

DECORAH HIGH SCHOOL

2026-27

Student Handbook

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An electronic copy of this handbook can be found on the Decorah Community School District website, www.decorah.k12.ia.us, under Decorah High School/Forms & Information.

ANNUAL NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of Decorah Community School District not to discriminate in its programs, activities, or employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, sexual orientation, age (for employment), and actual or potential family, parental, or marital status (for programs).

Decorah Community School District offers career and technical education programs in the following service areas:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Applied Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Manufacturing
- Business, Finance, Marketing, and Management
- Human Services

If you have a question or complaint related to this policy, or for information about the district's grievance procedures, please contact the District's Equity Coordinator, **Justin Albers**, MS Principal / Equity Coordinator, justin.albers@decorah.school or (563) 382-.8427., or the Director of the **Office for Civil Rights**, U.S. Department of Education, Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building, 1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310, Denver, CO 80204-3582, Telephone: (303) 844-5695 FAX: (303) 844-4303, TDD: (800) 877-8339, Email: OCR.Denver@ed.gov.

HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page Number

1. Welcome	5
a. Decorah High School Bell Schedules	5
b. School Hours and Expectations	5
2. Statement of Jurisdiction and Authority	6-8
3. Decorah Community School District Mission, Vision, and Core Values	8-9
4. Universal Student Protections and Legal Notices	9-28
a. Non-Discrimination / Equal Educational Opportunity	9-10
b. Anti-Bullying / Anti-Harrassment Policy	10-13
c. Student Grievance and Complaint Process	13-14
d. Educational Records	14-17
e. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA Compliance)	17-19
f. Section 504 Services	19-21
g. Special Education Services	21-23
h. Homeless Children and Youth	23-25
i. Special Admission Options (Exchange Students)	25-27
j. Custody and Parental Rights	27-28
k. Change of Address	28
5. Daily Operations and School Life	28-33
a. Building Hours and Supervision	28
b. Cancellations, Delays, and Early Dismissals	28-29
c. Announcements	29
d. Office Passes and Routine Forms	29
e. Visitor Expectations	30
f. Parking Expectations	30-31
g. Student Fees and Fines	31-32
h. Gifts and Deliveries	32
i. Lost and Found	32
j. School Identity and Traditions	33
6. Academic Programs and Requirements	33-52
a. Accreditation	33-34
b. Counseling Services and Four-Year Academic Planning	34-35
c. Subject Load Requirements	36
d. Grading and Assessment System	37-38
e. Grading Scale	38
f. Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation	38-39
g. Pass/Fail Policy	39-40
h. Final Semester Grades	40
i. Incomplete Grades	40
j. Honor Roll Designations	40
k. Academic Letter	40
l. Graduation Requirements	41
m. Commencement	42
n. Early Graduation	42
o. Testing Program	42-43
p. College Entrance Testing	43-44
q. Advanced Coursework and College Credit Pathways	44-45
r. Schedule Changes	45-46
s. Academic Integrity	46-47
t. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools	47-48
u. Student Survey Policy	48
v. Library Services	48-49
w. Reconsideration of Instructional and Library Materials	49-50
x. Online Course Options	50-51
y. Reading Courses	52

7. Attendance Policies and Expectations	52-60
a. Attendance Philosophy and Rationale	52
b. Absence Notification and Daily Attendance Procedures	52-53
c. Excused Absences	53
d. Unexcused Absences and Truancies	53
e. Attendance Coding and Chronic Absenteeism	54-55
f. Compulsory Attendance	55
g. Chronic Absenteeism	55-56
h. Chronic Absenteeism Intervention System	56-57
i. Quarterly Attendance Thresholds for Chronic Absenteeism Review	58
j. Activity Participation Policy	58
k. Field Trips and School-Sponsored Absences	58-59
l. Missed Learning and Make-Up Work Expectations	59
m. "Skip Day" Policy	60
n. Tardiness Policy	60
8. Student Conduct and Discipline	60-76
a. Philosophy and Guiding Principles	60
b. Policy Statement and Scope	60
c. Range of Disciplinary Actions	61-62
d. Considerations for Students with IEPs	62
e. Disciplinary Points Program	63
f. Categories of Misconduct.....	64-69
g. Weapons and Dangerous Objects	69-70
h. Fireworks and Explosives	70-71
i. Prohibited Items and Contraband	71
j. Restitution and Restorative Measures	71-73
k. Student Due Process Rights	73
l. Disciplinary Appeals	73-74
m. <i>Appendix 1: Decorah High School Teacher Disciplinary Report System</i>	<i>75</i>
n. <i>Appendix 2: Decorah High School Disciplinary Points System</i>	<i>76</i>
9. Safety, Security, and Health Services	77-88
a. Accountability, Communication, and Partnership Statement	77
b. Health Enrollment Requirements	77-78
c. Medication Administration to Students	78-79
d. Individual Health Plans	80
e. Student Illness, Injury, and Communicable Disease Protocol	80-81
f. Accident Insurance Option	81
g. Emergency Preparedness and Required Drills	81-82
h. Physical Restraint and Seclusion (Chapter 103)	82-83
i. Search and Seizure	84-85
j. Interviews by Outside Agencies	85-86
k. Privacy of Records	86
l. Reporting Abuse of Students	86-87
m. Surveillance Cameras and Campus Security	87-88
10. Student Expectations and Responsibilities	88-109
a. Foundational Rights and Responsibilities	88-89
b. Assemblies	89
c. Hallway Conduct	89-90
d. Cafeteria Procedures and Meal Accounts	90-91
e. Bus Transportation and Rider Conduct	91-92
f. Study Hall Rules	92-93
g. Building Hours and After-School Supervision	94
h. Dress Expectations (Dress Code Policy).....	94-96
i. Personal Electronic Devices (Cell Phone Policy)	96-100
j. Technology and Acceptable Use Guidelines	100-103
k. Posting and Distribution of Non-Curricular Materials	103-104

l.	Student Expression and Publications	104-105
m.	Prom Guidelines	106-107
n.	Spectator Expectations at Events	107-109
o.	Public Displays of Affection	109
11.	Privileges and Extended Opportunities	110-114
a.	Open Campus and Open Lunch Privileges	110-111
b.	Student Organizations	111-112
c.	Clubs and Activities	112-114
d.	Silver Cord Service Program	114
12.	Substance Use and Abuse Policy	114-116
a.	Philosophy and Early Intervention Supports	114-115
b.	Prohibited Conduct and Jurisdiction	115-116
c.	Consequences for Violations	115-116
13.	Student Eligibility for Extra Curricular Activities: Code of Conduct	117-124
a.	General Provisions	117
b.	Attendance Requirement	117
c.	Activity-Specific Rules	117
d.	Academic Standards	117-118
e.	Conduct Standards	118-119
f.	Sanctions	120
g.	Administration and Acknowledgement	120
h.	<i>Appendix 1: Academic Eligibility Illustrative Examples</i>	<i>121</i>
i.	<i>Appendix 2: Sanction Framework for Conduct Violations</i>	<i>122</i>
i.	<i>Sanction Examples</i>	<i>123</i>
ii.	<i>Non-Graded Musical Activities</i>	<i>124</i>

WELCOME

The students, faculty, and administration sincerely welcome you and hope you have many happy and worthwhile experiences at Decorah High School.

DECORAH HIGH SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULES



DECORAH HIGH SCHOOL
2026-27 BELL SCHEDULES
 Breakfast: 7:00 to 7:50 a.m.



MONDAY & THURSDAY		WEDNESDAY		TUESDAY & FRIDAY		Make Up Day Schedule	
Hours 1, 3, 5, 7		All Classes/Hours Meet A or B Day		Hours 2, 4, 6, Homeroom, WIN Times		All Classes/Hours Meet, WIN 1 A or B Day	
Hour	Time	Hour	Time	Hour	Time	Hour	Time
Tier 1 (1st hr.)	7:45 to 8:50	Tier 1 (1st hr.)	7:45 to 8:45	Tier 1 (2nd hr.)	7:45 to 8:50	Tier 1 (1st hr.)	7:45 to 8:50
1st Period	8:00 to 9:35	1st Period	8:00 to 8:55	2nd Period	8:00 to 9:35	2nd Period	8:00 to 8:50
3rd Period	9:40 to 11:10	2nd Period	9:00 to 9:50	4th Period	9:40 to 11:10	2nd Period	8:55 to 9:40
		3rd Period	9:55 to 10:45			3rd Period	9:45 to 10:30
Lunch 1	11:15 to 11:45	Lunch 1	10:50 to 11:20	Lunch 1	11:15 to 11:45	4th Period	10:35 to 11:20
5th Period	11:50 to 1:25	5th Period	11:25 to 12:15	6th Period	11:50 to 1:25	Lunch 1	11:25 to 11:55
				6th Period (A)	11:15 to 12:00	5th Period	12:00 to 12:45
5th Period (A)	11:15 to 12:00	5th Period	10:50 to 11:40	Lunch 2	12:05 to 12:35	5th Period	11:25 to 12:10
Lunch 2	12:05 to 12:35	Lunch 2	11:45 to 12:15	6th Period (B)	12:40 to 1:25	Lunch 2	12:15 to 12:45
5th Period (B)	12:40 to 1:25						
		4th Period	12:20 to 1:10	Homeroom	1:30 to 1:50	6th Period	12:50 to 1:35
7th Period	1:30 to 3:00	6th Period	1:15 to 2:05	WIN 1	1:55 to 2:25	7th Period	1:40 to 2:25
		7th Period	2:10 to 3:00	WIN 2	2:30 to 3:00	WIN 1	2:30 to 3:00
BELL SCHEDULE 1		BELL SCHEDULE 2		BELL SCHEDULE 3		BELL SCHEDULE 4	
Attendance in Homeroom and WIN Time is EXPECTED AND REQUIRED for ALL students. WIN Time (scheduled through Adaptive Scheduler) is designed to provide students time to get help from teachers, complete make-up work, make-up PE classes, or take advantage of enrichment opportunities. Absences from Homeroom and WIN time may be excused if students are participating in a work experience placement, or an off campus PSEO or PICC class. Students must get approval from the principal in order to be excused for these reasons.							
August 2026							

SCHOOL HOURS AND EXPECTATIONS

The regular school day runs from **8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

“What I Need” (WIN) Time occurs from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays, providing required academic support and enrichment. Attendance is mandatory and will be treated in accordance with school policies for all educational courses. Unexcused absences or trancies may result in disciplinary action.

To participate in a co-curricular activity on a school day, a student must be in attendance by **11:30 AM** that day. This requirement does not apply to non-school-day events. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed by the principal, activities director, or their designee, who may grant an exception based on the situation.

STATEMENT OF JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY

GOVERNING BOARD

A locally elected [Board of Directors](#) governs the Decorah Community School District. The Board is responsible for establishing district policy, approving the annual budget, overseeing district operations, and supporting the district's educational mission. Board members serve staggered four-year terms and participate in professional learning and governance development to support informed decision-making and responsible stewardship of district resources.

This handbook summarizes selected Board policies, procedures, and school expectations that are most relevant to students, families, faculty, and staff. It does not include all Board policies or administrative procedures applicable to the Decorah Community School District. The official Board policy manual remains the controlling source for district policy. Individuals seeking the most complete and up-to-date version of Board policy should contact the District Office or consult the district's official policy resources.

SCOPE OF JURISDICTION

The policies, procedures, and expectations described in this handbook are adopted and enforced under the authority of the Decorah Community School District Board of Directors, consistent with the Iowa Code, rules of the Iowa Department of Education, applicable federal law, Board policy, and district procedures. These standards apply to all students enrolled in Decorah High School.

The district's supervisory and disciplinary authority extends to all property owned, leased, used, or controlled by the district; all district buildings, grounds, parking areas, and facilities; all district-owned, contracted, or chartered vehicles and transportation services; and all school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activities, events, programs, field experiences, athletic contests, performances, competitions, and co curricular or extracurricular activities, whether held on or off district property.

The district also reserves the authority to address student conduct that occurs away from school property when the conduct has a sufficient connection to the school, materially or substantially disrupts or is reasonably likely to disrupt the educational environment, affects the health, safety, welfare, or property of students, staff, or others, interferes with school operations, or violates Board policy or applicable law within the district's authority to act.

This authority is not limited to regular school hours or the academic calendar. Student conduct during evenings, weekends, holidays, school breaks, summer periods, travel, online activity, or other times may be subject to district review and school discipline when the conduct falls within the jurisdiction described in this handbook, Board policy, or applicable law.

AUTHORITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

References in this handbook to the superintendent, principal, activities director, counselor, administrator, or other district official include any authorized designee unless otherwise required by law or Board policy. Building administrators are responsible for interpreting, applying, and enforcing this handbook in a manner that is fair, consistent, reasonable, and aligned with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable student rights.

Administrative personnel have the authority to make reasonable decisions necessary to maintain student safety, preserve order, protect the educational environment, address misconduct, supervise students, and ensure the school's effective operation. Nothing in this handbook limits the authority of administrators to respond to circumstances not specifically described when action is necessary and consistent with Board policy and applicable law.

HANDBOOK AUTHORITY AND GOVERNING LAWS

This handbook is intended to provide notice of important school expectations and procedures. It shall be interpreted consistently with federal law, Iowa law, administrative rules, Board policy, and district procedures. If a provision of this handbook conflicts with federal or state law, administrative rule, an officially adopted Board policy, or the requirements of an eligible student's Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan, the higher governing authority shall control.

Nothing in this handbook shall be interpreted to limit rights protected by the [United States Constitution](#), the [Iowa Constitution](#), federal or state [civil rights laws](#), special education laws, disability laws, or other applicable legal protections. The district will administer this handbook in a manner consistent with nondiscrimination requirements, due process protections, student privacy laws, and other applicable legal obligations.

RESERVATION OF RIGHT TO AMEND

The Decorah Community School District Board of Directors and district administration reserve the right to revise, rescind, interpret, supplement, or replace any policy, procedure, rule, expectation, or handbook provision as necessary. Changes may be made during the school year when required by law, Board action, administrative need, student or staff safety, operational circumstances, or other legitimate district interests. Amendments can be made at any time without advance notice.

The district will make reasonable efforts to communicate material updates through appropriate school or district communication channels. Students and families are responsible for complying with current Board policies, district procedures, and school expectations as revised. Any revised Board policy, administrative rule, or district procedure shall supersede inconsistent handbook language to the extent of the conflict.

NOTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The availability of this handbook constitutes notice to students, parents, and guardians of the expectations, policies, procedures, rights, and responsibilities that apply to students enrolled at Decorah High School. Students and families are responsible for reviewing the handbook and complying with its provisions, as well as applicable Board policies, district procedures, and school rules.

Continued enrollment in the Decorah Community School District, attendance at Decorah High School, and participation in district programs, services, activities, athletics, and events constitute acknowledgment of the expectations described in this handbook. This acknowledgment applies regardless of whether a signed handbook acknowledgment form has been submitted. Failure to read the handbook, review applicable policies, receive a printed copy, or submit a signed acknowledgment form does not excuse a student, parent, or guardian from compliance with Board policy, district procedures, school rules, or lawful directives from school personnel.

DECORAH COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

MISSION

Learning – Thriving – Creating Our Legacy

Decorah Community School District embraces student learning and well-being as its fundamental purpose. Working with students, families, and the wider community, we provide rigorous academics and rich co-curricular experiences that foster social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth. We aim to help every learner reach full potential, think critically, act ethically, collaborate effectively, and serve with purpose—preparing them to thrive in school, work, and life.

VISION

Decorah Community School District will be a collaborative, innovative, learning-centered organization empowering students to embrace their personal strengths and create their future.

At Decorah High School, this means fostering a safe and inclusive climate where all individuals feel welcome and respected; providing rich and relevant learning through coursework and activities that emphasize real-world problem-solving, creativity, and service; supporting whole-student growth with daily opportunities to build confidence, well-being, and ethical citizenship; developing future-ready skills so that graduates communicate clearly, think critically, and collaborate effectively across differences—preparing them for college, careers, trades, or military service; and instilling lifelong curiosity and a commitment to contribution, ensuring our alums continue to learn and use their talents to strengthen their communities.

By living this vision, Decorah High School equips students to meet today's challenges and shape tomorrow with integrity.

CORE VALUES

- **Collaboration & Community** – Partnerships spark innovation and shared responsibility.
- **Curiosity & Creativity** – Inquiry fuels meaningful learning.
- **Engagement & Excellence** – Purposeful work fosters pride and a sense of achievement.
- **Equity & Well-being** – Safety and inclusion foster a sense of belonging
- **Integrity & Humility** – Honesty and respect sustain trust.
- **Stewardship & Sustainability** – Wise use of resources secures our mission for the future.

