



CENTENNIAL

A SCHOOL FOR
EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Centennial, a School for Expeditionary Learning is committed to providing a rich learning environment for students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds -- students with a range of abilities, affinities, and strengths.

Centennial, A School for Expeditionary Learning is an inclusive school that fosters each child's sense of wonder and adventure through exemplary standards of character, academic achievement, and social responsibility.

Expeditionary Learning (EL) begins with children's curiosity about the world. It harnesses their natural passion to learn and helps them develop the curiosity, knowledge, skills, and personal qualities they need for successful adulthood.

Gone are the ringing bells, rows of desks, and fill-in-the blank worksheets. For all or most of the day, students and teachers are engaged in challenging learning expeditions that explore a topic or theme in depth. Their studies call for intellectual inquiry, physical exploration, and community service. On a given day, their explorations may take them outside the school building to do environmental research, conduct interviews in local businesses, or carry out other fieldwork assignments. There are opportunities for quiet reflection -- time for students to write in their journals, gather their thoughts, and reflect on what they have learned. Students work individually, in small groups, and as a member of their "crew" or class. Together they learn to draw on the strengths of a whole class experiencing synergy firsthand.

Centennial draws its direction and strength from ten Expeditionary Learning Design Principles:

- The Primacy of Self Discovery
- The Having of Wonderful Ideas
- The Responsibility for Learning
- Intimacy and Caring
- Success and Failure
- Collaboration and Competition
- Diversity and Inclusion
- The Natural World
- Solitude and Reflection
- Service and Compassion

These educational principles provide a powerful framework for personal growth through academic rigor, physical challenge, and service. The curriculum is designed around authentic, purposeful, project-based learning expeditions tied to Colorado Academic Standards and Common Core Standards.

Centennial is committed to comprehensively evaluating students' progress. We have clearly defined standards and employ a number of assessment tools: portfolios, developmental guidelines and checklists, summary reports, public exhibitions, student-led parent conferences, Passages, and standardized testing.

DAILY SCHEDULE – SCHOOL HOURS

Office Hours: 7:30am – 4:00pm

School Day for ECE 3 Students: 8:00am-11:00am and 12:45pm-3:45pm

School Day for ECE4, K-5 Students: 8:00am-3:45pm
Faculty: 7:45am-3:45pm

CENTENNIAL, A SCHOOL FOR EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING is a neighborhood school that serves approximately 470 students, ECE through 5th grade. The Centennial community believes that a love of learning, high academic achievement and parental involvement are keys to a lifelong education. The following information is important information about Centennial. If you have a question that is not addressed in this handbook please feel free to contact the Principal. Please read the following pages to become familiar with basic information concerning our school.

ADULTS ON CAMPUS

Your child's safety is our number one concern. With that in mind, any non-staff adult on campus must sign in at the office and wear a volunteer name tag or a visitor badge. Whether you are coming to volunteer for several hours or are just dropping off a lunch, please remember to come to the office first. The name tag/volunteer badge serves as a visual ID that lets any staff member know immediately who belongs in the school and it also reinforces our monitoring of people on our campus. **All parents must adhere to this rule.** Parents will not be permitted to enter the class during regular school hours via the outside classroom doors.

If you need to speak with the principal/assistant principal, sometimes they may not be readily available. The instructional program is very important and the principal/assistant principal spend the majority of the day observing and providing support to teaching staff and students. Your concerns are important. Please call the office to schedule an appointment so that a time can be set to address your concerns.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL AND EARLY DISMISSAL

Arrival: The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. for all students. Students should NOT arrive until 7:45am as no adult supervision is provided on the grounds before this time. Children are NOT permitted in the building before the beginning of school, as teachers are busy preparing for the day's lessons. Students are required to report directly to the playgrounds, where they are supervised by staff from 7:45am until 8:00 a.m. At 8:00am, when the school bell rings, students will be asked to line up at the exterior doors to their classroom.

