



**PIKES PEAK**

SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

**PIKES PEAK SCHOOL  
OF  
EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING**

Parent / Student Handbook

Located at:  
**11925 Antlers Ridge Dr. Falcon, CO 80831**  
Phone: (719) 522-2580 Fax: (719) 522-2585

Principal: **Mr. Don Knapp**  
E-mail: [theppselloffice@ppsel.org](mailto:theppselloffice@ppsel.org)  
Website: [www.ppsel.org](http://www.ppsel.org)



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## **Section I: Philosophy**



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## PIKES PEAK SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING MISSION STATEMENT

Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning's mission is to develop motivated, independently thinking individuals who demonstrate strong character, academic achievement, social confidence and service to the community by utilizing the Expeditionary Learning Model.

Our vision is to be a community that actively cultivates character in a challenging and engaging learning environment.

## PIKES PEAK SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING GOALS

PPSEL will accomplish its mission by focusing each learner on:

### ACADEMIC GOALS:

- Developing expertise in finding, framing, evaluating and using varied sources of information
- Applying content knowledge, critical thinking and problem-solving to real world problems and issues
- Communicating enduring knowledge and understanding in oral and written form

### CHARACTER GOALS:

- Showing a willingness to accept increasing amounts of responsibility
- Embodying the courage to view challenges as opportunities for personal and community growth
- Developing compassion and appreciation for the uniqueness and contributions of others
- Modeling a commitment to reflect integrity in all situations
- Maintaining self-discipline by prioritizing and balancing obligations and commitments with personal ambitions

### COMMUNITY GOALS:

- Establishing viable, inter-related partnerships among students, parents, professionals and the community
- Utilizing authentic opportunities for service that build contributing members to the community
- Creating a community that documents, displays and reflects upon the growth of its learners

## Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning



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## The Ten Design Principles of Expeditionary Learning

1. The Primacy of Self-Discovery  
*I am here to discover what I can do.*
2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas  
*I have wonderful ideas.*
3. The Responsibility for Learning  
*I am responsible for my learning and I help others learn.*
4. Empathy and Caring  
*I care for others; others care for me*
5. Success and Failure  
*Success is sweet but mistakes are good food.*
6. Collaboration and Competition  
*We work together as friends; I compete with myself.*
7. Diversity and Inclusion  
*Our differences make us stronger.*
8. The Natural World  
*Nature is our teacher.*
9. Solitude and Reflection  
*I need time to be with myself.*
10. Service and Compassion  
*We do excellent things for others*

## Character Traits

As a Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning Citizen I will endeavor to exhibit the following:

- Compassion
- Integrity
- Self-Discipline
- Craftsmanship

## Student Goals

- Develop the ability to think critically, communicate effectively and act responsibly
- Develop an understanding of and an appreciation for the rights, duties, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in a free and democratic society
- Develop ability to apply content knowledge, critical thinking and problem-solving to real world problems and issues

## Student Photos

Often we take photos of students working on projects, during assemblies, on fieldwork, etc. These photos are placed on our website and social media, most often without identifying information like first and last names. If you would like to opt out of this and request that photos of your child are not posted, please fill out the opt out form on the school website or contact the Executive Director.

## Family Involvement

We invite and strongly encourage parents and students to be active crew members with us, rather than passengers. We want to hear parents' perceptions about their children and their experiences at PPSEL. We expect parents to check in with their children's teachers and to be interested in their learning. We want parent feedback about our expeditions and our culture. We expect our students to be responsible for their own learning. Our teachers do not pour knowledge into passive students. Within this context, we expect students to explore, wonder, hypothesize, create and discuss their ideas about the world. This is hard work. We expect every member of the team to actively participate in the learning experience.



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One of the shared values of PPSEL is a high level of parental involvement to ensure our success and growth. Our expectation is that parents commit to volunteer for the school each semester. Here are a few examples of how you can volunteer:

- School set-up and care
- Before and after school drop off and pick up
- Teacher support
- Project preparation
- Fieldwork transportation
- Classroom involvement
- School-wide activities and committees
- Building and grounds
- Lunch / recess supervision
- Office / clerical work

## **Volunteers**

At Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning, we welcome volunteers as a source of special skills and the much needed extra hand in the classroom. Volunteers are very much appreciated for the support they extend to teachers. All volunteers must follow board policy regarding non-supervised contact with students are required to undergo a background check. Please check with the office if you have any questions.



