

# **Polaris Expeditionary Learning School**



## **Student/Parent Handbook 2011 – 2012**

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## WHO WE ARE

### Mission Statement

The mission of Polaris Expeditionary Learning School is to develop 21st Century learners through rigorous academic coursework, high quality adventure experiences, character development, and leadership opportunities.

### Vision Statement

Students at Polaris will discover and further develop their personal strengths in order to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### About Our School

Polaris is a choice school within Poudre School District serving students in grades 6 – 12. Through the national model of Expeditionary Learning (EL) we strive to nurture student's unique abilities so that they can grow to their fullest potential and become contributing members of their local and global communities. Unique to Polaris is the school-wide focus on active pedagogy, fieldwork experiences, and quality adventure opportunities.

### Ten Design Principles of Expeditionary Learning

The ten EL Design Principles best describe the core values of the Expeditionary Learning philosophy. Refer to <http://www.elschools.org/> for more detailed information.

- **The Primacy of Self Discovery** - People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected.
- **The Having of Wonderful Ideas** - Learning situations provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.
- **The Responsibility for Learning** - Students become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.
- **Empathy and Caring** - Ideas are respected and mutual trust is fostered in small learning groups. Students feel physically and emotionally safe.
- **Success and Failure** - All students need to experience success to build confidence, but it is also important for students to learn from their failures and to persevere when things are difficult.
- **Collaboration and Competition** - Students work together to achieve more than they could alone. They are encouraged to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** - Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others.
- **The Natural World** - A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches students to become stewards of the earth.
- **Solitude and Reflection** - Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts and create their own ideas.
- **Service and Compassion** - Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others.

### Expeditionary Learning Core Practices

In addition to the design principles, Polaris is based on the following core practices. These Expeditionary Learning structures transform our school community into a learning community.

- **Learning Expeditions** - Standards are the foundation of powerful, long-term thematic units of study, with a strong emphasis on literacy. Expeditions are enhanced by service learning, local experts, and fieldwork excursions. Partnerships extend our classrooms beyond the walls of the school into the community and enhance students' learning opportunities.
- **Culture** – Polaris is committed to guiding and sustaining a healthy school culture for all stakeholders. Staff and students are trained in the Discovery Program, which teaches the skills necessary to support a community of high expectations where community members treat one another with dignity and respect.
- **Assessment** – Intentional, well-crafted assessments help shape and inform every aspect of the school. Formative and summative evaluations of content, skills, and progress in meeting learning targets provide a consistent thread that provides data and direction to learning and growth.

- **Structures** – Relatively small class sizes, multi-year relationships between students and teachers, and an inclusive model are structures which support high-quality learning. A commitment to EL professional development ensures that teachers are trained in content specialization, literacy, active pedagogy, classroom management, curricular development, and assessment practices.

## ACADEMICS

### PSD Graduation Requirements

High School students at Polaris are expected to graduate by meeting the Poudre School District graduation requirements. **In addition to meeting PSD graduation requirements Polaris requires every graduating senior to complete a Senior Portfolio and their Presentation of Learning at the end of their senior year.**

| <u>Subject</u>         | <u>Credits Needed</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Speech                 | 5                     |
| English                | 25                    |
| Government             | 5                     |
| US History             | 10                    |
| World Studies          | 20                    |
| US Literature          | 5                     |
| Humanities             | 5                     |
| Art/Foreign Language   | 10                    |
| Mathematics            | 20                    |
| Biological Science     | 10                    |
| Physical Science       | 10                    |
| Health                 | 2.5                   |
| Phys. Education        | 12.5                  |
| Critical Skills / Crew | 5                     |
| Electives              | <u>75</u>             |
|                        | 220                   |

- Within our block schedule students can earn five credits per quarter and ten credits per semester depending on the length of the course.
- Once a particular requirement has been met any additional credits earned in that subject area goes towards their elective credit requirement.
- **ATTENTION current 9<sup>th</sup> graders that will be starting High School in the fall of 2011! Class of 2015!** The Poudre School District Board of Education adopted new graduation requirements for those that will be starting their high school careers in the fall of 2011. Please refer to this web link for all the information you'll need to know: <http://www.psdschools.org/psdinfo/newsevents/index.aspx?newseventid=1000362&affid=>

### New Graduation Requirements for All 2011 – 2012 Freshman

| <u>Subject</u>   | <u>Credits Needed</u>                   |
|------------------|---|
| English          | 40                                      |
| Math             | 30                                      |
| Science          | 30                                      |
| Social Studies   | 25 (must include US History and Civics) |
| Humanities       | 5                                       |
| World Language   | 10                                      |
| Art              | 10                                      |
| Health & PE      | 15                                      |
| Personal Finance | 5                                       |
| Economics        | 5                                       |
| Electives        | <u>65</u>                               |
|                  | 240                                     |

▪ **Typical Requirements for Admission to Four-Year Colleges**

For students intending on attending a four year college after high school it is critical that they understand that the entry requirements for four-year schools is typically greater than the requirements needed to graduate from Poudre School District. Please refer to the information below prior to requesting any changes in your schedule.

