family with documentation in SIS and call is made to family with documentation in SIS

Day 10: D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy School Leader or designee sends official WITHDRAWAL letter requesting the family to provide the school with current school enrollment information to forward student records.

OPERATIONS

Reporting Protocols

Student safety is our primary concern at DSA. To that end, we have two primary protocols in place to ensure that every child is safe in our school.

Incident Reporting

Incident reports will be generated for all injuries that occur on school property. A copy of the report detailing the incident will go home with all students involved and parental contact will be made the same day. Incidents involving disciplinary action will be handled by School Administrators.

Mandated Reporting

School Personnel Reporting

All school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they: "have reasonable cause to believe that a child who is under 18 years old known to them in a professional or official capacity has been harmed or is in danger of being, harmed-physically, sexually, or through neglect and that a caregiver either committed the harm or should have taken steps to prevent the child from harm."

Student/Family Reporting

In accordance with the requirements found in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7, the School complies with the Professional Standards Commission's state mandated process for students to follow when reporting instances of alleged inappropriate sexual behavior by a school employee.

Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at the School.

Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving such a report shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to Executive Director Grier and shall submit a written report of the incident to Executive Director Grier within 24 hours. If Executive Director Grier is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Governing Board and State Charter Schools Commission.

Executive Director Grier who receives a report of abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to the appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 or § 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by the School. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, Executive Director Grier shall make an immediate written report to the Governing Board, State Charter Schools Commission and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5.

"Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

1. Making sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showing or displaying sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
3. Writing sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spreading sexual rumors.
5. Spying on students as they dress, shower, or use the restroom at school.

6. Flashing or "mooning" students.
7. Touching, excessively hugging, or grabbing students in a sexual way.
8. Forcing a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talking or asking about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
10. Talking repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Making fun of your body parts.
12. Calling students sexual names.

Emergency Procedures

Each month students will have practice drills to prepare and educate them on the proper procedures in the event of an emergency. Drills may be announced or unannounced. A map detailing the evacuation plan required for specific emergencies is posted in every classroom. Students must follow the instructions of teachers and staff at all times during emergency drills/events. Students are expected to remain silent during drills so that they may hear instructions that might be given in the event of a real emergency. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.

Inclement Weather

In the event of pending inclement weather that might require a change in operational hours (snow, storms, etc), DSA will notify all families via phone, email, website and our text system to provide updates. In general, DSA will follow the decision of Douglas County Schools with school closings. However, we reserve the right to make a call to close school when we deem it is in the best interest of the safety of our students. Parents should sign up for all notification platforms during orientation.

If inclement weather situations arise while school is in session, we will follow the procedures outlined below for shelter-in-place. Parents will be notified of their children's safety **after** the inclement weather has passed. Please know that the school's first priority is your child's safety.

Evacuation/Shelter-In-Place Drills

Fire Drill:

Fire drills are conducted twice during the first month of school and monthly thereafter as follows:

- **The Alert:** Fire alarm sounds, alerting the school of a drill.
- **Staff Responsibilities:**
 - Teachers line students up and quickly lead students out of the building to the designated safe place.
 - Teachers must take attendance and account for every student.
 - Administrative staff ensures building is clear and gives all-clear signal when it is safe to return inside.
 - At conclusion of drill, teachers lead students silently back inside to resume instruction.
- **Student Responsibilities:**
 - Listen to and follow all instructions given by staff members. Students should walk briskly, not run, and proceed directly to exits.
 - Students should not gather belongings.
 - Students should stay with their class and teacher.
- **Special Notes:**
 - If a fire alarm sounds while a child is not in the regular classroom, he/she should exit the building by the quickest route and proceed to the designated meeting place to reunite with their class.
 - Students should familiarize themselves with the location of the interior fire alarm striking stations and should be familiar with how to pull these alarms in the event of an emergency.
 - Any student found guilty of pulling the school's fire alarm without cause will be subject to disciplinary consequences including reporting to local authorities.