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## Parent/Student/Teacher Contract

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*Please read, sign and return to office.*

### Parent/Guardian Agreement:

I want my child to develop to his/her fullest potential. I will encourage him/her by doing the following:

- Ensure that my child attends school on time and is prepared to learn.
- Be aware of my child's progress and talk about school with him/her.
- Communicate with teachers and school staff to support and challenge my child.
- Encourage reading and writing at home.
- Encourage my child to complete homework.
- Expect the school to maintain proper discipline.
- Participate in activities that support the school.
- Be responsible for my child wearing uniform.
- Model PPSEL's Character Traits and Design Principles.

### Student Agreement:

It is important that I do my best. I will try to do the following:

- Make sure that I arrive at school on time and ready to listen, learn and participate.
- Finish my work and complete and return homework and other projects as assigned.
- Be respectful to others.
- I will make good choices.
- I will help others to learn.
- I will tell the teachers and parents when I have a problem at school.
- Follow the Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning Character Traits and Design Principles.

### Teacher Agreement:

It is important that each student performs to his/her fullest academic potential. I will strive to do the following:

- Provide the academic instruction necessary for students to excel.
- Provide a caring and safe environment that allows for positive, regular communication with parents.
- Determine how each student learns best and use this information for guidance.
- Provide meaningful homework assignments for students.
- Model the Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning Character Traits and Design Principles.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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# **Section II: General Information**





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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is a charter school?**

Charter schools are public schools that are typically created and run by parents, educators and/or community members who care about education. The governance structure is autonomous and is quite different from “regular” public schools. We want to briefly explain the governance structure of the Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning:

PPSEL was granted its first charter in 2000 and is governed by an independent Board of Directors. This board is a policy board, which means they do not “run the school”, but rather set policy, while the Executive Director (Principal) runs the day to day business of the school. The Board of Directors consists of the following:

#### **Voting Members:**

The Board of Directors consists of 5 voting members that may include parents, business leaders and/or community members. No voting member of the Board of Directors receives compensations for his/her role as a board member or as the committee chair of a standing board committee.

### **How is a charter school funded?**

Charter schools must operate with a budget that is determined by state funding formulas and any grant/donation funding secured by the school. The state money is allocated to the charter school rather than to the district where the student was enrolled. As a state funded school, PPSEL does not charge tuition for general program instruction. As a separate school in the Falcon school district, PPSEL is not eligible to receive any local tax dollars from bond election or overrides for facilities.

### **How is registration handled?**

All registration is handled through the Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning office. Enrollment inquiries can be placed through the “Enrollment” button on our website.



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## School Description

Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning is a District 49 charter school. Our core values and school philosophy reflect our adoption of the Expeditionary Learning school model. Project and fieldwork-based learning develops connections between curriculum and real-life issues and promotes active, hands-on participation by all learners.

PPSEL is based on the Expeditionary Learning philosophy. Expeditionary learning is one of seven “Break the Mold” school designs funded in the early 1990s by New American Schools, a Presidential and private sector initiative that called for radically new models of education built upon high standards and yielding dramatic improvement in student achievement. Expeditionary Learning schools extend throughout the nation and the world.

We believe children learn best through personal, direct experience. Expeditionary Learning begins with children’s curiosity about the world. It harnesses children’s passion to learn and helps them develop the curiosity, knowledge, skills and personal qualities they need for successful adulthood. Learning expeditions – journeys into the unknown for a definite purpose – are at the heart of this methodology. Students acquire knowledge and skills primarily through learning expeditions that cut across and make connections among disciplines. Instruction is individualized, with our focus on meeting the needs of every student.

For most of the day, students and teachers are engaged in challenging learning expeditions that explore topic or theme in depth. Their studies call for intellectual inquiry, physical exploration and community service. On a given day, they’re in local businesses, or carry out other fieldwork assignments. Each day provides opportunities for quiet reflection – time for students to write in their journals, gather their thoughts, and reflect on what they have learned. Throughout the year students may participate in camping trips and “adventure days” that may involve rock climbing, skiing or other outdoor activities. Students work individually, small groups, and as a member of a “crew” or class. Together they learn to draw on the strengths of a whole class.

Though we have grown considerably since our inception, our classroom organization has not changed. Students in grades 1-8 are organized in multi-age “crews”.