○ **Academic Standards (18 academic units) for Priority Consideration**

- English 4 units
- Math 4 units (must include algebra I, algebra II and geometry)
- Natural Sciences 3 units (2 units must be lab-based)
- Social Sciences 3 units (1 unit must be US or World History)
- Foreign Language 2 units (must be same language)
- Electives 2 units (music, art, theatre/drama, career/technical education courses such as engineering and agriculture, computer science, journalism, or additional courses in subject areas above)

○ **Additional Requirements for Admission to Four-Year Colleges**

- ACT or SAT test (The ACT is given to all 11<sup>th</sup> graders by the state of Colorado instead of CSAPs)
- Personal Essay (minimum 250 words)
- Applicants are encouraged to use the essay and short answers within the application to describe their school involvement, community service, leadership, obstacles overcome, honors received, and ability to contribute to the campus community.
- One teacher or school-based counselor recommendation, the Recommendation Form included in the application for admission may be submitted with or without an attached letter of recommendation. The recommendation will help us further assess the applicant's academic and personal strengths.

▪ **Grading at Polaris** Students at Polaris are graded for both academics and Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs). We intentionally separate these two measures so that students and families can have an accurate assessment of their learning.

○ **HOWLs (Habits Of Work and Learning)**

HOWL grades do not affect a student's academic grades and they will not have any influence on a student's GPA. They will get reported on Pinnacle Internet Viewer and quarterly report cards so that you may see how work habits may be affecting an academic grade in any particular class. Students will be assessed on their HOWLs using the following scale: Leader, Consistently, Inconsistently, and Rarely. These are three HOWL learning targets that students will be assessed on:

- *I can produce quality work on time*
  - I complete work on time
  - I strive for neatness and accuracy
  - I revise and improve my work
- *I participate*
  - I make positive contributions
  - I stay on task
  - I seek help when necessary
- *I am prepared*
  - I use systems to keep my work and materials organized
  - I bring what I need to class
  - I am mentally present

○ **Academic Grades / Standards Based Grading**

Academic grades are assessed in the same fashion throughout Polaris. First, teachers identify the long-term Learning Targets they want students to achieve, which are determined through Colorado state standards. Next, the teachers identify short-term Supporting Targets that will help the students achieve the long-term targets. Finally, student assessments are created so teachers may gauge how a student is progressing towards the learning targets. Some assessments may incorporate more than one learning target at a time.

The grading of assessments is also consistent throughout the Polaris staff. The following chart explains how a student's grades on any given assessment leads to a grade within a class, and finally how that grade appears on their transcripts. It is important to remember that grades at Polaris are NOT an average of a

student's body of work on assessments, rather, it's **the highest level of proficiency reliably demonstrated** that determines a student's grade.

| <b>Designation within Pinnacle and on Report Cards</b> | <b>Scale Used to Determine Designation</b> | <b>Correlation with Letter Grades on Student Transcripts</b> | <b>Credit Earned</b> |
|--|--|--|----------------------|
| Exemplary  | 3.5- 4                                     | A  | Yes                  |
| Accomplished   | 3.0 - 3.4                                  | B  | Yes                  |
| Developing/Accomplished                                | 2.5 - 2.9                                  | C  | Yes                  |
| Developing   | 2.0 - 2.4                                  | F  | No                   |
| Beginning  | 1.9 and below                              | F  | No                   |

**Please note that students do not earn credit for work that falls below the "C" level.**

- **Academic Accountability** The Polaris staff is committed to providing students accurate and timely feedback regarding their student's progress toward Learning Targets. We will be updating Pinnacle Internet Viewer every Tuesday and an automated phone call will go home if a student is failing one or more of his/her classes.
- **Response to Intervention (RtI)** The staff has worked to identify structures that can help all students succeed. Much of this work has stemmed from our professional development with PSD involving the "Response to Intervention" training, our book study with "Whatever It Takes", and the work we put forth during our Collaboration Day in February of 2009.

One of the main outcomes from our collaboration day in 2009 was the establishment of our Lunch Time Support process. The purposes of Lunch Time Support are to ensure that we are providing as many opportunities possible for students to meet with academic success at Polaris, to communicate with families when students are struggling academically, and to provide support to students during the school day. As a student, the best way to avoid Lunch Time Support is to complete your work with quality in a timely fashion.

As a staff, our hope is that families can support us in our efforts to ensure that all kids succeed at Polaris. Please feel free to call any staff member if you have questions regarding this intervention or the flow chart on the next page.