Tornado Drill:

Tornado drills will be conducted twice a year as follows:

- **The Alert:** An announcement will be made over the PA system alerting the school that a tornado drill is in session.
- **Staff Responsibilities:**
 - Teachers line students up quickly and lead them into the hallway.
 - Teachers take attendance and account for every student.
 - All staff shelter with students after attendance is taken.
 - Administrative staff secure the perimeter of building and shelter with students and give signal of “all-clear” when drill has concluded.
 - Teachers lead students silently back inside to resume instruction.
- **Student Responsibilities:**
 - Listen to and follow all instructions given by staff members.
 - Students quickly grab a book, notebook, or other hard object to protect their heads.
 - Students sit in the hallway with their backs against the walls, knees bent, and heads covered.
 - Students should stay with their class and teacher.
- **Special Notes:**
 - Students should familiarize themselves with more than one safe shelter space and if the drill happens while they are not in class, proceed immediately to one of those places and take cover.

Other Emergency Preparedness Drills

Additional emergency preparedness drills are necessary and vital for the safety and security of students and staff. Each of these drills should be taken seriously and all procedures and directions should be followed with fidelity. DSA conducts the following additional emergency preparedness drills: intruder/active shooter, bomb threat, earthquake, lockout, and lockdown. These drills are conducted twice a year. All students will be given specific instructions in emergency preparedness drills prior to each individual drill. Students are expected to:

- Listen and pay attention to all directions given by the teacher or administrator.
- Be absolutely silent.
- Walk, not run, to designated exits or safe spaces.

Every drill is a preparation to preserve life and students and families should discuss the importance of appropriate behaviors during a drill or actual event.

Parent Expectations During Emergencies

In the rare event that DSA experiences an emergency situation (bomb threat, intruder, fire, etc), we will be in communication with parents as soon as it is safe to do so. We have a moral and legal obligation to first ensure the safety of your child. Regardless of what you hear in the media, please follow the instructions sent to you by the school. **Please do not come to the school.** As difficult as it may be, the best thing for you to do is stay home, stay informed, and be ready to move immediately to the designated pick up location. The school will ALWAYS communicate with you when it is safe to come and pick your child up. You will also always receive notification of incidents that require us to exercise any of the emergency preparedness procedures listed above.

Family Communication

DSA firmly believes in the “village” concept and we know that children are stronger and more successful when they have multiple people working alongside them and advocating on their behalf. Thus, we deem communication and partnership with our families to be of the utmost importance.

Communicating with Teachers

Teachers will provide families with their email address and dojo links for communication. Classroom teachers will set their own availability to accept calls in the evenings. Please respect the set hours of phone communication. Teachers have limited availability to respond to parent phone calls, email, and text messages during the school day as they are engaged in teaching your children with excellence. Therefore, all urgent communication for classroom teachers should be sent through the main office. Families must **communicate directly with the main office regarding changes to transportation and/or changes in administration of doctor prescribed medicine.**

Communicating with Administration

The 'A' Team is flexibly available between 7am - 5pm daily by phone, text, or email. Administrators will return all calls within 24 business hours. Please know that our Executive Director is hands-on. This means she is rarely in her office, but rather out within the school building ensuring quality instruction for your children. If you need to meet with Executive Director Grier, please schedule an appointment. She is not available to have impromptu meetings for non-emergency situations.

Electronic Communication Platforms

DSA's primary communication platform is Parent Square. Parents receive information and training on parent square during orientation. All field experience payments, permission slips, messages to teachers, etc go through this platform. Additionally, Class Dojo is used in grades K-5 to share behavioral information with parents as well as posting of photos of students in action. Finally, DSA is moving to Infinite Campus as our Student Information System for the 24-25 school year. More information to come about this platform and its new capabilities.

Panther Pages

Each week, there will be an electronic newsletter that is sent home to families. The Panther Pages includes a summary of important school information and updates for the week. Families should read the newsletter every week to stay connected to our school community.

Panther Pocket

Every Friday, students will come home with their "Panther Pocket". Within will be graded assignments, a weekly progress report, school announcements, and anything else the teacher deems necessary to send home. The Panther Pocket will need to be signed by a parent/guardian to acknowledge receipt. This is a primary communication method between school and home. Be sure to check your child's backpack every weekend for updates.

Cell Phone Policy

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school, however, they must be surrendered to the designated homeroom teacher or administrative staff member each morning upon arrival to school. Cell phones in grades K-2nd will be collected by an administrative team member each morning and labeled. They will then be secured in an undisclosed location by the administrative team. Cell phones in grades 3rd - 7th will be collected each morning by the homeroom teacher and securely locked up within the classroom. Students may retrieve phones at the end of the school day.

