

**Denver Street School
2025-2026
Student Handbook**



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Introduction and History

In 1985, Tom Tillapaugh relocated his family from Oklahoma to Denver and began teaching classes in his dining room to five students. He quickly adjusted techniques and procedures from the traditional classroom to meet the special needs of his unique student body. These students were dealing with issues including poverty, addiction, violence, illiteracy, anger, and an utter lack of hope for a meaningful future. A high school diploma and future success were impossible without a holistic approach that included not only academic rigor, but also career, life skills, and social/emotional development. To this end, the school began.

The Denver Street School is a 501(c)(3) faith-based, private high school serving the inner-city community of Metro Denver. We accept students who have struggled in, dropped out of, or been expelled from other schools and need a more personalized approach to their education. The school is privately funded and accredited by Cognia.

Our campus is in Lakewood, located right in the heart of inner-city neighborhoods. The curriculum is based on state standards and includes courses in Mathematics, Science, English, History, Economics, Computer Science, and electives. The student-to-teacher ratio averages 7:1. We offer life counseling, tutoring, mentoring, athletic opportunities, individualized career counseling and testing, faculty advocacy, and health care referrals.

Purpose and Mission Statement

The purpose of DSS is to bring hope, a second chance, and the love of Christ to Denver's struggling students through quality education in a safe environment and a supportive network of loving, caring adults.

Since 1985, we've offered struggling students a second chance to earn a high school diploma. We believe that every student, regardless of their past choices or present environment, deserves the opportunity for a high-quality education and the hope of a promising future.

During the time they spend at DSS, we not only educate them in academic content, but we also help them analyze and overcome their past while opening their eyes to future possibilities. Students will become productive citizens by:

- acquiring tools to solve problems and set goals
- identifying and overcoming negative habits
- having a vision for a positive future
- working to develop and maintain healthy relationships
- knowing the Gospel and understanding how to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ
- finding and ethically using relevant information from multiple sources
- mastering course content
- earning a diploma

These skills will enable students to be well-rounded, productive, and independent members of society, aligning with our vision for them.

Admission Policy

The Denver Street School admits students of any race, color, religion, and national and ethnic origin to all of the rights, privileges, and activities generally accorded or made available to the students of this school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies and school-administered programs.

The Principal, however, owns the right to deny enrollment to an applicant.

Registration Process

Denver Street School may accept students for enrollment at the beginning of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarters of the school year, depending on their current enrollment. Please see the [current school calendar](#) for specific start dates of each quarter.

Due to our limited class sizes, a student may occasionally be placed on a *waiting list* for the upcoming quarter. We recommend applying as soon as possible to maximize the opportunity for enrollment in the desired quarter. Students on the list who are not placed are given priority for the next enrollment period.

1. Students wishing to enroll may obtain an application packet by:
 - Downloading one from our website at DenverStreetSchool.org. [Note: before an interview can be scheduled, a completed application must be submitted.]
 - Contacting the school directly and requesting that an application be mailed to them.
 - Coming to the West campus to pick up a packet.

Note: Where possible, please return your application with a current copy of your school transcripts that show any high school credits received and your immunization records. Any delay in such documentation will slow down the enrollment process.

We are not staffed to accommodate intensive IEPS and/or 504 plans established with public schools and/or Special Education documents.

2. Once the completed application packet has been returned and evaluated by the principal, students will be contacted to schedule an informational interview. The interview will be conducted with a parent/guardian present. A tour and a meeting with the school counselor will be included.
3. After a discussion between the principal and counselor, the next steps will be initiated.
4. If the principal determines that the applicant is not well suited for attendance at DSS, the parent or guardian of the applicant will be notified of the denial of enrollment.
5. Students who are chosen for enrollment will review this **Student Handbook**, in person, with the principal/counselor, and signatures will be required at the time of the meeting. At this time, any additional information that pertains to attendance at DSS will be shared.

Tuition and Fees

The annual cost of educating a student at the Denver Street School is approximately \$11,000. Because we recognize that most of our students are financially unable to pay that amount, funds are raised from various sources to make up the difference.

The student's family is responsible for tuition in the amount of \$50.00 per quarter, payable upon receipt of the billing. The school also charges a \$25.00 technology fee and an additional \$25.00 insurance fee once each school year.

Students have the option of completing 8 hours of community service in exchange for one quarter's tuition. The hours must be documented and signed by an employee of the organization. Documentation needs to be submitted to the principal prior to the end of the quarter to pay that quarter's tuition. **The \$25.00 technology and insurance fees must be paid via cash or check.**

If a student expects to be late with their tuition, it is their responsibility to make arrangements with the principal in advance. Should a student become more than 2 quarters behind in their tuition, they are subject to being dismissed from school. **Official student records may be delayed in release to parents or other institutions if there is an outstanding account balance.**

Parental Involvement

The administration and faculty of the Denver Street School invite and welcome the involvement of parents and guardians in our students' lives. The school will offer periodic parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, and additional activities to encourage parents' participation. Parents are also encouraged to attend our weekly chapel. The principal and advocate will communicate regularly with parents about student success and also patterns of concern. Parents and guardians are welcome and encouraged to contact us at any time regarding their child's academic standing and progress.