United by these principles, we strive to ensure every Decorah student is prepared to contribute with purpose and live with confidence.

UNIVERSAL STUDENT PROTECTIONS AND LEGAL NOTICES

Decorah High School operates within a framework of federal law, Iowa law, Board of Education policy, and district procedures designed to protect student rights, ensure equal access to educational opportunities, support student safety, and guide responsible school operations. These legal protections and notices apply to students, families, staff, programs, activities, records, services, and instructional practices.

The summaries in this section are intended to help students and families understand important rights, responsibilities, and procedures related to nondiscrimination, student records, privacy, health and safety, equal educational opportunity, curriculum, surveys, instructional materials, student supports, and related school matters. These summaries do not replace the full text of applicable laws, regulations, Board policies, or district procedures. When a question or concern arises, students and families are encouraged to contact the building principal, the school counselor, the appropriate district administrator, or the District Office. The district will address concerns in accordance with Board policy, applicable law, and established procedures.

NON-DISCRIMINATION / EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY (Board Policy 102)

The Decorah Community School District is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for all students. Students shall have access to district programs, activities, services, and educational opportunities in a safe, respectful, and orderly environment consistent with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable state and federal law.

The district does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or any other status protected by applicable law. This prohibition applies to access to educational programs, coursework, activities, athletics, services, employment, and other district-sponsored opportunities.

All students are expected to respect the dignity, rights, and safety of others. Harassment, discrimination, intimidation, retaliation, or conduct that interferes with another student's equal access to education is prohibited. It will be addressed in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law.

The district recognizes that [Iowa Senate File 418](#) amended provisions of Iowa law, including provisions related to sex, gender, and gender identity under the Iowa Civil Rights Act. The district will comply with applicable Iowa law while continuing to meet all obligations imposed by federal law, including federal civil rights, disability, privacy, and equal educational opportunity requirements. The district remains committed to treating every student with dignity and to maintaining a school environment where all students can learn safely and respectfully.

This policy applies during the school day, on district property, in district vehicles, at school-sponsored activities or events, and in any school-related setting where student conduct affects the educational environment, school operations, student safety, or the rights of others. Individuals, organizations, contractors, volunteers, and partners working with or on behalf of the district are expected to comply with applicable nondiscrimination requirements.

Questions, concerns, or complaints regarding discrimination, harassment, equal educational opportunity, or related matters should be directed to the district's Equity Coordinator:

Mr. Justin Albers

Middle School Principal and Decorah Community School District Equity Coordinator
Decorah Community School District

405 Winnebago Street, Decorah, IA 52101

(563) 382-8427

justin.albers@decorah.school

You may also reach out to:

- [Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education](#), 230 S. Dearborn St., 37th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604 | (312) 730-1560 | OCR.Chicago@ed.gov
- [Iowa Office of Civil Rights](#) | (515) 281-4121
- [Iowa Department of Education](#) | [Civil Rights Compliance](#) | (515) 281-5294

ANTI-BULLYING/ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY (Board Policy 104)

The Decorah Community School District is committed to maintaining a school environment in which students, employees, volunteers, and visitors are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment undermine student safety, interfere with learning, disrupt the educational environment, and harm the well-being of individuals and the school community. Such conduct is prohibited and will be addressed in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law.

This policy applies on school property, in district vehicles, at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activities, and during school-related events. It also applies to conduct that occurs off school grounds, including electronic communication or social media activity, when the conduct has a sufficient connection to the school, creates or is reasonably likely to create a substantial disruption to the school environment, or interferes with the rights, safety, or educational access of students or staff.

Definition of Bullying and Harassment

Under [Iowa Code 280.28](#) and [Board Policy 104](#), **bullying or harassment** means electronic, written, verbal, or physical conduct toward a student that is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and that creates an objectively hostile school environment.

An objectively **hostile school environment** exists when the conduct meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
2. Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance.
4. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from district services, activities, or privileges.

Electronic conduct includes, but is not limited to, email, text messages, social media posts, online messages, group chats, gaming communications, shared images or videos, and other digital communications. The district may consider the impact of the conduct, the context in which it occurred, its connection to the school environment, and whether it disrupts or interferes with school operations or a student's educational experience.

Protected traits or characteristics include, but are not limited to, age, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, physical attributes, physical or mental disability, ancestry, political belief or party preference, socioeconomic status, familial status, or other characteristics protected by applicable law or Board policy.

Examples of **prohibited conduct** may include slurs, name-calling, threats, intimidation, ridicule, spreading harmful rumors, purposeful exclusion intended to distress or humiliate, posting or sharing degrading messages or images, displaying offensive symbols or graphics, taunting a person based on a protected trait or characteristic, or using electronic communication to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person.

Reporting Bullying and/or Harassment

Students, parents, guardians, employees, volunteers, and community members are encouraged to report any concerns about bullying or harassment promptly. Reports may be made to a teacher, counselor, administrator, the superintendent or designee, or another trusted school employee. The [district's complaint form](#) is available through the district website and in school offices. Assistance will be provided to anyone who needs help filing a report.

Reports should be made as soon as possible after the incident or after the concern becomes known. Although reports are encouraged within sixty days, serious concerns will be reviewed whenever they are brought to the district's attention. When the district receives a report indicating that a student may have been bullied or harassed, the district will notify the parent or guardian as required by law and Board policy.

Investigation

The superintendent or designee will assign an appropriate investigator to review reports of bullying or harassment. If a conflict of interest exists, an alternate investigator will be assigned. Investigations will be conducted promptly, thoroughly, and as confidentially as permitted by law. The investigation may include interviews with the complainant, respondent, witnesses, staff members, or others with relevant information; review of written statements; examination of digital evidence, video footage, documents, records, or other relevant materials; and consideration of the surrounding facts and circumstances.

The investigator will decide based on the applicable evidentiary standard, generally whether it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred and whether the conduct violates Board policy, district procedures, or applicable law. At the conclusion of the investigation, the district will communicate the outcome to the parties as permitted by student privacy laws, personnel confidentiality requirements, Board policy, and applicable legal standards.

Outcomes and Consequences

If bullying or harassment is confirmed, the district will take appropriate action to stop the conduct, prevent recurrence, address its effects, and support the safety and educational access of affected students.

Consequences and corrective measures will be determined based on the nature, severity, frequency, and impact of the conduct; the age and circumstances of the individuals involved; prior conduct; safety concerns; and applicable legal or educational considerations. For students, possible outcomes may include parent or guardian notification, counseling, restorative measures, behavior planning, loss of privileges, disciplinary points, detention, suspension, a recommendation for expulsion, a referral to law enforcement, or other actions permitted by Board policy and law.

For employees, volunteers, or other adults, possible outcomes may include corrective direction, training, restriction of duties, removal from service, employment discipline, termination, exclusion from school property, referral to law enforcement, or other appropriate action.

Retaliation and False Reports

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report, participates in an investigation, provides information, or supports another person involved in a report is strictly prohibited. Retaliation will be treated as a separate violation and will result in disciplinary or corrective action.

A person who knowingly files a false complaint, intentionally provides false information, or intentionally withholds material information during an investigation may also be subject to disciplinary or corrective action. This provision shall not be used to discourage good faith reports or punish a person because a concern cannot be substantiated.

Confidentiality, Records, Training, and Publication

Reports, investigation records, and related documentation will be maintained confidentially and shared only with individuals who have a legitimate educational, supervisory, safety, administrative, or legal need to know, or as otherwise required or permitted by law.

The district will publish the anti-bullying and anti harassment policy as required. It will provide training or information to students, employees, and volunteers to support recognition, prevention, reporting, investigation, and response. The district may also review reports, patterns, and data to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and response efforts.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINT PROCESS (Board Policy 502.4)

Decorah High School encourages students and parents, or guardians, to raise concerns promptly so they can be addressed in a timely, fair, and appropriate manner. When possible, concerns should first be addressed informally through a conversation involving the student, parent or guardian, the person involved, and an appropriate building administrator or supervisor.

Informal resolution shall not be used when prohibited by law or district procedure. Allegations involving sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or other matters covered by [Title IX](#) shall be addressed through the district's applicable Title IX grievance process and related Board policies.

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, the student, parent, or guardian may submit a written complaint. The written complaint should clearly describe the concern, identify the person or decision involved, state the facts supporting the complaint, identify any requested resolution, and include relevant documentation.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the superintendent or designee shall assign an appropriate investigator or reviewer. The district will review the complaint promptly and thoroughly. The review may include interviews with the complainant, respondent, witnesses, staff members, or others with relevant information; review of documents, records, electronic evidence, or other materials; and consideration of the totality of the circumstances.

Findings shall be based on relevant evidence rather than character statements, personal attacks, speculation, or unsupported assertions. Unless a different standard is required by law or Board policy, the district will use the ***preponderance of evidence standard***, meaning whether it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct or violation occurred.

If a violation of Board policy, school rules, district procedures, or applicable law is substantiated, the district shall take appropriate action. Remedies, corrective measures, or sanctions will be determined based on the nature of the violation, the impact on the student or school environment, applicable legal requirements, and the district's responsibility to maintain a safe, respectful, and orderly educational setting.

A student, parent, or guardian who remains dissatisfied after the initial written decision may submit a written appeal to the superintendent or designee and may request a meeting. The appeal must identify the decision being appealed, state the specific basis for disagreement, and include any additional relevant information that was not previously available.

If the matter remains unresolved after the superintendent's review, a further written appeal may be submitted to the Board Secretary, when permitted by Board policy and applicable law. The Board shall receive the complaint, the record of review, the superintendent's decision, any written appeal materials, and any statement the superintendent submits before the Board considers the matter. The Board may take action, request additional information, refer the matter for further review, or decline to act.

If the Board declines to act, the superintendent's decision shall stand as the final district decision.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS ([Board Policy 506.1](#))

The Decorah Community School District maintains student educational records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Iowa law, Board policy, and district procedures. Student records are maintained to support instruction, document academic progress, assist with school operations, provide required services, and communicate appropriate information to families, students, postsecondary institutions, and other authorized parties.

Definition of Student Records

A student's **educational record** includes records, files, documents, data, or other information that directly relate to a student and are maintained by the district or by a party acting on behalf of the district. Student records may include enrollment information, grades, attendance records, assessment results, health and immunization records, discipline records, educational plans, correspondence, and other information maintained for school purposes.

Records kept in the sole possession of an individual staff member for personal memory aid and not shared with others, as well as certain treatment records maintained separately by health or counseling professionals, may not be considered part of the official educational record as provided by law.

Record Categories and Retention

The district maintains student records in accordance with applicable retention requirements. A student's **permanent record** may include information such as the student's legal name, contact information, date and place of birth, attendance history, final grades, credits earned, honors and awards, immunization information, and school photographs. Permanent records are retained indefinitely.

A student's **cumulative record** may include the permanent record as well as additional educational information, such as standardized test results, family background information, disciplinary records, correspondence from outside agencies, and educational plans. Cumulative records are retained in accordance with district procedures and applicable law, generally for a period of time after the student graduates, transfers, or withdraws.

Special education records may include evaluations, eligibility documents, Individualized Education Programs, progress reports, service records, prior written notices, and related documentation. These records are maintained in accordance with special education law, Board policy, and district procedures. Parents or eligible students will be provided the required notice before special education records are destroyed, when such notice is required by law.

Inspection, Review, and Amendment of Educational Records

Parents, guardians, and eligible students have the right to inspect and review student educational records maintained by the district, as provided by law. An eligible student is a student who is eighteen years of age or older or who is enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

Educational records may include transcripts, grades, attendance records, school health records, standardized assessment information, discipline records, Individualized Education Programs, Section 504 Plans, and other records that directly relate to the student and are maintained by the district or by a party acting on behalf of the district.

Requests to inspect or review records shall be submitted in writing to the building principal, superintendent, or other designated district official. The district will provide access within the timelines required by law, generally within forty-five calendar days of receiving a proper request. The district will make reasonable arrangements for review and will explain records when appropriate.

Student records shall not be removed from district custody during review. Copies may be provided when circumstances make in-person review impractical or when otherwise required by law. Reasonable copying fees may be charged unless the fee would effectively prevent access to the records.

Parents, guardians, or eligible students may request amendment of a record they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of student privacy rights. If the district denies the request, the parent, guardian, or eligible student may request a hearing in accordance with Board policy and applicable law.

Disclosure of Records

The district will not disclose personally identifiable information from student educational records without written consent unless disclosure is permitted or required by law.

The district may disclose records without prior written consent to school officials with a legitimate educational interest, officials of another school or district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, authorized state or federal education officials, courts or law enforcement agencies under subpoena or court order, officials processing financial aid, organizations conducting approved studies for or on behalf of the district, accrediting organizations, appropriate parties in connection with a health or safety emergency, or other individuals or entities authorized by law.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest when the official needs the information to perform professional duties for the district, support student instruction or services, maintain school safety, carry out administrative responsibilities, or comply with legal obligations.

Directory Information

The district may designate certain information as **directory information** and release it without prior written consent, unless a parent, guardian, or eligible student submits a written opt-out request by the annual deadline.

Directory information may include the student's name, grade level, enrollment status, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, height and weight of athletic team members, honors and awards, photographs, video images, and similar information customarily used in school publications, programs, newsletters, websites, or other district communications.

Directory information will not be released when the district determines that disclosure would be inappropriate, unsafe, or inconsistent with student privacy, student welfare, Board policy, or applicable law.

Annual Notice

The district will provide annual notice to parents, guardians, and eligible students regarding rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and state law. These rights include the right to inspect and review educational records, request amendment of records believed to be inaccurate or misleading, provide consent for most disclosures of personally identifiable information, opt out of directory information disclosures, and file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures to comply with federal student records requirements.

Questions or Requests

Questions about educational records, requests for access, amendment requests, directory information opt-out forms, or related matters should be directed to the Decorah High School main office or the Decorah Community School District Central Office.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA Compliance)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. The Decorah Community School District maintains and discloses student records in accordance with FERPA, Iowa law, Board policy, and district procedures. FERPA rights generally belong to the parent or guardian while the student is a minor. These rights transfer to the student when the student turns 18 or enrolls in a postsecondary institution. A student to whom these rights have been transferred is referred to as an eligible student.

Request for Amendment

Parents, guardians, and eligible students may request amendment of a student record they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. The request shall be submitted in writing to the building principal or superintendent. It shall clearly identify the record being challenged, the specific change requested, and the reason for the change.

The district will review the request and notify the parent, guardian, or eligible student of its decision within a reasonable time. If the district denies the request, the parent, guardian, or eligible student will be informed of the right to request a hearing in accordance with FERPA, Board policy, and district procedures.

If, after a hearing, the district determines that the record will not be amended, the parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to place a written statement in the record explaining the concern or disagreement. That statement will be maintained with the contested portion of the record and disclosed with the record when required by law.

Consent for Disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information

The district will not disclose personally identifiable information from a student's educational records without written consent unless disclosure is permitted or required by FERPA or other applicable law. Personally identifiable information includes information that directly identifies a student or would allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the student with reasonable certainty. Written consent shall identify the records to be disclosed, the purpose of the disclosure, and the person or entity to whom the disclosure may be made.

FERPA permits certain disclosures without prior written consent. These may include disclosures to school officials with a legitimate educational interest, officials of another school or district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, authorized state or federal education officials, courts or law enforcement agencies pursuant to subpoena or court order, officials involved in financial aid, organizations conducting approved studies for or on behalf of the district, accrediting organizations, appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency, or other individuals or entities as permitted by law.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest when the official needs the information to perform professional responsibilities for the district. School officials may include teachers, administrators, counselors, nurses, support staff, district-employed safety or law enforcement personnel, Board members when acting in an official capacity, and contractors or service providers performing institutional services or functions for the district, such as attorneys, auditors, technology providers, consultants, or therapists.

Directory Information

FERPA allows the district to designate certain information as directory information. Directory information may be released without prior written consent unless a parent, guardian, or eligible student submits a written opt-out request by the district's annual deadline. Directory information may include a student's name, grade level, enrollment status, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, height and weight of athletic team members, honors, awards, photographs, video images, and similar information customarily included in school publications, programs, websites, newsletters, or announcements. A directory information opt-out does not prevent the district from including student information in required state or federal reports or from making disclosures otherwise permitted or required by law.

Right to File a Complaint

Parents, guardians, and eligible students who believe the district has failed to comply with FERPA may [file a complaint](#) with the United States Department of Education. Complaints should identify the specific facts that support the alleged violation and must be filed within the timeline established by federal regulations.