**Lunch Time Support Process:**

1. Teachers begin compiling grades at the beginning of each quarter.
2. Tuesday All Calls informing families of a student's failing grade(s) goes out beginning in week three of each quarter.
3. Students are expected to arrive at Lunch Time Support with their food and remain for the entire lunch period.
4. Students return to Lunch Time Support for the remainder of the week OR until all their grades are to the "passing" level
5. Grades are updated again the following Tuesday and if there are still classes not being passed then the process continues. If a student isn't failing any classes then they do as they wish during lunch within school policies.

**Things to Remember about Lunch Time Support:**

- This process has been put into place to support our students; it is NOT intended to be a punishment. As a result there will never be disciplinary action taken if a student fails to follow through with these expectations. The natural consequence will be failing classes and being unprepared for the next grade level OR not graduating on time.
- The Polaris staff members are supporting these students by giving up their lunch three days per week. Please do your part at home by stressing the importance of school.
- **Again, the best way to avoid LT Support is by staying caught up on all assignments and using your time wisely during class.**

**PORTFOLIOS**

- **Purpose of Portfolios**  
At Polaris, students create annual portfolios by selecting and organizing artifacts that showcase achievement of

**Global Learning Targets** (see below). The purpose of portfolios is for students to make meaning of their educational experiences and reflect on who they are as learners. Portfolios are professional anthologies that represent a student's educational journey.

▪ **Global Learning Targets**

- **Knowledge** – I have a good foundation of knowledge. This means I can demonstrate understanding of the core concepts of math, science, humanities and the arts and how they are interconnected
- **Reasoning** – I can think critically. This means I can analyze, interpret and evaluate data, problems, issues and stories.
- **Communication** – I can communicate effectively. This means I speak, listen, read, and write in order to continue to learn, express myself clearly, solve problems, and work with others.
- **Imagination** – I can use my imagination and creativity to solve problems and understand the world in innovative ways.
- **Risk-Taking** – I can challenge myself by taking healthy risks both in the classroom and in the outdoors to improve my mental and physical strength.

▪ **Types of Portfolios at Polaris**

**Annual portfolios**, which are housed and organized in Crew classes, demonstrate achievement of Global Learning Targets over the course of a year. Class **academic binders** are kept in every classroom; students select work from these binders to place in their Annual portfolios during designated Crew periods. **Presentations of Learning** are completed at the end of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup> grade, these serve as an opportunity for students to present their journey as a learner over a longer span of time in front of a panel.

▪ **Organization of the Annual Portfolio**

▪ **Cover and Spine**

The portfolio spine includes the student's first and last name and the school year. The cover includes the same information in addition to a photo or piece of artwork that reflects who the student is and what he/she values.

▪ **Crew**

This section paints a picture of who a student is, where a student is going, and what role he/she plays in the POLARIS community. It includes a personal statement and other evidence of character, goal-setting, and growth. Crew Leaders will guide students through many activities, discussions, and reflections that will be represented in the Crew Section.

▪ **Global Learning Targets**

In these sections, students demonstrate their achievement of global learning targets. For each learning target, the student includes 2 - 3 pieces of work as evidence along with a reflection of how the work selected demonstrates achievement of the global learning target. Work may be pulled from any academic class as well as from Adventure, Fieldwork, or Community Service as long as it demonstrates achievement of a particular global learning target.

▪ **Presentations of Learning (POLs)**

Students in grades 8, 10 and 12 use their annual portfolios to present their learning to a panel that can consist of staff, students and/or community members. POLs are rites of passage that allow students to celebrate achievement, growth, communication skills, and self-awareness. Students reflect on goals they set for themselves during the previous two years and set goals for the upcoming years. **Senior POLs** are a graduation requirement for all Polaris students, students who elect not to take part OR fail their Senior POL will not be allowed to walk in the Polaris graduation ceremony.

## ADVENTURE

▪ **Purpose**

The purpose of Adventure trips is to teach and practice leadership skills, the EL Design Principles, and to connect the curriculum to life outside the school walls.

- **Risk Management**

The staff at Polaris place student safety a top priority while on Adventure trips. Our Adventure Coordinators have submitted a 28 page Risk Management Plan to Poudre School District that has been approved. The precautions taken by Polaris, coupled with the experience of our staff, allow us to have experiences that are not offered at any other school within PSD. All Adventure trips that are “wilderness” in nature are led by a staff member who has a Wilderness First Responder Certification. Any Adventure trip that has access to immediate medical attention through a hospital or Urgent Care facility does not need a Wilderness First Responder staff member as a chaperone.

- **Adventure Funding**

Polaris asks that each family make a \$100 contribution each year. These contributions help fund our fall Crew Camp Trips as well as our Fieldwork and Intensive experiences throughout the school year.