With project-based learning expeditions as the core element PPSEL’s curriculum includes:

- A focus on developing reading and writing skills in alignment with state standards.
- A rigorous math program using standards-based curriculum.
- The use of computers to develop research and critical thinking skills.
- Fieldwork allowing students to learn about and provide service to the community
- Adventure and environmental education to challenge students, foster teamwork, and nurture students’ understanding of nature.
- Fine arts to develop critical thinking and creativity in every learning expedition.

PPSEL is a cooperative enterprise: our families, teachers, and staff share the responsibilities and rewards of operating our school. Parents play essential roles in and out of the classrooms. Our families experience



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firsthand the school environment, become advocates for their children, and enrich the school community with their ideas, interests, talents and resources. Many of the families were substantially involved with the school – helping with classroom instruction and fieldwork, serving on committees, supporting the office, serving as reading volunteers, staffing camping trips etc. Our goal is 100% participation.

## **Why Does PPSEL Look Different Than Other Schools?**

A great deal of thought, research and practice has gone into designing our school's structure. We haven't always made the same decisions that were made by the schools of our childhood. Some of what you see may look unfamiliar. You may be surprised that certain school pieces are missing. You may notice some unexpected new things. The next few pages share some of the philosophy and shifts you may experience.

### **Our Classroom space is used flexibly**

In a PPSEL classroom, work areas are arranged to help students collaborate in small groups. Each classroom has a large space set aside for whole group meetings, which are essential to building a supportive community of learners.

### **Our Classrooms have Ongoing Conversations and Are Full of Movement**

Student conversation is the center of much of our learning here. We believe that deep learning takes place when children challenge one another, ask questions, share ideas, and build on one another's knowledge verbally. At certain times during the day, children will be getting out of their seats to gather material, consult with one another, and look at information on the walls. In these situations, the child who is sitting still and not making a peep may be the one off-task and not the other way around.

### **Fieldwork Is Central To Our Curriculum**

Learning extends beyond PPSEL's wall; it connects to the world. Students frequently work in the field, sometimes once or twice a week. Fieldwork is deeply woven into each teacher's curriculum. Attendance is required on fieldwork as much as it is in the classroom. The field may be a forest, a theatre, a ghost town, a hospital lab, a courtroom, a museum, etc...

### **We Use Primary Sources As Much As Possible**

We believe children can learn authentically by using authentic resources. Although they have access to some textbooks, students more often gather information from non-fiction and fiction trade books, publications, and the Internet. By reading literature and exploring primary sources, children gain information-gathering skills that they use to independently problem-solve and conduct research in the real world.

### **Revising Work is Habit Here**

Students at PPSEL normally aren't finished with a piece of work until they complete multiple drafts of it. This expectation reaches across grades and disciplines. Improving on work again and again is common practice here. Teachers guide students from draft to draft. They sometimes collaborate to assess the work of their peers. Rubrics set high standards for finished pieces and guide students as they strive to get their work to meet these high standards.



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## **Conferences**

At Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning conferences are traditional teacher led at the beginning of the year and often student led in the Spring. Conferences not only tell you how your child is doing in school, but they help your child take responsibility for her/his own learning. Conferences provide an occasion for students to reflect on their progress, set goals for future work, and make a public presentation to the most important people in their lives. Your child may sometimes lead her/his own conference and present his/her own learning to you. Students prepare for these conferences by choosing best work, revising work, writing reflections on their learning, and practicing presentation skills. We expect parents to come with their children for every parent/teacher/student conference in the school year. Because these conferences are such a part of your child's learning at PPSEL, student and parent attendance is required.

## **We Believe in the Value of Internal Reward**

We believe that if children only experience extrinsic rewards, they learn to only work for those rewards, and do not connect their learning to the outside world. We strive to help children make those connections, believing that the purpose of learning is to interact thoughtfully and powerfully with the world.

## **Learning is Collaborative**

Our students' work is often assessed by their peers. Students read their writing aloud, solicit comments and present project drafts for formal peer critiques. We do public work just like in the real world. Having an authentic audience keeps us on our toes, supporting quality work with high standards.

## **School Closings and Regularly Scheduled Early Dismissals**

PPSEL school closings can be found on the website, social media, local radio and TV, and on the school's app.

Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning will adhere to the published school calendar. Friday's school dismisses early to allow for staff development activities. There is tuition-based before and after school program available on those days. Additional teacher workdays and parent-teacher conference days are noted on the PPSEL calendar. These days are "No Student" days.

## **Bus Service**

Although Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning does not have its own bus service students do have access to District 49 Bus service.

