



STUDENT PARENT HANDBOOK 2016-2017

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Crestone Charter School is one of Colorado's oldest and most successful Charter Schools. It is a winner of the *John Irwin Award for Academic Excellence*, the *Governor's Improvement Award for Academic Achievement* and it is nationally recognized as a model of success in rural charter school education. CCS has multi-aged classrooms, individual learning plans, award-winning instructors, and a non-graded, innovative program that serves about 95 students grades K-12. Dedicated to experiential learning that supports the whole child with a particular focus on place-based and environmental education, the program is the Free Public School of Choice for Crestone/Baca residents.

Crestone Charter School is a "living school". At its best it is flexible and adaptive in meeting changing needs of children, their families and the staff. Just so is this Parent/Student Handbook a "snapshot" of the school as it is now. As the school changes, this Handbook will change to meet new conditions and challenges.

COUNCIL, STAFF, AND TRUSTEES

The following are key personnel in the operation and maintenance of CCS:

Charter School Governing Council, 2014-2015		
Name	Title	Phone
Vesper Gers	Chair	719-937-7813
Alison Ramadei		719-256-5916
Brook Clodfelter		719-588-0723
Shauna Ianson		719-480-7155
Josh Paine		970-930-2022
Charter School Staff, 2014-2015		
Administration		
Marie-Louise Baker	Director	256-4907 ext. 114
Deb Morley	Office Manager	256-4907 ext. 112
Shara Briggs	School Counselor	256-4907 ext. 115
Michael Pacheco	Information Technology & Building Systems Manager	ext. 107
Faculty		
Emily Donaldson	High School Program	256-4907 ext. 207
Ryan Johns	High School Program	256-4907 ext. 203
Thomas Walling	Middle School	256-4907 ext. 126
Audrey McDowall	Middle School	256-4907 ext. 129
Robin Blankenship	Intermediate Classroom	256-4907 ext. 101
Ashlee Jernigan	Primary Classroom	256-4907 ext. 105
Lyndsay Duebber	Early Elementary Classroom	256-4907 ext. 108
Teaching Assistants		
Anna Batistatos		

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

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The Mission of the Crestone Charter School is to provide a stimulating experiential program that, in a creatively structured atmosphere, nurtures each student's sense of wonder and natural desire to learn.

Emphasizing academic excellence and uniqueness of character, we strive to inspire healthy responsibility in relationship with self, community and environment, both locally and globally.

The scope of the Crestone Charter School shall include, but not be limited to, the following objectives:

- To offer an innovative educational program of academic excellence that integrates body, mind, emotions and spirit;
- To provide a learning environment that encourages self-esteem, and respects the experiences, talents and uniqueness of every student;
- To prepare each student to be a life long learner through relevant education;
- To prepare each student to find his/her place in the context of human history and to comprehend the challenges we all face in a world in transition;
- To insure mastery of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and artistry that meet or exceed the state content standards;
- To develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, collaborative skills, and a sense of community responsibility;
- To use the natural environment as a classroom to foster appreciation for our ecosystem and the Earth as a whole;
- To engage the united efforts of parents, teachers, students and community members in the educational process and school governance;
- To participate in the nationwide effort to reform public education.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Crestone Charter School, is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment where all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. Crestone Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, genetic information, marital status, or disability, in admission to its program, services, or activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals, or in any aspect of their operations. Crestone Charter School does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices or any other work based learning programs.

This notice is provided as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of Amendments of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding these laws including grievance procedures may be forwarded to the Director or Superintendent/Compliance Officer for Moffat Schools.

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Colorado, like most states, has created the opportunity for private citizens to create schools having distinctive programs that address issues not easily done in regular public schools. The Crestone Charter School was started by a group of parents and teachers in 1995 in order to address educational concerns that Crestone/Baca parents had at that time.

The School was incorporated as a non-profit corporation and remains so today. It operates within the Moffat Consolidated School District and is a public school.

Charter School legislation was created so that parents had an alternative to public schools and to provide a set of "laboratories" in the State that were able to try different approaches to teaching and learning. In order to facilitate the experimental nature of charter schools, each school is exempted from some regulations that govern regular public schools in order to provide greater flexibility in operation. One example is that Crestone Charter School can hire mentors who do not have Colorado State teaching certificates/licenses. Innovative mentors and mentorship programs in Drama, Dance, Visual Arts, Japanese or German language instruction, Horse-back riding, Archery, Martial Arts, Poetry, Film Editing and Production and Voice are a few of the rich electives opportunities available through the CCS program via professional mentors in the Crestone community. Though these teachers may not have completed a formal teacher-induction program, their mastery in an area of specialization is at the heart of relevant, hands-on learning available through the school's charter.

Charter Schools characteristically provide more permeability for parental engagement with their children's learning, and engage parents more directly in the school's governance. The Governing Council of the Crestone Charter School is composed of parents and community members who exercise governance responsibility directly for the school's policies. The Director is hired by the Governing Council, not by the District. The Director is responsible for teacher and staff hiring at CCS.