In addition to the \$100 contribution we’ll be asking families to fund their student’s Adventure trips within a “Menu” process. The “Menu” process involves families deciding which trips they would like to attend, depending on their grade level, and paying individually per trip. This means a student can go on as many trips as they would like as long as they have the funds and are in the appropriate grade level.

Families who are not able to pay for a particular trip will have the option of obtaining scholarship dollars to help fund their student. Our goal is to make Adventure trips available to all students despite any financial hardships a family may be experiencing. The funds for the scholarships will be raised mainly by the Polaris Parent Action Crew (PAC).

- **Adventure Logistics**

It is imperative that families pay close attention to critical information from Polaris as Adventure trips are draw near. This involves students being present for gear checks, parents attending the informational meetings that are held for families prior to each trip, and providing us with critical health information prior to departure. Students without the proper medical paperwork required will NOT be able to attend any Adventure Trip and they will be refunded the amount paid for the trip.

- **Behavioral Expectations**

All PSD student Code of Conduct policies apply while on Adventure trips. In some cases the expectations are even greater than those within the Code of Conduct book as we are participating in activities that call for heightened focus, awareness, and listening.

- **Academic, Behavioral and Attendance Eligibility**

Adventure trips are a privilege at Polaris not a right. Students must buy into the culture, both academically and behaviorally, of our everyday structures before we can feel safe in bringing them on an Adventure trips. Students with a poor attendance record and/or discipline record may be restricted from attending any particular Adventure Trip. This policy is to ensure that students who attend these trips will have a high quality experience without any additional risk-management issues.

- **Prioritizing Adventure and Intensive Selections**

If a student is in good standing with behaviors, academics, and attendance then they will be asked to provide their top three choices of Intensives and Adventure Trips. It is difficult to give all students their top choices due to the following reasons:

- Some Intensives / Adventure Trips are highly desirable by many students
- Some Intensives / Adventure Trips are held to a smaller number due to risk management issues
- We simply can’t accommodate every student on an Adventure Trip due to our trip capacity and the number of students we have enrolled.

In an effort to do our due diligence to accommodate as many students as possible we devised a prioritization process to make such selections. This process was approved during the March 2010 School Improvement Team meeting. Here is how students will be selected:

- Students who get top priority:
  - Students who hand in their selection sheets by the stated due date
  - Students who qualify for the Good Attendance Incentive Policy (see below)
  - Students who have earned either Honors or High Honors the previous quarter
  - Students who are earning enough credits to graduate “on-time” (pertains to High School students only)

- Students who are second in priority:
  - Students who hand in their selection sheets by the stated due date
  - Students who have earned either Honors or High Honors the previous quarter
  - Students who are earning enough credits to graduate “on-time” (pertains to High School students only)
- All other students who don’t qualify under the above mentioned criteria will then be placed in an Intensive or Adventure Trips
- **Good Attendance Incentive**

The need for good school-wide attendance is a critical focus each year. As a result, through much discussion during SIT meetings in the 08-09 school year, we implemented an incentive program in order to improve daily attendance. The need for good attendance is becoming more and more crucial for the health of our school. The following are some facts that involve attendance:

  - The state of Colorado has a school’s attendance rate as a contributing factor when it comes to determining if they are accredited or not.
  - Poor attendance during certain parts of the year can lead to a negative impact on our school’s budget. During the 10-11 school year we were asked to pay back \$6,750 to the district due to poor attendance during October Count.
  - Students with poor attendance have difficulty learning in our inquiry-based model at Polaris.
  - Preparing students for the necessary skills to succeed later on in life is one goal we have as educators and the foundation for job success is being prompt and prepared for work on a consistent basis.
- **How Does the Incentive Work?**
  - During first quarter, if a student has two absences or less in ALL their classes when it comes time to sign up for Intensives, that student will be given top priority for their first Intensive choice. A student loses this prioritization if they do not adhere to the stated due date for their Intensive/Adventure selection sheets.
  - To qualify for our Spring Intensives in February a student needs to have three or fewer absences in ALL their classes.
  - To qualify for our May Intensives a student needs to have three or fewer absences in ALL their classes.
- **What else do I have to consider in order to be eligible for this incentive?**
  - Be aware that all UNEXCUSED and EXCUSED absences are counted towards this policy. The only absences that aren’t affected by this policy are SCHOOL EXCUSED absences.
  - Be aware that every three tardies in any particular class adds up to the equivalent of one absence.
  - Remember that exceeding the absence limit in any particular class results in ineligibility for this incentive.
- **Fieldwork**

Fieldwork is defined as a form of excursion beyond Polaris property in order to support relevancy of learning. Fieldwork is the classroom beyond the school. It provides a living context for shared academic experiences and individual connections to the learning expedition.