Chapel

Our school-wide Chapel is held weekly. This is a time of togetherness, where we gather to pray and hear a message of truth from God's Word. **Attendance at our school-wide chapel service is mandatory for all students.** While this school is an academic institution providing a quality high school education, it is also a Christian ministry. We believe that an education is incomplete without God. It is therefore our desire that all of our students will come to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Bible study and Chapel are a **requirement for graduation.**

Students interested in being baptized as a result of this Christian education and who wish to establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ may be baptized at New Life in Christ Church, the shared location of our school. Family members are encouraged to attend the baptism ceremony, which will be conducted during school hours. During this ceremony, the students will publicly proclaim their desire to know Jesus as their personal Savior before their peers at school.

Athletics

The Denver Street School endeavors to offer various sports depending on our students' interests and the availability of resources. Should we not be able to offer a sport, every effort is made to connect our students to a program where they can participate. Students may participate provided they meet eligibility in attendance, academics, and behavior. Students who successfully participate in athletic programs will receive $\frac{1}{4}$ of an elective credit for every 30 hours of participation.

If a student signs up with their local high school or another athletic program, credit may still be awarded. **A signed document must be presented before credit is issued to the principal by the head coach or governing authority of the location where the sport is played.** No exceptions will be issued. Currently, there are no sports programs at DSS.

Discipline Policy

Our goals, as they relate to discipline, are to maintain high academic standards and integrity, to protect the learning environment, and to create a safe place for students and faculty. If a student causes a problem, they will be asked to fix it, with appropriate support from the school. If a student cannot or will not fix a problem, the school will intervene and take corrective action. What the school does will depend on each unique situation. The Principal holds the right to determine appropriate consequences.

Standards of Conduct

The administration and faculty desire to treat students as adults. In return, students are expected to behave maturely and obey all school rules and expectations. It is in this atmosphere of mutual respect that the learning process will be most enhanced. **Each student is required to read, agree to, and sign the Standards of Conduct contract, which is included in the application packet.** No student will be permitted to remain enrolled without a signed agreement on file. Please be advised that...

The following choices may result in *suspension*:

- Cheating or consistent refusal to complete assignments or work in class
- Attending school high or drunk
- Insubordination to a faculty member or administrator
- Damaging school or church property
- Repeated inability to follow school rules
- Threatening anyone at the school
- Refusal to comply with technology policies

The following choices may result in *expulsion*:

- Failure to take responsibility for an ongoing problem
- Weapons possession at school or a school event
- Threatening and/or physical harm to or sexual harassment of a student or faculty member
- Gang activity or recruitment at school
- Possessing, selling, or distributing drugs at school or a school event

Policy Regarding Gang Activity

The Denver Street School is a safe and neutral environment for all students. Our basic policy is that no gang-related activity is allowed. We will give students a written warning the first time anything occurs, including, *but not limited to*:

- gang-related language, whistling, or other “signals or signs”
- wearing predominantly gang colors
- wearing clothing with any gang symbols or signifiers
- wearing their clothing in a way that signifies a gang affiliation
- writing any symbols, names, numbers, etc., on anything in the building, including their notebooks, papers, etc
- using fonts, file names, or anything else gang-related on the school computers and/or on any work done on the school computers

A second offense of any kind will result in a probationary contract. A third offense of any kind may result in dismissal from school for the remainder of the quarter, resulting in a loss of credit. The ability to return the following quarter will be at the discretion of the principal and will require a conference with the student and their parent or guardian.

Policy Regarding Drugs/Alcohol

If we suspect that a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, because they smell like it, are acting like it, or have any physical manifestation of it, parents will be called, and the student will be suspended for the rest of the day. No drug tests will be administered at school. If a student brings certified results of a clean UA that was taken within 24 hours of the incident at school, the suspension will be revoked and will not count against the student toward dismissal. *Please know that parents are always welcome to come to school and meet with the principal and your student if you feel they are not being treated fairly or appropriately.*

In addition to the suspension, the first incident will result in the student being placed on a drug contract, which will remain in effect for the rest of their time at the school. A second incident will result in another suspension. A third incident will result in dismissal for the rest of the quarter and loss of that quarter’s credits. A conference with the students’ parents or guardians will be required for readmission the next quarter.