The School operates under a Contract with the Moffat Consolidated School District #2. This Contract, available at the school office, specifies the responsibilities and duties of the District and the Charter School. The current Contract will be in effect until the 2035 school year.

HOURS AND SCHEDULES

The normal school day, Monday through Thursday, for all students at the Charter School is 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Recesses, lunch and P.E. are included in these hours.

Friday's schedule varies for the time of year and grade levels. During most of the year school hours on Friday are 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. During winter, from January through the end of March the Monarch Ski and Snowboard Program runs a longer day, from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM for the older students grades 4-12.

Camping and other multi-day activities may be scheduled during the year, by each class. Parents will always be apprised of this, since parent volunteers are often needed for such events

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at the Elementary level. Some day trips may result in classes returning to school after 3:30. Parents will be informed about what time to pick up their children.

Spring trips are slated in the yearly calendar during April. The actual dates of the trips may vary from the calendar, since destination, weather, emerging opportunities and other factors may influence the choice of dates.

Parents should pay close attention to the school's schedule and special event calendars. Every effort is made to communicate to parents by each teacher regarding deviations from the regular schedule.

GOVERNANCE

The Governing Council of CCS is a board comprised of parents and community volunteers whose role is to keep the vision and results of school at the forefront and be guided by the school's mission statement. The Council's job is to:

- Link with the CCS community to educate people about the policies and goals for students at our school.
- Create policies, which guide the Director in achieving our goals.
- Monitor the progress of the school toward meeting its Ends Policies.

The Council's job is to actively engage the Crestone/Baca/Moffat members of the CCS community in dialogue regarding the Ends of the Charter School; to listen, to ask questions, and to encourage the community to participate. The Governing Council meets once per month. Contact a Council member to attend a meeting, join a committee and get to know the school.

The "Ends" refer to the end results of learning at CCS and is part of the Carver Governance lexicon. Another way to understand our school's "Ends" is to see them as the Educational Standards that drive programming, curriculum and development. A complete description of each Ends goal is available in the school office or on the school website.

ENDS POLICIES OF THE CRESTONE CHARTER SCHOOL

GLOBAL ENDS

CCS exists to provide an educational choice for the Moffat School District within the funding parameters of the charter contract and available community resources. CCS education results in young people being lifelong learners and world citizens who exhibit stewardship and civic engagement for the common good.

EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Crestone Charter School's system of holistic experiential education utilizes individualized competency based promotion and high quality non-graded assessments.

Within the school's budgetary parameters, this ensures that all students who graduate from CCS will demonstrate proficiency in the following academic and non-academic content areas.

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1. Academic Skills covered by the Colorado Academic Standards
2. Artistic Skills
3. Service Learning and Stewardship
4. Environmental Awareness
5. Life Skills, Health and Body Awareness
6. Self Awareness and Character Development
7. Cultural Awareness

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Crestone Charter School relies on high quality parental involvement, awareness and inclusivity. CCS and its students benefit from meaningful parental involvement and contributions that support programing and reduce budgetary strain.

Accordingly:

1. Parents are informed and knowledgeable about the CCS mission, Student Parent Handbook, CCS educational model, governance process and cultural values represented by CCS.
2. Parents are informed of their child(ren)'s experience and educational process throughout the year.
3. Parents contribute to the operation of the school through specific channels described in the Student Parent handbook, including the fulfillment of required volunteer hours and involvement in other forums which invite and depend upon parent support.
4. Parents support the success of CCS through:
 - a. the proper use of the channels of communication outlined in the Student Parent handbook
 - b. collaboration with CCS staff in problem solving
 - c. modeling appreciation for the school with their children and in the community.

WHERE DOES THE CHARTER SCHOOL GET ITS MONEY?

The Crestone Charter School is a public school. We receive our operating funds from the Moffat Consolidated School District #2 which, in turn, receives the bulk of its funds from the State. Basically, the District passes the money it receives to CCS based on the number of students who are enrolled and present at CCS on Count Day. Count Day is during the first week of October. This financial relationship with the school district is defined by the Contract that CCS and the District have entered into. The District retains a portion of the PPOR (Per Pupil Operating Revenue) to underwrite various administrative services that it provides to CCS.

PPOR varies from year to year depending on the State's budget and the total number of children enrolled in schools in Colorado

The Charter School is also a non-profit corporation. This enables CCS to raise tax deductible contributions and allows it to secure grants from other sources that are separate from Moffat District efforts. The budget of CCS is determined by the Director and Governing Council, and apart from certain laws that determine some expenditures, CCS has independent control over its own budget.

Furthermore, parents are asked, from time to time, to contribute funds for trips and other special events which may be more costly than the budget allows. Parents do so in accordance with

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their financial means. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE SCHOOL THAT NO CHILD IS DENIED OPPORTUNITY BECAUSE OF THE FAMILY'S FINANCIAL CONDITION.