Unsafe behavior during Fieldwork will be defined by the professional discretion of the teacher and will be dealt with accordingly. As Fieldwork and related excursions require particular safety and behavioral expectations, it is possible that student choices will necessitate removal from these experiences. After an administrator at Polaris has been contacted, parents may be contacted to pick up the student. If parents are not available, then a staff member will arrange to have the student transported back to school. Student behaviors that put the group at risk, or have negative consequences on Polaris as a whole, may result in removing the student from future Adventure Trips as well.

Appropriate preparation is essential in ensuring both safety and academic integrity on fieldwork. The following items are standard; specific excursions will require additional items:

- Permission form (prior to Fieldwork day)
- Notebook
- Writing implement
- Water bottle
- Lunch (unless otherwise arranged)
- Weather appropriate clothing
- Daypack/bag appropriate footwear

Students who are unprepared for fieldwork may be required to remain at the school for immediate parent pick-up; students who are not permitted on fieldwork will be counted as absent. Staff will make reasonable efforts to include students, but will exclude students when a lack of preparation may impact safety or academic involvement.

Note: Due to weather or circumstances beyond Polaris' control, fieldwork will occasionally need to be revised, rescheduled, or cancelled. Students are expected to have academic materials available even on fieldwork days to ensure that the academic program is not disrupted. If changes to pick-up times or locations are required due to last minute adjustments to fieldwork, Polaris will contact families as soon as possible.

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

### ▪ **PSD Code of Conduct**

Polaris provides students with the opportunity for self-improvement, individual growth, and rich learning. Students are expected to act in a manner which is compatible with the school's function as an educational facility. Conduct which disrupts or threatens to disrupt the operation of a school; which interferes in any way with the rights and privileges of other students or citizens; which endangers the health, safety, or welfare of any person; or which damages property; will not be tolerated.

All employees of Polaris will be expected to share the responsibility for supervising the behavior of students and for seeing that they abide by the established rules of conduct and the PSD Student Rights and Code of Conduct. It is essential that families review this document with their teen. An online version of this document is available at the following web address:

[http://www.psdschools.org/documentlibrary/downloads/School\\_Services/Student\\_Rights\\_and\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct.pdf](http://www.psdschools.org/documentlibrary/downloads/School_Services/Student_Rights_and_Code_of_Conduct.pdf)

### ▪ **School-Choice Eligibility / PSD Policy JFBA**

All students at Polaris attend due to PSD's School of Choice policy, we serve no attendance area, therefore it is imperative that students and families are aware of policies that impact one's standing within a School of Choice program like Polaris. Getting into Polaris isn't guaranteed and remaining at Polaris requires an appropriate level of academic performance, behaviors, and attendance. Students not performing at the required level may find themselves under "probation" and will be expected to improve their performance through the use of an Eligibility Contract. If a student fails to meet the goals within the Eligibility Contract they will be asked to return to their neighborhood school. This process is supported through PSD policy JFBA that states the following:

*The District reserves the right to rescind and/or amend any or all choice/open enrollments, including the reassignment of choice/open-enrolled students to their neighborhood schools or to other choice schools or programs with available space, if it determines that (1) the choice/open enrollment was obtained through misrepresentation or nondisclosure of a material fact, (2) there is overcrowding of facilities in the choice school or program, (3) the choice school discontinues a particular program, (4) the choice school or program cannot continue to meet the special needs of the student, (5) the student no longer satisfies the eligibility criteria or level of performance required by the choice school or program, or (6) for other reasons authorized by law and considered by the District to be in the best interest of the student and/or the school or program.*

### ▪ **Discovery**

The Discovery Model is used throughout Polaris as a means to increase our consistency with communication, discipline, and overall culture. The underlying thread within Discovery is to treat all people within the Polaris community with dignity and respect. All new students take a Discovery course to learn about communication skills, team work, problem solving, and anger management. The Polaris staff members have all been through Discovery training and are expected to model the Discovery skills for students on a consistent basis.

### ▪ **Cell Phones / Electronic Devices**

As used in this policy, "personal communication device" or "PCD" is defined to include all student cell phones, pagers, iPods, MP3 players, zunes, personal digital assistants, cameras, audio and/or video recorders and players, and all other hand-held electronic communication and data storage devices.

