

**2008 – 2009
Parent and Student Handbook
And
Code of Conduct**



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Foreword

The purpose of this book is to acquaint students and parents with the programs of studies, practices, and regulations of Don T. Durham Intermediate School. New students and their parents will find within these pages the answers to many of their questions. Students who have been previously enrolled in DIS should familiarize themselves with the contents of this book in order that they may better understand the programs of our school and to become familiar with policy changes for this school year.

All children must have the opportunity to develop essential academic and social skills and to acquire a knowledge base on which to build lifelong learning. They must also develop the ability to think logically, independently and creatively, and to communicate effectively. Educating children to be productive in a changing society necessitates an educational system characterized by quality education, equity for all children, and accountability for continuous improvements. Attending school should be an enjoyable experience. It is also a serious matter that requires a high degree of cooperation between the home, school administrators, teachers, and the student. At Durham we say; “We are Durham, Partners with Parents for Student’s Success.” Without cooperation and understanding on the part of all concerned, the maximum benefits of an education cannot be secured. Parents, please feel free to talk to your child’s teachers or come to the office at any time for help in solving a problem.

The administration, staff, and teachers of Don T. Durham Intermediate School have a responsibility to each student to uphold the core values that have been established by Carroll ISD. These core values are excellence, relationships, character & integrity, innovation, and open & honest communication. Durham has established campus goals to aid in student’s success.

1. Students will be challenged to reach academic excellence and encouraged to increase performance in local, state and national assessments.
2. Students will excel in a positive school climate in which they are safe, drug free, and encouraged to develop positive relationships.
3. DIS staff will partner with parents to focus on the success of the students by practicing open communication, attending teacher/parent meetings, and responding to students’ needs in a timely manner.
4. Teachers and staff will continue their on-going education to increase their classroom and subject knowledge, practices of vertical teaming, and increase their knowledge and use of learning communities.
5. DIS personnel will follow district guidelines to further develop financial resource.

The staff of Durham Intermediate School sincerely hopes that your days here will be pleasant and profitable, and the education gained here will prepare your student(s) to face responsibilities in the future.

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ACADEMICS

Homework

Homework is important, as it is an extension of the learning that takes place in school.

The purpose of homework is to:

1. Complete unfinished work. After teachers introduce the lesson for the day teachers are to model the work for the students and provide groups practice. Students may be given extra practice through class work. If a student does not complete the work within the given time, the work will be considered homework.
2. Provide an opportunity to reinforce basic skills and provide extension of the curriculum.
3. Complete projects. Students will have opportunities to work on special class projects. Teachers assign the projects giving students ample time to complete the projects within a specific time period. Parents may need to help students learn to plan their activities to complete the projects in that allotted time. Students need not put off projects until the due date, proper planning is necessary. Parents can help their students by viewing the teacher's web site.

If your student is spending more than two hours a night on homework, contact the teachers to resolve the conflict.

Late Work

All assignments are due on the assigned due date. Points will be deducted from work turned in after the due date as explained below:

1. One day late - 15 points deducted from the grade.
2. Two or more days late - maximum grade is a 50. (DIS policy requires students to complete all assignments)
3. A "zero" (0) is recorded in the grade book for work not turned in by the end of the six week grading period. The work can not be made up after the end of the six weeks grading period.
4. Due dates are established by each teacher for their class work/homework/projects.

Any student who fails a test may have the opportunity to retake that test based on teacher criteria for that lesson. Not all tests may be retaken, but if the student does retake a test, the highest grade he/she can make is a 70. Zeroes are highly discouraged and we, as educators, want to ensure that our students do their work and/or receive additional teaching and tutoring. If a student refuses to turn in any work or take advantage of all the additional help offered, a zero (0) may be averaged in with his/her other grades.

Make-up Work

Students will have one make-up day for each day of excused absence. Students are responsible for learning missed concepts from teachers or peers. Assignments given prior to the student's absence will be due on the date when the student returns. This is for an excused absence only and

must be requested at least two (2) days in advance of the absence and the request must be approved by the teacher and the principal or assistant principal. Credit for unexcused absence work will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the teacher and the principal or assistant principal. No homework will be given in advance for an unexcused absence. When a student is absent for one day, the student will get their make-up assignments from the teachers when they return the next day. When a student is absent for two or more days, teachers will start a folder on the second day and continue adding the work to the folder until the student returns. Each teacher will give their folder to the student when they return. After the first 48 hours of absence, parents or students may request assignments during a prolonged absence due to illness by calling the school office. Schoolwork will not be provided prior to absence except in case of illness or religious holy days. Assignments should be requested no later than 10:00 AM and it will be available in the office the next morning. Please be aware that many teachers may prefer to arrange make-up work when the child returns to school. This is done to ensure the child has the prerequisite skills to complete the work successfully. Parents can contact the teachers directly if they have questions about the homework.