Complaints may be directed to:
Student Privacy Policy Office
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Safeguards and Record Keeping

The district maintains student records in secure physical or electronic systems. Paper records are kept in designated secure locations, and electronic records are protected through appropriate access controls. Staff are expected to follow district procedures for maintaining, accessing, using, and disclosing student information. The district maintains records of access and disclosure when required by law. Student records will be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate educational interest or as otherwise permitted or required by law.

Employees who misuse student information, access records without authorization, or disclose confidential information improperly may be subject to disciplinary action and other consequences permitted by Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law. FERPA is intended to balance the right of families and eligible students to review and correct educational records with the district's responsibility to safeguard confidential student information.

Questions about FERPA rights, record access, amendment requests, directory information, or disclosure of student records should be directed to the Decorah High School main office or the Decorah Community School District Central Office.

SECTION 504 SERVICES

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including public schools. A student may qualify for protection under Section 504 when the student has a documented physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, or caring for oneself.

At Decorah High School, the Section 504 process may begin with a referral from a parent or guardian, a teacher, a counselor, an administrator, a school nurse, or another individual with knowledge of the student's needs. The district will review relevant information to determine whether the student meets Section 504 eligibility criteria.

This review may include medical documentation, educational records, academic performance, attendance information, assessment data, teacher input, parent or guardian input, health information, and other information relevant to the student's functioning in the school setting.

A knowledgeable school team makes eligibility decisions. The team may include a school counselor, classroom teachers, a building administrator, the school nurse when health-related concerns are involved, the parent or guardian, and other staff with relevant knowledge of the student, the evaluation data, and available accommodations or supports.

If the student is determined eligible under Section 504, the team will develop a written Section 504 Plan. The plan will identify the accommodations, supports, services, or related procedures necessary to provide the student equal access to the general education program and school activities. Accommodations may include extended time on assessments, preferential seating, access to a reduced distraction setting, health-related supports, assistive technology, modified procedures, or other supports appropriate to the student's documented needs.

Decorah High School 504 Coordinators

Decorah High School designates school counselors to coordinate Section 504 supports for students based on their last names.

Mrs. Brigit Storhoff (Students with Last Names A-J)
Decorah High School Counselor and 504 Coordinator
brigit.storhoff@decorah.school

Mr. Patrick Trewin (Students with Last Names K-Z)
Decorah High School Counselor and 504 Coordinator
pat.trewin@decorah.school

A Section 504 Plan is intended to provide equal access, not to guarantee a particular grade, outcome, or level of performance. Students receiving accommodations remain responsible for meeting course expectations, following school rules, and demonstrating learning, with accommodations implemented as required by the plan.

The Counseling Office manages the day-to-day coordination of Section 504 Plans at Decorah High School. This includes communicating required accommodations to teachers and other appropriate staff, supporting their implementation, arranging testing supports when required by the plan, monitoring compliance-related concerns, and scheduling annual reviews.

A Section 504 Plan will be reviewed at least annually. It may be reviewed sooner when a student's needs change, when new information becomes available, when concerns arise regarding implementation, or when requested by a parent or guardian, an eligible student, a teacher, a counselor, an administrator, or other appropriate school staff member. Families with questions about Section 504 eligibility, accommodations, plan implementation, annual reviews, or concerns regarding an existing plan should begin by contacting the student's school counselor.

Families may also contact the designated Section 504 Coordinator for additional guidance. [Keystone Area Education Agency](#) and the [United States Department of Education](#) provide additional resources on Section 504, including guidance for parents and educators, evaluation procedures, procedural safeguards, and grievance processes.

Decorah High School remains committed to implementing Section 504 in a manner that provides eligible students equal access to educational programs, services, and activities while maintaining appropriate expectations for student learning, participation, and conduct.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (Board Policy 603.3)

The Decorah Community School District provides a [free appropriate public education](#) to eligible students with disabilities in accordance with the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#), [Iowa Administrative Code 281 Chapter 41](#), Board policy, and district procedures. Students may be referred for special education evaluation when there is reason to suspect that a disability may affect the student's access to, participation in, or progress within the educational program.

Special education eligibility is determined through a comprehensive evaluation process conducted in coordination with Keystone Area Education Agency. A parent or guardian, a teacher, an administrator, a school staff member, or another appropriate individual may initiate a referral. The evaluation process shall consider relevant educational, developmental, functional, behavioral, medical, and other information necessary to determine whether the student meets [eligibility criteria under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#).

If a student is determined eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program Team shall develop an [Individualized Education Program](#) (IEP) for the student. The team includes the parent or guardian, general education teacher, special education teacher, district representative, and other individuals with knowledge or expertise regarding the student, including related service providers when appropriate.

The Individualized Education Program is a legally binding document that identifies the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, measurable annual goals, specialized instruction, accommodations, modifications, related services, supplementary aids and services, and other supports necessary for the student to receive a free appropriate public education.

Related services may include speech-language services, counseling, occupational therapy, physical therapy, transportation, or other services as required for the student to benefit from special education.

The Individualized Education Program shall be reviewed at least annually and revised as appropriate. The team may reconvene sooner when data, parent or guardian concerns, staff concerns, progress monitoring, evaluation information, behavioral needs, health concerns, or other circumstances indicate that the student's needs may have changed.

Decorah Community School District Special Education Director

Mrs. Laura Smith

laura.smith@decorah.school

Decorah High School is committed to educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs. Students with Individualized Education Programs shall participate with nondisabled peers in general education classrooms, nonacademic programs, extracurricular activities, and other school settings to the maximum extent appropriate, as determined by the Individualized Education Program Team.

Specialized instruction and related services may be provided in the general education classroom, a special education setting, a community setting, or through a combination of settings. Placement and services shall be based on the student's individual needs and shall be determined by the Individualized Education Program Team, not by disability category, program availability, or administrative convenience.

Graduation Requirements and Course of Study

To earn a regular Decorah High School diploma, students, including students with Individualized Education Programs, must complete the district's graduation requirements, including the required core areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, and any other locally required credits or graduation conditions.

An Individualized Education Program Team shall not award a regular high school diploma solely based on completion of Individualized Education Program goals. Instead, beginning no later than eighth grade, the team shall develop and document an individualized course of study designed to support the student's progress toward district graduation requirements and Iowa Academic Standards.

The course of study shall be reviewed at least annually and revised when needed. The team may consider appropriate supports, such as accommodations, modified pacing, specially designed instruction, transition services, participation in alternate assessments when appropriate, and other individualized supports necessary to help the student access and make progress toward graduation requirements.

A student who does not complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma may receive a certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or other recognition as permitted by district policy and applicable law.

Receipt of a certificate does not automatically terminate special education eligibility. A student who remains eligible may continue to receive a free appropriate public education until the student graduates with a regular high school diploma, reaches the maximum age for eligibility under law, or otherwise exits special education services in accordance with legal requirements.

Oversight of special education services is shared by district administration, Decorah High School staff, Keystone Area Education Agency personnel, and the Iowa Department of Education. Services shall be implemented in a manner that is individualized, data-informed, legally compliant, and focused on meaningful student access, progress, and postsecondary preparation.

Parents or guardians with questions about referrals, evaluations, eligibility, Individualized Education Programs, services, placement, graduation requirements, procedural safeguards, or special education records should contact the Director of Special Education, the building principal, the student's case manager, or Keystone Area Education Agency staff.

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

([McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) and [Board Policy 501.16](#))

The Decorah Community School District shall provide students experiencing homelessness with immediate and equitable access to a free public education, including preschool when applicable, and to the services necessary for full participation in school. The district will comply with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Board policy, and applicable state and federal requirements to ensure that homelessness does not create a barrier to enrollment, attendance, transportation, academic progress, or participation in school programs.

Definition of Homelessness

A child or youth is considered **homeless** when the student lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This may include students who are sharing housing with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar circumstances; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, emergency shelters, or transitional shelters; living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or other places not designed for regular sleeping; or living in similar circumstances due to migratory status.

Unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and who meet the definition of homelessness are also protected under this policy.

Enrollment and School Stability

Students experiencing homelessness shall be enrolled immediately, even if they lack proof of residency, immunization records, birth records, prior school records, guardianship documents, or other records typically required for enrollment. The district will assist in obtaining needed records after enrollment and shall not delay school attendance while records are being located.

When it is in the student's best interest, the district will seek to maintain the student's enrollment in the school of origin. The school of origin may include the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including preschool when applicable. School placement decisions shall be based on the student's best interest, with consideration given to school stability, safety, transportation, educational continuity, family preference, and the circumstances of the individual student.

If a placement decision does not align with the preference of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the district shall provide a written explanation of the decision and information regarding the dispute resolution process. During a dispute, the student shall remain enrolled in the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth until the dispute is resolved, as required by law.

Transportation, Services, Fees, and Confidentiality

The district shall provide transportation to and from the school of origin when required by law and when it is in the student's best interest. If transportation involves more than one district, the districts will coordinate on responsibility and cost-sharing as required by law.

Students experiencing homelessness shall have access to services comparable to those provided to other students, including special education services, Section 504 supports, English learner services, gifted programming, Title I services, counseling, extracurricular activities, school meals, and other programs or supports for which the student is eligible.

School fees shall be waived when necessary to remove barriers to participation. Students experiencing homelessness are categorically eligible for free school meals under applicable federal requirements. A student's housing status is confidential and shall be handled in accordance with student records laws, privacy requirements, Board policy, and district procedures. Information regarding homelessness shall be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate educational, safety, or legal need to know.

District Homeless Liaison

Mr. Matthew Steven

matthew.steven@decorah.school

The district homeless liaison is responsible for helping identify students who may qualify for McKinney-Vento protections, supporting immediate enrollment, coordinating transportation, assisting with fee waivers and school meals, helping families and unaccompanied youth obtain missing school or medical records, and connecting students and families with health, dental, mental health, housing, and community resources.

The liaison also provides parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth with information about their rights. It assists with the dispute resolution process when questions arise regarding eligibility, enrollment, school placement, services, or transportation.

The Decorah Community School District is committed to ensuring that homelessness does not interrupt a student's education or limit access to the full range of academic, social, extracurricular, and support opportunities available through the school.

SPECIAL ADMISSION OPTIONS (EXCHANGE STUDENTS)

The Decorah Community School District may accept a limited number of exchange or international students each year when placement complies with district requirements, Board policy, state law, and applicable federal immigration and exchange-visitor regulations. The purpose of these placements is to promote cultural exchange, global understanding, and positive educational experiences for students and the school community.

Approval is not automatic. All placements require approval by the building principal or superintendent before enrollment is finalized. The district reserves the right to deny, limit, or revoke approval when admission requirements are not met, when required documentation is incomplete, when the placement is inconsistent with federal or state requirements, or when the placement would create an unreasonable burden on district programs, staffing, services, or operations.

J-1 Foreign Exchange Students

Most high school exchange students attend through a J-1 Secondary School Student Exchange Program. J-1 exchange students must be placed through a U.S. Department of State-designated exchange visitor sponsor. The sponsor is responsible for complying with all applicable federal exchange visitor requirements, including student eligibility, host family screening, placement procedures, monitoring, required documentation, and communication with the school.

A J-1 exchange student may be considered for tuition-free enrollment for one academic year when the student is placed through an approved exchange sponsor, resides with an approved host family within district boundaries, meets district enrollment and health requirements, and receives prior approval from the building principal or superintendent.

F-1 International Students

Students seeking admission in F-1 status are subject to separate federal requirements administered through the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. A public high school may enroll an F-1 student only if the school is properly certified through the Student and Exchange Visitor Program and the student meets all federal attendance requirements.

An F-1 student attending a public high school may attend only grades 9 through 12, may attend a public high school for no more than 12 months, and must pay the full, unsubsidized per capita cost of attendance before applying for the F-1 visa. Tuition-free enrollment is not available for F-1 students unless otherwise permitted by federal law.

Eligibility and Admission Requirements

To be considered for enrollment, an exchange or international student must meet all applicable district admission requirements, including age, grade placement, residence, immunization, health documentation, academic readiness, English language readiness when applicable, and any other requirements established by Board policy, district procedures, state law, or federal law.

The student must reside within district boundaries while attending Decorah High School unless a specific exception is approved by the district and permitted by law. The student must remain in good standing with the district, the host family, and, when applicable, the sponsoring organization.

The district may require official transcripts, English translation of academic records, immunization documentation, proof of age, proof of residence or host placement, visa documentation, exchange sponsor documentation, emergency contact information, and any other information necessary to determine eligibility and support the student's enrollment.

Sponsor and Host Family Responsibilities

Community-based exchange organizations and sponsors must be reputable, legally authorized, and compliant with all applicable requirements of the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, and the district.

Required paperwork must be completed and approved before the student enters the United States or before enrollment is finalized, as applicable. The sponsoring organization and host family are responsible for supporting the student's adjustment, communication, supervision outside the school day, transportation not otherwise provided by the district, healthcare, insurance, emergency needs, and compliance with applicable program requirements.

Costs and Limits

The Board of Education and district administration reserve the right to limit the number of exchange or international students accepted each year. The district may also limit placements by grade level, available space, course availability, staffing, services, program capacity, or other educational or operational considerations.

Unless otherwise approved by the district or required by law, exchange and international students are responsible for school fees, supplies, meals, activity costs,

transportation not provided as part of regular district services, insurance, and other personal expenses. F-1 students, when eligible for admission, must pay the full unsubsidized per capita cost of attendance as required by federal law.

Compliance and Continued Enrollment

Exchange and international students are subject to all Decorah High School rules, attendance expectations, academic requirements, conduct standards, technology rules, activity rules, and Board policies. Failure to comply with school expectations, visa or program requirements, host family expectations, or sponsor requirements may result in loss of enrollment approval, school discipline, removal from activities, referral to the sponsoring organization, or other action permitted by law.

Questions regarding foreign exchange or international student admission should be directed to the building principal or superintendent before any placement is finalized.

CUSTODY AND PARENTAL RIGHTS ([Board Policy 507.7](#))

The Decorah Community School District recognizes that students may come from a variety of family circumstances, including situations in which parents or guardians do not live together or may disagree regarding custody, parenting time, communication, or decision making. Custody disputes and parental disagreements are private legal matters to be resolved by the parents or guardians through the appropriate legal process, not by the school district.

The district will remain neutral in custody and parenting disputes and will not take sides, interpret informal agreements, mediate disputes, or favor one parent, guardian, or family member over another. School staff shall not become involved in private custody disagreements except as necessary to comply with a valid court order, protect student safety, maintain school operations, or meet legal obligations.

Unless the district has been provided a current and valid court order that specifically limits a parent's or guardian's rights, the district will generally presume that a parent or legal guardian has the right to access the student, communicate with school staff, receive school information, review educational records, and participate in school-related decision-making as permitted by law.

Parents or guardians requesting specific restrictions, changes, or limitations related to student release, communication, access to records, or school involvement must provide the district with a current, complete, and valid court order. The district will follow court orders as written. It will not rely on verbal statements, informal agreements, text messages, emails between parents, or one parent's interpretation of a custody arrangement as a substitute for a court order.

If school staff become aware of an immediate concern involving a student's health, safety, welfare, or possible abuse or neglect, the district will take appropriate action

consistent with Board policy, mandatory reporting requirements, law enforcement procedures, and applicable law.

Staff may listen to student concerns, provide appropriate school support, and refer students to counseling or administrative assistance when needed. However, staff shall not mediate custody disputes, relay private messages between parents, provide legal advice, or participate in matters that are properly handled through the court system.

Parents and guardians are responsible for keeping the school informed of current contact information, emergency contacts, custody orders, parenting plans, and any legal changes affecting access to the student or school records. The district may request clarification from legal counsel, the court, or appropriate authorities when necessary to ensure compliance with legal requirements and student safety.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If a student moves to a different residence, they should inform the office immediately of their change of address and telephone number.

DAILY OPERATIONS AND SCHOOL LIFE

BUILDING HOURS AND SUPERVISION

The cafeteria opens to students at 7:00 a.m. on regular school days for breakfast and quiet study. Early Bird Physical Education begins at 7:15 a.m. Tier 1 Strength and Conditioning begins at 7:45 a.m. The regular academic day ends at 3:00 p.m.

Before and after the regular academic day, students may be in the building only in approved and supervised areas. Students who are not participating in a supervised class, practice, rehearsal, meeting, help session, activity, or other school-approved obligation must remain in the cafeteria, commons, or another area specifically approved by school staff. Students shall not remain unsupervised in hallways, classrooms, locker rooms, gyms, offices, stairwells, parking areas, or other areas of the building.