Students may only possess and use PCDs on District property, on a District vehicle, at a District or school-sponsored activity or event, and off District property when such possession or use has a reasonable connection to school or any District curricular or non-curricular activity or event, in accordance with the following rules:

1. Students shall not use PCDs at any time they are in class or participating in or attending education-related activities, unless otherwise expressly authorized by the principal or his/her designee.
2. Students shall keep PCDs out of sight at all times they are in class and at all times they are participating in or attending education-related activities, unless otherwise expressly authorized by the principal or his/her designee.
3. Students shall keep PCDs turned off or dormant at all times they are in class and at all times they are participating in or attending education-related activities, unless otherwise expressly authorized by the principal or his/her designee. In this regard, "dormant" means elimination of all vibration alerts, alarms, ringtones, flashes, and other methods of notification of incoming calls or messages.
4. Students shall not use PCDs when they are not in class or when they are not otherwise participating in or attending education-related activities if such use disrupts the educational process, interferes with or disrupts school operations, or interferes with or disrupts a District or school-sponsored activity or event, as determined by the principal or his/her designees.
5. Students shall not use PCDs on District vehicles in a manner that may interfere with or disrupt the safe operation of the vehicle, as determined by District transportation officials or their designees.
6. Students shall not use PCDs with cameras and/or video recording capabilities at any time they are in a bathroom, locker room or other location where such use could violate another person's reasonable expectation of privacy, and shall keep PCDs with cameras and/or video recording capabilities out of sight at all times they are in a bathroom, locker room or other location where such PCDs could violate another person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
7. Students shall not use PCDs to send, receive or store pornography or sexually oriented images, photographs, videos, or messages in written or audio form, that may be reasonably perceived as having the purpose or effect of stimulating erotic feelings or appealing to prurient interests.
8. Students shall not possess or use PCDs in any manner that involves a violation of any law, District policy or regulation, or established school rules.

Rules 1-3 above shall not apply to the extent they conflict with a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. Rules 1-4 above shall not apply in an emergency situation affecting a student at school. As used in this policy, an "emergency situation" is defined as a situation that threatens loss of life, personal injury and/or damage to the personal property of the affected student.

Students who violate any of the foregoing rules are subject to one or more of the following consequences for each violation:

1. Confiscation of the PCD possessed or used in violation of the rules for a period of time to be determined by the principal or his/her designee, up to and including the remainder of the school year. The return of confiscated PCDs may be conditioned on a meeting between the student's parent/guardian and the principal or his/her designee to discuss the violation and steps that may be taken to ensure future compliance with the rules in this policy.
2. Receiving a failing grade with respect to any test or assignment during which the student possessed or used a PCD in violation of the rules in this policy.
3. Discipline, including suspension or expulsion from school.
4. Referral of the matter to law enforcement authorities when the student's PCD possession or use may involve a violation of the law.

Adopted by Board: April 13, 2010, effective July 1, 2010

- **Computer / Internet Use** Students are allowed use of computers under teacher supervision. If parents are not comfortable with their child using the internet or school computers they must sign a Computer Non-Permission form. Students must follow the policies described within the PSD Code of Conduct book (policy JS) in order to retain their computer privileges. Any student who violates the policy will receive disciplinary action that may include denial of any computer use for up to one year.
- **Food / Drink** The privilege to eat and drink within the classroom will be a determination made by individual teachers. Students are expected to uphold the rules of each individual teacher.

During lunch students may use the cafeteria and/or the outside areas on the East and South sides of the building if they choose. Eating lunch in the halls or the main foyer will not be permitted.

- **Dress Code:** The Board of Education recognizes that responsibility for the dress and appearance of students generally rests with individual students and their parents. Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for all school activities. The following general standards will be in effect:

1. Reasonable cleanliness of wearing apparel is expected as a matter of general health and welfare.
2. To avoid injury and disease, shoes, sandals, or boots must be worn in the buildings.
3. Beach or swim wear is inappropriate.
4. Dress that causes or is likely to cause disruption of the educational process is prohibited.
5. Wearing apparel that interferes with or endangers the student while he/she is participating in classroom or other school-sponsored activities is prohibited. The decision as to the safety or unsuitability of the clothing is a matter for the instructor's or school administrator's judgment.
6. Pupils must not wear dark glasses in the building
7. Any manner of grooming or apparel, including clothing, jewelry, hats, emblems, tattoos and badges, which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, or other attribute is associated with or denotes membership in or affiliation with any gang, will not be allowed. The prohibition on gang-related apparel shall be applied at the discretion of building-level administrators after consultation with the superintendent or designee as the need arises at individual schools. (See District Policy JICF, Secret Societies/Gang Activity and Dress.)

Subject to approval of the superintendent or designee, principals may establish additional specific standards for their own schools. Disciplinary action for violation of any standard will include notification of the violation, the requirement that the clothing be changed before re-entering class, and, at the discretion of the building-level administrator, a parental conference. More severe disciplinary consequences, including suspension or expulsion, may result from repeated or serious violations.

- **Skateboards, & Roller Blades** Once students arrive on campus the use of skateboards and roller blades will not be permitted. These items may be confiscated if used on campus or during fieldwork. If there are repeated offenses then further disciplinary action may be taken.
- **Public Displays of Affection** Students shall not exhibit intimate public displays of affection on school property or during hours of school operation. Questionable behavior will be left to the discretion of the teachers and/or Principal.
- **Closed Campus/Off Campus Lunch Privilege** Polaris has a closed-campus policy for sixth through eighth grade students. Students may not leave the campus or break specified boundaries while unsupervised during school hours. Sixth through eighth grade students may not go to the parking lot, enter cars, or leave the school grounds during school hours without advanced permission from a parent or teacher. Students may be given detention or service to the community for breaking boundaries.