[http://transportation-services.d49.org/modules/groups/integrated\\_home.phtml?&qid=2398734&sessionid=eb547a4d91143b2832c72db879045050](http://transportation-services.d49.org/modules/groups/integrated_home.phtml?&qid=2398734&sessionid=eb547a4d91143b2832c72db879045050)



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## **Lunches**

**LUNCHES:** Your child may bring a sack lunch that requires no heating, or can purchase lunch from our lunch provider (D49) **No soda is allowed for snacks or lunches. Excessive junk food or candy is also not allowed.**



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## Drop Off and Pick-Up

It is important to the safety of the Students at Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning that you follow these guidelines.

**SLOW DOWN!** Children can come out from between cars unexpectedly. **SLOW DOWN!**

A link to a drawing of parking lot procedure can be found here:

<http://www.ppsel.org/html/newsdetails.php?id=345>

Do not leave your car unless your car is parked in a parking spot (not the fire lane).

At dismissal, the parking lot will be blocked at the exit by cones. For the safety of children, you should enter the parking lot, and pull up to the end of the line and stay in your car. Your child's class will be walked out by their teacher. If you have trouble locating your child, please let one of the parking monitors know and they will relay the message inside. Once students are dismissed, the cones will be released and cars begin to move. You must move your car forward as others move forward, leaving no empty spots.

If you are picking up for the 2<sup>nd</sup> dismissal, please find a parking spot and allow 1<sup>st</sup> dismissal the opportunity to use the parking lot.

Please observe the parking lot traffic pattern and the following rules to avoid accidents:

1. Observe single file, one way traffic flow
2. Enter the drop off driveway on the North and exit the driveway on the South
3. Do not park or stop to talk in the traffic flow area
4. Loading and unloading takes place from 7:30 am until 8:05 am, 11:00 am - 12:20 pm, and 3:15 pm until 3:50 pm. No student should be walking unsupervised through traffic at these congested times.

If you have an appointment and the traffic flow may slow you down, park in the parking area indicated and walk around traffic flow area to get your child.

**Students not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal will be sent to after school care. Fees may apply.**

## Expedition Fees

In addition to our supply lists, Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning collects a Projects & Activities Fee (Expedition Fee) for students in grades Kindergarten through eight. Our fees support each class as they travel through their expedition and will be used to fund fieldwork, provide materials or to acquire resources and discover within the school setting. This is not just a "field trip" fee, but the Expedition Fee helps with any materials that are part of Expedition (curriculum) content. For example, when the art teacher has a lesson connected to Expedition content—the materials come out of expedition fees. The list is pretty extensive what it covers. Every school and school district handles the cost of field trips differently. If you



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are unable to pay the full amount due, please contact the Office manager to set up payment arrangements. Families who have been approved for Free or Reduced lunch may automatically waive out of school fees.

<u>The first installment is due by:</u> <u>September 1</u>	<u>The second installment is due by:</u> <u>January 1</u>	<u>Total for Year</u>
Pre-K (2day) \$20.00	\$20.00	<b>\$40.00</b>
Pre-K (4day) \$40.00	\$40.00	<b>\$80.00</b>
Kind (1/2 day) \$30.00	\$30.00	<b>\$60.00</b>
Kind (full-day) \$60.00	\$60.00	<b>\$120.00</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade \$60.00	\$60.00	<b>\$120.00</b>

## Fund Raising

The Projects and Activities Fee may not provide sufficient funds for each classroom's fieldwork and/or project goals and funds may need to be raised. Fund raising will fall into two categories:

- School-wide (general operating funds)
- School-wide (designated)

Parent volunteers and classroom teachers should develop a fundraising proposal. This proposal is then presented to the Principal. After his/her approval has been obtained, the Board of Directors shall give its approval. Special consideration must be given to the effect of fundraising efforts on school community and classroom learning.

## Emergency Information

Parents and Guardians must complete an Emergency Form for each student. This information will be used when the student becomes ill or if an accident occurs at school. **PLEASE NOTIFY THE OFFICE WHEN INFORMATION CHANGES SO WE CAN UPDATE THE CARD.**

## Security Policy

Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning implements sensible measures to provide an enhanced level of security for our students, staff, and visitors. We will strive to meet the following:

- ID badges worn at all times by staff and board members.
- Completed background checks for all parent volunteers who either work directly with students or chaperone fieldwork.
- Enhanced visitor check-in procedures requiring all visitors to sign-in with the office and prominently display a visitor's badge. Badges are numbered and must be turned in prior to leaving the building.
- Restricted access to the building through a "Buzzer" entry system requiring users to contact the office through the built-in intercom system and verbally identify themselves for entry into the building during school hours. Doors will be locked after the start of each school day and reopened prior to dismissal. In the event of an emergency, please call the school at (719) 522-2580.
- Training for staff on proper safety/security practices and procedures.