Students in the building outside regular class hours are expected to maintain quiet, respectful, and purposeful behavior consistent with study hall expectations. This includes the appropriate use of technology, compliance with staff directions, and respect for school property and others' activities. Students who fail to follow building use and supervision expectations may be directed to leave the building, lose the privilege of remaining in the building outside regular school hours, or receive disciplinary consequences consistent with Board policy and school procedures.

CANCELLATIONS, DELAYS, AND EARLY DISMISSALS

When classes start late, are dismissed early, or are canceled, the district will communicate the change by posting an alert on the school website, sending a text

message through PowerSchool SchoolMessenger, and broadcasting the notice on KVIK-FM (Decorah) and other local media outlets.

The superintendent determines whether buses run regular routes; if weather makes normal service unsafe, drivers will use designated emergency routes, and families may need to pick up students at school. Co-curricular events and practices scheduled for a day that are canceled or cut short may be canceled or rescheduled. With the superintendent's approval, the principal or activities director may permit an activity or practice to proceed.

To maintain instructional continuity and reduce the need for makeup days, Decorah High School will continue implementing virtual learning during weather-related late starts and early dismissals. All scheduled classes will still meet on days with a late start or early dismissal; however, class periods will be shortened accordingly. During these periods, teachers will communicate any expectations for virtual learning, and students will be responsible for completing assigned work after school. Classwork and assignments will be available on Canvas or provided in class to ensure that all students have access to the necessary materials.

Students are not required to complete virtual learning before school begins on late start days. We understand that many students have morning responsibilities, such as helping younger siblings, and may be unable to focus on schoolwork at that time. Instead, any virtual learning should be completed after school. Teachers will be available by email to answer questions and provide support. The high school will also monitor how weather-related schedule changes affect class time and adjust the bell schedule as needed to ensure all classes receive adequate instructional time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements should be emailed to the office by 7:55 a.m. Please check for conflicts, especially meetings. Announcements will be posted via the TV announcement channel.

OFFICE PASSES AND ROUTINE FORMS

Students who arrive late to class at any point during the school day must report to the office and obtain a Tardy or Pass before entering class. Students are responsible for following the office check-in procedure, including using the office iPad or another designated system, to ensure accurate attendance recording.

Students who are withdrawing from Decorah High School must complete the required Check Out Sheet before their withdrawal is finalized. This process includes obtaining required staff signatures, returning district-issued technology and other school property, resolving outstanding obligations when applicable, and completing any additional steps required by the office, counseling staff, or administration. The Check Out Sheet is available in the main office.

VISITOR EXPECTATIONS

Decorah High School welcomes parents, guardians, and community members to the main office during school hours for school-related questions, appointments, and assistance. To maintain student safety, protect instructional time, and preserve an orderly school environment, all visitors must follow district visitor procedures.

Visitors who wish to access classrooms, hallways, student areas, or any location beyond the main office during the school day must receive prior approval from the building principal or designee. All approved visitors must check in at the main office upon arrival, provide identification when requested, receive and visibly display a visitor badge, and remain only in the area approved for the stated purpose and time of the visit.

Visitors are expected to comply with all school rules, staff directions, safety procedures, confidentiality expectations, and applicable Board policies while on district property or attending school-sponsored activities. Visitors shall not disrupt instruction, interfere with student supervision, access unauthorized areas, photograph or record students without authorization, or engage in conduct that compromises safety, privacy, or the educational environment.

Classroom visits or observations for specific educational purposes must be arranged in advance with the supervising teacher and approved by the building principal or designee. Requests should be submitted at least 24 hours before the proposed visit, unless the administration determines that a shorter timeline is appropriate. Approval of a classroom visit does not authorize access to other classrooms, students, staff members, or school areas.

The staff member or school host associated with an approved visit is responsible for helping ensure that the visitor follows school expectations. The Administration may deny, limit, modify, postpone, or end a visit when it would disrupt instruction, interfere with school operations, compromise student or staff safety, violate confidentiality, or otherwise conflict with school expectations, Board policy, or applicable law.

A visitor who fails to comply with school procedures or staff directions may be required to leave school property, may be denied future access to district facilities or events, and may be referred to law enforcement when warranted.

PARKING EXPECTATIONS

Parking on school grounds is a privilege, not a right. Students who drive to school are expected to follow all parking procedures, traffic laws, posted signage, and directions from school staff. Failure to follow parking expectations may result in fines, loss of parking privileges, school discipline, towing when appropriate, or other action permitted by Board policy and school procedures.

Seniors and juniors may park in designated student parking areas on campus. Students who park on campus must register their vehicle in PowerSchool each August or before bringing it to school. **Ninth and tenth-grade students** with valid driver's licenses or school permits must park on adjacent city streets, including approved angled parking spaces, unless the administration grants specific permission.

Students shall not park in staff parking lots, staff-assigned spaces, visitor spaces, fire lanes, grass areas, driveways, loading areas, or any area not designated for student parking. The south end of the Keystone lot is reserved exclusively for Decorah Bank & Trust employees and is not available for student parking. The circle drive in front of the school is reserved for visitor parking only between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Students must operate vehicles safely and responsibly on or near school property. Reckless driving, excessive speed, failure to yield to pedestrians, unsafe parking, blocking traffic, or other conduct that poses a safety risk may result in the loss of parking privileges and additional consequences.

Unauthorized parking in restricted areas will result in a \$10 fine. Driving or parking on grass will result in a \$10 damage charge. Repeated violations, failure to pay fines, unsafe driving, misuse of parking privileges, or parking in prohibited areas may result in suspension or revocation of campus parking privileges.

Students are responsible for keeping parking lots clean and free of litter. Trash must be placed in the outdoor containers located in each lot or carried into the building for proper disposal. Students who litter, damage property, or misuse parking areas may be assigned cleanup responsibilities, ordered to pay restitution, face disciplinary consequences, or lose parking privileges.

STUDENT FEES AND FINES (Board Policy 503.3)

The Decorah Community School District expects students to respect district property, instructional materials, technology, equipment, facilities, and resources provided for student learning and school participation. Students and families may be assessed fees, fines, charges, or replacement costs as permitted by Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law.

Fees may be assessed for course materials, consumable supplies, activity participation, optional items, or other school-related costs authorized by the district. Fines or charges may be assessed for overdue, lost, damaged, or misused school property, including textbooks, library materials, technology devices, chargers, cases, equipment, uniforms, instruments, or other district-owned items.

The superintendent or designee is responsible for developing administrative procedures for student fees and fines and for informing the Board of Education of the dollar amounts charged to students or others for approved fees, fines, or

charges. Students and families are responsible for resolving outstanding fees, fines, or obligations in accordance with district procedures.

Fee Waivers and Reduction Procedures ([Board Policy 503.3R1](#))

The Decorah Community School District recognizes that required student fees may create a financial burden for some families. The district is committed to ensuring that financial need does not prevent students from accessing required educational programs or opportunities. Complete, partial, or temporary fee waivers may be available for eligible students in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law.

A student qualifies for a **full fee waiver** when the student or the student's parent or guardian meets eligibility criteria established by law or district policy, including eligibility for free meals under the Child Nutrition Program, participation in the Family Investment Program, eligibility for open enrollment transportation assistance, or placement in foster care.

A student who qualifies for reduced-price meals may receive a **partial fee waiver** in accordance with district procedures. Families experiencing short-term financial hardship may request a temporary fee waiver at any time during the school year. A temporary waiver, if approved, shall remain in effect through the end of that school year unless otherwise stated by the district.

How to Apply

Families seeking a fee waiver or fee reduction must submit the district's fee waiver form to the District Office or other designated office. Fee waiver forms are available throughout the school year and must be renewed annually. Information submitted as part of a fee waiver request will be treated as confidential student information and handled in accordance with student records laws, Board policy, and district procedures.

If a fee waiver request is denied, the parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the superintendent or designee in accordance with district procedures.

Fee waivers apply to eligible school fees. Fines, charges, or replacement costs for lost, damaged, destroyed, or misused school property are not considered fees and are not waived through the fee waiver process.

GIFTS AND DELIVERIES

To maintain an uninterrupted learning environment, Decorah High School does not accept or deliver gifts, flowers, or similar items to students during the school day.

LOST AND FOUND

The lost and found department is in the high school office. Students who lose or find something should inform the office. The school is not responsible for lost items. Unclaimed items will be periodically donated to local charities.

SCHOOL IDENTITY AND TRADITIONS

School Song

On Decorah! On Decorah! Best bunch in the state,
We have pep enough to last through victory or defeat. Rah! Rah! Rah!
On Decorah! On Decorah! Boosting for our fame;
Fight, Vikings Fight! Fight! Fight
We'll win this game.

School Colors

SCARLET & ROYAL

School Mascot

VIKING

Victory Bell

The Victory Bell may be rung to celebrate state championship wins. The bell, made of solid brass and dated 1856, originally came from a rural schoolhouse.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS & REQUIREMENTS

ACCREDITATION ([Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 12](#))

Decorah High School is accredited by the Iowa Department of Education and operates in accordance with the accreditation standards established under Iowa Code 281, Chapter 12. Accreditation reflects the school's compliance with applicable state requirements for educational programming, staffing, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school operations. Accreditation does not guarantee admission to colleges, universities, service academies, trade schools, apprenticeship programs, or other postsecondary institutions.

Each postsecondary institution or program establishes its own admission standards, which may include specific coursework, grade point average requirements, class rank, standardized test scores, world language expectations, preparation, extracurricular involvement, recommendations, or other criteria.

Students who plan to pursue education, training, military service, apprenticeships, or employment after high school are responsible for reviewing the requirements of the institutions or programs they are considering. Students should begin this planning early so that course selections, academic performance, testing plans, and extracurricular participation align with their postsecondary goals.

School counselors are available to assist students and families with postsecondary planning, course selection, transcript review, application timelines, and general admissions research. Students and families are also encouraged to contact admissions offices, registrars, program representatives, military recruiters, or

apprenticeship coordinators directly to confirm the most current requirements before making final academic or career planning decisions.

COUNSELING SERVICES AND FOUR-YEAR ACADEMIC PLANNING

Decorah High School's counseling program supports students in academic planning, career exploration, college and postsecondary preparation, social-emotional development, and access to school and community supports. Counselors work with students, families, teachers, administrators, and staff to help students remain on track for graduation, make informed decisions, and prepare for life after high school.

The Counseling Office is located near the main office and is open on regular school days from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Students may stop by between classes when appropriate, request a pass, or email their counselor to schedule a meeting. Urgent concerns will be addressed as promptly as possible. Because counselors serve many students, students and families are expected to respect scheduling procedures, student privacy, and confidentiality requirements. Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the Counseling Office by phone or email to ask questions, share concerns, request support, or schedule a meeting.

Academic Planning and Support

Counselors assist students with academic planning, course selection, review of graduation requirements, credit monitoring, and postsecondary preparation. Each student will develop and update a four-year academic plan that meets Decorah High School graduation requirements and supports the student's interests, strengths, and future goals.

Counselors may also assist with academic interventions and supports, working lunch sessions, tutoring referrals, progress monitoring, and coordination of supports for students who are struggling academically or experiencing attendance concerns. For students who need more structured support, counselors may coordinate or participate in Care Team meetings, parent or guardian conferences, and individualized intervention planning.

Collaboration with Families and Staff

Counselors work regularly with teachers, special education case managers, Section 504 coordinators, Keystone Area Education Agency staff, office staff, administrators, and community providers when appropriate. This collaboration supports student progress, identifies concerns early, and coordinates school-based interventions.

The Counseling Office also helps communicate information related to testing dates, scholarship opportunities, college and career planning, academic deadlines, mental health resources, and other student support services. Parents and guardians may request conferences involving teachers, counselors, coaches, case managers, administrators, or outside providers when coordinated support would benefit the student.

College and Career Readiness

Beginning in high school, students participate in career and academic planning through the Individual Career and Academic Plan process. Decorah High School uses SchoolLinks to support this work. Through SchoolLinks and related counseling activities, students explore career interests, review academic pathways, develop postsecondary goals, and connect course planning to future education, training, military service, apprenticeships, or employment options.

Students in grades 11 and 12 receive additional support with college applications, essays, scholarships, financial aid planning, apprenticeship pathways, job shadows, employment preparation, military options, transcript requests, and other postsecondary transition steps. Students are expected to take an active role in this process by meeting deadlines, reviewing requirements, communicating with counselors, and following through on assigned planning tasks.

Counseling and Student Support

Counselors provide confidential, short-term, school-based counseling and support for stress, peer relationships, grief, anxiety, school adjustment, conflict, academic concerns, and other issues that may affect a student's school experience. School counseling is not a substitute for long-term therapy or medical treatment. When a student needs ongoing therapeutic support, counselors may help connect the student and family with community agencies, licensed providers, telehealth services, or other appropriate resources.

When safety concerns arise, school staff will follow district crisis response procedures, which may include same-day risk assessment, safety planning, parent or guardian notification, administrative involvement, referral to outside services, or emergency response when warranted.

Course Registration

Course registration typically begins in February. Students use the online Course Planning Guide and PowerSchool registration tools to request courses for the following school year, with input from counselors, teachers, and parents or guardians.

Counselors review course requests to help ensure that students remain on track for graduation and, when applicable, are appropriately planning for college entrance requirements, career and technical pathways, apprenticeship programs, NCAA eligibility, military options, or other postsecondary goals.

Students and families are responsible for reviewing course descriptions, prerequisites, graduation requirements, and postsecondary entrance expectations before finalizing course requests. Counselors are available to assist with this process, but students and families should understand that course selection decisions can affect future eligibility, scheduling options, and postsecondary preparation.

SUBJECT LOAD REQUIREMENTS

Decorah High School expects each student to maintain a course schedule that supports academic progress, graduation readiness, postsecondary preparation, and meaningful engagement in school. Students shall be enrolled in a full and appropriate academic program each semester unless an exception is approved in accordance with state law, Board policy, and district procedures.

Students in grades **9 through 11** are required to enroll in at least five full-credit academic courses each semester, plus physical education. **Seniors** are required to enroll in at least four full credit academic courses each semester, in addition to physical education or another approved physical education requirement. Students must remain on track to meet all Decorah High School graduation requirements. Approved college-level coursework may count toward the minimum subject load requirement.

Exceptions to the subject load requirement may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the school counselor, building principal, or designee when the student's individual circumstances support an adjustment. Exceptions may include approved work-based learning, apprenticeships, documented medical needs, special education or Section 504 considerations, credit recovery, alternative programming, or other circumstances permitted by law, Board policy, or district procedures.

Students and families should understand that reduced course loads may affect graduation progress, athletic or activity eligibility, college admissions, financial aid, NCAA eligibility, scholarships, work-based learning participation, or other postsecondary opportunities. Students considering a reduced course load must consult with a school counselor before changes are approved.

Physical Education Participation and Excuse Procedures

All students are expected to enroll in and participate in physical education unless they are medically excused, exempt under Iowa law or Board policy, or provided an accommodation or modification through an Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, or other legally required plan.

Students who are medically unable to participate in physical education must provide appropriate documentation from a licensed healthcare provider. The documentation should identify the nature and duration of the restriction, as well as any limitations relevant to safe participation.

Physical education make-up opportunities may be provided for excused absences or approved medical circumstances in accordance with course expectations and school procedures. Students remain responsible for completing required physical education expectations unless excused or exempted under applicable law, Board policy, or an approved student plan.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

At Decorah High School, grading is more than a record of scores—it is a tool that supports learning and prepares students for success in college, careers, and life. Our grading and assessment practices are designed to build essential academic and life skills such as accountability, responsibility, organization, and self-advocacy—qualities that colleges, employers, and communities expect and value.

Building Responsibility and Academic Habits

A key habit students develop in high school is the ability to manage time effectively and meet deadlines. Our grading system reinforces this by holding students accountable for submitting assignments on time, mirroring expectations they will encounter in college and the workplace.

Teachers may, at their discretion and when educationally appropriate, accept late work or offer limited reassessment opportunities. However, these are not guaranteed and should not be assumed. Students are expected to plan ahead, meet deadlines, and understand that extensions and retakes are exceptions, not replacements for steady effort and responsibility.

Purpose and Principles of Grading

Grades communicate the level of a student's understanding of course content and standards. While grades primarily measure academic achievement, they also reinforce the importance of meeting deadlines and fulfilling course responsibilities—skills essential for success beyond high school.

Grade Integrity and Extra Credit

To maintain straightforward and trustworthy grades, extra credit is not permitted in any course. Although often well-intentioned, extra credit can inflate grades in ways that do not reflect a student's actual level of understanding and may conceal gaps in learning. By upholding this standard, Decorah High School ensures that grades accurately reflect a student's knowledge and abilities, fostering trust among students, families, colleges, and employers.