THE CRESTONE CHARTER SCHOOL HAS MULTI-AGED CLASSROOMS

The Crestone Charter School is set up in multi-age classroom cultures. Some of the reasons for doing this are:

- Children learn from each other regardless of age.
- Intellectual abilities grow at different rates depending on subject area and are not necessarily linked to age. For example, a ten-year-old child might be reading very advanced literature and doing mathematics with much younger children.
- Multi-age classes allow more chances to find natural learning groups.
- Our society exists without recognition of age except in broad ranges. It makes little sense to isolate children by age.

For all of these reasons we do not refer to children as "graded."

Class Comparative Grade Levels	
EARLY ELEMENTARY	K-1
PRIMARY	2-3
INTERMEDIATE	4-6
MIDDLE SCHOOL	6-7-8
HIGH SCHOOL	9-12

We seek to place a child enrolled in our school in the classroom in which they will thrive. This decision is made based on the child's social, emotional and academic development by the teachers and parents together and can change during a school year. In cases of acceleration, a team, which may include administrators, teachers, parents, student, and other professional personnel, is used to evaluate a student's academic, social, and emotional needs. The Iowa Acceleration Scale may also be consulted in order to bring less subjectivity to the matter. But in the end, the final decision for acceleration will always rest with the professional judgment of the teachers.

NON-GRADED INSTRUCTION

Instruction at CCS and the work children do is based on the Ends Policies set out for us by the Governing Council. The accomplishment of these Ends requires success in a large number of projects and lessons over many years. Our students also learn a sense of inner drive and self-evaluation throughout their time at CCS. The practice of giving students grades can disarm the development of the learning process. The teacher's role is to help students learn how to know when things are completed, how to judge the quality of their work, and to validate when student self-assessment is accurate.

At CCS we give feedback and use a number of evaluation methods to help students and parents understand how they are doing in school. Individualized Learning Plans, parent/student conferences, student projects, performances and regular quizzes, tests and informal assessments provide a spectrum of feedback on student achievement.

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Regular, formative assessments (tests following a chapter in Mathematics or Spanish Language, for example) help to understand a student's progress across the given curriculum are an expectation of instruction at CCS. Formative assessments are not used as a competitive tool, and are never used to rank students or make those who achieve below the norm feel unsuccessful. Formative assessments, quizzes and tests are used primarily for teachers to understand how their instruction is succeeding with students and what adjustments a teacher may need to make in his/her instructional approach in order to help every student reach his or her learning goals.

We also participate in school-wide annual standardized tests, including:

- PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers)
- NWEA (The Northwest Evaluation Association)
- ACT College Entrance Exam
- PSAT (For Juniors, qualifies students for the National Merit Scholarship)
- DIBELS Reading Assessments grades K-3
- CMAS Colorado Measure of Academic Success

At the beginning of the school year, following an initial assessment period, students, parents and teachers will meet to map an **Individual Learning Plan** for each student. The plan will include specific academic goals based on previously acquired test data, or if this is not available for a new student entering the program, the initial first weeks' in class will allow the teacher the chance to conduct assessments and help guide the student towards significant, achievable goals for the remainder of the semester.

In-class tests, projects and student work will develop a body of evidence that supports student achievement towards their specific goals. If a student is not making progress towards goals in their learning plan, teachers will change the learning plan in consultation with the student. At the end of each semester, teachers will discuss with parents and students at their conference, the progress the student is making toward the accomplishment of his/her goals, and refine the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) for the next semester. A written record of this conference is made and kept in the student's records. These written records constitute a student's enhanced transcript, which is routinely accepted by other schools and by colleges.

YOUR PART – OUR EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

As a parent of a child at CCS, we expect a few things from you:

- Get to know your child's teacher.
- Transport your child to and from school on time.
- Provide appropriate lunches and snacks.
- Assure that your child is appropriately dressed for school based on the activities of the day ahead.
- Provide a good breakfast each day.
- Have and enforce appropriate bedtimes.
- Make time for reading and individual school-work in an appropriate quiet space at home.
- Attend school conferences
- Read communications from your student's teacher and the school
- Volunteer-our program depends on you!

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers make a major contribution to the Charter School's program. Some aspects of the program, such as field trips, would occur much less frequently if parents did not volunteer to drive or supervise students.

It is not only that parents help in areas where budget constraints would otherwise limit the school's ability to function. Volunteer hours are logged in the office, converted to a dollar amount, and used as in-kind support for grants and program funding.

Parents are expected to serve a minimum of 4 volunteer hours per month. This equates to 36 hours per year, or \$360.00 in-kind funding which the school uses in fundraising for grants and program expenses. In 2010-2011 CCS parents logged over 1,900 volunteer service hours as reading buddies, trip chaperones, committee members, fundraisers and event organizers.

The Charter School was founded in order to give parents the opportunity to become involved in their child's education. Volunteering to help the school is a major contribution.