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- Training drills for staff and students on a periodic basis.

These security enhancements are funded through PPSEL's general operating fund and grants (when available) and reflect the administration's ongoing emphasis on school safety. If you have any questions or concerns about specific policies or procedures, please contact the principal or one of the board members.

## Visitors

We welcome adult visitors at any time. **ALL VISITORS ARE REQUIRED TO SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE.** Parents wishing to visit a classroom are requested to call or stop at the office to make arrangements. Parents with younger children who wish to volunteer must first clear it with the coordinator of the activity. **WHEN YOU ARE IN A CLASSROOM OBSERVING OR ASSISTING, PLEASE DO NOT HOLD A CONFERENCE WITH THE TEACHER ABOUT YOUR CHILD OR OTHER PERSONAL ISSUES.** Make an appointment to confer before or after school.





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## **Child Custody**

In most cases, when parents are divorced, both continue to have equal right concerning their children. If you have a court order that limits the rights of one parent in matters such as custody or visitation, please bring a copy to the office. Unless your court order is on file with us, we must provide equal rights to both parents.

## **Guests**

There are times that the school may allow guests to join classrooms. For example, a prospective student may shadow a class or classes. Sometimes a PPSEL graduate may request to assist the school for a day. Regardless of the reason, all guests should get permission and request this permission at least 24 hours in advance. The primary purpose of the school is education and requests may be turned down if that purpose will not be as easily accomplished with guests.



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# **Section III**

# **Education Program**



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## ABOUT EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

The ten design principles are our best short statement of the philosophy of Outward Bound and Expeditionary Learning. Drawn from the work of Outward Bound's founder Kurt Hahn and other educational leaders, the principles focus our attention on what is important and give us something to return to when we need guidance. Learning is an expedition into the unknown. Expeditions draw together personal experience and intellectual growth to promote self-discovery and construct knowledge. We believe that adults should guide students along this journey with care, compassion, and respect for their diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and needs. Addressing individual differences profoundly increases the potential for the learning and creativity of each student. Given fundamental levels of health, safety and love, all people want to learn. We believe expeditionary learning harnesses the natural passion to learn and is a powerful method for developing the curiosity, skills, knowledge, and courage needed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it.

## WHY EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING?

- Expeditionary Learning schools promote a strong culture of best effort, high expectations, teamwork, adventure and service and foster a climate of respect, inclusion, and respect for diversity.
- **THERE IS A CONSISTENCY BETWEEN WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENTS AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ADULTS.** Staff strives to model a spirit of inquiry, reflection, critique, revision, and collaboration in their professional practices and relationships and strives to ignite and sustain these qualities in students.
- High quality learning expeditions are at the center of the curriculum. Learning expeditions are long-term, in-depth investigations of a theme or topic that engage students through authentic research, projects, fieldwork, service, and adventure.
- Each learning expedition is defined by a series of significant projects that serve as a primary structure through which students learn skills and engage with content. Projects may focus on work from a single discipline or they may connect work from multiple disciplines. Projects involve students in original work and research and focus on critical thinking skills. While projects define a common body of work and expectations for ALL students, the richness and complexity of a well-designed project allows students across a wide range of abilities to be pushed to a challenging level.
- **FIELDWORK** and the use of outside experts enrich and motivate the learning within projects. They create a real-world context for learning, and strengthen the connection between school and community. Families are actively recruited for involvement in these activities. **STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN FIELDWORK ACTIVITIES AND A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THEIR GRADE IS BASED UPON THIS PARTICIPATION.**
- A high level of engagement and achievement is supported by the consistent use of instructional practices including creating explicit assessment criteria, providing models of exemplary work from the school or professional world, expecting multiple drafts, and critiquing work from peers and adults.
- **HIGH QUALITY STUDENT WORK** is a central focus of the school culture. Work is displayed, showcased, and celebrated throughout the school. Portfolios and exhibitions serve to both assess



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and motivate student learning. Assessment data at PPSEL will be based equally on traditional test data as well as exhibitions, portfolios and fieldwork.