To maintain grade integrity and ensure consistency across courses, final grades shall reflect the student's demonstrated level of learning, based on established course expectations and the body of evidence collected throughout the grading period.

Teachers retain professional discretion in evaluating student learning, applying course expectations, and determining final grades; however, students should not assume that grades will be rounded upward or request or expect grade adjustments unsupported by evidence of learning.

Monitoring Academic Progress

Students and parents are expected to regularly check their academic progress using **PowerSchool**, which provides up-to-date information on grades and assignment

statuses. Teachers record scores and note when assessments or assignments are missing or late.

Late submissions may receive reduced credit, and work not submitted by the due date will be recorded as zero to reflect the student's current level of performance accurately. Opportunities to replace zeroes may exist under each course's late work and reassessment policies, as outlined in the individual syllabi. Consistently monitoring PowerSchool helps families stay informed, address concerns early, and avoid surprises at the end of each grading period.

GRADING SCALE

Decorah High School uses a conventional A–F letter grading scale. This widely recognized system clearly communicates student performance, ensuring that grades are meaningful and comparable for colleges, scholarship committees, and employers.

A+ 97-100%	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	F Below 60%
A 93-96%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	D 63-66%	
A- 90-92%	B- 80-82%	C- 70-72%	D- 60-62%	

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) CALCULATION

A student's grade point average (GPA) is calculated as the average of all final semester grades for all semesters completed. Each letter grade is assigned a point value as shown below:

A+ = 4.00	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33	F = 0.00
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	D = 1.00	
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D- = 0.67	

Example — Single Semester:

Suppose a student takes seven classes: Physical Science, English 9, World Geography, Algebra 1, Physical Education, Spanish 1, and Band. At the end of the first semester, the student earns the following grades:

- B+ in Physical Science (3.33),
- A- in English 9 (3.67),
- B in World Geography (3.00),
- C+ in Algebra 1 (2.33),
- A in Physical Education (4.00),
- B- in Spanish 1 (2.67), and
- A in Band (4.00),

In this case, the total grade points for the semester add up to:

- $3.33 + 3.67 + 3.00 + 2.33 + 4.00 + 2.67 + 4.00 = \mathbf{23.00}$

Divide by the number of classes (7) to calculate GPA for that semester:

- $23.00 \div 7 = 3.29$
- So, the GPA for that semester is **3.29**.

Example — Cumulative GPA Over Multiple Semesters:

GPA is cumulative, which means each semester's final grades are added to previous semesters to calculate an overall grade point average over multiple semesters.

Suppose this same student earns the following total grade points for each semester:

- Semester 1: 23.00 grade points (GPA 3.29 for seven classes)
- Semester 2: 24.00 grade points (for seven classes)

First, combine the total grade points: $23.00 + 24.00 = 47.00$

Then, combine the total number of classes taken: $7 + 7 = 14$

Divide the total points by the total classes: $47.00 \div 14 = 3.36$

So, the student's cumulative GPA after two semesters is **3.36**.

Maintaining a strong GPA has significant benefits: it strengthens college applications and can open doors to scholarships that help offset the cost of higher education.

Many colleges and universities, including Iowa's Regent institutions (Iowa, Iowa State, and UNI), expect students to maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 (B average). In contrast, more selective institutions often seek GPAs closer to a 4.0.

PASS / FAIL POLICY

Students in grades 10–12 may request to take one elective course per semester on a Pass/Fail basis. This option is available only for elective courses or for courses taken beyond the minimum core graduation requirements, such as an additional year of mathematics, science, or world language.

Approval to take a Pass/Fail course is not automatic. To be considered, the student must complete the required Pass/Fail request form and obtain written approval from the course teacher, a school counselor, and a parent or guardian. The course teacher may establish reasonable conditions for continued eligibility under the Pass/Fail option, such as regular attendance, completion of coursework, or participation in academic support opportunities, including WIN sessions, when appropriate.

Students interested in changing a course to Pass/Fail must submit the completed and signed form to a school counselor or Student Support Facilitator ***within the first quarter of the first semester and third quarter of the second semester***. Requests submitted after this deadline will generally not be approved. In cases involving significant extenuating circumstances, such as an extended severe illness, an exception may be considered at the principal's discretion.

A final grade of "P" earns credit for the course but is not calculated into the student's grade point average. A final grade of "F" results in no credit and is calculated as 0.00 in the student's grade point average.

Students and families should carefully consider the potential implications of taking a course on a Pass/Fail basis. Non-letter grades, including pass/fail grades, may affect postsecondary admission, scholarship consideration, athletic eligibility, NCAA

eligibility, course placement, program admission, or other future opportunities. Students considering this option are expected to consult with a school counselor before submitting a request. When applicable, students should also consult directly with specific colleges, universities, scholarship organizations, athletic associations, the NCAA Eligibility Center, or other eligibility agencies to understand how a non-letter grade may be reviewed or calculated. The school district cannot guarantee how outside organizations will interpret or apply non-letter grades.

FINAL SEMESTER GRADES

Semester grades are cumulative, representing a student's demonstrated learning and performance over the entire term. These grades appear on official transcripts, factor directly into the calculation of a student's grade point average (GPA), determine academic eligibility for activities, and influence eligibility for honor roll recognition and scholarship consideration.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Students who face illness or extraordinary circumstances near the end of a semester may request an Incomplete. The teacher, with administrative approval, will complete an Incomplete Grade Form outlining the remaining work and setting a firm deadline for submission.

HONOR ROLL DESIGNATIONS

Students are recognized each semester for academic achievement through two honor roll distinctions: the ***B Honor Roll*** for a GPA of 3.00–3.74 and the ***A Honor Roll*** for a GPA of 3.75–4.00. To qualify, students must be enrolled in at least five full-time academic courses, including physical education, unless exempt; seniors must be enrolled in at least four academic courses plus physical education, or have an approved exemption. Questions about honor roll eligibility may be directed to the principal or a school counselor.

ACADEMIC LETTER

Students in grades 10–12 may earn an Academic Letter by maintaining a GPA of 3.60 or higher for three consecutive semesters while completing at least four honor roll-eligible classes each semester. Gold bars are awarded for each additional qualifying semester beyond the initial award. Recipients are formally recognized at the Spring Awards Program.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ([Board Policy 505.5](#))

To receive a Decorah High School diploma, students must complete all coursework mandated by the Iowa Department of Education and the Decorah Community School District. A minimum of [48 credits](#) is required for graduation, distributed as follows:

- **English/Language Arts:** 8 credits, including:
 - English 9 or Advanced English 9: 2 credits
 - English 10 or Advanced English 10: 2 credits
 - English 11 or AP English Literature and Composition: 2 credits
 - Additional English elective(s) – 2 credits
- **Mathematics:** 6 credits
 - May include Algebra, Geometry, or other math electives
- **Science:** 6 credits, including:
 - Physical Science – 2 credits
 - Biology – 2 credits
 - Additional science elective(s) – 2 credits
- **Social Studies:** 6 credits, including:
 - World Geography or Honors World Geography: 1 credit
 - World History or Honors World History: 1 credit
 - American History or US History (NICC): 2 credits
 - Government or AP Government: 1 credit
 - Economics or Macroeconomics (NICC): 1 credit
 - Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, and in accordance with [Iowa Senate File 369](#), students must earn a passing score on the state-required Civics Test as a condition of graduation.
- **Physical Education:** 4 credits, including:
 - 0.5 credit per semester
 - Juniors and seniors may substitute participation in a school sport for one semester of P.E. each year.
- **Health:** 1 credit, including:
 - CPR instruction leading to CPR certification, per [Iowa Code 256.11\(6\)](#)
- **Electives:** Remaining credits to meet 48-credit requirement
 - Students choose from a range of elective courses
 - Courses from other schools or institutions (e.g., PSEO) must be approved by the principal.
- **Special Education** - Students with IEPs receive specially designed instruction to meet Iowa's 4-3-3-3 graduation requirements. Alternative courses or adjusted content may be provided as determined appropriate by the IEP Team to address individual learning needs.

For questions or more information about graduation requirements, contact the school administration or the counseling office.

COMMENCEMENT (Board Policy 505.7)

Students who meet all Decorah Community School District graduation requirements will receive a district diploma and may be eligible to participate in the spring commencement ceremony.

Participation in commencement and other senior activities is a privilege, not a right, and is contingent upon the student remaining in good standing. Students with unresolved disciplinary matters, significant behavioral concerns, or other circumstances that would substantially disrupt or detract from the ceremony may be excluded from commencement or other senior activities at the discretion of building administration.

EARLY GRADUATION (Board Policy 505.6)

Students interested in early graduation should first contact a school counselor for additional information and assistance with the application process. The student must meet with a school counselor to review graduation requirements, determine eligibility, and confirm whether early graduation is academically possible.

After this review, eligible students may apply for early graduation if they have completed, or are on track to complete, all credits, required courses, and graduation requirements established by the Decorah Community School District. Early graduation is based solely on the student's completion of academic graduation requirements and must be approved by the Board of Education.

To formally begin the approval process, the student and parent or guardian must submit a written, signed request to the high school principal. Requests for mid-year graduation must be submitted before the December Board of Education meeting. Requests to graduate one year early must be submitted before the August Board of Education meeting.

Once early graduation is approved by the Board of Education and all graduation requirements have been completed, the student is officially recognized as a graduate and alumnus of Decorah Community School District. Students who graduate at the end of the first semester are no longer enrolled as students and are not eligible to participate in winter, spring, or summer school activities.

However, early graduates may participate in senior events associated with their graduating class, including Commencement, Prom, Scholarship Night, Senior Banquet, and Commencement Practice, provided they remain in good standing and meet all applicable school expectations for participation.

TESTING PROGRAM (Board Policy 505.4)

The Decorah Community School District uses a combination of state, district, and classroom assessments to monitor student learning and guide academic, college, and career planning. All testing programs are reviewed and approved by the Board

of Education and administered in accordance with procedures established by the superintendent and principals to protect student privacy and ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. Assessment results help teachers tailor instruction, address individual learning needs, and support each student's academic growth and progress toward graduation and postsecondary goals.

[Iowa Statewide Assessment of Academic Progress \(ISAPs\)](#)

Students in grades 9–11 at Decorah High School take the ISASP each spring. This assessment covers reading, language, writing, and mathematics, with science tested in 10th grade. ISASP measures student progress toward Iowa's academic standards and provides achievement data for individuals and groups.

While ISASP results provide a standardized snapshot of learning, they represent only a portion of the high school curriculum. Teachers and counselors use these results, along with classroom performance and student engagement, to inform their instruction and provide targeted support to students. Over time, ISASP data helps identify academic growth trends and informs college and career planning.

[Measures of Academic Progress \(MAP\)](#)

Students in grades 5–11 take MAP assessments in Reading, Language Usage, Science, and Mathematics. These adaptive tests adjust in difficulty based on student responses: correct answers lead to more challenging questions, while incorrect answers lead to easier ones. The goal is for students to answer approximately half of the questions correctly. The final MAP score provides an estimate of a student's achievement level, helping educators track growth, identify learning needs, and inform instruction.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE TESTING

[American College Test \(ACT\)](#)

Most four-year colleges and universities in Iowa require or expect ACT scores for admission, whereas community colleges and private trade schools typically do not. The ACT serves two primary purposes: it provides colleges with a consistent measure of academic readiness in English, math, reading, and science to review alongside GPA, and it helps colleges determine course placement in standard, advanced, or support-level classes.

Students register for the ACT online, and the test is offered seven times each year at national sites, including Luther College in Decorah. Counselors recommend that juniors take the ACT in April to allow time for retakes and to support college admission and scholarship planning.

[National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test \(NMSQT/PSAT\)](#)

The PSAT/NMSQT is an exam that gauges the verbal and math reasoning skills needed for college work. Decorah High School offers the test each October. Although

colleges do not require PSAT scores, the exam is the entry point for the National Merit Scholarship Program. High scorers may advance to semifinalist and finalist levels and compete for National Merit Scholarships. In Iowa, approximately 9,000 juniors take the test each year, with about 250 ultimately earning National Merit recognition. Any 11th-grade student may sign up—there are no eligibility restrictions. Registration details and deadlines are announced by the Counseling Office early each fall.

ADVANCED COURSEWORK AND COLLEGE CREDIT PATHWAYS

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

Decorah High School offers College Board–approved AP courses in English, math, science, social studies, and the arts. Qualified DHS teachers deliver nationally standardized curricula, and students are eligible to take AP exams each spring. Colleges determine whether and how to award credit based on exam scores.

NICC PICC / Concurrent Enrollment / Career Academy

Through a partnership with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), Decorah High School provides college credit opportunities that replace the traditional Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) model. Students can earn both high school and college credit at no cost. NICC determines which courses are offered and sets seat limits.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PSEO)

Eligible 11th and 12th graders—and qualifying 9th and 10th graders—may enroll in college courses not available at Decorah High School. Tuition is district-funded when the course is taken at an Iowa public or accredited private college and no comparable DHS or NICC concurrent course exists. If a student chooses to enroll in a comparable college course despite a local option, the family must cover the tuition cost, although DHS may still grant credit and record the grade.

Eligibility Requirements

In accordance with [Iowa Code 281—Chapter 22](#), students must demonstrate proficiency in reading, math, and science to enroll in college credit courses. The primary measure for proficiency is the student’s most recent ISASP scores. If a student is not proficient on the ISASP or did not take the test due to an excused absence, a MAP score may be used as an alternative measure. Course-specific prerequisites set by the college must also be met and remain in effect.

Deadlines for college-credit registration arrive early, so students should meet with their counselor well before the end of the first semester to confirm eligibility, review timelines, and select appropriate classes.

Testing & Dual Enrollment

The high school office administers the ISASP (grades 9–11), MAP (grades 9–10), PSAT

(grade 11), ACT, SAT (all grades), and AP exams each May. Accommodation requests for students with IEPs or 504 plans must be submitted 6–8 weeks before test dates.

Dual-credit opportunities include NICC Career Pathways, PICC online courses, and PSEO options at Luther College. Counselors assist students with eligibility, registration, obtaining textbooks, and ensuring that transcripts transfer properly for college credit.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Careful and intentional course selection is essential. Student course requests directly affect staffing, room assignments, class sizes, course availability, and instructional planning. Students are expected to make thoughtful decisions during the registration process and to consult with parents or guardians, teachers, and school counselors before finalizing course requests.

To maintain balanced class sizes, protect instructional continuity, and ensure a stable start to the semester, schedule changes shall be limited. They will be approved only for valid academic, graduation, placement, legal, health, or administrative reasons. Schedule changes must generally be requested within the first two weeks of the semester. Requests submitted after that time will be denied unless the building principal determines that extraordinary circumstances justify an exception.

Acceptable reasons for schedule changes may include:

1. Retaking a required course that was previously failed.
2. Moving to a more appropriate course level with teacher, counselor, and administrative approval, such as changing between Standard, Honors, Advanced Placement, or other appropriately leveled coursework.
3. Updating a schedule to implement a new or revised Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, Individual Health Plan, or other legally required plan.
4. Correcting a schedule to ensure the student remains on track for graduation, avoids duplicate credit, or meets required course sequencing.
5. Adding a missing prerequisite or required course that should have been included in the student's schedule.
6. Adjusting a schedule due to documented changes in college, career, work-based learning, apprenticeship, or postsecondary plans, as verified by the counselor or principal.
7. Making necessary changes for a student who enrolls after the regular registration period or for other administrative needs.
8. Filling an open period with an appropriate course, including physical education, when the change fits the student's schedule and does not disrupt class balance or course availability.

In rare circumstances, the principal may approve a schedule change for a reason not specifically listed above when the change is consistent with Board policy, district procedures, graduation progress, and the student's best educational interests.

A student must begin the schedule change process by completing the required form and meeting with a school counselor. Most requests require parent or guardian consent, counselor approval, and approval from the affected teacher or teachers. Requests that do not meet established criteria, cannot be accommodated within the master schedule, or would negatively affect course balance, staffing, safety, or instructional programming will be denied.

A course may be **dropped** only if the change does not reduce enrollment below the minimum needed to offer the course, does not lower the student below the required enrollment status, and does not interfere with graduation progress or other academic requirements. A course may be **added** only if space is available and the student can begin without missing essential foundational instruction.

Class size limits, room capacity, safety requirements, specialized equipment limits, staffing availability, and partnership agreements shall not be exceeded.

Required courses, including courses needed for graduation, shall not be dropped except in extraordinary circumstances approved by the principal. Maintaining full enrollment in appropriate core academic and elective courses helps ensure that students remain on track for graduation, postsecondary readiness, and meaningful engagement in school.