The following list details some of the volunteer roles that are available.

- Playground supervision (morning)
- Playground supervision (lunchtime)
- Playground supervision (after school)
- Classroom aide (in my child's class)
- Classroom aide (any class that need exists)
- Individual tutor (at school in basic skill areas, i.e. reading, arithmetic)
- Maintenance/fixit for special projects or needs
- Housekeeping on a periodic basis
- Office helper
- Governing Council membership
- Parent Volunteer Coordinator
- Accountability Committee
- Special workdays
- Mentor for individual student.
- Mentor for groups of students.
- Trips (Day trips, overnights, and multi-day extended)

TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIPS

Parents are responsible for transporting their child to and from school. Many parents form car pools to share the responsibility. It is very important that children are delivered and picked up at the times indicated. Children who arrive late miss important parts of the school day. Teachers are required to supervise children until they are picked up, so when parents are late in doing so, a teacher cannot leave the front of school.

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Most field trips, whether a day trip or longer, require several adults to supervise children. Parents are called on for such service. Often vehicles other than the school's vans are needed to transport children and gear and must be privately insured. Parents are asked to volunteer such services in order to facilitate the broadest array of experiences for their children. Your child's teacher will be contacting you regarding your availability for trip transportation.

Students who exhibit inappropriate behavior at school or who have not completed significant academic coursework may not be allowed to participate in expeditionary travel or briefer field trips outside of class. A student excluded from expeditionary travel will be provided an alternative learning plan within the school or home setting that supports their individual learning goals and complies with Free and Appropriate Education guidelines. Choices regarding student participation in expeditionary travel is at the discretion of the classroom instructor and trip coordinator.

ABSENCE POLICY FOR PARTICIPATION IN FIELD TRIPS, TRAVEL OR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students may not participate in extra curricular activities (either athletic, field trip, Monarch Ski and Snowboard or expeditionary travel, as a participant) if they are absent the day prior to the activity, unless the previous day's absence has prior approval by an administrator, the student was at a medical doctor's appointment and provides verification from the medical doctor, or the administrator in charge of attendance approves the absence is valid. (Example - funeral service, college visit, testing, etc.)

Fever, throwing up and illness is considered contagious within 24 hours. Sick children jeopardize field trips for the entire group and will not be allowed to travel with their group if they are absent from school the day prior to the trip (field trip, Monarch, other off-campus activity). Students will not be allowed to travel with their class if they are absent the day prior to the trip unless they provide medical doctor verification.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Many people have not had significant Mentors during their educations. Some have had none in their lives. Those of us who have had Mentors are aware of the richness they added to our experience. They became, for some period of time, guides and reference points for the important decisions we made. It is a good idea to think about how we can construct education so that children and youth have the opportunity to have their lives similarly enriched.

We don't create significant Mentors, but we can arrange things so that it is more likely that something of that magical relationship is available to students. In this special community we would be remiss if we didn't make the effort. So far, the results of this have enriched and inspired many Charter School students. And because our Mentors work for very small stipends, it must be something of a labor of love for them to be so willing to continue.

"Mentoring some talented Seniors two years ago gave me my first experience with teaching Art for the Crestone Charter School. It was a delight to watch these students grow in their ability to observe, see and depict the objects they were studying with increasing skill and accuracy. Presently I am again teaching drawing, this time to a partially younger age group. The continuation of expressive "Art Play" and the more focused understanding of form,

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perspective and proportion makes these classes both fun for all of us and an exciting learning process. I am extremely proud of the progress shown by these talented young people and enjoy their enthusiasm and exuberance during the hours we spend together very much!"

-Marika Popovits, Mentor

All High School students are required to participate in the Mentorship Program, which engages them four afternoons each week. Students may be involved in more than one Mentorship during each Semester. Colorado State credit hours in foreign language for secondary students is met through a portion of afternoon mentorship. As well as giving students the opportunity to choose among Mentors who have indicated an interest in working in the Program, every effort is made to find

Mentors that satisfy students' special interests.

Mentorships have been created in the arts, foreign languages, fashion design, music, woodworking, photography, culinary arts, nutrition, child development, law, horsemanship, cello, permaculture, bio-diesel production, theatre arts, dance, concurrent enrollment with Adams State, and many other areas. The community members who become Mentors enhance and supplement the regular academic program that the school offers.

PERSONAL TRAVEL AND PARENT-GUIDED INSTRUCTION (PGI)

Family travel can provide memorable experiences for children that have significant impact on learning. The lifestyle and value of many parents and families in Crestone/Baca community includes extended travel during the regular school year. So that such travel is a useful educational experience, a program of Parent Guided Instruction provides experiential and project based learning opportunities for our students. Parent Guided Instruction is designed to be both a benefit to students and to the school as a whole.