Ninth through twelfth grade students have the option to eat lunch in the cafeteria, outside or off campus. Open campus for high school students is meant for lunch and off period only, students are not permitted to leave campus between class periods.

- **Plagiarism** In keeping with Polaris' high academic standards and the commitment from all members of the school community to act with integrity, plagiarism will be treated as an unethical and dishonest offense. The act of plagiarism violates our expectation that students exhibit ethical behavior as expressed in their academic work.

Plagiarism - n 1: a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work 2: the act of plagiarizing; taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own. Oxford Dictionary of Current English, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

According to Joseph Gibaldi: "Forms of plagiarism include the failure to give appropriate acknowledgement when repeating another's wording or particularly apt phrase, paraphrasing another's argument, and presenting another's line of thinking. You may certainly use other person's words and thoughts, but the borrowed material must not appear to be your creation. In your writing, then, you must document everything you borrow; not only direct quotations and paraphrases, but also information and ideas."

Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1998.

Although Polaris instructional staff will address plagiarism with students as necessary, if a student has any concerns or questions about how to cite material for a particular assignment, the student has a responsibility to consult his/her teacher prior to submitting final work when the possibility of plagiarism exists.

While plagiarism is a suspendable offense, it is the goal of Polaris to aid students in understanding and correcting this offense in the first occurrence. It is up to the Polaris instructional staff along with the principal to determine the

most logical consequence for each individual. If a student is in violation of this policy on more than one occasion, they will be subject to suspension as per the Code of Conduct.

- **Refocus Protocols / Problem Solving Contracts**

In order to help students learn the expected behavioral expectations within each classroom the teachers use the Refocus Protocols. The process helps to building rapport, establish clear expectations, and practice effective problem solving.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Refocus**

- This is a gentle reminder to the student during class that his/her behaviors are not in line with building expectations.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Refocus**

- During this step teachers will approach the student and identify the off-task behavior then ask if the student needs any additional support in order stay on task for the remainder of the class.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Refocus / Hall Conference**

- During the third Refocus students will be asked by the teacher to join them in the hall way to discuss the off-task behavior(s), the process should go as follows:

- Teacher names the behavior(s)
      - Teacher asks if there is anything going on outside of class that is preventing the student from staying on task
      - Teacher gets feedback from the student
      - Teacher ends the conversation with an encouraging statement

- **Problem Solving Contract**

- A Polaris Problem Solving Contract may be issued under a two circumstances.

- Student asks for some time to reflect during the hall conference
      - The student's "off task" behaviors continue after the hall conference

- The purpose of the Problem Solving Contract is to again help the student understand why their behaviors are not allowed within the classroom, and to identify possible solutions to the problem. When a contract is issued a parent should expect a phone call home from the teacher that issued the contract within 24 hours.

- **Teacher's Rights**

- There are circumstances where the behaviors exhibited by a student may call for the teacher to bypass the Refocus Process because it is considered a serious discipline issue. In these cases a call will be made home by an administrator and appropriate discipline actions will be taken with student Due Process Rights being followed as outlined in the PSD Code of Conduct.

- **JKDA/JKEA - GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION/EXPULSION OF STUDENTS**

The principal or principal's designee may suspend or recommend expulsion of a student who engages in one or more of the following types of conduct while on District property, connected locally or remotely to the District computer network, on a District vehicle, at a District or school-sponsored activity or event, or off District property when such conduct has a reasonable connection to school or any District curricular or non-curricular activity or event:

1. Causing or attempting to cause damage to District property or stealing or attempting to steal District property.
2. Causing or attempting to cause damage to private property or stealing or attempting to steal private property.
3. Willful destruction or defacing of District property.
4. Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
5. Commission of any act which, if committed by an adult, would be robbery or assault as defined by state law. Expulsion shall be mandatory in accordance with state law for robbery or first or second degree assault.
6. Violation of criminal law that has an effect on the District or on the general safety or welfare of students or staff.
7. Violation of any District policy or regulation, or established school rules.
8. Violation of the District's policy on student conduct involving weapons. In accordance with state law, expulsion shall be mandatory for carrying, bringing, using or possessing a dangerous weapon without the authorization of the school or District. A student may but need not be expelled for violation of this policy if, as soon as

possible upon discovering that he or she is in possession of a dangerous weapon, the student notifies and delivers the weapon to a school official (in accordance with federal law, this exception shall not apply with respect to firearms).