Students who fail to surrender their cell phones in the morning will receive disciplinary consequences as follows:

- 1st offense - cell phone is confiscated and must be picked up by a parent/guardian same day.
- 2nd offense - cell phone is confiscated and student receives one day of in-school suspension. Phone must be picked up by a parent/guardian after the ISS is served.
- 3rd offense - cell phone is confiscated and student receives two days of in-school suspension. Phone must be picked up by a parent/guardian after the ISS is served.
- 4th and every subsequent offense - cell phone is banned from school and student receives out of school suspension.

School Telephone Use

Students may only use the school phone with permission from their teacher or another staff member at the school. In general, phone use is limited to school-related business.

Health Policy

Immunizations

At the start of each school year, the operations team is responsible for reviewing all vaccination records for entering

Kindergarten students, new students and for all updated vaccination records for returning students. Families should update immunization records for students as needed and required by Georgia state law. The front office team can provide more information regarding immunization requirements and exemptions, as it relates to school entry.

Health Records

Medical records must remain up-to-date at all times in order to meet the health requirements for the school entry year. Failure to submit and maintain updated immunizations or physical exam documents in the office will prevent your child from attending school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in helping us to protect all of our students.

Medical Information

Upon entering D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy, families are responsible for submitting a health information form for each student attending the school. Students with chronic conditions that require medical treatment or adaptations during the school day may sign a release of medical information form to access medical records.

Families who wish for the office team to administer any treatments or medications (including over the counter medications) must submit a medication administration order form signed by their physician. All forms can be retrieved from the office team. Families are responsible for providing up-to-date and accurate information to our school. Families will be given the opportunity to update this information each year at orientation in the summer.

Medication

Students may take medication at school only if a Request for Medication Form is completed by the student's doctor and is on file at the school. Students are not permitted to self-administer medication, prescription or over the counter, while at school. Please make sure the medication follows these guidelines:

- Original container with appropriate prescription label (including the name of the student, the name of the medicine, the date, the dosage information, and directions for administering the medication)
- Appropriate student health authorization form (Request for Medication Form)

We store and administer the medicine in a secure location. Please be aware that the medication cannot travel back and forth to school – once it's given to us for your student's use, it must remain with us until it needs to be refilled. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to ask for two separate prescriptions when at the doctor's office with your student. Students are not allowed to have medication (prescription or non-prescription) of any kind in their possession at school, and it should not be placed in their backpacks.

Adults should bring the medication directly to the office manager. For further information on medication or any health-related issues, please call the main office. Families are responsible for providing up-to-date medication at the beginning and throughout the school year and picking up their child's medication at the close of the school year. Please note we will not administer expired medication to students.

Illness

Families will be contacted immediately for any child who is at school with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Uncontrolled Asthma
- Ringworm
- Unspecified Rashes
- Pinkeye
- Head Lice
- Infectious Disease
- Moderate Trauma

Students with the above symptoms must be picked up within an hour of contact with parents. Return to school will require a physician's release note when necessary. Students must be symptom free for 24 hours without intervention of medication to return to school. Scrapes and minor bruises will be attended to at school, and your student will return to class.

Chronic Illness/Allergies

All students with chronic conditions such as: asthma, allergic reaction, diabetes, respiratory distress, seizure disorder, urinary frequency or incontinence must meet with the office team at the beginning of the school year to discuss a health/emergency care plan which must accompany orders signed by the child's physician for medication or treatment in school. The office team will communicate with the school leadership team as necessary to implement the plan. The front office will be notified of students that may present with medical emergencies so that swift intervention may be implemented.

Lice/Scabies/Pink Eye/Communicable Disease

Any student suspected of having any of the above will not be able to attend school until satisfactory treatment has been given. Discretion is used to check other students in classes where there is an outbreak. Written notice will be sent home regarding outbreaks. A copy of our Covid-19 policies is posted on our website.

Reporting a Child's Sickness

If your student is going to miss school because of illness, please call the school as soon as possible. All student absences should be followed up the next day (submitted within 24 hours) with a note signed by a parent/guardian or doctor. Please inform the school if there are any medical concerns or special circumstances that we should be aware of. Again, students may not return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours without the intervention of medication.

NUTRITION

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy provides breakfast and lunch for students. The cost of breakfast is \$1.80 and lunch is \$3.20. Breakfast and lunch should be prepaid online. The cost for both meals for the week is \$25. The cost for lunch only is \$16/week. Parents may opt to pay for all 10 meals or just a few meals at their discretion.