Before leaving on an extended trip, parents and students meet with the classroom teacher to explore the learning possibilities that are consistent with family travel plans. A learning plan is cooperatively designed that focuses on linking such learning possibilities with classroom work that has either occurred or is planned for the future. A concrete product or collection of products is agreed upon (a film, audio tape, journal, scrapbook, etc). The parents' responsibilities are defined as well as the students'. Continuous exposure to reading, writing or arithmetic assignments are integrated into the plan.

Each teacher will expect both parents and students to complete their agreement and submit the material at the end of the trip. Timely presentation to the class will be required.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND CHILDREN WITH LEARNING CHALLENGES

The Crestone Charter School is committed to addressing the learning needs of all children, respecting their individuality and uniqueness. In this environment the distinctions between children who have learning challenges and those who don't become less clear. Teachers make every effort to find a way to make learning a happy and successful experience for every child. They do so in an atmosphere of collegiality that makes all of the teaching resources of every teacher available to all.

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The Special Education and Counseling services of Moffat Consolidated School District #2 are available as resource to the Charter School, and the Moffat staff has been important in making special services available to our students.

Charter School students have the same rights to special services, based on assessed needs that children in all the State's schools do. Services from the Special Education staff at the Bureau of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in Alamosa are available when indicated.

Children who have received Special Education services at former schools and have an active Individual Education Plan (IEP) bring that IEP with them to the Charter School and receive the services indicated by the plan.

In accordance with both state and federal law, no child is refused admission to the Crestone Charter School because of handicaps. Additionally, all children are evaluated to be sure that CCS is the best educational placement available for them.

It is assumed that all of the following behaviors will be performed in an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual support among the staff and in full partnership with the school's administration. It is also to be understood that, where applicable, the following standards will be adhered to by mentors, volunteers and ancillary personnel, including parents, who are involved in in- or out of class activities.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT POLICY AND INFORMATION

Pursuant to state law, any student who wishes to participate in concurrent enrollment at a College or University with whom Crestone Charter School has an established relationship for the purpose of taking college level courses while also enrolled in high school at Crestone Charter School may do so, receiving both college and high school credit for the course taken.

In order for students to be permitted to participate in concurrent enrollment they must be in good academic standing. Any concurrent courses taken cannot conflict with educational requirements of CCS.

All concurrent coursework must fit with and be a part of a student's Individual Career and Academic Plan. Additionally the High School Program Coordinator, the School Counselor, the School Director and the student's parent or guardian must approve all coursework taken.

Students must ensure they meet all course prerequisites prior to enrolling in a course.

Crestone Charter School will pay for up to 2 college courses (a maximum of 8 credits) per semester. A student's family is responsible to pay for any additional courses the student wishes to take.

If a student does not pass a course taken at ASU the student is responsible for paying for the entirety of the course costs.

Students must be approved for their concurrent coursework no later than 60 days prior to the start of the semester they are applying for.

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Concurrent courses may be taken online or at the local college or university. If a student elects to take courses at the college or university, the student is responsible for his/ her transportation to and from class.

Note: All coursework taken at Adams State University is guaranteed to transfer to any college or university in the state of Colorado. Credits do not have a guaranteed transfer to out of state colleges or universities; however, general educational courses have a higher probability of transferring than degree-specific courses.

STANDARDS FOR TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT THE CRESTONE CHARTER SCHOOL

It is assumed that all of the following behaviors will be performed in an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual support among the staff and in full partnership with the school's administration. It is also to be understood that, where applicable, the following standards will be adhered to by mentors, volunteers and ancillary personnel, including parents, who are involved in in- or out of class activities.

GOAL 1: TO MAKE CHILDREN FEEL SAFE-BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

- Teachers will attempt to foresee unsafe conditions in all activities and make every effort to mitigate those conditions.
- Teachers will not speak to students in a derogatory, humiliating, or defaming way in the effort to control student behavior.
- Teachers will exercise discipline procedures in their classrooms only after insuring that students understand the rules and standards to be used, and with clear instruction regarding what the appropriate behavior is with respect to any potential sanction.
- Teachers will make every effort to mitigate abusive and threatening behavior of students toward their classmates, and will be able to demonstrate that efforts to promote cooperative, supportive and caring relationships among the students is an essential curricular element.
- Teachers will identify unsafe facility and environmental factors at the school and bring these factors to the attention of administration in order to have them corrected as quickly as possible.
- Teachers will identify students who may be facing emotional stresses, which are diminishing their ability to cope with social or academic demands. Such students will be discussed at the staff's periodic Case Study meetings with the option of engaging parents in discussion about the situation.
- Teachers will adhere to agreed upon standards regarding adult/student ratios on excursions, field trips and other away-from-school activities. Younger students require a lower chaperone-student ratio than older students to insure safety on field trips. Higher risk activities such as multi-day back-country camping treks may require a lower chaperone-to-student ratio to safely undertake than a lunch excursion to the town park.