- Habits of character such as perseverance, compassion, craftsmanship, self-discipline and commitment to service are viewed as inextricably linked to success in school and beyond and are actively developed and celebrated by the school community.
- Expeditionary teaching and learning is supported by WHOLE SCHOOL structures including:
  - Schedules that provide long, flexible blocks of time for projects and fieldwork.
  - Teaming structures that create small learning communities, facilitate collaboration across multiple disciplines, and create multi-year relationships between students and their teacher or team of teachers.
  - Budgets that prioritize resources for instructional materials, fieldwork costs, and staff development.
  - Homework counts for significant percentage of the course grade in each class. We believe that excellence demands effort; both in the classroom and at home, and students re-enforce what they are studying at school and develop a more disciplined mind by doing homework.

All families who send their children to Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning commit to attending family conferences, exhibitions and celebrations of student work. By attending exhibitions and conferences, families and teachers get acquainted and understand students' academic and social performance better. It also provides authentic recognition for real-world work on the part of the students.

- Many of our students have unique learning needs that require extra support on the part of the instructional staff. We expect parents of PPSEL to partner with the staff and students in giving a helping hand to those students needing extra attention.
- Much of the research that is required of PPSEL students is done in small groups or individually. It requires a growing ability on the part of our students to work responsibly and productively when they are in their small groups or alone. Students who become habitually disruptive to this process will be required to have their parent or guardian monitor them during these times so that others can continue their work.
- Teacher planning time that is frequent and focused;
- Shared leadership and inclusive school governance.

## Fieldwork

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in fieldwork activities since they are an integral part of Expeditionary Learning and a significant portion of their academic assessment. Fieldwork is planned at an age and grade appropriate level and may include overnight trips and some out-of-state trips in upper grades. Since our school does not provide transportation, we rely heavily on parent volunteers.

## Homework

PPSEL believes that homework is generally used for reinforcement of concepts, finishing work not completed in the classroom, and for working on larger projects. Students should expect around 10 minutes of homework



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multiplied by their grade level (for example, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student might have 30 minutes of homework a night—10 minutes times 3). Homework should not include students learning new concepts at home.

## **Adventure**

Adventure helps to create the student engagement and focus on character that distinguishes the EL experience. Adventure can be any physical, artistic, or intellectual experience that involves risk, challenge, and discovery. Every adventure has a strong element of entering the unknown and not being certain of the outcome. EL promotes the kind of adventures that create opportunities for leadership and collaboration as groups of students and teachers face challenges together. Together, students and adults discover they can do more than they thought was possible, and find aspects of themselves that they didn't know were there.

## **Service**

Service learning is an integral part of academic work - it teaches students that the skills they are learning can be put to use to make a better community. Service learning goes beyond charitable volunteer work to include projects that address important academic skills (e.g., beyond collecting clothing for the homeless, it may involve creating a guide to free city services that can be distributed at homeless shelters).



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# **Section IV**

# **Policies and Procedures**



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## Uniform Policy

Students attending Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning will be required to wear a school uniform that consists of a plain colored (not plaid or stripes) polo shirt embroidered with the school logo. To reiterate, the logo must be embroidered and fully attached to the uniform. Slacks, neat jeans, skirts, some leggings and shorts are acceptable coordinates. No items that are revealing would be appropriate. However, nothing more than four inches above the knee is allowed at school. If students come without the designated uniform and appropriate clothing for the weather or circumstance, teachers are responsible to inform the office so that parents may be informed. Please be aware that “appropriate clothing for the weather or circumstance” means that PPSEL teachers and the PPSEL office have the authority to deem what is appropriate and what is not.

Items such as pajama pants, inappropriate shoes or other items that are deemed not to be appropriate for a school setting will not be allowed. Wigs\*, excessive make-up, busy accessories and other items that may distract from the classroom will not be allowed. If a student consistently refuses to comply with the uniform policy, parents will be required to pick up their child for the remainder of the day or other consequences such a detention may be implemented. **Pre-kindergarten students are not required to follow the uniform policy.**

Sweatshirts, hoodies or other jackets may not be worn during class unless they are official sweatshirts with a full embroidered PPSEL logo in the same way our polos are embroidered. Any exceptions must receive written approval from a school administrator. These sweatshirts, hoodies and jackets must be solid in color. A uniform polo shirt needs to be worn underneath, as well. Finally, uniform shirts may not be cut, changed or altered, tied up in any manner or worn in any way other than intended.

\*A medical exemption is available for wigs. Please contact the office.