During **inclement weather** signs will be posted at the main entrance door signaling that it will be an INSIDE DAY. If it is an INSIDE DAY, students will enter the school through the front, main doors and are to go to the assigned indoor location for their grade level. Students will be picked up by teachers at 8:00am from the interior hallway and will be escorted to their classroom. No students are to enter their classrooms through the exterior classroom doors on INSIDE DAYS.

On cold (below 20 degrees F), rainy or snowy days, children should dress appropriately and should NOT arrive at school until 7:45am.

Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Late arrival is an interruption to those already engaged in learning activities and results in a loss of instruction time for the tardy student.

Students arriving after 8:05 a.m. must report to the office before going to class.

Parents/guardians of late students in all grades need to walk their child into the building if arriving after 8:05 a.m. to ensure the child's safe passage into his/her scheduled class. All absences and tardies become part of a child's permanent record file. Please see section, **Attendance and Absenteeism** for more information on the school's attendance policy.

Dismissal: All students are dismissed from their classroom, at the exterior door, at 3:45 p.m. when the bell rings. Faculty members supervise the building exits during dismissal. Children who are not picked up by 4:00pm will be asked to wait for parents inside the main entrance. The office staff is not able to stay after hours to wait with your child. Centennial staff will be required to call Safety and Security and/or Denver Health and Human Services if students are repeatedly not picked up by 4:00pm.

Early Dismissal: It is strongly recommended that all appointments and extracurricular activities be scheduled outside school hours as the loss of class time is detrimental to the student. **In the event that the occasional appointment cannot be so scheduled, a note should be sent to school with the student requesting early dismissal for that day and giving the time that the parent will pick up the student.** Parents must meet their children in the office and officially sign them out of school. Teachers are instructed not to release children from the classroom or playground without authorization from the office. This procedure is followed to protect your child and to hold classroom interruptions to a minimum. A child will not be released to anyone who is not on the emergency card or to anyone under 18 years of age, unless the school's office has been notified in writing or by phone by the parent.

Should early dismissal become necessary because of an illness or accident in school, the nurse/office will contact that parent or appropriate designee on the Emergency Information Form. A parent or emergency contact person must sign the student out of school as outlined above. A doctor's note may be required if absences or early withdrawals are deemed excessive (please see section, **Attendance and Absenteeism** for more information).

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

In order for students to receive the full benefit of the Centennial education, daily attendance is the first and most important step. The school calendar is published and distributed before the commencement of the school year and parents are asked to schedule any travel within the dates that classes are NOT in session. Please see the school website <http://centennial.dpsk12.org> which lists district and school events. Please notify the school if your child will be absent or tardy by phoning the school attendance line at (720)424-8901. This should be done each day a child is absent.

Academic work may be made up for approved absences. However, please do not drop in at dismissal time to request work. Requests should be telephoned or emailed ahead of time to the office and teacher.

Centennial has an attendance and tardy policy in accordance with the Colorado School Attendance Law and Denver Public Schools' "Denver Plan." These guidelines allow for roughly 10 absences during the course of a school year or in other words, a 97% attendance rate. Every month the school social worker reviews student attendance and sends letters to parents for those students whose absences are excessive. The definition of "excessive" changes throughout the school year based on number of school days but parents can expect to receive the first letter after 5 absences or 5 tardies.

Once a child's absences have reached a level of concern, which is currently 10 absences/tardies or more (please note that this is outside of medical or family emergencies), an attendance contract must be completed with the school social worker. This will outline attendance

expectations as well as the additional requirement of a doctors' note for any absence of two days or more. If absences are chronic, excessive, unexcused, or otherwise of concern a child and their family will be referred to truancy court where the court will mandate your child's attendance. This mandate is quite serious and will follow the child for the remainder of their education. A few other things to note are: A school principal can 'un-excuse' any parent-excused absence if a student has become truant. Excessive tardies and early withdrawals are also subject to truancy law.

BIRTHDAYS/CELEBRATIONS

To minimize interruptions to classroom instructional time, we strongly recommend that all the month's birthdays will be celebrated on a day of the teacher's choosing.. We ask that if you are providing snacks for your child to celebrate his/her birthday the snacks be healthy ones, free of excessive sugar. Since we have a number of students with severe allergies, we ask that you check with the classroom teacher to see if any special considerations need to be honored. Parents that have students with severe allergies are asked to provide an alternative snack that the classroom teacher can use as a substitute, when needed.