GOAL 2: TO INSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE WORKING AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF INTELLECTUAL

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CHALLENGE WHILE MAXIMIZING THEIR ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL GROWTH

- Teachers will make every effort to differentiate instruction in their classes according to the assessed needs and abilities of the students. Such differentiation will be based on clear assessments made by observation, demonstrations, and/or the use of measurement instruments. In addition, such assessments will be used in forming ILPs for each student.
- Teachers may provide homework for students that is based on current children's programs, and such homework will be reviewed in class with the students within a reasonable time frame from when it was assigned.
- Teachers will discuss with their classes the standards and expectations that will be held for various activities with the intention of attempting to insure that students understand what is expected of them and the methods by which they can fulfill those expectations.
- Teachers will make every effort to ensure that parents are informed about long-range projects that students are expected to work on out of school, and that parents, where appropriate, will be given suggestions as to how to best assist their children in completing such projects successfully.
- Teachers will be expected to help students clarify not only the end result expected in performing their work, but also to help them assess their progress toward those results, especially on projects or tasks that are extended over time.
- Teachers will be expected to demonstrate and clarify, in writing, the curricular relevance of field trips, excursions and extended study trips. Such demonstration will include the goals of the event, its connection to in-class activities, and the expected learning outcomes for students. There will be an assessment component to all such activities. The teaching staff and Director will, working together, create efficient and useful instruments for accomplishing this standard.

GOAL 3: TO BUILD A LEARNING COMMUNITY OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

- Teachers will be expected to develop methods for using parent volunteers in classrooms, conditioned by any training or instruction that may be needed to assist parents in performing such functions well.
- Teachers will develop methods for ensuring communication to the parents of their students regarding classroom goals, expectations, progress and programs.
- Teachers will develop methods that insure that parents feel welcomed to visit the school and classrooms, under appropriate conditions, and parents wishing to visit the school will understand what's expected of them during such visits.
- Teachers will be expected to respond appropriately and in a timely way to parent requests for information, meetings or assessment of their children. Wherever reasonable and necessary, the Director will assist both teachers and parents in fulfilling this standard.

STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

(To be discussed by teacher and students and by parents and their children.)

Crestone Charter School's primary objective is for students to develop a deep love of learning and this can only happen through achieving the following behavioral expectations:

- Students are expected to be open to trying new things.
- No student's behavior will disrupt the learning opportunities or safety of others.
- Crestone Charter School does not tolerate any form of bullying or cyber-bullying occurring on the physical, emotional or mental levels.
- Students will avoid anything that might cause harm to themselves or others.
- Students will treat one another as they wish to be treated by others.
- Students will show respect for their teachers by telling the truth when asked to do so, by speaking up when things are not going well, by giving their best effort at everything the teacher asks, and by showing consideration for teachers' feelings and values.
- Students are expected to work individually and collectively for the betterment of community.
- Students will understand and follow rules. Different activities have different rules. Teachers will make different rules clear as they apply to different situations. Students will also understand the consequences of their actions.
- Mutual respect in the relationships among students and teachers at the Crestone Charter School is the over-riding standard for determining how to handle discipline matters.

DISCIPLINE: MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Crestone Charter School is committed to ensuring a safe and effective learning environment for all students. At Crestone Charter School, the learning environment extends from the classroom to include all trips, adventure/outdoor learning and travel. CCS creates a positive learning environment using best practices. All classrooms use the Virtues Project, a behavioral support system that emphasizes positive character development.

Each teacher is responsible for establishing a classroom climate that is conducive to learning. Teachers are responsible for establishing shared expectations, codes of cooperation and consequences that are appropriate for the age levels of the classroom. If a student's behavior is disruptive to the learning environment the teacher determines the best appropriate action for that student.

In the event that conflict arises, conflict management becomes part of the learning process, increasing children's senses of responsibility, compassionate understanding and self-other awareness. Practices that may be utilized include peer mediation, talking circles and formalized restorative justice.

Parents have an important role to play because their child brings the expectations, standards

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and values of the home to the school. Parents and teachers must communicate and work together to help children grow and learn.

Each child is unique and special, and this principle applies to discipline in the event that shared expectations are violated. In situations where gross misbehavior has resulted in physical or emotional injury to another student or if a student is so disruptive that his/her behavior is interrupting the learning environment and the classroom teacher has exhausted classroom tools, the following actions will occur:

- The offending child will be removed from the classroom immediately. In some cases he/she may be sent home for the remainder of the day for the purpose of reflection with his/her parents. The parent and child will discuss the appropriate behaviors and virtues needing development.
- A meeting between school administration, the child, the child's parents and the classroom teacher will occur to set clear guidelines before the child may return to the classroom.

In some cases the offending child may be asked to prepare a statement that provides reflections about the impact of his/her actions. This statement will be presented to all school staff at a staff meeting. In other cases the child may need to give an apology or make other amends to the victim and his/her family.

In the event that a child is sent home, the length of time away from school will vary with situations. In some cases the child may spend his/her reflection time in school during school hours. If standardized testing is taking place the child will still test but in a separate environment away from the classroom.