School Meals Offered

Meals served are created with student health in mind. The meals are minimally processed, created without food additives such as artificial colors and dyes, do not include items such as high fructose corn syrup or imitation ingredients, and include a variety of whole grains. Students participating in the school meal program are offered all of the components of a healthy and filling meal.

Bringing Lunch from Home

Students bringing lunches from home must have a complete meal. If you choose to send lunch with your student, we encourage the consumption of healthy foods. Sodas and carbonated beverages are not permitted. Juices, milk, and water are preferred. **Hot flavored chips or sides are not permitted.** Please note that **peanut products are not allowed** as we have several students and staff members with severe peanut allergies. We will notify parents of this at the start of the school year. This is for the safety of all students.

Food Allergies and Other Special Dietary Needs

School food service may make food substitutions, at their discretion, for individual students who do not have a disability,

but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. Each special dietary request must be supported by a medical statement, which explains the food substitution that is requested. Medical Statements should include the following:

- An identification of the medical or other special dietary condition which restricts the student's diet;
- The food or foods to be omitted from the student's diet, and
- The food or choice of foods to be substituted
- Signature of a recognized medical authority (i.e., a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or registered nurse)

Vegetarian options are available for students who do not wish to eat meat, poultry or fish.

Snacks

Students will have a morning or afternoon snack according to the student's classroom schedule at the teacher's discretion. In order to promote a healthy learning environment, if you choose to send a snack with your student, we encourage the consumption of healthy snacks on campus. **Students are not allowed to bring soda, carbonated beverages, gum, hot chips, or any candy.** If a student brings any of these items, they will not be permitted to be consumed.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Trust is critical to the culture of the D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy. As a school we operate from the position that students will become better decision- makers if they are provided appropriate freedom, trust, and support. There are a variety of strategies to promote good decisions including explicit behavioral and social skills through our Social Emotional Support, progressive discipline through goal- setting and check-in, reflections, positive behavior supports/interventions, and positive reinforcement. The staff regularly highlights students for accomplishments and progress as it relates to behavior. There are also monthly recognition of students who demonstrate the attributes of a DSA Panther.

It is important that there are clear and consistent approaches to addressing students' decisions that harm or hinder their learning and safety of themselves or others. Whenever possible, staff will engage students in analysis and discussion to understand why their behavior is harmful or inappropriate, as well as how students can make better decisions in the future. Through support from the teachers, administration, and classroom communities, students also work to repair any damage done from their behavior. This may include restorative practices and other opportunities to reflect on the impact of their actions. In addition to these practices, there is also a need for a clear and consistent system of consequences to discourage inappropriate and harmful behavior. The consequences listed in this code of conduct are general guidelines. ***The administration reserves the authority to bypass steps in issuing consequences based on the severity, duration, and frequency of the behavior(s).***

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) applies to the programs and activities of a state education agency (SEA), local education agency (LEA), or other recipient of funds under any program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It governs the administration to students of a survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight protected areas:

political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
sex behavior or attitudes;
illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

PPRA also concerns marketing surveys and other areas of student privacy, parental access to information, and the administration of certain physical examinations to minors. The rights under PPRA transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.

Social Emotional Support

Social Emotional Support involves processes through which children and adults develop fundamental emotional and social competencies to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, maintain and establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The overall intent and purpose of the program is designed to inform how adults/students relate to each other, foster a calm and welcoming school climate, shape partnerships with family and community, and build heightened engagement, trust and collaboration. We have embraced social emotional support at DSA and have put programs in place to promote a calm, safe, and highly productive learning environment.

Our Approach to Discipline

D.E.L.T.A STEAM Academy’s approach to discipline is a combination of progressive and restorative. We hold high behavioral expectations of all of our students and firmly believe that children rise to the level of expectation set for them. In light of this belief, we teach students to take responsibility for their actions and hold them accountable for their choices. When addressing behavior, we do just that, address the behavior, not the character of the child. We want students to understand that part of becoming a responsible citizen is the ability to make choices and understand the consequences - favorable or non-favorable - that come with those choices. We also want students to know that we all make mistakes and a bad choice today does not mean good choices can’t be made tomorrow. Every day is a new day to reset and bring our best selves to school. In all cases, the end goal is always to restore a student to their classroom community as that is where they most need to be.

Progressive Discipline

Levels of Infractions

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy has the highest expectations for student conduct to promote a culture of excellence, integrity, and community. Our primary goal is to educate, not employ punitive measures as a regular practice; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others and/or causes school/classroom disruptions, consequences are enacted. These consequences have levels based upon the severity and frequency of the action committed.