9. Violation of the District's policy on student conduct involving drugs and alcohol. Expulsion shall be mandatory for a student's involvement in the purchase or sale of all drugs except for those sold over the counter.
10. Violation of the District's tobacco-free District policy.
11. Violation of the District's policy on harassment of students.
12. Throwing objects that can or do cause bodily injury or damage to property.
13. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students, District personnel, or other persons.
14. Engaging in verbal abuse; i.e., name calling, ethnic or racial slurs, swearing, screaming, obscene gestures or threats directed at an individual, either orally (including by telephone) or in writing (including by e-mail or the Internet), or derogatory statements that are addressed publicly to an individual, his or her family or a group that precipitate disruption of the District program or incite violence.
15. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; i.e., obtaining money or other objects of value from an unwilling person or forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
16. Lying or giving false information, either verbally or in writing, to a District employee.
17. Engaging in scholastic dishonesty, which includes but is not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, or unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work.
18. Continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority, including deliberate refusal to obey a member of the District staff.
19. Behavior on or off school property that is detrimental to the welfare, safety or morals of one or more other students, District personnel or other persons, including behavior that creates a threat of physical harm to the student exhibiting the behavior or to one or more other students.
20. Engaging in behavior that disrupts school or District operations.
21. Promoting or being involved in gang or gang-like activity.
22. Engaging in "hazing" activities, i.e., forcing prolonged physical activity, forcing excessive consumption of any substance, forcing prolonged deprivation of sleep, food or drink, or any other behavior that recklessly endangers the health or safety of an individual.
23. Threats of serious bodily injury or death to one or more District employees, students or other persons, threats to damage or destroy District property or the property of one or more District employees, students or other persons, and/or threats to disrupt school or District operations.
24. Bullying, including the use of physical or verbal coercion to obtain control over others or to be habitually cruel to others.
25. Assault upon, disorderly conduct toward, harassment of, intimidation of, bullying of, or any criminal offense against another student, or damage to the property of another student.
26. Repeated interference with a school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.
27. Violation of the District's policy on student use of District computers, e-mail and Internet access.
28. Violation of the District's policy on student possession and use of personal communication devices.
29. Assault upon, disorderly conduct toward, harassment of, making knowingly false allegations of child abuse against, or any criminal offense against a teacher or District employee, or damage to property of a teacher or District employee, which occurs on District property (a minimum of three days' suspension is mandatory).
30. Initiating or participating in false alarms, false notifications of alarms, or bomb scares.
31. Violation of the District's student dress policy.
32. Being declared a habitually disruptive student.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ▪ **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Polaris students are offered multiple extra-curricular activities that vary from year to year depending on student, parent, or staff interest. A schedule of activities offered will be posted and announced through student community meetings and newsletters. Examples of activities organized in the past have included book clubs, chess, poetry groups, climbing clubs, and dance. Administrator approval of activities, scheduling, the use of facilities, and supervision is required.

Currently, Polaris does not offer organized sports. Polaris students are welcome to return to their home school to participate on sports teams. However, students must remain in good academic standing in each currently enrolled class.

- **Campus Visitations** Polaris students may not bring visitors to the school site without one day prior notification and necessary paperwork. The paperwork involved ensures that we have important information about the visiting student in case of emergencies and it also gives us an indication that the visitor's guardians are aware of the visitation.

All visitors to campus must sign in at the front desk.

- **Family Involvement** Family involvement is one of the key foundations of Polaris in two ways. First, families are essential partners in the education and success of their students. Second, families are needed to help Polaris fulfill its mission by supporting the functions and development of the school. This involvement is what makes Polaris a learning community and not just a school.

**Home Support:**

Stay informed about homework, projects, portfolio pieces, and your student's progress  
 Ensure students are prepared for school, especially making sure they have the necessary clothing and supplies, have eaten breakfast, has lunch, is well rested, etc.  
 Ensure students are prepared for adventure excursions and fieldwork with the proper outdoor attire, equipment, water, food, etc.  
 Read Newsletters  
 Know and use the same communication skills expected of the students

**School Support:**

Attend school functions including Celebration of Learning, Fundraisers, and Student-led conferences  
 Arrange with teachers for conferences as needed  
 Plan for students to participate in all adventure activities and fieldwork  
 Seek to understand: ask clarifying questions of staff and students

- **Opportunities for School Support:**

**After-School Clubs**

- Organize and lead an after-school clubs

**Chaperones**

- Accompany crews on adventure trips and field work

**Assistance with school operations**

- Reception/clerical
- Lunch monitors

**Classroom assistance**

- Work one-on-one with students who need extra help
- Individualize materials
- Be a guest speaker in classes
- Support literacy initiatives

**Committees**

- Parent Action Crew
- School Improvement Team
- Fundraising
- Grant Writing

**Special Events Coordination**

- Back-to-School Night
- Gear Swap
- Teacher Appreciation
- Celebration Nights
- Book Fair