PPSEL requires a school uniform for many reasons. School uniforms build school spirit, show pride in one’s appearance and advertise the school. A school uniform is more economical for parents. It lessens peer and social pressure to buy clothing that represents the latest fashion trend. Uniformity also has tremendous safety benefits. School uniforms are invaluable when we leave school grounds for fieldwork activities because they allow teachers and volunteers to quickly identify Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning students among a larger group.

On days that students have Physical Education (P.E.), students need shoes that the P.E. teacher feels will keep students’ feet and bodies safe. On days that there isn’t P.E., students still need to wear shoes that are safe for walking and moving quickly from place to place, so no “flip flops” or shoes that do not have a strap on the heel.

## Dress Code for Non-Uniform Days, Events and Activities

Occasionally, there will be times when the uniform requirement could be waived. Those times could include, but not be limited to Fridays, school sponsored sports events, fine arts events, student school social activities, etc.

On those occasions that are school related “uniform free” days or functions, the dress code is as follows:



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Apparel containing printed or visual messages that are inappropriate in a school setting (i.e., alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, sexual references, profanity, “double meaning”, derogatory comments, gang affiliations, etc.) will necessitate a change in clothing. Clothing is not to be tight, suggestive, revealing, or distracting, i.e. torn, “sagged/low riding, and/or baggy.” See-through shirts, shirts with bare midriffs, or other revealing shirts are not allowed.

- Nice pants, leggings, sweat pant outfits; jeans and jean shorts that are hemmed (not frayed or torn) are acceptable. Shorts must be no shorter than four inches above the middle of the knee. Children should wear appropriate clothing for weather conditions.
- Skirts and dresses should not be shorter than four inches above the middle of the knee. Shorts must be worn under dresses during P.E. and recess.
- Sweatshirts and t-shirts with appropriate pictures, logos or words may be worn. Collared shirts, turtleneck and mock-turtleneck shirts, and sweaters are acceptable.
- Non-clothing accessories must be approved by the administration.

Hats or caps are not to be worn in the building.

Students are able to have hair that has a color added. When hair colors or styles begin to distract from learning, students may be asked to make a change.

## Attendance

**In accordance with State law, it is the obligation of every parent or guardian to ensure that every child under his/her care and supervision who has attained the age of seven years, and is a registered student in Falcon D49, receives adequate education and attends school. Zero unexcused absences include Friday half days. If your child is not going to be in school, please contact the school. The best method to report an absence is using our school app or reporting it at <https://www.ppsel.org/absence-notification/>. If you are unable to report it in those ways, it is acceptable to call or email the office.**

JH/JHB (7104) STUDENT ATTENDANCE establishes the expectation that all children between the ages of seven and 16 be registered and attending school. It defines excused absences as those approved by the Principal, those due to illnesses, both temporary and extended, and those that occur when the student is in the custody of the court of law enforcement agencies. Schools will monitor absences and will contact parents when student’s unexcused absences become a concern. Excessive absences may result in referral to the court system and may become the grounds for suspension and/or expulsion. **A “habitual truant” shall be defined as a student who has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or 10 unexcused absences from school during any school year.** Prior to such designation, a meeting between the student’s parent(s) and appropriate school personnel shall be conducted to address the situation. Being identified as “habitual truant” may be grounds for suspension and/or expulsion. Schools shall notify parents each year in writing of their obligation to ensure that all children of compulsory attendance age attend school. Parents shall acknowledge the receipt of this notification in writing and furnish telephone numbers or other means of contacting them during the day. Parents are also expected





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to contact the principal in writing if there is a possibility of a long-term absence (3 days or more) a minimum of 36 school hours prior to the term of absence.

## **Tardiness**

Truancy procedures as stated above will be followed for tardiness.

Punctuality is another shared value of the PPSEL community. Please help your child in his or her class to maintain an excellent record in regard to this. The Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning community will not accept habitual tardiness. Appropriate actions will be taken in response to this issue.

## **Inclement Weather**

**SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS:** If the decision is made to cancel or delay school, local news channels and radio stations will be informed by 6:00 am. The school website and app will also have this information. Since we are located in D49 and many of our families come from other districts, parents are asked to judge road conditions specific to their school route. Please inform the office if your child(ren) will not attend due to road/weather conditions.

**EARLY RELEASE:** When a storm develops during the day, a decision may be made to send students home early. Please make prior arrangements if you are unable to pick up your child. Inform the school of these arrangements as soon as possible. Students will be released at any time to parents who believe weather conditions warrant the child(ren) be taken home.