Grade Reports

Parents can view their student's grades on a computer by receiving a password from the DIS office. Parents are encouraged to view their student's grades weekly or daily if required to monitor student's grades. Grades can be viewed at any time during the year. Teachers will update the grade reporting system weekly. Special project grades may not be entered weekly due to completion due dates and various phases of the project. Report cards will be sent home at the end of a six week reporting period. Parents will not be required to sign and return reports cards. Progress reports will be sent home at the three week time period for students that are in danger of failure in a subject for the six weeks. The progress reports will require a parent's signature and should be returned to the teacher which issued the report. Teachers will contact the parents if the signed report does not return within five (5) school days from the date the report was given to the student. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if they have a question concerning the grade report.

Promotion of Students

To be promoted from one grade level to the next, students shall attain an average of 70 or above in three of the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Students in the fifth (5th) grade must pass the state assessment TAKS in math and reading before being promoted to the sixth (6th) grade.

Tutorials

Students will have the opportunity to attend tutorials in any subject area at least two (2) days per week. Please check with your student's teachers for dates and times of tutoring sessions. Students who fail a subject for a grading period will be required to participate in the tutoring program. During the second semester tutorials will be offered to those students that have been identified as needing additional instruction.

ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

Attendance

Your child must be in attendance daily to receive optimum learning and preparation. Time lost from teaching can never be replaced. When students are absent, most work can be made up, however, the level of learning will not be the same as when the student has the opportunity to interact with the teacher and fellow students. Students arriving after 8:35 AM will be considered tardy. (See Tardy) The Texas School System funding is based on daily attendance and having students present is vital to receive the funding. Students arriving late due to a medical appointment need to provide a physicians' slip.

Leaving School Early

Durham Intermediate School maintains a closed campus; therefore, no student may leave school without clearance from the office. For a student to be permitted to leave campus the student's parent, legal guardian, or custodian may personally check the student out of school from the office, phone the office, or send a written note including the following information:

1. Reason for leaving school.
2. Date and time to be dismissed.
3. Date and time of return to school.
4. The name of the person who will pick up the student—we will require photo identification.
5. The person picking up the student must sign the student out from the office.

Tardy

Students arriving after 8:35 AM should report to the office to receive an admittance slip and to be counted present. Failure to report to the office can result in a student's attendance record marked as absent.

COMMUNICATIONS

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The Durham Intermediate School staff appreciates parental support and interest. We encourage parents to monitor student's progress via Family Access, inform teachers of your concerns, and keep us informed of situations that might affect your child's learning. By calling a teacher, a conference with your child's academic team of teachers will be scheduled as soon as possible. If you leave a voice mail for your child's teacher, he or she may return your call at a conference time or before or after school. Email is the recommended form of communication with the teaching staff. Please contact the teacher to resolve issues first. If an issue is not resolved with the help of a teacher please contact a campus administrator.

Campus Weekly Information

Parents are encouraged to sign up to receive the weekly school information by electronic mail. Please talk to the office staff or visit the DIS web-site for information about how to sign-up for the e-mail. Arrangements can be made with the office staff if you do not have internet service.

Telephone Use by Students

Students may use the phone for emergencies only. Students calling for overnight stays, wanting to visit friends, and etc., should make those arrangements before school. We do not encourage students to call parents for books, homework, shoes, and etc. The learning process at the intermediate level involves learning how to plan for daily activities. Students never have permission to call and ask their parents to come and pick them up. All requests for student pickup will come through the nurse's office or campus office. (See use of cell phones under Discipline)

CURRICULUM

At Durham Intermediate School, students are enrolled in several courses of curriculum. All fifth and sixth grade students take classes in the following five (5) academic curriculum courses:

Language Arts
Mathematics
Science and Health
Social Studies
Encore Curriculum
 Art
 Band
 Music
 Physical Education
 Choir
 Quest

GENERAL INFORMATION

Address Change Information

If there is ever a change in the home address, home telephone number, or parents' places of employment, the school's office staff should be notified immediately. Parents should tell the office staff if there is any change in the information listed in the emergency section of the registration card.

Back Packs

Due to safety for the students back packs are not allowed to be placed inside classrooms. Students can go to their lockers between classes and get their supplies for each class.