Level 1 Infractions: Level 1 infractions are acts of misconduct which interfere with orderly school procedures, school functions, extracurricular programs, and learning processes. Infractions and potential consequences include, but are not limited to the following:

Sample Infractions	Potential Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excessive talking ● Failure to follow classroom procedure(s) ● Refusal to participate in class or complete assigned work ● Inability to work cooperatively with others or failure to resolve interpersonal conflicts ● Distracting noises or movements ● Persistent attention-seeking behaviors ● First offense with electronic devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Logical consequences related to the student action (relocation to another room, a break or time out from an activity, restrictions on free time) ● Reflective consequences that require redirection and problem solving ● In-class behavioral interventions ● Restorative consequences that repair harm done or mend relationships (written apology, mediation)
	<p>Other Recommended Actions</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent phone call ● Documentation of chronic or repeated Level 1 offenses
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Level 2 Infractions: Level 2 infractions are acts of misconduct which include, but are not limited to, repeated Level 1 infractions as well as misbehavior directed at persons or property, but which do not seriously endanger health, safety, or well-being of others. Infractions and potential consequences include, but are not limited to the following:

Sample Infractions	Potential Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refusing to follow directions of an adult ● Refusal to engage appropriately in a logical consequence from a Level 1 behavior (e.g. disruption in the assigned time out classroom) ● Repeated interference with the school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students ● Speaking disrespectfully to staff/adults ● Throwing objects or other behavior that may become harmful ● Mild technology infraction ● Any repeated Level 1 offense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Logical consequences that follow from the student's action (relocation in the classroom, time out placement, loss of privilege or activity, confiscation of property) ● Reflective consequences that require reflection and problem solving pertinent to the infraction ● Restorative consequences that repair harm done or mend relationships (written apology, mediation, etc.) ● Loss of privileges (field trips, pep rally, dances, assemblies, Field Day, etc.) ● Loss of technology privileges ● Lunch Detention assigned by administration ● In-school suspension, part of day or whole day, possibly multiple days ● Removal for the remainder of the school day <p>Other Recommended Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting to develop Intervention Plan/Behavior Contract ● Required conference with parent/guardian ● Conference with administrator

Level 3 Infractions: Level 3 Infractions are serious acts of misconduct. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, repeated misbehaviors of a similar nature, serious disruptions of the school environment that may threaten health, safety, or property, along with other acts of serious misconduct. A child who reaches this level of infraction will be sent to an administrator. Infractions and potential consequences include, but are not limited to the following:

Sample Infractions	Potential Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chronically disruptive behavior (previous referrals at Level 2) ● Repeated disruption of the learning environment ● Repeated refusal to follow adult directions ● Instigating/provoking fights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Logical consequences that follow from the student's action ● After School detention/Lunch Detention ● Behavior Contract with provisions that may result in recommendation for disciplinary tribunal which can lead to

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fighting/physical aggression ● Food fights ● Intentionally setting off fire alarm ● Verbal or written threats to harm another student or staff ● Verbal or written aggression ● Use of profanity to peers and adults ● Leaving classrooms or building without permission ● Theft/attempted theft/possession of stolen item ● Inappropriate gestures/comments of a sexual nature ● Destruction of school or private property (vandalism) ● Bullying ● Inappropriate technology usage (severity left at discretion of administration) 	<p>recommendations for long-term suspension or expulsion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loss of privileges (field trips, assemblies, dances, etc.) ● Restitution (payment of damages) ● Out of School Suspension (1-10 days) ● Required conference post consequence with school administration ● Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal <p>Other Recommended Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Required parental contact ● Counselor referral ● Meeting to develop intervention plan/behavior contract ● Conference with administrator
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Level 4 Infractions: Level 4 infractions are the most serious acts of misconduct, as these acts of misconduct threaten the health, safety, or well-being of others. These violations are so serious they may require notice to law enforcement or outside agencies. Such acts may result in criminal penalties being imposed. At this level, the school has made every attempt to work with the student and his/her parent/guardian. Either the interventions have not worked, or the severity of the infraction warrants this level of discipline. If a student is in possession of weapons, drugs, alcohol, or causes bodily harm/assaults staff or another child, the administrative response team will be contacted immediately. Additionally, the school will confiscate and retain possession of the illicit item. In addition, all Level 4 infractions warrant referral for a Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing for consideration of expulsion. Infractions and potential consequences include, but are not limited to the following:

Sample Infractions	Potential Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Possession of/carrying weapons or incendiary devices ● Possession of a facsimile of a weapon (BB gun, Airsoft rifle, etc.) ● Possession or use of drugs/alcohol ● Arson ● Bomb threats/terroristic threats ● Repeated pulling of fire alarm ● Assault of staff ● Bodily harm to other students ● Sexual harassment to other students/staff ● Promiscuous or immoral acts ● Severe misuse of technology or internet usage ● Gang activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-Term Suspension (10+ days) ● Referral to Disciplinary Hearing ● Temporary or permanent expulsion ● Report to law enforcement

Restorative Practices

Our goal is for every child to remain in class and receive the education they need to be successful. We make every effort to avoid getting to Level 3 and 4 infractions and we do this by creating an environment of trust, accountability, and respect amongst students and between students and adults. We will implore restorative practices in conjunction with the progressive discipline named above to mitigate escalation of situations. Below are examples of restorative practices that we engage in at DSA to ensure full restoration of a student to their school and classroom communities.

Affective Statements: Affective statements, or feelings statements, are personal expressions of feelings as a response to someone else's actions. With affective statements you state your feeling, the reason for the feeling and what you need to feel better. Affective statements can be used between teachers and students or peer-to-peer.

Collaborative Class Agreements: Teachers and students collaborate to make rules that will create a great classroom environment. When students are given the opportunity to contribute to the rules that will govern their class they develop a sense of ownership for their classroom.

Mindfulness: Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present and aware of where you are and what you are doing. Mindfulness allows students to become more self-aware with classmates and teachers. It also increases focus, and reduces stress and anxiety. Mindfulness practice involves sitting quietly for a few minutes and focusing on your breath. It can be guided with words, assisted with calming music, or completely silent. It can be done as a group or individually.

Zen Zones: Each teacher will have an area in their classroom where a student can go to reflect, reset, calm down, and take some deep breaths to refocus. We call this a "Panther Pause". When situations arise where a longer pause is needed, a student may be temporarily removed from the classroom/lunch/recess by an administrator for the purposes of taking a break from the classroom environment. Students will reflect on their actions and partake in mini-lessons and discussions related to their infraction. This may include videos, social stories, reading passages, role playing, etc. The student returns to class within 15 - 20 minutes once they are calm and ready to rejoin the classroom environment.

Panther Reunion: When a student has been suspended for any amount of time, two re-entry meetings are required that must be attended by a parent/guardian and the student - one meeting with an administrator and one meeting between the student and his/her class. For 1-2 day suspensions, re-entry meetings are conducted by an administrator other than the Executive Director and the child is sent back to class. The class re-entry meeting is conducted by the teacher during the morning meeting or closing circle. For 3+ day suspensions, the meeting is conducted by the Executive Director. The student/class meeting is also conducted by the Executive Director with the support of the teacher. The purpose of the administrative meeting is to spend some time reflecting with the student on what they have learned as a result of the suspension, what different choices they plan to make, and what they need to be successful in making better choices. The purpose of the class meeting is to restore a student to his/her peers. The student shares their reflections in their own way of how their actions impacted the rest of their peers. They then re-commit to the classroom community and are welcomed back in.

Peer Mediation: Mediation is conducted by a teacher or administrator to resolve problems and improve communication between students. Mediation may be used as an intervention with students prior to a discipline referral.

Problem-Solving Anchor Charts: Students and teachers together create a problem-solving chart that helps them identify when they need teacher support for an issue and when they have the tools to do it on their own.

Restitution: Students/families will be responsible for the payment and/or restoration of school or personal property that has been vandalized, damaged, lost, or stolen. This includes, but is not limited to the following examples - deliberate damage to laptop/Chromebook, destruction of another student's clothing or items, charges or fines by the Fire Department for false fire alarms, etc.

Restorative Circles: Restorative Circles help to build self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills. During circle time, participants sit in the circle to discuss group issues or reflect on their feelings. Restorative Circles are used to check in about your day, resolve conflict, or for academic conversations.

Investigation of Misconduct

When a discipline violation is reported or suspected, the administrator or designee will determine whether an investigation is warranted, and, if so, will instruct appropriate personnel to conduct an investigation. The investigation should include interviews with the alleged offender(s), victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s), staff members, and others who might

have relevant information. Statements can be obtained from all individuals who are interviewed. Video surveillance, if available, will be reviewed and secured. Any other physical and documentary evidence can be collected and preserved.