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM (BIC)

The mission of Denver Public School's Food and Nutrition Services is to provide healthy food and nutrition education so all students will have the opportunity for success. One way we work to meet this mission at Centennial is through the Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) program. All students at Centennial will be provided a nourishing breakfast in their classrooms every day at no charge.

Menus: <http://foodservices.dpsk12.org/menus.html>

Nutritional Information: <http://foodservices.dpsk12.org/nutrition.html>

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Students who live at least one mile from the school are entitled to school bus transportation by DPS. The routes are set by the district and any questions concerning this service should be directed to its transportation office. For the safety of each child it is always a good idea to walk your children to and from the bus stops. Younger children should always be escorted or picked up by an adult or a responsible sibling. For information regarding late busses, or any other bus questions, call the parent hotline number at (303)825-2611. Please report any problems, concerns or questions to the school office.

Regarding **bus behavior** it is important that children obey bus safety rules. When students misbehave it is difficult for the bus driver to concentrate on driving. To ensure the safety of students riding the bus to/from school or on excursions, students must:

- Sit in their seats quietly
- May not change seats or stand while bus is in motion
- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner
- Keep arms and heads inside the bus
- Refrain from eating on the bus.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Denver Public Schools will make a decision in the early morning about closing schools or putting the Storm Schedule into effect. Check the DPS website and listen to the local television and radio stations for the announcement. KOA 850 or KBNA 1220 are the official announcement stations for school closing information. When DPS elementary schools are put on the storm schedule, bus pick up times at the bus stops are delayed about one half hour. School will start at the regular time for students who do not ride DPS school busses.

In the unusual circumstance where school must be canceled during the school day, parents and/or guardians will be notified immediately. The information on the Emergency Form on file in the office will be used, and administrators and teachers will determine that all students have satisfactory transportation and supervision at home before releasing them from school. Please make sure your emergency contact numbers are kept up to date to ensure we may make timely contact with you during the school day.

CELL PHONES

Centennial prohibits students from using cell phones during the school day. Cell phones create interference with instruction and may impede school safety in a real emergency. If you wish your child to have a cell phone in his/her possession for reaching you after school, your child must keep it in his/her backpack. If a child is out of compliance with this policy, cell phones will be confiscated by the teacher. It will then be necessary for the parent to come to school to obtain possession of the cell phone. **Please note that Centennial is not responsible for any lost or stolen items; please see Toys and Personal Belongings section for more information.**

CLASS PLACEMENT PROCESS

Centennial seeks to hire and retain the best teachers in the district. Children will be placed by staff according to individual and class balancing needs. Assigning students to classes is most effectively done by our classroom teachers who have been working with the students daily in an educational setting. Teachers consider the learning styles and academic needs of the returning students and assign them to the different classrooms at the next grade level. This process is done with care and the utmost consideration of each child's academic and social/emotional needs. It takes careful consideration of many factors to create equitably balanced classrooms in terms of academic needs, behavior, gender, ethnicity, and number of students.

If you feel that your child requires unique consideration as these decisions are made, the principal will receive letters regarding your child's placement for the following year. Parents will be expected to spend at least 30 minutes in each classroom to inform the request. A letter must be submitted and must contain a clear statement about why the requested teacher is a better educational match for the child's needs. A letter may not be e-mailed and must be delivered directly to the principal by the deadline of May 1. **This is not a guarantee that requests will be honored, but it will be taken into consideration.** A late request will not be considered due to the amount of work that will already have been completed in creating class placement.

COMPUTER/INTERNET/TECHNOLOGY

Centennial believes that the use of technology is integral to teaching students. All parents and students must sign an acceptable Use Agreement governing computer use at Centennial. Failure to comply with any or all of this policy will result in a loss of any or all computer use privileges.

COMMON AREA AND PLAYGROUND RULES

In order to maintain a positive school culture in which students feel safe, we have several school-wide expectations for students in our common areas and playground.