Bringing Valuables to School

Students should bring enough money for lunch or other necessities each day; however, they are urged not to bring extra money. Electronic games and cell phones are not permitted at school. DIS is not responsible for the loss of valuables brought to school.

Birthday Parties and Snacks

It is not a practice to celebrate birthdays with a party at the intermediate grade levels. There are national, state and district policies that govern "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value." Cup cakes, cookies and etc. are considered FMNV's. With a growing number of students having food allergies, parties are not encouraged.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Electronic devices such as cell phones, electronic games, MP3 players and etc. are not allowed at DIS. These items will be turned into the office and parents can pay a \$15.00 fee to have them returned to the parent.

Changing Classrooms

Students have four (4) minutes between classes to go to their lockers and take care of personal needs. This time has been found to be more than adequate for students to change classes. Students choosing to visit between classes and not getting to class on time may be given conduct/behavior consequences.

Collections and Sells

No collections of any type, for any purpose, may be made in the school by students without the approval of the principal. The sale of any item is prohibited at Durham Intermediate School unless authorized by the principal.

Complaints

A student or parent who has a complaint should first bring the matter to the appropriate teacher. If the outcome is not satisfactory, a conference with the principal or assistant principal can be requested.

Counseling Services

A certified counselor is provided to assist students in academic planning, solving scholastic problems, and dealing with everyday problems faced by students. Parents are urged to contact their children's counselor whenever they desire.

Dress Code

The policy concerning dress and grooming at Durham Intermediate School shall be as follows:

Boys

1. Hair should be clean and well groomed at all times and should not extend below the eyebrows or over the bottom of the collar of a regular shirt.
2. Boys shall not be allowed to wear earrings.
3. No tank tops or muscle shirts will be allowed.
4. Very short shorts, bike shorts, wind shorts, etc., are not appropriate for classroom wear. Form-fitting shorts or pants (i.e. bike shorts) are not permitted to be worn alone. If they are worn underneath walking length shorts or pants, the shorts or pants that are worn on the outer side

need to be of appropriate length. Our guideline for determining appropriate length is that shorts must be first knuckle length of a fist hand or longer. Students shall not be allowed to wear clothing that has hems that are frayed.

5. Pants should fit properly - not be baggy and not hang below the navel or at the hips.

6. Shirts must have sleeves or be small enough around the arms not to show skin beyond the arm pit.

Girls

1. Dresses or skirts shall be a reasonable length in proportion to the height of the individual.

Low-cut sun dresses are not acceptable. Foundation garments must be worn.

2. No bare midriffs or halter-tops or tank tops shall be worn. No backless attire is acceptable.

3. Very short shorts, bike shorts, wind shorts, etc., are not appropriate for classroom wear. Form-fitting shorts or pants (i.e. bike shorts) are not permitted to be worn alone. If they are worn underneath walking length shorts or pants, the shorts or pants that are worn on the outer side need to be of appropriate length. Our guideline for determining appropriate length is that shorts must be first knuckle length of a fist hand or longer. Students shall not be allowed to wear clothing that has hems that are frayed.

4. Appropriate shoes should be worn for this age.

5. Age appropriate make-up. (This will be determined on individual student bases.)

Student Body

1. Students will not wear slogan buttons or clothing with inappropriate or suggestive slogans or advertising on it.

2. Any clothing or grooming that, in the Principal's judgment, may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations is prohibited.

3. Dress for social functions and activities will be determined by the sponsors of those functions and announced prior to the occasion.

4. Clothing with holes or tears will not be permitted.

Students will be sent to the Nurse's Office to change into appropriate attire, or parents of students who violate these basic rules of good appearance may be called and asked to correct the problem before the student may return to classes. Repeated violations will result in disciplinary actions by the building administrators.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the curriculum and philosophy of our school. Learning can take place inside and outside the classroom. As a school, our belief is that field trips can enrich and enhance the academic experience at Durham. We believe that field trips are a privilege, not a right. Our expectations for students are that they will be good examples and models for classmates and younger students. If a student proves through his/her personal behavioral choices that they are not responsible to represent Durham at the highest level, then he/she will not be permitted to go on the trip. If a student has already paid for the trip/activity the money for the trip may not be refunded if the student is removed from going on the trip. Once the school has made a financial obligation, no funds can be returned. Alternative activities and instruction will

be provided to students not attending field trips. Students should come to school during regular hours to participate in these planned alternative activities.