In certain situations Crestone Charter School is obligated by state law to ensure student safety. With this said, pursuant to Board Policy and Colorado State Law the following behaviors will result in mandatory expulsion:

- Possession of dangerous weapons on school grounds or at school activities
 - A firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, or a firearm facsimile that could reasonable be mistaken for an actual firearm
 - Any pellet or "bee-bee" gun or other device, whether operation or not, designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air;
 - A fixed blade knife with a blade that measures longer than three (3) inches in length or a spring loaded knife or a pocket knife with a blade longer than three and one-half (3 1/2) inches; or
 - Any object, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury.
- Sale of illegal chemical substances, including alcoholic beverages –Colorado State Law requires that any person selling such substances be expelled from school.
- Habitually disruptive students – students who have been sent home 3 times for causing substantial disruption in the school setting or activities at school.

Expectations for Class Trips and Outdoor Learning Experiences

Due to the inherent risks involved in outdoor programs and travel expeditions, it is essential that

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students demonstrate trust and integrity while on these trips. Students who exhibit inappropriate behavior at school may, at the school's discretion, not be allowed to participate in expeditionary travel or briefer field trips outside of class. If a student violates the school behavior policy while on a class trip or an outdoor learning experience, he/she may be removed from the trip at the parent or guardian's expense and he/she may not participate in future trips for the remainder of the academic year.

Student Attendance Policy

Crestone Charter School values student learning and active participation in classroom assignments, projects and field-based learning experiences. Student success in school is largely dependent upon regular and punctual attendance. Students who have good attendance generally have a more positive mindset, more developed social skills and a higher self-concept. No single factor may interfere with a student's progress more quickly than frequent tardiness or absence. Frequent absences lead to poor academic work, lack of social development and possible academic failure.

In accordance with state law it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under his/her care and supervision receives adequate education and training, and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school.

Excused Absences

All absences are considered unexcused unless the following conditions are met:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured with notification on the day that the student is absent through a written note from a health practitioner/email and a phone call from the parent.
2. A student whose absence is approved by the school Director on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only, which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
3. A student who is absent for an extended period of time due to a physical, mental or emotional disability with a submitted Doctor's note for verification.
4. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of the school.
5. A student who is participating in Parent-Guided-Instruction with preapproval from the school Director and classroom Teacher.
6. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the School Director.
7. A student who is suspended or expelled.

As applicable, CCS may require proof regarding the above exceptions including written statements from appropriate medical sources (i.e. a doctor's note confirming illness). Absences are ultimately deemed excused by the School Director.

Make-up work shall be provided to any students with excused absences. It is the responsibility of the student and/parents to pick up any work missed from his/her classroom teacher.

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Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is an absence that is not covered by one of the aforementioned exceptions. If a student voluntarily skips school, parents will be notified and that child will be expected to meet with his/her classroom teacher and the School Director to determine appropriate consequences.

Each unexcused absence shall be entered on the student's record. For safety reasons, Crestone Charter School will notify the parent/guardian of the student receiving an unexcused absence by phone or in writing the day on which the absence occurs.

Chronic Absenteeism

When a student has an excessive number of absences, these absences negatively impact the student's academic success. Once a student has accrued 3 unexcused absences a letter will be sent home from the school. After 6 unexcused absences the parent and student will be required to attend a meeting with the student's teacher(s) and the School Director where a plan will be created to ensure regular attendance.

The maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is 10 days during any school calendar year. After a student has accrued 10 or more unexcused absences the School Director has full authority to report the child to truancy court.

Additionally, a student who has 15 total absences in a school year, whether the absences are excused or unexcused, may be identified as "chronically absent" by the School Director. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall not be counted in the total number of absences considered for a student who is chronically absent.

If a student is chronically absent, the School Director shall develop a plan in full collaboration with the student's parent/guardian to improve the student's attendance. The plan shall include best practices to address the reasons for the student's chronic absenteeism.

If a student misses more than 32 days of school with the absence of a prior-approved Parent-Guided Instruction Program, the school team will have full authority to determine whether or not CCS is the best educational fit for the student and the student may be disenrolled from the Crestone Charter School.

Tardiness

CCS expects that students arrive to class on time. Occasional tardiness is unavoidable. Chronic tardiness is a serious issue that can affect a student's ability to progress at school. Being chronically late is disrespectful to fellow students and teachers and interrupts morning programming that is dedicated to increasing attention and focus of learners.

If a student is tardy 3 times the student's parent/guardian will receive written notice. If a student is tardy 6 times the student and his/her parent/guardian will be required to meet with the classroom teacher and School Director.

DRUG/ALCOHOL POLICY FOR CCS STUDENTS AND STAFF

For purposes of clarifying this policy, the substances at issue include: all beverages containing alcohol, tobacco products, marijuana, and "harder" drugs including, but not

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limited to heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, and any other illegal, illicit or controlled substances.