In hallways/common areas, students must:

- Always walk and never run
 - Walk in an orderly, organized line
 - Keep hands to selves
 - Stay with his/her class, and
 - Are escorted by teachers from class to class.
- On the playground students
- Skip, walk or move carefully on blacktop and never run
 - Sit down on the slides
 - Only throw objects meant to be thrown
 - Use the swings and other equipment properly and do not jump from them
 - Remain on the playground at all times, and
 - Treat their fellow classmates with respect at all times.

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

The school's main telephone number is 720.424.8900. A secretary is on duty from 7:30 a.m. until 4:00p.m. Outside of those hours, messages are recorded on an answering machine. If your child is sick or absent please either leave a message on the Attendance Line at 720.424.8901 to notify us of your child's absence.

In order to minimize unnecessary classroom disruptions, i.e., parent phone calls to classrooms during the school day, please communicate in advance with your child. Routine/regular parents' calls to classrooms are discouraged because they interrupt an entire classroom's learning.

Centennial is working hard to improve communications from school to home, by obtaining students' household email addresses for electronic weekly updates and other pertinent information. Information will be shared electronically via email with families every Thursday. We are striving to go paperless and have email be the primary means to communicate regular school-wide correspondence to families. However, paper copies will be sent to homes that request non-digital information. Please see office staff in the main office for more information.

Teachers are expected to communicate with parents/guardians regularly regarding your child's academic progress. These forms of teacher communication include and are not limited to classroom weekly updates (blogs, emails, etc.), parent-teacher or student-led conferences (twice yearly), report cards (trimesters) and informal/formal communications, as needed. If you have questions or need more information from a teacher on your child's progress, please contact him/her directly via email or phone to schedule an appointment. Centennial encourages parents and guardians to communicate their concerns to the appropriate staff first, before contacting administration. However, members of the community are welcome to involve administration if/when it is warranted.

CONDUCT (SEE ALSO HABITS OF SCHOLARSHIP)

Centennial is a place of learning. In order to achieve this purpose, high standards of student conduct are expected, inside and outside the classroom. These standards are based on mutual respect and responsibility--for oneself, toward classmates, adults and for property. These standards will enable students to develop self-discipline, self-esteem and problem-solving skills. Centennial has adopted a positive behavior program that focuses on the following Habits of Scholarship (WoRLD CARE)- qualities we wish to foster in all our students throughout the day:

- W – Wonder
- R – Respect
- L – Leadership
- D – Determination
- C- Compassion
- A- Advocacy
- R- Respect
- E- Empathy

Concurrent to this focus on these Habits of Scholarship, we also use **DPS’ Discipline Ladder** and **Discipline Matrix** as a framework for addressing negative student behaviors. These documents are the product of the DPS Discipline Policy, as described in School Board Policies JK & JK-R. In sum, this system encourages staff to examine student offenses against a leveled approach (e.g., Level A, first incident of a minor offense, in which teacher counsels student and intervention is initiated). Depending on the offense, consequences may range from a reminder by teacher, to a parent meeting, to an in/out-of-school suspension. Our discipline policy has been designed to help our students learn self-control and discipline in a constructive way. It is our hopes that throughout the school year, our school-wide focus on positive behaviors will help students make choices that benefit them and their peers.

COMMUNITY CIRCLE

Every month Centennial will host a Community Circle where community and family members are invited to experience Crew with their students. Community Circle will be a time to build community among Centennial students, staff and families and to recognize and celebrate Centennial students for achievements related to both academics and Habits of Scholarship.

CREW

An Expeditionary Learning school culture is planned for, developed and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew, not passengers. Students in EL school are known well and supported by adults. The structure of crew allows for relationship building, academic progress monitoring, and character development. Crew allows students to build positive connections with their peers and with their crew leader. Crew leaders strategically plan crew to address and assess these multiple goals. Crew at Centennial will take place daily for 45-minutes each morning after Breakfast in the Classroom.