Health Clinic

The clinic is staffed by a school nurse. Registered nurses promote the health of students by providing emergency care and first aid, vision, dental, scoliosis and hearing screening, counseling on individual health problems, and health education. The nurse is also a health resource for school faculty. Parents should notify the school by phone if the student is ill, especially if the student has a communicable condition (chicken pox, mumps, measles, infectious hepatitis, impetigo, scabies, lice, etc.). Parents should keep the student home if he/she has a fever (100.4° or over), diarrhea, red draining eyes, or an undiagnosed rash. If a student is injured or ill, every effort will be made to contact the parent. The parent will make arrangements for the student to be taken home or to a physician. Parents must notify the school of changes in home or work telephone numbers and persons to contact in case the parent cannot be contacted. This is important for the protection of the student in the event of an emergency.

Library Services

The library will be made available to the students before and after school, 7:55 AM – 3:55 PM.

Lockers

Every student is issued a hall locker. Students are urged to use the facilities with which they are provided and to keep their supplies in locked lockers. Students should keep locker combinations confidential. Lockers are not to be shared. Lockers, as provided by the school district, are purchased, furnished, and maintained by the school district and remain the property of the school district. Students may not write, draw, or place stickers or stamps either inside or outside of lockers. Items of a non-school nature should not be placed or kept in the lockers. The school reserves the right to inspect all lockers at any time for health and/or safety reasons. Parents wanting to decorate a locker for a special day may do so after receiving permission from an administrator. Lockers are small and will hold a backpack with wheels. Students that “jam lockers” will need to pay for the repairs if incurred.

Lunch

All students in Grades 5 and 6 have a 30-minute lunch period. Student lunches can be purchased by depositing money into the student’s account through the on-line Family Access or at the cafeteria with a check or with cash placing money into the student’s account. Students can also buy a lunch and pay for it at the time of purchase.

Parent Volunteer Program

Durham Intermediate has an excellent Parent Volunteer Program. Many parents and friends work in classrooms with students and help teachers prepare learning activities. Others help in the library, office, special classrooms, or on the playground. Some jobs can be done at home by those parents who are unable to come to school to work. All volunteers must enter the school through the office. All volunteers must present their drivers licenses to the office staff. Licenses will be scanned through the “RAPTOR” security system and a tag will be issued to the volunteer.

PTO

Parents are encouraged to join and take an active role in the Parent Teacher Organization. Meetings are held on a regular basis and include topics of interest as well as special programs. The PTO sponsors a telephone directory of Durham students and a monthly newsletter. To receive the news letter parents can sign-up on the DIS web-site. The news letter will be sent to parents via the internet. They sponsor several fund raising events a year with the proceeds going to purchase instructional supplies for the classroom and pay for special programs for the students. (Participation in fund raising events is always voluntary.) Information about the PTO is available in the school office and on-line at the DIS web-site.

Students Organizations

Student clubs and performing groups, such as the band and choir, may establish rules of conduct and – consequences for misbehavior – that are more stringent than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the school shall apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization. At Durham Intermediate School, there are a variety of clubs and organizations that students may join. They are:

Computer Club

Chess Club

Yearbook Staff

Student Council

Robotics - 6th grade only

Choir – Requires try-outs and selection by the choir staff. (Limited number of spaces)

Transportation

Bus transportation is an option for all students in Carroll ISD. The students are expected to exhibit the appropriate behaviors that enable the district to transport the students in a safe and timely manner. A student being transported in school-owned vehicles is required to comply with the Code of Conduct. Riding the bus is a privilege which can be revoked. All bus discipline consequences shall be implemented with consideration given to the student's age, maturity level, and attitude. Frequency of offenses will also be considered. In the case of serious misconduct which endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to return the student to campus, and the parents will pick up the student from the campus. The driver may also call for law enforcement assistance. The principal and parents will be notified of the situation as soon as possible. Students may be removed from the bus permanently.

The student and/or student's parents will be responsible for any damages incurred to passing motorists and/or vehicles as a result of the object thrown from the bus. The student and/or student's parents will be responsible for any damages incurred to the bus. Before a student can ride home on a bus that is not their normally assigned bus, they must inform the office and have a note from a parent requesting the pass.

CONCLUSION

This student handbook has been prepared for the benefit of the students and parents of Durham Intermediate School. It is not flawless and several changes may have to be made, as progress always calls for change. Surely, something of importance has been overlooked and left out. If you have suggestions for other items that should be included in the future, please contact the school office. Every school has a personality. By working together, we can keep ours positive with a high commitment to excellence.