## **Grievance Process**

**As adopted by Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning**

PPSEL is interested in achieving and fostering both employee and student/family satisfaction. The following procedures were developed to ensure that the employee and student/family grievances are addressed fairly by the appropriate persons in a timely manner. PPSEL prohibits discrimination against its employees and against its employees and students/families on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry.

1. Initiate and have a conversation with the person involved.
2. After attempting to resolve the issue with the person, if further resolution work is needed, contact the Principal or Assistant Principal to arrange a meeting and proceed further.
3. After having worked with that person and the Principal, and additional counsel is needed, a meeting can be arranged with the Board of Directors if a school policy was not followed. If the individual involved is the Principal, seek the assistance of the Board President.

## **Medication**

### **Administering Medicines to Students**

Parents are expected to bring medications to school and leave them with the office staff, who will administer all medications.



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When at all possible, please try to schedule drugs to be administered at home. If drugs must be administered at school, please try to arrange the schedule so that the drug is administered around lunch or recess times to avoid disruption of the instructional program. The following procedure must be followed for drugs to be administered at school:

## **Prescription medication:**

Prescription medications must come in the bottle dispensed by the pharmacy. It is a good idea to have a bottle for here and a bottle for home. The bottle label must include the following information:

- Student name
- Prescribing practitioners name
- Name of the drug
- Time to be administered
- Prescription date
  - For medications that have been prescribed for a chronic condition and the child routinely takes them, the prescription date must be during the current year.
  - For medications that are given for acute conditions, the prescription date must reflect that time frame and the label must indicate the duration of the treatment.

**The above requirements are met when the drug is accompanied with the proper written consent of the parent or guardian and a physician; this drug may be given as directed.**

## **Non-prescription medication:**

Should a student be required to take any non-prescription medication at school, the medication must be brought to the school in the purchased container labeled with:

- Student name
- Amount of drug to be given
- Time when drug is to be given
- Container must be dated
- Physicians written instructions

**The above requirements are met when the drug is accompanied with the proper written consent of the parent or guardian and a physician; this drug may be given as directed**

## **Discipline**

At Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning we abide by District 49's Standard Discipline Policy you can view these policies in full at the following link:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/co/d49/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies>



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## **Outdoor Recess & Supervision**

Student should plan to be outdoors 15 minutes at recess and approximately 20 minutes at lunch. As we all know, our weather can change rapidly. We ask that parents send their children to school prepared for weather changes. Hats, mittens, boots, or layers of clothing can easily be removed or added as the weather necessitates. Outdoor recess will be suspended depending on weather conditions and when the temperature is known to be below 20 degrees. There will be no adult supervision on the playground or in the building outside of school hours.

## **Celebrations**

Please be aware that it is our policy here at PPSEL that if any invitations for parties are handed out at school, they must be given to EVERY student in your child's class, or not given out at all. If you do not intend to invite all of them, then please make sure that your invitations are sent through the mail or handed out another time other than during school. Please be respectful of the other student's feelings and our policy on this matter.

## **Telephone Calls**

Students are asked to use the office telephone only in cases of emergency (there is only one official line). Arrangements for after school are not considered an emergency. All after-school activities should be taken care of prior to coming to school. All cell phones are to be left off during any school hours. If cell phones are left on, staff members may take the phone away.

## **Access to Student Records**

A student 18 years of age or older, the parents of a student 18 years or older who claim the student as a dependent for federal tax purposes, or the parents of a student who has not yet attained the age of 18 are permitted to review that student's records upon timely request to the Office Staff. The requested records shall be made available within three working days of the request. In the absence of a court order presented to the school that restricts such access, PPSEL will permit any natural or adoptive parent of a student, whether the parent has custody of the student or not, to inspect the student's education record.

## **Withdrawal or Transfer**

When a student leaves Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning, the original and complete cumulative education record will be sent as requested to the new school of attendance. In order to release these records, the office will need a complete withdrawal form filled out.

## **PPSEL Acceptable Use of Technology**

At Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning we believe in using technology ethically and legally correct. Students must have a signed Acceptable Use Agreement to use technology unassisted.

## **Overnight Fieldwork**

We will potentially have overnight field work. At Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning we practice a five students to one adult chaperone ratio.



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\*In this handbook, Principal and Executive Director are synonymous.

\*\*NOT ALL ADOPTED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE LISTED IN THIS HANDBOOK. PLEASE SEE THE PRINCIPAL FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

We are autonomous from District 49 but choose to adopt many of their policies and procedures.