DISCOVERY LINK

The Discovery Link Center at Centennial provides a range of high-quality services before and after school for students in grades K-5. The services provided support student learning and development and include: tutoring/mentoring, homework help, academic enrichment, community

service opportunities, as well as music, arts, sports and cultural activities. Anne Heerdt is Centennial's onsite Discovery Link coordinator and can be reached at 720-666-1910. Anne has an office in Room 126. Discovery Link hours are 6:30am-8:00am before school and 3:45pm-6:00pm after school.

DRESS CODE

Students should come to school looking clean, neat and dressed in a manner that is appropriate and not distracting. The Denver Board of Education passed a "Zero Gang Tolerance" policy in 1992 which states that no clothing associated with gangs are to be allowed in any DPS school building. Students should dress for weather - especially on inclement weather or field trip days. Please label all outer garments and your child's backpack with their full name.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Parents' Emergency Information is kept on file in the office. Please notify the school office if there is any change in address, telephone number, place of employment, or emergency contact person so that we may be in contact with you at any time if necessary. It is very important for the safety and well being of your child that you keep this information current. When a parent or responsible adult cannot be contacted, the school may call the Denver Police and/or Office of Social Services for assistance.

SAFETY DRILLS

Safety drills are required by law and are important practice in the event that an actual emergency should occur. Students learn the evacuation path established for each room they occupy. Conduct rules during these safety drills are strictly enforced. All building occupants must move silently and in an orderly fashion to a specified area where they remain until instructed to return to the building. All schools practice at least one fire drill a month and a lock down and shelter in place each semester. Please refer to the DPS Emergency Response and Crisis Management pamphlet for a complete understanding of the drills.

HABITS OF SCHOLARSHIP

Habits of scholarship are the traits and attributes we want the students at Centennial to attain to support them in being successful citizens of the world. Centennial's habits include: Wonder, Responsibility, Leadership, Determination, Care, Advocacy, Respect, and Empathy.

FIELD WORK AND EXCURSIONS

Classroom learning takes on a whole new meaning when put in the context of professional performance, firsthand discovery and experiences shared with experts. Field work is a way of taking the classroom into the community and are therefore regarded as an integral part of the

educational experience. These excursions also serve to heighten community awareness, involvement, appreciation, and commitment. Students of all ages travel to museums, theaters, farms, historical sites, government buildings, and/or concert halls. Parents are often asked to act as chaperones, especially for outings involving the younger students. Please be aware that there may be times where the school may ask for a nominal fee for your child to attend the excursion. Often times the venue of which the grade level or class is attending needs to have the money in advance. Please be prompt in sending the money. Talk to your child's teacher if there is a question or concern.

LOST AND FOUND

Please check the lost and found area that is located outside the cafeteria in the hallway. Also, please put your child's name on coats, mittens, gloves, lunch-boxes and water bottles. All lost items will be bagged and donated at the end of each semester.

LUNCH

Students have the option of bringing their own lunch to school or purchasing milk or a hot lunch. Families can pay on-line and view account balances by subscribing to www.mylunchmoney.com ; you will need to know the ID number for your child. Checks should be made payable to WCE Lunchroom or parents can directly deposit electronic funds into account via www.mylunchmoney.com. You may write a check with the child's name on it, payable to Westerly Creek. The money can be paid directly to the lunchroom after 10:30 a.m. or may be given to the office staff to be placed in the cafeteria's mailbox. Each child is responsible for his/her own lunch money. If the money is lost or forgotten, a lunch will be provided but the child must repay the lunchroom manager the following day. A child is only allowed 2 charges before an alternative meal (peanut butter or cheese sandwich, fruit and drink) will be served. Please write the child's name on the sack or lunch box. Students are expected to eat a healthy, balanced breakfast and lunch. Soft drinks are not allowed in the WCE lunchroom. Forms for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program are available in the office.

Menu: www.dpsk12.org/lunchmenu

Nutritional Information: www.foodservices.dpsk12.org

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Centennial parents are essential to the success of our school. Parents enrich our school with their ideas, interests, talents, and resources. Just as we have high expectations for our Centennial staff and students, we have the same expectations for parental involvement. One of the most important aspects of involvement is communication between the school and the family (please see **Communication Expectations** section for additional information). It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to read and manage communications from the staff, and PTA. The teachers will provide regular correspondence about classroom activities, important dates,

needed classroom help, etc. If you feel you are not getting the information you need, please contact your teacher, or the main office to let them know so improvements can be made.