Policy Regarding Bullying

We believe that every student is created in the image of God and deserves to feel safe, valued, and respected. Bullying of any kind, whether physical, verbal, emotional, or cyber, is not acceptable. This includes but is not limited to name-calling, threats, intimidation, exclusion, or spreading rumors, both in person and online.

If a student believes they are being bullied, they should report it immediately to a trusted staff member, advocate, or the principal. Every report will be taken seriously and investigated with discretion and care. Retaliation for reporting bullying is also not tolerated.

Consequences for bullying may include:

- Mediation with a school advocate
- Written behavior contract
- Suspension or dismissal, depending on severity and pattern

We are committed to building a culture of kindness, honesty, and support. Students are encouraged to speak life over one another and to hold each other accountable in a loving manner.

Policy Regarding Weapons and Firearms

To protect our school community, the possession of firearms or any weapon on school property or during school events is strictly prohibited. This includes knives, replicas, or any other items intended to intimidate or cause harm. Any student found in possession of a weapon will be subject to immediate suspension and may be reviewed for potential expulsion. The authorities may be contacted if necessary.

Policy Regarding Zero-Tolerance for Violence

DSS has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of physical violence, whether against students, staff, or other people at DSS (like volunteers, visitors, etc.). This includes on and off-campus. We will not allow unsafe behavior that puts others at risk.

Consequences for violent behavior may include:

- Immediate suspension
- Behavioral contract
- Expulsion
- Police involvement, when appropriate

We are a school of second chances, but we also believe in setting firm boundaries so that all students and staff can thrive in a safe environment. This is one of our *strictest policies* because we believe students cannot learn, grow, or truly be themselves unless they feel safe—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. (See Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.)

Policy Regarding Phones and Electronics

Phone and electronics usage will be at the discretion of the academic staff.

Policy Regarding Dress Code

Though the Denver Street School does not require a uniform, it does have some general guidelines concerning dress for school. Students are expected to wear *modest* clothing that appropriately covers the body in a Christian setting.

Clothing is not permitted that has:

- a gang affiliation
- obscene language, symbols, or pictures
- drug or alcohol related symbols or slogans

Approval of dress is at the discretion of the principal.

Policy Regarding Attendance and Tardiness

Consistent attendance is expected of each student at DSS. If a student indicates to us, through their lack of attendance or tardiness, that they are not serious about pursuing an education, that student will be subject to dismissal for the remainder of the quarter in which the attendance problem occurs, resulting in the loss of credit.

Absences: Should a student exceed four (4) absences, excused and/or unexcused, in a class during a quarter, they will be dropped from that class and will not receive credit in it. The principal has discretion regarding the consequences; however, if there is any absence from ditching (AD) or failure to work in class (AW), it may result in an immediate drop after the fifth absence.

Tardy to Class: Since being on time is a critical workplace skill, we treat tardiness as an employer would. Any student exceeding six (6) tardies in a class will be subject to dismissal from that class for the remainder of the quarter.

- Students arriving up to 10 minutes late for class will be marked as “tardy” and will receive notification of the number of tardies they have used of the six allotted.
- Students arriving 11-30 minutes late to class will receive a half-absence.
- Students arriving more than 30 minutes late will be considered “absent tardy” for attendance recording purposes; however, this level of tardiness will count as a full absence.

Tardy for Advocacy: If a negative pattern occurs in a student’s Advocacy attendance, action will be taken.

Policy Regarding Ditching

Ditching class, study hall, detention, advocacy, chapel, or any other required activity is considered a serious offense. It will result in an unexcused absence, with the attendance code being marked accordingly. If a pattern of ditching continues, consequences will be determined for the specific student.

Parents will be notified by email, phone, or text message for any consistent attendance issues and/or if a student receives an attendance code regarding any form of unexcused absence.

Policy Regarding Study Hall

Study Hall is a mandatory part of the school day for any student who is not passing classes or has two or more missing or incomplete assignments. Once a student has submitted all necessary work, they may be excused from Study Hall until the following weekly progress report.

General Information

School Contact Information

Principal's phone: (303) 847-7582

Email: west.principal@denverstreetschool.org

Fax: (303) 942-6055

Campus phone: (303) 860-1702

School Hours

- Monday through Thursday
 - 9:00 am to 3:30 pm
 - An optional early Study Hall is available from 8:30 am - 8:55 am
- Most Fridays
 - 9:00 am to 12:30 pm
 - Friday schedules vary

School Supplies

Each student is requested to bring their paper, pencils, pens, and other necessary school supplies. DSS will provide any student with school supplies if they are unable to obtain them on their own.

Lunch

The Denver Street School has an open campus during lunch. Students are welcome to eat and drink in designated rooms or outside the building. A refrigerator, freezer, and microwave oven are available. Students may bring a bag lunch or purchase their lunch at local stores. Students are expected to return to class on time at the beginning of the period after lunch. DSS is not responsible for accidents that may occur to students once they leave the facility.