Schedule Change Deadlines

Courses may not be added after the fifth school day of the semester unless the principal determines that an exception is necessary for graduation, legal compliance, health or safety needs, placement correction, or other extraordinary circumstances. This deadline helps ensure that students do not miss critical foundational content and that course expectations remain fair and academically sound.

Courses dropped after the first quarter of a first-semester course or after the third quarter of a second-semester course will be recorded as an F on the transcript unless the principal grants an exception due to extraordinary circumstances. Exceptions shall be limited and must be supported by appropriate documentation or a clear educational need.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Decorah Community School District, we uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. All students are expected to complete their work honestly and independently, ensuring it reflects their knowledge and effort. Academic integrity applies to every aspect of a student's work assignments, projects, exams, and other submissions and requires that all work be entirely the student's own. When using ideas or words from any source, students must give proper credit to the original author. By approaching every assignment honestly, students safeguard their grades and build responsibility, critical thinking, and ethical judgment—skills that extend far beyond high school.

Cheating and Plagiarism

- **Cheating**—including but not limited to looking at another student’s work during an exam or assignment, copying homework, using unauthorized materials or devices, submitting someone else’s work as one’s own, or reusing previous work without permission- is strictly prohibited. Students who provide answers, work, or unauthorized assistance to another student are also contributing to academic dishonesty and will be subject to the same consequences.
- **Plagiarism**—including using another person’s words, ideas, or work without proper acknowledgment- is strictly prohibited. This includes copying passages without quotation marks or citation, closely paraphrasing without giving credit, or submitting internet-generated or AI-generated material as original work.

Addressing Violations

When a violation is suspected, the teacher will meet with the student, review the concern, determine the appropriate academic response, and document the incident. The academic response may include requiring the work to be redone, reducing credit, or assigning no credit, depending on the circumstances.

A first offense typically results in a loss of credit, notification to a parent or guardian, and possible additional consequences, including an office referral. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action through the Disciplinary Points Program and may affect eligibility for school honors, leadership roles, or other privileges.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS

([Board Policy 605.08](#); [Administrative Regulation 605.08R1](#))

The Decorah Community School District authorizes the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools solely for instructional purposes under the direct supervision and explicit approval of licensed teaching staff. AI tools may supplement learning but shall not substitute for a student’s independent analysis, original composition, or mastery of course content.

Students are strictly prohibited from entering personally identifiable or confidential information into AI systems, consistent with federal and state privacy protections. Students shall verify the accuracy of any AI-generated material and must appropriately cite all sources, including AI, in accordance with copyright law and district citation standards.

Unauthorized or improper use of AI tools, including but not limited to: submitting AI-generated work as wholly one’s own, failure to properly cite the use of AI resources, misrepresenting authorship, creating or disseminating harmful or inappropriate content, or using AI to bypass assigned work, constitutes a violation of Board Policy 605.08 and the District’s Academic Integrity expectations. Such

violations may result in the loss of credit, assignment of disciplinary points, and additional consequences as outlined in the Disciplinary Points Program and other applicable policies.

STUDENT SURVEY POLICY ([Iowa Code §279.79](#))

Under [Iowa Code §279.79](#), **prior written consent** is required before a student completes any survey, analysis, activity, or evaluation that collects information about the student or their family on topics such as political beliefs; mental or psychological issues; sexual behavior, orientation, or attitudes; illegal, antisocial, or self-incriminating behavior; critical appraisals of family members; privileged relationships (like attorney, physician, or clergy); religious practices or beliefs; or income (except as required for program eligibility).

Social-Emotional Surveys

Before any employee or contractor collects information through a survey about a student's social or emotional abilities, competencies, or characteristics, the district will provide parents or guardians with detailed information about the survey's creator, sponsor, purpose, intended use of data, and how the data will be stored. Prior written consent must be secured. This consent is not required when such information is collected solely to develop or implement an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Confidentiality & Appeals

All survey and assessment records are confidential student records and are managed in accordance with district privacy policies. Parents and guardians may appeal a denial of consent or raise concerns directly with the superintendent. By following these procedures, Decorah Community School District safeguards student privacy while responsibly gathering information to support each learner's success.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The Decorah High School Library supports academic success and [promotes literacy](#) by providing access to books, digital resources, equipment, and instructional services aligned with the school's curriculum. Students may visit the library during Study Hall or WIN Time with a pass. A pass is also required when coming from a class unless the teacher has notified library staff in advance. The library is open during lunch when staffing permits; however, food is not allowed at any time.

Resources and Services

Magazines and newspapers are available for overnight checkout. The library offers spaces for video viewing and production, including a conference room and a green room, with priority given to school-related projects. Students may check out cameras, microphones, and other equipment for use during the school day. Out-of-school use requires prior approval. Conference rooms are available for student use with permission. Class use takes priority, and misuse may result in restricted access.

Checkout and Returns

Books may be checked out for 3 weeks with 1 renewal; magazines may be borrowed for 1 day with 1 renewal. Loan periods for non-print materials vary by item. Students must return or renew overdue items before checking out new materials. Lost or damaged items will result in replacement charges. However, refunds will be issued if the items are returned before the first day of the following school year.

After-Hours Use

The library is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Access outside of regular hours requires prior approval. For security purposes, the library remains locked after hours unless permission has been granted. For questions or support, please contact the library staff.

RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL AND LIBRARY MATERIALS

[\(Board Policy 605.3 and Administrative Regulation 605.3R1\)](#)

The Decorah Community School District carefully selects textbooks, other instructional materials, and library resources through a thorough professional process to support curriculum goals and student learning. However, parents, students, or community members may sometimes wish to challenge the appropriateness of certain materials used in the educational program or made available in school libraries.

Request to Limit an Individual Student's Access

Parents or guardians may request that their child be excluded from accessing specific instructional materials or checking out certain library items by completing an [Individual Student Prohibited Request](#) form. This right applies only to materials defined under Iowa law as instructional materials, printed or electronic textbooks, and related core materials required for classroom instruction, and does not include lesson plans. A separate district form must be completed for each student and each item to be restricted. Approved restrictions apply only to the named student.

Parents, students, or community members with broader concerns about the use of a particular resource should first discuss the matter at the most appropriate level, typically with the classroom teacher or teacher-librarian. School staff will explain how the material was selected, its intended educational purpose, and its alignment with curriculum goals. In most cases, questions and concerns are resolved through this informal conversation.

Formal Reconsideration Process

If an issue cannot be resolved informally, a community member may submit a [Reconsideration Request Form](#) to the building principal. School staff is available to assist with completing the form; however, unsigned or incomplete forms will be considered invalid, and no further action will be taken.

Once a valid request is received, the principal will forward it to the Superintendent

within two school days. The Superintendent will convene a Reconsideration Committee within two weeks. This committee consists of licensed staff, a teacher-librarian, an administrator, and community members appointed annually.

The committee will review the material in question, consider professional reviews and the complainant's statement, and may hear input from interested parties or content experts. Within five school days of the meeting, the committee will submit a written recommendation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will issue a decision within five school days of receiving the recommendation and will provide a copy to the complainant.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision, they may file an appeal with the Board Secretary within five days. The School Board will determine whether to hear the appeal at its next regular meeting or within thirty days. The Board's decision is final.

During the reconsideration process, the material generally remains in use; however, in rare cases, the Reconsideration Committee may vote by a two-thirds majority to temporarily remove the material while deliberations continue. A final decision may result in retaining the material without change, removing it from use district-wide, or restricting its educational use in some way.

Any decision to limit or remove a resource does not imply fault or negligence on the part of the staff who selected it.

More detailed information about the reconsideration process, required forms, and current administrative regulations is available on the district's website or through the building principal.

ONLINE COURSE OPTIONS (BOE Policy 604.10)

Decorah High School is ***not*** an Iowa Department of Education-[approved online academy](#). Students enrolled at Decorah High School are expected to attend classes in person each day and may not complete coursework asynchronously in place of regular attendance.

Under ***rare and exceptional circumstances***, students may be approved to enroll in an online course through Decorah High School's Edgenuity (E2020) Program, which uses a state-approved online curriculum platform. This option is considered a last resort and is not intended to replace the rigor, accountability, and meaningful interaction of daily classroom-based instruction.

Why In-Person Learning Matters

Extensive research and Decorah High School's own performance data show that students learn best when they are physically present in classrooms, actively engaged

with qualified teachers, and supported by structured routines and real-time feedback.

By contrast, full-time online programs in Iowa have consistently yielded lower achievement, weaker academic growth, and reduced college and career readiness. Many online academies also lack the supervision and peer connection critical for student well-being and success. For these reasons, the strongest outcomes and the best preparation for life after graduation come from in-person, teacher-led instruction within a supportive school community.

Eligibility and Approval

Online courses may be approved only for **seniors** participating in verified work-based learning internships that require schedule flexibility; seniors with unavoidable, documented schedule conflicts that cannot be resolved through traditional scheduling; students with significant medical, behavioral, or academic circumstances as determined by the principal; or students taking specific pre-approved courses through a state-approved provider such as Kirkwood's Distance Learning Program.

All online course requests must begin through the Counseling Office and require written approval from both a school counselor and the building principal. Approved students must dedicate a class period during the regular school day to complete online coursework in a supervised setting at school, maintain daily attendance, and demonstrate consistent academic progress. Students who do not meet attendance or performance expectations may be removed from the course and may lose eligibility for future online enrollment through Decorah High School.

Grading and Credit

All online courses taken through the school's Edgenuity program are **graded Pass/Fail**; no letter grades are awarded. Grades transferred from other institutions for online coursework are also recorded as Pass/Fail. A **minimum score of 80%** is required to pass and earn credit. To qualify for a Decorah High School diploma, students must complete **at least 24 credits** through traditional, teacher-led, in-person instruction.

While online courses may provide limited flexibility in specific situations, they do not match the proven benefits of daily classroom learning, personalized teacher support, hands-on experiences, and strong social connections. Students, parents, and staff are strongly encouraged to prioritize in-person learning as the best path to academic success, postsecondary readiness, and lifelong growth.

Credit recovery (for failed classes) through online courses will not be considered until a student's senior year, and only after in-person course retakes have been implemented.

READING COURSES

Strong reading skills are vital for academic success in all subjects. Decorah High School offers reading courses to build fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and overall literacy. These courses are strategic supports designed to strengthen foundational skills and promote success across the curriculum.

Placement is determined using multiple data points, including MAP scores, classroom performance, and professional judgment. The goal is to ensure that each student possesses the literacy skills necessary for success in high school and beyond. After placing students who meet the required criteria, additional students who wish to develop their reading skills further may request enrollment in a reading course if space allows.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE

Daily, punctual attendance is essential to student learning and school success. When students attend school consistently, they are more likely to remain on track academically, participate meaningfully in class, build positive relationships, and benefit from the full instructional experience provided by their teachers.

Attendance is also an important part of developing responsibility, reliability, and readiness for life beyond high school. Colleges, employers, technical programs, military programs, and other postsecondary opportunities may consider attendance patterns as one indicator of a student's commitment, dependability, and ability to meet expectations.

Absences can affect student progress, even when the reason for the absence is valid. Missed instruction, classroom discussion, group work, practice, feedback, assessments, and other learning experiences cannot always be fully replicated through make-up work alone. Frequent or extended absences may also disrupt instructional continuity and require additional time and support to help students reconnect with missed learning.

For these reasons, Decorah High School expects students and families to prioritize regular attendance. Consistent attendance supports academic achievement, strengthens the classroom learning environment, and helps students develop the habits necessary for success in school and beyond.

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION AND DAILY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Parents or guardians must notify the main office by 9:00 a.m. each day a student is absent. Whenever possible, families are encouraged to notify the school in advance of planned absences, appointments, or other changes affecting a student's attendance. Students are expected to communicate with their teachers in advance, when possible, to plan for missed instruction, assignments, assessments, or other learning activities.

Students who need to leave during the school day must have prior approval and must check out through the office before leaving school grounds. For appointments, students must sign out in the office and provide appropriate documentation, such as a signed appointment slip, upon return or as otherwise requested by the school. Families should allow reasonable travel time before and after appointments.

If a student needs to leave school due to illness, the student must first report to the school nurse and obtain approval before leaving. For other reasons, the attendance office must receive communication from a parent or guardian before the student leaves school. Students who leave school without prior approval or without properly checking out through the office may be recorded as unexcused.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Decorah High School recognizes that students may need to be absent for valid reasons. While parents and guardians have the authority to decide when a student must be absent from school, the district determines whether an absence is ***excused*** under district policy and applicable Iowa law. Students and parents or guardians are expected to limit absences whenever possible and to work with the school to prevent unnecessary academic setbacks.

Absences that may be considered ***excused*** include participation in school-sponsored activities, which are always excused; personal illness; professional appointments, such as medical, counseling, or therapy appointments; court appearances; bereavement; religious observances; parent or guardian requests that are essential to the family's welfare; and pre-approved absences, including college visits, when proper documentation is provided. For extended, recurring, or medically related absences, the school may require additional documentation or may develop a care plan or support plan in coordination with the school nurse, school counselor, Student Support Facilitator, or other appropriate staff.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND TRUANCIES

Absences for reasons not recognized as excused under district policy and applicable Iowa law will be recorded as ***unexcused***. Examples may include, but are not limited to, oversleeping, routine errands, personal appointments that could reasonably be scheduled outside the school day, and work obligations, unless specifically approved by administration.

Consistent with course expectations and district policy, work missed due to an unexcused absence may not be eligible for full credit. Teachers have professional discretion to determine whether make-up work will be allowed, how it will be completed, and whether reduced credit or no credit is appropriate based on the circumstances. Unexcused absences may affect credit for missed assignments, assessments, participation, or other course expectations. Unexcused absences, truancies, and other time-related attendance violations may also result in disciplinary consequences under the school's attendance and conduct procedures.

ATTENDANCE CODING AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

ATTENDANCE CODES – NEW VS. PREVIOUS CODES – Office Assigned

FAM – parent excused

- Out of town
- Funeral
- Car trouble
- Hunting
- Personal
- Roads/weather
- Working/farming (not Work Based Learning)

MED – parent excused

- Illness
- Appointment (doctor, dentist, PT, ortho, chiro, eye, flu, mono, strep, wisdom teeth)
- Hospitalization

SOV – School Office Visit¹ (present code)

- Nurse's office, Guidance office, Student Support Office, Principal's office
- Viking Academic Success Center
- Testing

SRP – School Related Participant¹ (present code)

- Activity early dismissals/school activity
- Field trip
- School activity
- College class at another location (NICC, Luther)
- Viking Academic Success Center
- Work Based Learning

¹Does not count against a student's daily absence(s) and attendance summary

SRNP – School related non-participant

- Student attending a school sponsored activity/event, but not participating, attending as a fan
- State tournaments

Conc – Concussion

CV – College Visit

DIF – Death in immediate family³

TE & TU – tardy excused and tardy unexcused

- Within 10 minutes of tardy bell
- After 10 minutes, coded with appropriate attendance code

ISS – In School Suspension

OSS – Out of School Suspension

UN – Unexcused absence

- Skipped class, truant
- Absent – no parent contact

EXEMPT CODES:

GRDX - Completed grad. requirements²

CRTX - Court exempt² (Dept. of Human Services Placement)

RELX - Religious exempt²

MEDX - Medical exempt^{2, 3}

- Diagnoses
- medical placement
- surgery
- medical excuse for PE, sports, etc.

Must provide documentation
i.e. doctor's note

IEPX - IEP exempt²

504X - 504 exempt²

²Used for SF2435 Truancy exemptions; these are still marked as absences in the attendance code setup.

³Excuses PE make up

Teacher assigned codes:

A – Absent	TE – Tardy Excused
P – Present	TU – Tardy Unexcused

A student may be marked **excused** when a parent or guardian reports an absence for illness, a medical appointment, or another reason recognized under district attendance procedures. Examples may include family-related absences, illness, medical appointments, bereavement, religious observances, college visits, school-related activities, or other approved reasons.

An absence may be recorded as **unexcused** when the reason does not meet district criteria for an excused absence, when required documentation is not provided, or when a parent or guardian does not notify the school as required. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, skipped classes, trancies, and absences without parent or guardian contact.

Families should understand that an excused absence does not necessarily mean it is **exempt** from Iowa's chronic absenteeism calculations. Unless an absence meets specific exemption criteria under Iowa law or district procedures, it may still count toward the student's total number of absences for accountability purposes.