PARENT/TEACHER HOME VISIT PROGRAM

Centennial participates in the District's Parent/Teacher Home Visit program as a way to foster long lasting relationships between teachers, students and families. Teachers at Centennial will contact parents individually through out the course of the year to set up home visits. Teachers will visit families at a time, and at a location that's mutually agreed upon.

PETS

For safety and often health reasons, animals are not to be brought to school grounds. This includes pets on a leash. Denver City Ordinances prohibit having dogs or other animals on the playground. Please respect this ordinance even after school hours and on weekends. We recognize that some dogs are service animals and are exempted from the above policy. However, please be cognizant of potential student allergies and/or fears children may have of strange dogs. A pet may be gentle at home but dangerous at school when it comes into contact with so many different children.

RECESS

Students go outside, at minimum, every day for recess before/after eating lunch. Please make sure that your student is dressed appropriately to be outside for 25 minutes at a time. We are all aware of how fast the weather in Colorado can change so it would be great if students always have access to a hat, pair of gloves and boots in their backpack. The sun is also very intense in Colorado; please make sure your student has sunscreen applied before coming to school.

SCHOOL NURSE

Centennial's school nurse is in the building five days a week. If a child becomes ill or injured at school, he/she will receive temporary care and first aid, and the parent will be notified immediately so that the child may be picked up. Please be sure an accurate emergency phone number is on file!

Regarding medication, Denver Public School Policy states, in accordance with state law, that medication may be dispensed with physician and parent/guardian authorizations at school. The parent must provide the medication in a separate prescription bottle that stays at school. The bottle must have a prescription label clearly stating the student's name, doctor's name, name of the medication, dosage and time(s) to be taken. Medication requiring three doses a day should be given before school, after school and at bedtime. Medication requiring four doses a day may necessitate giving one dose at school.

ALL medication must be turned into the office and not carried around by students. Please do not send pills or capsules in plastic bags or over-the-counter medications such as cold pills, Tylenol

and cough drops. Medications will be stored and locked in the school office and dispensed by the office staff. The student is responsible for going to the office/clinic to obtain his/her medication.

Regarding immunizations, Colorado state law requires all students to be fully immunized when entering school. Records must be available showing dates of all immunizations, as follows:

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

- Five DPT
- Four Polio
- Two MMR
- Three doses of Hepatitis B for ECE-3rd grade
- One Varicella for Kindergarten

TOBACCO FREE DISTRICT

Denver Public Schools is a tobacco free district. No tobacco products are allowed on school grounds.

TOYS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Toys, athletic equipment, gadgets, electronic devices, cell phones and makeup are not to be brought to school without teacher permission. If permitted, they need to be clearly marked with the student's name. Please be aware that we will not assume responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen materials.

WHEELS AT SCHOOL

If your child rides a bike to school, he/she is responsible for making sure the bike is properly locked up. **Bicycles must be “walked” on school grounds.** Skateboards and rollerblades are not to be used on school grounds. Each student is responsible for locking his/her bike and for security throughout the day. It is recommended that parents keep a record of the bike's description and serial number in case of theft.

Parents should encourage children to follow all safety rules established for pedestrians. This emphasis on safety is also a concern of the school's staff, and is an important part of our instructional program.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

- Centennial School Office Telephone 720.424.8900
- FAX to Centennial Office 720.424.8935
- Centennial Web Page <http://centennial.dpsk12.org>
- Centennial PTA Web Page <http://Centennial.dpsk12.org/pta-2/>

- Attendance Line (available 24 hours per day) (720) 424-8901
- DPS Bus Transportation (303) 825-2611
- Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/CentennialEL>
- Discovery Link (on site) (720) 666-1901
- DPS Web Page www.dpsk12.org
- Lunch Payment Page www.mylunchmoney.com
- School Board (720) 423-3210