At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, the parent or guardian will be notified. If it is deemed necessary for a student to be removed from the school setting by emergency medical or law enforcement personnel, parents will be immediately notified. If a parent is unable to arrive to accompany the student with the medical or law enforcement, a school administrator will accompany the student until a parent arrives. The determination of whether or not a student has committed a disciplinary violation will be made solely based on a preponderance of the evidence. The decision to charge a student for violation of this code of conduct is made by the school administration.

- **Student Questioning by School Administrators:** Administrators have the responsibility and authority to question students for the purpose of maintaining a safe and orderly school environment at any time. Though it is important to inform parents about issues of concern, **parental consent is not required prior to the questioning of students.** Additionally, parent requests that students not be questioned without their presence will not be considered.
- **Student Interaction with Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS):** DFCS officials investigating suspected child abuse are permitted to conduct reasonable interviews and inspections of children. Notice to parents is neither required nor desirable when the object of the investigation may be the parents. If the investigation involves suspected child abuse by individuals other than those residing in the child's household, parents will be informed that such interviews are being requested.

IEP and IDEA Requirements, Due Process

D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy commits to staying in compliance with any federal law regarding student discipline for children with disabilities and will stay apprised of any changes in the law. Students with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses. If a student with disabilities has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that includes disciplinary guidelines that student will be disciplined according to those guidelines as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Students for whom the IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with the standard school policies discussed above.

Any student who is receiving special education services or has been identified as a student with a disability under IDEA and whose acts are determined by the Administration Team and Executive Director to have violated any rules, regulations or laws as alleged, shall be referred to an IEP committee. The IEP committee will be responsible for determining if the student's conduct is a manifestation of his/her disability and whether such conduct warrants a change in placement and amendments to the IEP. If the IEP committee determines that the student's conduct is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school shall determine what, if any, disciplinary actions shall be taken with regard to offenses that the student has been found by the Administration Team or Executive Director to have committed. The IEP committee shall also have the authority to reconsider, recommend, and implement any changes in a student's IEP or educational placement. Nothing in these rules shall alter or adversely affect the rights of students with disabilities under applicable federal and state laws.

A student's family may elect to appeal a decision by the Executive Director for long term suspension or mandatory transfer to the Administration Team. The Administration Team may delegate the responsibility and authority to conduct a hearing to a tribunal committee and the tribunal shall take all actions that would otherwise be taken by the Administration Team. All such actions taken by the tribunal in connection with such a hearing will be binding on D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy and the student. In all events of mandatory withdrawal, the Administration Team and/or school social worker will work in conjunction with the family to find the best solution.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is not tolerated at D.E.L.T.A. STEAM Academy. Our staff takes bullying seriously and will take disciplinary actions in cases where bullying is identified. Repeated incidents of student bullying will result in disciplinary actions including loss

of privileges, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, etc.

Cyberbullying/Electronic Bullying: Bullying can occur on school property or through school technology resources but can also occur through the use of electronic communications. Whether or not that communication originated on school property with school technology resources, if the electronic communication is directed specifically at students or school personnel, maliciously intended for the purpose threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose it is considered a form of cyberbullying.

Bullying behavior is defined as:

- Willful attempt or threat to inflict injury or another person when accompanied by an apparent present or ability to do so
- Intentionally exhibiting a display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect any immediate bodily harm
- Intentional written, verbal, or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that:
 - Causes substantial physical harm or bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim and may include, but is not limited to, substantial injuries or pain
 - Interference with the victim's education
 - Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment
 - Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

***NOTE:** Parents/guardians of students who are victims of bullying or are found to have committed bullying behaviors will be notified via conference or letter/referral. Staff members should report instances of these behaviors to school administration immediately so that administrators may review them in a timely manner. A meeting with administration is required with the parents of the student determined to have committed bullying behaviors.

Employees, volunteers, students, and parents/guardians/other persons that have access to monitor students may anonymously report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity to a school administrator. No person who reports bullying will be retaliated against by any school employee. Students who retaliate against others for reports of bullying behavior are subject to discipline which may include additional consequences.

This information does not in any way limit or restrict the school's ability to take additional action, including imposing disciplinary sanctions through and including permanent expulsion from the school as a result of the student's behavior.