Examples of absences that may be **exempt** from chronic absenteeism calculations include verified medical absences with appropriate documentation; absences related to a documented chronic medical condition; religious observances; funerals; approved school-related participation; work-based learning; military service; court-ordered placements; and other legally recognized exemptions. Examples of absences that are generally **not exempt** and may count toward chronic absenteeism include family or parent excused absences, personal illness without appropriate

medical documentation, school-related non-participant absences, college visits, and unexcused absences.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE ([Board Policy 501.3](#) and [Iowa Code §299](#))

Under Iowa law, the parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian of a child who is of compulsory attendance age is responsible for ensuring that the child attends a public school, an accredited nonpublic school, competent private instruction, or independent private instruction during the school year, unless the child qualifies for an exemption allowed by law.

The Decorah Community School District Board of Education establishes the required days or hours of attendance for students enrolled in the district. It may require attendance for the entire time school is in session. The Board also adopts policies related to absenteeism, truancy, and chronic absenteeism, and district attendance expectations may be more stringent than the minimum requirements established under Iowa Code Chapter 299.

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring regular attendance and providing appropriate documentation when an absence, exemption, or inability to attend school is due to medical, legal, educational, religious, military, family, or other qualifying circumstances recognized by law or district policy.

Certain absences may be exempt from chronic absenteeism provisions, including those related to legitimate medical reasons, an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan that affects attendance, religious services or instruction, court-ordered excuses, military processing or service, funeral travel, wedding travel, completion of graduation requirements, or other legally recognized exemptions.

The principal or designee may review attendance concerns, communicate with families, determine appropriate interventions, and take steps to address truancy or chronic absenteeism in accordance with district policy and Iowa law.

When required or warranted, the district may participate in mediation, refer attendance matters to the county attorney, and take other legally authorized action. If an attendance agreement or mediation agreement is established, the student, parent or guardian, and district are expected to comply with its terms.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM ([Board Policy 501.9](#))

Regular, daily attendance is essential for academic success and for meeting the rigorous learning standards expected at Decorah High School. ***Chronic absenteeism***, defined as **missing 10% or more of school days for any reason**, poses significant challenges for students, teachers, and the broader school community.

Under Iowa law ([Senate File 2435](#), 2024; [Senate File 277](#), 2025), schools are required to monitor student attendance closely and take timely action when a student is

chronically absent. Chronic absenteeism is also a state-reported indicator on the [Iowa School Performance Profile](#) and directly affects our school's accountability rating.

To help reduce chronic absenteeism, parents should, when possible, provide medical documentation and schedule vacations and appointments outside of school hours. Students and parents are expected to maintain regular contact with teachers and the Student Support Facilitator to address attendance issues. Decorah High School works proactively with families to resolve concerns and support consistent attendance so every student can succeed academically.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM INTERVENTION SYSTEM

- ***Tier I:*** Promotes positive attendance habits through school climate, recognition, and engaging instruction
- ***Tier II:*** Supports students missing **5–10% of days** with early outreach and strategies to reduce barriers, such as transportation or illness
- ***Tier III:*** Once a student exceeds 10 percent absenteeism, we reach out to the family. If absences reach 15 percent, a ***School Engagement Meeting***—including the student, guardian, and school officials—***may*** be convened, and is required only when attendance is clearly hindering academic performance. In such cases, an ***Absenteeism Prevention Plan*** must be created.
- Continued absences may result in referral to the County Attorney.

Persistent Non-Attendance for Students Not Subject to Compulsory Attendance

For students who are not subject to Iowa's compulsory attendance requirements, including students who are sixteen years of age or older on the first day of the school year, persistent nonattendance may result in significant changes to the student's educational program.

When repeated attendance interventions have not been successful, Decorah High School may consider transitioning the student from traditional in-person courses to a more restrictive online coursework arrangement through the school's approved online classroom option.

Before making any decision to transition a student to online coursework because of persistent nonattendance, the school will review the student's individual circumstances. This review shall include attendance history, academic progress, prior interventions, documented health needs, disability related considerations, and any requirements under an Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, Individual Health Plan, or other legally required plan.

When applicable, the district will follow all required procedures under state and federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, before determining next steps.

When a student is assigned online coursework due to chronic attendance concerns, the following expectations shall apply:

1. Daily in-person attendance is still required. The student must report to school each day and complete online coursework in a supervised setting during assigned periods.
2. Asynchronous, at-home completion is not permitted. Online courses offered through Decorah High School, including Edgenuity or other approved providers, are intended to be completed on-site during the regular school day under staff supervision, unless the principal approves a different arrangement due to documented legal, medical, disability-related, or extraordinary circumstances.
3. Online coursework is a limited intervention, not a preferred instructional model. Online coursework generally provides less direct teacher interaction, less immediate feedback, and less structure than daily classroom-based instruction. It is used only when the student's attendance pattern, academic situation, or individual circumstances require a more restrictive alternative.
4. Students must maintain attendance and progress expectations. Students assigned to online coursework must attend as scheduled, use time productively, communicate with assigned staff, and demonstrate consistent academic progress. Failure to meet these expectations may result in additional interventions, loss of privileges, removal from the online course, or other action permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Students and families should also understand the academic implications of online coursework. Online courses through Decorah High School are graded Pass or Fail. Decorah High School does not award traditional letter grades for online courses.

If attendance concerns persist after a student is assigned online coursework, the district may take additional action. This may include restricting home access to online courses, holding additional attendance or support meetings, referring the matter for further review, or, when permitted by state law, Board policy, and district procedures, considering withdrawal from enrollment.

This approach reflects Decorah High School's expectation that students attend school consistently, engage with qualified teachers, and benefit from the structure, relationships, accountability, and support that daily in-person learning provides. The school's goal is to keep students connected to learning while also maintaining clear expectations for attendance, progress, and responsible participation in the educational program.

Quarterly Attendance Thresholds for Chronic Absenteeism Review

August 24-October 23	First Quarter	42 Days
1st quarter midterm - 9/25/26	10% Absence	4 Days
	15% Absence	6.5 Days
	20% Absence	8.5 Days
October 26-December 22	Second Quarter	37 Days
2nd quarter midterm - 11/20/26	10% Absence	4 Days (3.7)
	15% Absence	5.5 Days
	20% Absence	7.5 Days
January 5-March 19	Third Quarter	44 Days
3rd quarter midterm - 2/11/27	10% Absence	4 Days
	15% Absence	6.5 Days
	20% Absence	9 Days
March 22-May 17	Fourth Quarter	38 Days
4th quarter midterm - 4/16/27	10% Absence	4 Days
	15% Absence	6 Days
	20% Absence	8 Days

ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION POLICY

To participate in or compete in a school activity, contest, or performance, a student must be in attendance at school by **11:30 a.m.** on the day of the event, unless prior approval has been granted by the Activities Director or, in the Activities Director's absence, the building principal.

Absences due to illness do not automatically excuse a student from this attendance requirement. Students who are absent due to illness must still be present by **11:30 a.m.** to participate that day, unless an exception has been approved in advance. All other absences on the day of an activity must be excused in accordance with school attendance procedures. The Activities Director has final authority to determine whether an exception is appropriate and whether a student has met the attendance requirements for participation. An excused absence on Friday does not affect a student's eligibility to participate in a Saturday activity.

FIELD TRIPS AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED ABSENCES (BOARD POLICY 606.5)

Field trips and school-sponsored activities enrich the curriculum by providing learning experiences that extend beyond the traditional classroom setting. The principal may authorize trips that support district educational goals, provided that the school arranges transportation. Approval considers educational value, cost,

safety, and alignment with instructional priorities. Parental permission is required for all students. The superintendent must approve out-of-state travel, and trips of significant length or cost require Board approval. Teachers must plan well in advance, submit a detailed itinerary and budget, and coordinate with the principal to ensure smooth arrangements.

MISSED LEARNING AND MAKE-UP WORK EXPECTATIONS

Students are responsible for completing missed learning activities, assignments, assessments, and other course requirements promptly. Completing missed work is necessary to maintain academic progress and demonstrate learning. For students with an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan, make-up work expectations will be implemented in a manner consistent with the student's required supports, services, and accommodations.

School-Sponsored Absences

Absences for school-sponsored activities are excused. Students remain responsible for all missed coursework and are expected to communicate with teachers in advance when they know they will miss class for a school activity. Whenever possible, students should notify teachers at least one school day before the absence.

Assignments, projects, or assessments due on the day of a school-sponsored absence may be required to be submitted before the absence or immediately upon return, as determined by the teacher. Work assigned immediately before or during the absence is generally due within two school days after the student returns, unless the teacher approves a different timeline.

Make-Up Work for Excused Absences

For excused absences other than school-sponsored activities, students are generally allowed two school days to make up work for each day missed, unless a different arrangement is made with the teacher. This timeline is intended to provide students a reasonable opportunity to complete missed work while maintaining progress in the course.

Planning and Grading

Students and families should, whenever possible, communicate with teachers in advance of planned absences to clarify expectations for completing any missed work. Teachers have professional discretion to establish makeup procedures, determine appropriate timelines, and apply late work policies when work is submitted after the approved makeup period.

Late work expectations, grading impacts, and procedures related to unexcused absences may be further explained in individual course syllabi. Students and families are encouraged to review course syllabi at the beginning of each term and contact teachers with questions about classroom expectations.

“SKIP DAY” POLICY

Decorah High School expects students to maintain consistent daily attendance to ensure their learning, academic progress, and success. Each school day provides planned instruction and engagement; therefore, any student-organized “Skip Day” is unauthorized and serves no educational purpose. Absences for this reason will be classified as unexcused and addressed in accordance with established attendance policies and disciplinary procedures.

TARDINESS POLICY

A student is considered tardy if they arrive at class after the second bell rings. Tardiness and any unauthorized late arrivals are unexcused and may result in disciplinary action. Students who miss more than 15 minutes of a class period will be marked absent for that period. Each instance of tardiness results in 3 disciplinary points, which may accumulate toward detentions or more serious consequences, including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or Saturday school.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Decorah High School’s disciplinary framework is grounded in three core principles:

1. Every student learns best in a safe and respectful environment.
2. Misconduct is addressed most effectively through consistent, proportionate consequences that include opportunities to repair harm and rebuild trust.
3. Due process safeguards ensure that all disciplinary actions are fair, lawful, and aligned with district policy.

POLICY STATEMENT AND SCOPE [\(Board Policy 503.1\)](#)

Students are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and responsibly at all times to maintain a safe, orderly, and productive learning environment. Behavior that disrupts learning, infringes on the rights of others, or endangers the health or safety of students, staff, or visitors is strictly prohibited.

These expectations apply at all times: while on school property; while riding in school-owned or school-chartered transportation; while participating in or attending school-sponsored activities; and at any time off school grounds if the conduct adversely affects the operation, safety, or welfare of the school community.

Disciplinary measures will be reasonable, developmentally appropriate, and based on the specific facts of each situation. Students who violate these standards may face consequences for actions that interfere with learning, disrupt school operations or events, deny others full access to their education, or create a risk of harm or damage.

RANGE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Disciplinary responses may include, but are not limited to, the actions listed below. Consequences will be determined based on the nature, severity, frequency, and circumstances of the conduct, as well as the student's age, disciplinary history, and any applicable legal or educational considerations.

Educational and Restorative Measures

A student may be required to complete an educational, reflective, or restorative response appropriate to the situation. This may include a restorative apology, a conference, relevant community service, restitution, or other corrective action intended to repair harm, reinforce expectations, and support improved decision-making.

Detention

A student may be assigned detention before school, after school, or on a non-school day for disciplinary reasons. Detentions may be assigned by school staff or building administration.

Removal from Class

A student may be removed from class and referred to the office when the student's behavior disrupts instruction, interferes with the learning environment, or violates classroom or school expectations. Removal from class may affect participation, completion of class activities, or other course expectations as determined by the teacher and administration.

Restrictions on Activities

A student may be temporarily restricted from participating in athletics, activities, performances, competitions, school events, or other extracurricular opportunities. Depending on the circumstances, the student may still be expected to attend classes, practices, rehearsals, or other required school obligations.

Probation

A student may be placed on probation with specific conditions for continued enrollment, attendance, participation, or access to school privileges. Failure to meet the conditions of probation may result in additional disciplinary action.

Law Enforcement Referral

When student conduct may violate the law or create a safety concern, the matter may be referred to local law enforcement. Law enforcement involvement may include consultation, education, investigation, citation, or criminal charges, depending on the circumstances.

In-School Suspension

A student assigned to in-school suspension remains at school but is removed from regular classes and peer interaction for disciplinary reasons. In-school suspension

will not exceed 10 consecutive school days unless otherwise permitted by law or Board policy.

Out-of-School Suspension

For serious misconduct or repeated violations, a student may be suspended from school, including classes, activities, and school events, for up to 10 consecutive school days, unless extended with the superintendent's approval in accordance with Board policy and applicable law. A student returning from out-of-school suspension may be required to participate in a reentry meeting with a parent or guardian and administration before resuming regular school participation.

Expulsion

Only the School Board may expel a student, which results in the student being removed from all classes, activities, and school privileges for a specified period.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH IEPs

When a student with an Individualized Education Program is removed from school for disciplinary reasons, the district will review the removal in accordance with special education requirements. If a student is suspended for more than ten consecutive school days, or if multiple removals total more than **ten school days** in a school year and may constitute a pattern of removal, the district will convene a Manifestation Determination Review with the student's Individualized Education Program Team.

The Manifestation Determination Review determines whether the conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or whether the conduct was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the Individualized Education Program.

If the conduct is determined to be a ***manifestation of the student's disability***, the student will not be disciplined in the same manner as a student without disability related protections. The Individualized Education Program Team will review the student's needs and determine appropriate next steps, which may include reviewing or revising supports, services, accommodations, placement, or the student's Behavior Intervention Plan.

If the conduct is determined ***not to be a manifestation of the student's disability***, the student may be subject to the same disciplinary consequences as students without disabilities. However, the district will continue to provide educational services as required by law during any disciplinary removal.

These safeguards are intended to ensure that discipline is administered in a legally compliant manner while continuing to support the student's access to a free, appropriate public education. Families with questions about this process should contact the student's case manager, Special Education Director, or building principal.

DISCIPLINARY POINTS PROGRAM

Decorah High School maintains clear and consistently enforced expectations for student behavior to support a safe, respectful, and orderly learning environment. The Disciplinary Points Program provides a structured process for documenting certain student conduct violations and assigning appropriate consequences.

When a student is referred to the office for a violation that carries disciplinary points, the administration will review the incident, and points may be assigned based on the nature and severity of the conduct. A student who receives disciplinary points is **ineligible to participate** in after-school activities on the day of the referral or consequence.

Assigned detentions or disciplinary obligations must be completed by the stated deadline. A student who fails to complete the assigned consequences by the deadline may be restricted from practices, competitions, performances, activities, open campus privileges, or other school privileges until the assigned consequence has been completed.

Repeated, serious, or escalating violations may result in additional disciplinary action, including Saturday school, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, referral to law enforcement, recommendation for expulsion, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

The Disciplinary Points Program is based on the district's authority under Board policy and Iowa law to establish reasonable expectations for student conduct and to assign appropriate consequences when those expectations are violated. The program is intended to promote accountability, consistency, and early intervention. It helps ensure that similar conduct is addressed similarly, that disciplinary decisions are supported by documentation, and that students and families are informed when behavior patterns begin to interfere with school success.

Disciplinary points also serve as an early warning system. When a student accumulates points or exhibits repeated behavioral concerns, school staff may consider additional supports, such as communication with parents or guardians, counseling, restorative measures, behavior planning, or other targeted interventions.

The Disciplinary Points Program does not limit the school's authority to respond immediately to serious misconduct. In cases involving safety concerns, significant disruption, illegal conduct, or other serious violations, administration may impose more serious consequences without following the usual progression of points or interventions. All disciplinary decisions will be made in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable state and federal law. Students will be provided the procedural protections required by law, and disciplinary consequences will be determined based on the specific facts and circumstances of each case.

CATEGORIES OF MISCONDUCT

Decorah High School holds students to high standards of conduct to maintain a respectful, safe, orderly, and productive learning environment. The categories below are intended to help students and families understand the types of behavior that may result in disciplinary action and the range of consequences that may apply.

Misconduct will be reviewed based on the nature, severity, frequency, and circumstances of the behavior. Administration may also consider the student's disciplinary history, the impact on others, the level of disruption to the school environment, and any applicable legal or educational considerations when determining an appropriate response.

Communication and Respect

Students are expected to communicate and interact with peers, staff, and others in a respectful manner that supports a safe, orderly, and positive school environment. Conduct that is disrespectful, vulgar, profane, threatening, harassing, disruptive, or otherwise inconsistent with school expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Prohibited conduct may include disrespectful or profane language directed at others; shouting obscenities in hallways or common areas; and verbal or written intimidation, threats, harassment, or other communications that interfere with the rights, safety, or educational experience of others.