Regular (full-time) staff members have a special role to play as both arbiters and models for student behavior. In addition, the bonds of mutual dependence and trust among staff members are an important factor in the school's success with young people. Since the Crestone Charter School advocates a generally healthy lifestyle for its students, including positive development of mind, body, emotions and spirit, the adults who are responsible agents of the school have a special role to play in student lives. Drug use is oppositional to the development of healthy lifestyles of elementary, middle and high school students.

Parents play the most critical role in student substance use issues. Any efforts to control, mitigate, and prohibit drug use is best done when the parents and school are working in harmony and agreement on these matters.

Students will not bring prohibited substances to any activity of the Crestone Charter School. This includes regular classrooms, field trips, school events such as Show and Tell, and any other activity sponsored by the school. Students will not make such substances available to other students at any such event or school hosted outing or gathering. Students will not come to any school activity under the influence of any of the prohibited substances. There will be no smoking on school grounds or in school buildings.

Students who are found to have broken this policy will be returned to the supervision of their parents or guardians as soon as is practical, the student will serve 3-days-in-school suspension and all travel privileges will be suspended for the remainder of the academic year. If the student has a 2nd offense of violating the policy, travel privileges will be revoked entirely for the duration of the student's attendance at CCS and the student will serve 5 days out-of school suspension. All offenses accrue over the student's entire academic attendance at CCS.

The student may return to school grounds after suspension contingent upon a meeting with the student's parents/guardian and relevant school staff, including the school Director. The purpose of this meeting is to clarify the school's policies and ensure that the student understands the consequences for future infringements on the school's policies.

It should be remembered that attendance at the Crestone Charter School is a voluntary act on the part of students and parents, and no unequivocal right to participate in school programs exists. In every instance the needs of the school, the classroom and the students will be evaluated in order to determine an appropriate course of action. Individualized sanctions are imposed with the same attention as all individualized programs within the school.

Staff members who come to work under the influence of any drugs prohibited by this policy are subject to immediate dismissal by the Director, and will immediately remove themselves from school premises. Bringing such substances into the school or using or having them available on field trips makes staff members subject to immediate dismissal. Staff members who make prohibited substances available to students at school, away from school, on field trips or at any other time during or outside of school hours are subject to immediate dismissal

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and will be prosecuted to the full extent of applicable law.

Mentors are at-will contract employees, providing services, usually, within their own homes or place of business. During the time they are engaged in Mentorship teaching they are acting as agents of the school and will fall under the applicable aspects of this policy. Mentors who use prohibited substances or make them available to students during Mentorship hours will be terminated. Mentors who knowingly allow students to engage in prohibited substance use during school hours will be terminated. A mentor's role as arbiters and models for student behavior is no less important than regular staff.

District Policy and Regulations specific to use of illegal substances is included at the end of the handbook. Parents and students are responsible for reading the policy and understanding that CCS is held to enforcing this policy and its regulation.

COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES AND CONCERNS

Children are often the first communicators that something is not going well at school. If they have a complaint about a teacher or other students, they are likely to voice this concern to their parents. It is important that parents pay attention to what their children tell them; it's also important for parents to check out what the child has reported. **The first best thing to do is talk to the child's teacher to get another perspective on the event.** Miscommunication and misunderstanding are easily come by in schools when many children are vying for teacher's time and attention. Sometimes in a high energy classroom a teacher may have misunderstood a child's need; sometimes children have not understood what a teacher expected. Talking to the teacher is the most important thing that parents can do to resolve a problem or nip misunderstanding in the bud! It is a central feature in the school's program that teachers are available to parents, and that classrooms are permeable to parent visits and observation. The goal is to have teachers and parents work as a team in the best interests of the child.

The parents' next recourse is to speak with the school's Director. The Director will suggest a course of action, depending on the issue, but is always inclined to try to get the parents and teacher to communicate effectively, albeit with the Director's help. Meetings may be set up at times convenient to all parties. The child may or may not be involved, depending on the issue. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter in a way that protects the child's and teacher's rights and integrity, preserves the appropriate functioning of the classroom, and provides a method for continuing communication between parents and teachers. The Director's role in conflict resolution is to help find a way that the child, the teacher and the parents come to a satisfying and effective resolution of the matter.

If parents are still not satisfied with the outcome of these discussions, parents have recourse to the school's Governing Council, composed of parents and community members. This is done through contacting one of the members of the Council to determine what appropriate steps should be taken. The Governing Council will always seek to have the concern resolved at the teacher or Director level.

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For students who are served under section 504, a formal complaint process has been established by the Moffat Board of Education, which covers all complaints against District personnel and practices including compliance with the rules and agreements set forth under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. This is Policy AC-R of the *District Administrative Policy Manual*. Under this policy, the Compliance Officer is the Superintendent of schools. All formal complaints should be filed with the Superintendent.

Because enrollment at the Charter School is a choice made by parents and children, parents always have the option of withdrawing their child and seeking educational alternatives at other schools.