Field Trips

The permission slip for *all* field trips is included in each student's application. Additional permission slips will not be sent home for each individual field trip. Students will be informed of any upcoming trips and are expected to notify their parents.

Advocates

Each student will have an assigned advocate. The purpose of the advocate is to provide additional support and encouragement to students at DSS, as well as to offer direct and immediate intervention for students in crisis.

Inclement Weather

The principal will determine whether there will be a late start or school closure, and it will be announced on the school's Facebook page. See the Bell Schedules for the late start schedule.

Lost and Found

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Students should pay close attention to their belongings, including books, purses, phones, and sunglasses. A lost and found box is located in the principal's office. Items left unclaimed will be donated to charity at the completion of each quarter.

Fire Readiness

Students will be informed about the fire exits and escape routes for each room. They will be expected to familiarize themselves with these in case of a fire or other emergency. There will be two fire drills and two active shooter drills (one in the fall and one in the spring) per year.

Volunteers

The school is honored and privileged to enlist several part-time volunteers to help carry out our mission of providing a quality education to our students. These volunteers serve in various capacities, including tutors, nursery workers, secretaries, and food providers. Students are expected to treat volunteers with consideration and respect, and utilize the time spent with the volunteers. All volunteers are screened before they have any contact with students.

Visitors

The school policy is that there are to be no visitors in the building at any time. Friends may meet students at the school door after school, provided they do not create a problem for you or anyone else at the school.

Building Security

The north and south doors will be locked at all times. No unannounced visitors will be allowed onto the school property or to pick up students.

Daily Bell Schedule

<u>DSS Normal Day Schedule</u>			
Monday/Wednesday		Tuesday/Thursday	
8:30 - 8:55	Study Hall am	8:30 - 8:55	Study Hall am
9:00 - 10:30	A Block	9:00 - 10:30	D Block
10:35 - 12:05	B Block	10:35 - 12:05	E Block
12:10 - 12:40	Advocacy	12:10 - 12:40	Advocacy
12:45 - 1:20	Lunch	12:45 - 1:20	Lunch
1:20 - 2:55	C Block	1:20 - 2:55	F Block
3:00 - 3:30	Flex	3:00 - 3:30	Flex

Half-Day Friday Schedule

8:30 - 8:55	Study Hall
9:00 - 10:00	Block I
10:00 - 10:15	15-minute break
10:15 - 11:15	Block II
11:15 - 11:30	15-minute break
11:30 - 12:30	Block III
12:30	Dismissal

Late Start Schedule

10:00 - 10:20	Advocacy
10:25 - 11:40	A/D Block
11:45 - 1:00	B/E Block
1:05 - 1:35	Lunch
1:35 - 2:50	C/F Block
2:55 - 3:30	Flex

If a Holiday falls on Monday, the regular schedule will be adhered to, starting with Tuesday and ending with a half-day Friday.

Academic Requirements and Procedures

Graduation Requirements

For a student to graduate from the Denver Street School, they must have earned at least **23** credits. Following is a list of required credits.

<u>Subject</u>	<u># Credits Needed</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u># Credits Needed</u>
English	4	Social Sciences	3
Math	3	Bible	2
Science	3	Electives	9

Grading System

A system of letter grades and conferences is used to inform parents of student progress. The letter grades are based on the following percentage groupings:

A= 90-100%

C= 70-79%

B= 80-89%

F= Below 70%

All classwork must receive a grade of 70% or above to receive credit. Revision is required for any assignment failing to meet that standard.

Missing and incomplete class work may only appear once on a missing assignment list. If it is not completed and resubmitted for grading by the next list deadline, it may receive a zero for a grade.

All tests and major assignments must receive a 70% or above to receive credit. Revision and retesting are required for any test or assignment that fails to meet the standard. Students who fail to satisfactorily complete any tests or major assignments by the end of the quarter will not receive any credit for that class.

Last Week of Quarter/Final Exams

- The last 2 days of each quarter will be for final exams only in each class.
- All other tests, quizzes, and make-up work must be done by 3:30 on the Friday before finals. Students must have a grade of 60% or higher in the class to take the final.
- Only major concepts will be tested on final exams. Teachers will provide students with a review sheet. Students are strongly encouraged to keep all class work, tests, etc., to use for review.

Signed Agreement for Enrollment

To be signed in-person by a parent or guardian:

I, _____, have read the Student Handbook in its entirety and understand the expectations and policies for students enrolled at the Denver Street School.

Student signature

Date

Parent or Guardian signature

Date

To be signed by the student at school:

I, _____, have read the Student Handbook in its entirety and understand the expectations and policies for students enrolled at the Denver Street School.

Student signature

Date