Depending on the nature and severity of the conduct, these violations may result in disciplinary points, loss of privileges, detention, suspension, referral under the district's bullying and harassment procedures, or other appropriate consequences.

Students are also expected to comply with reasonable directives from teachers, administrators, substitutes, coaches, sponsors, paraprofessionals, office staff, and other school employees. Willful refusal to follow a reasonable directive, repeated noncompliance, or conduct that escalates a situation may be considered insubordination and may result in more significant disciplinary consequences.

Students may not engage in conduct, whether on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, or in circumstances connected to the school environment, that causes or is reasonably likely to cause a substantial disruption to school operations, instruction, activities, or events.

Disruptive conduct may include threats or acts of violence, excessive noise, coercion, intimidation, resistance that obstructs normal school activities, vandalism, pranks that interfere with school operations, blocking hallways or exits, refusal to comply with lawful directives, or use of electronic communication or social media to incite disorder or create safety concerns.

Off-campus conduct, including electronic communication or social media activity, may result in school disciplinary action when the conduct has a sufficient connection

to the school, substantially disrupts or is reasonably likely to disrupt the school environment, or threatens the safety, welfare, or rights of students or staff, consistent with district policy and applicable law.

Integrity Violations

Integrity and honesty are essential to maintaining a safe, respectful, and trustworthy school environment. Students are expected to be truthful in their communication with school staff, accurate in the information they provide, and responsible in their academic work, records, and school-related interactions.

Prohibited dishonest conduct may include knowingly providing false or misleading information to school staff, intentionally withholding relevant information during a school matter, forging or falsifying a parent or guardian signature, altering or tampering with records, excuses, passes, academic work, or school documents, and providing untruthful statements during disciplinary, attendance, academic, or administrative investigations.

Integrity violations may result in disciplinary points, detention, loss of privileges, suspension, referral to administration, or other appropriate consequences. Repeated, serious, or intentional violations may result in more significant disciplinary action, depending on the nature and circumstances of the conduct.

Physical Behavior Offenses

Students are expected to maintain self-control and interact with others in a manner that supports a safe, respectful, and orderly school environment. Violent, aggressive, threatening, sexually inappropriate, or unwelcome physical conduct is strictly prohibited.

Prohibited physical conduct may include pushing, shoving, tripping, kicking, tackling, hitting, punching, slapping, fighting, physically intimidating another person, blocking or restraining another person's movement, engaging in horseplay or roughhousing that creates a safety concern, using an object to strike or attempt to strike another person, or threatening physical harm through gestures, posturing, or implied force.

Physical contact of a sexual nature is also strictly prohibited. This includes sexually inappropriate touching, sexual harassment, sexual advances, or other conduct that violates another person's bodily autonomy, dignity, or right to feel safe at school.

Acts of physical aggression or unsafe physical conduct may result in immediate staff intervention and referral to administration. Consequences will be determined based on the nature, severity, intent, impact, and circumstances of the incident, as well as the student's prior conduct and any applicable legal or educational considerations. Minor physical incidents may result in disciplinary points, detention, loss of privileges, restorative measures, contact with a parent or guardian, or other corrective action.

Serious incidents, including fighting, repeated aggression, injury, threats of harm, sexually inappropriate physical contact, or conduct that creates a substantial safety concern, may result in removal from the setting, suspension, referral to law enforcement, recommendation for expulsion, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Students and families should understand that certain physical acts, threats, assaults, or sexually inappropriate conduct may also be subject to law enforcement involvement in addition to school discipline. When appropriate, students involved in physical incidents may also be referred for counseling, conflict resolution, restorative conferencing, behavior planning, or other supportive interventions to address the behavior and reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

Technology Misuse

Students are provided access to district devices, network systems, internet resources, accounts, and digital tools to support learning. Students are expected to use school technology lawfully, responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with district policies, administrative regulations, the technology agreement, and applicable state and federal laws.

Prohibited technology conduct may include compromising or attempting to compromise the security, integrity, or appropriate use of district technology; bypassing or attempting to bypass internet filters, security software, firewalls, or administrative controls; accessing or attempting to access another person's account without authorization; using, sharing, or distributing another person's username or password; impersonating another person through digital communication; installing unauthorized software, applications, or browser extensions; connecting personal devices to the school network in violation of policy; or using district technology to create, access, download, post, send, or distribute threatening, harassing, obscene, defamatory, false, disruptive, or otherwise inappropriate material.

Technology misuse may result in disciplinary points, parent or guardian notification, loss or restriction of technology privileges, detention, suspension, referral to administration, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Consequences will be determined based on the nature, severity, intent, impact, and circumstances of the violation, as well as the student's prior conduct and the effect on school operations, network security, or the rights and safety of others.

Students and families may be financially responsible for costs resulting from unauthorized purchases, service charges, intentional damage, or deliberate misuse of district devices, accounts, systems, or technology resources. Repair costs, insurance deductibles, or replacement costs may be assessed as provided in the district's technology agreement.

Use of district devices, accounts, network systems, internet access, and digital resources may be monitored, accessed, reviewed, and logged by the district at any time. Students should not expect privacy when using school technology, including district devices, district email, school accounts, or district network resources.

Students are expected to use technology in ways that support learning, maintain network security, respect others' rights, and demonstrate integrity as digital citizens. Students who are unsure whether using technology is appropriate should ask a teacher, administrator, or technology staff member before proceeding.

Threats of Violence

Any threat of violence, whether spoken, written, texted, emailed, posted online, conveyed through gestures or symbols, or communicated in any other manner, is strictly prohibited. All reported threats will be taken seriously, reviewed promptly by administration, and referred to law enforcement when appropriate, consistent with district policy and applicable law.

Prohibited conduct may include stating an intent to harm another student, staff member, or group; writing, drawing, posting, or sending threats on school property or digital platforms; sending threatening messages through text, email, social media, or other electronic communication; displaying a weapon or look alike weapon in a threatening or intimidating manner; making bomb threats or false claims involving explosives; threatening damage to school property; or using gestures, posture, symbols, or language intended to create fear of harm.

Threats made off campus, including through personal social media accounts, private messages, or other electronic communication, may result in school discipline when the conduct has a sufficient connection to the school, substantially disrupts or is reasonably likely to disrupt school operations, or poses a risk to the safety or welfare of students, staff, or the school community.

When a threat is reported, the district may use a threat assessment process to evaluate the nature and seriousness of the concern. The review may include administration, counseling, or mental health staff, other appropriate school personnel, and law enforcement when warranted. Factors considered may include the context of the statement or conduct, the student's age, prior behavior, access to weapons, stated intent, credibility of the threat, cooperation during the investigation, and any immediate safety concerns.

Verified threats of violence may result in significant disciplinary action, including removal from the setting, suspension, referral to law enforcement, recommendation for expulsion, safety planning, loss of privileges, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law. The district may also provide or recommend appropriate supports or interventions when needed to address student safety, well-being, and future conduct.

Students, parents, guardians, and staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe school environment. Any threat or safety concern should be reported immediately to an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other trusted school employee so the school can respond promptly and appropriately.

Theft

Honesty and respect for others' property are essential to maintaining a safe and trustworthy school community. Students may not take, attempt to take, conceal, possess, use, or transfer personal property, school property, or property belonging to any school-affiliated organization without permission.

Theft-related conduct may include taking another student's belongings without consent; removing, hiding, damaging, or possessing classroom materials, school equipment, supplies, technology, money, or other property without authorization; possessing property the student knows or reasonably should know was stolen or misappropriated; or using school resources, accounts, equipment, technology, or funds for personal gain without approval.

Theft or attempted theft may result in disciplinary points, detention, loss of privileges, suspension, restitution, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Consequences will be determined based on the nature of the conduct, the value of the property, the impact on others, the student's intent, prior conduct, and any other relevant circumstances.

Students and families may be required to repair, replace, or reimburse the district or affected individual for stolen, damaged, or misused property. When appropriate, theft-related incidents may be reported to law enforcement for investigation or possible criminal charges.

Vandalism

Respect for school property and shared community resources is essential to maintaining a safe, welcoming, and productive learning environment. Students may not intentionally damage, deface, destroy, alter, misuse, or interfere with the use of school property, personal property, or property belonging to any school-affiliated organization.

Vandalism-related conduct may include marking, writing on, carving, etching, or damaging desks, lockers, bathroom stalls, walls, floors, furniture, equipment, technology, signs, vehicles, buildings, grounds, or other property. It may also include graffiti, breaking or damaging windows or equipment, tampering with security systems or life safety systems, pulling a false fire alarm, or engaging in any deliberate act that diminishes the condition, safety, appearance, or use of property.

Vandalism may result in disciplinary points, detention, loss of privileges, community service, suspension, restitution, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Consequences will be determined based on the nature and extent of the damage, the student's intent, the cost of repair or replacement, the impact on school operations, the presence of hate- or bias-related symbols or messages, prior conduct, and any safety concerns.

Students and families may be required to pay the full cost of cleaning, repair, or replacement. When appropriate, students may also be assigned corrective or restorative actions related to the offense. Serious, repeated, malicious, or safety-related acts of vandalism may result in more significant disciplinary action, including suspension, referral to law enforcement, recommendation for expulsion, or other legally permitted consequences.

Reporting and Responsibility

All members of the Decorah High School community, including students, staff, and visitors, share responsibility for maintaining a safe, orderly, respectful, and well-cared-for school environment. Students are expected to use school property and facilities appropriately, handle materials and equipment with care, and respect the property, rights, and personal belongings of others.

Any person who observes or reasonably suspects theft, vandalism, damage, misuse of property, or other property-related misconduct should report the concern promptly to a teacher, administrator, office staff member, or other appropriate school employee. Timely reporting allows the school to investigate concerns, address safety or property issues, and take appropriate corrective action.

WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS OBJECTS

(Board Policy 502.6 and Iowa Code § 724.4B, § 280.21B)

The Decorah Community School District strictly prohibits the possession, handling, use, display, or transmission of any weapon, dangerous object, or realistic look-alike weapon on district property, in district facilities, in district-operated vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activity or event, whether on or off school grounds.

This prohibition applies to items that are weapons by design, items used or intended to be used as weapons, items capable of causing serious injury, and objects that reasonably appear to be weapons or create a safety concern. Such items present significant risks to students, staff, visitors, and the school community and may substantially disrupt the safe and orderly learning environment the district is required to maintain.

Prohibition and Enforcement

This prohibition applies to all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors. Any

prohibited item discovered on district property, in a district facility, in a district-operated vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event may be confiscated and secured immediately.

Parents or guardians will be notified when appropriate. Law enforcement may be contacted when warranted or required by law. Disciplinary action may include removal from the setting, suspension, a recommendation for expulsion, a referral to law enforcement, an employment action, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Mandatory Expulsion for Firearms

In accordance with state and federal law, any student who brings a firearm onto school property, knowingly possesses a firearm on district property, or knowingly possesses a firearm at a school-sponsored or district-controlled activity or event shall be expelled for not less than one calendar year. The superintendent may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis when permitted by law.

For purposes of this policy, a firearm includes any weapon that is designed to expel a projectile by explosive action, the frame or receiver of such a weapon, a firearm muffler or silencer, or any destructive device, including certain explosive, incendiary, or poison gas devices, as defined by applicable law.

Exceptions

This prohibition does not apply to certified law enforcement officers acting within the scope of their official duties. It also does not apply to individuals who have been specifically authorized in writing by the Board of Education or superintendent to possess or use such items for a legitimate educational, instructional, safety, or security purpose.

Administrative Implementation

The superintendent is authorized to establish administrative procedures to implement this policy fully and to ensure compliance with Iowa Code sections [724.4B](#) and [280.21B](#), as well as all applicable local, state, and federal laws.

FIREWORKS AND EXPLOSIVES

Students may not possess, ignite, discharge, activate, display, or transmit fireworks, smoke bombs, sparklers, bang snaps, incendiary devices, explosives, explosive materials, or realistic look alike items on any property owned, leased, or operated by the Decorah Community School District, in any school building or district vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity or event, regardless of location. These items create serious safety risks, may cause injury or property damage, and may substantially disrupt the safe and orderly school environment.

Possession or use of such items may result in immediate removal from the setting, disciplinary points, suspension, referral to law enforcement, recommendation for

expulsion, restitution for damage, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Incidents involving the intentional activation or detonation of an explosive or incendiary device, especially indoors or in a manner that causes damage, injury, panic, evacuation, or substantial disruption, will be treated as serious misconduct and may result in significant school discipline and possible criminal consequences under Iowa law.

PROHIBITED ITEMS AND CONTRABAND

To protect the health, safety, and orderly operation of the school environment, students may not possess, carry, use, distribute, display, or exercise control over prohibited items or contraband on any property owned, leased, or operated by the Decorah Community School District, in any district vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity or event, regardless of location.

Prohibited items may include tobacco products, nicotine products, vaping devices, vaping liquids, or related paraphernalia; alcohol; controlled substances without a valid prescription; counterfeit or look alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or nicotine products; drug paraphernalia; weapons, dangerous objects, explosives, fireworks, or realistic look alike items; poisons or hazardous chemicals; stolen property; laser pointers used to distract, harass, or create a safety concern; and any other item, material, or device that is intended or reasonably likely to disrupt, interfere with, or compromise the safe and orderly operation of the school.

Prohibited items or contraband may be confiscated, documented, secured, and turned over to law enforcement when appropriate or required by law. Possession, use, distribution, or attempted distribution of prohibited items may result in disciplinary points, detention, loss of privileges, suspension, recommendation for expulsion, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Consequences will be determined based on the nature of the item, the student's intent, the circumstances of possession or use, the impact on school safety, and any other relevant factors.

RESTITUTION AND RESTORATIVE MEASURES

When a student's actions result in harm to another person, school property, personal property, or the school community, the student may be expected to make appropriate restitution and, when applicable, participate in restorative measures. Harm may include property damage, theft, personal injury, emotional harm, disruption of the school environment, or reputational harm, including defamatory or otherwise harmful conduct via electronic communication or social media.

Restitution is intended to address the harm caused by the student's conduct. Depending on the circumstances, restitution may include reimbursing the cost of repair, replacement, or cleaning; returning stolen or misappropriated property; paying for damaged or lost property; or completing school-approved service or corrective action related to the offense.

Restorative measures may also be used when appropriate. These measures may include a restorative conference, written reflection, apology, mediation, behavior agreement, community service, or other actions designed to repair harm, rebuild trust, reinforce accountability, and support better decision-making.

Restitution and restorative measures may be assigned in addition to other disciplinary consequences. The use of restorative measures does not limit the school's authority to impose detention, suspension, loss of privileges, referral to law enforcement, recommendation for expulsion, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Purpose and Benefits of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an approach to addressing misconduct that focuses on accountability, repairing harm, restoring relationships, and strengthening the school community. Rather than focusing solely on punishment, restorative practices encourage students to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility for the harm they have caused, and participate in appropriate steps to make things right.

When used appropriately, restorative practices may provide those harmed with an opportunity to explain the impact of the misconduct, encourage the student responsible to take ownership of their actions, provide a structured setting for respectful dialogue, help identify underlying issues that may contribute to conflict or repeated misbehavior, and support a healthier school culture by modeling constructive ways to resolve conflict.

How Restorative Justice Works

Restorative justice is a structured process that may involve the student who caused harm, those affected by the conduct, and appropriate school personnel. The purpose is to acknowledge what occurred, identify the impact, determine what can reasonably be done to repair the harm, and support future behavior that is consistent with school expectations.

A restorative process may include discussion of what happened, how others were affected, what responsibility the student accepts, and what steps are needed to repair harm or rebuild trust. Depending on the circumstances, the restorative plan may include a sincere apology, restitution, written reflection, community service, mediation, a behavioral or educational goal, connection with a counselor, or other reasonable steps approved by school officials.

Participation in restorative practices is generally voluntary and must be appropriate to the situation. Restorative practices will be used at the district's discretion based on the seriousness of the incident, the needs and safety of all parties, the willingness of participants to engage meaningfully, and the potential for the process to repair harm without causing additional harm.

If a student fails to complete an agreed-upon restorative plan, does not participate in good faith, or if school officials determine that continued participation is not appropriate, the matter may proceed through the regular disciplinary process.

STUDENT DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Decorah High School will provide students with due process in disciplinary matters, consistent with Board policy and applicable state and federal law. When a student is alleged to have violated school rules or expectations, the principal or authorized designee will identify the concern, explain the rule or expectation involved, review relevant information with the student, and provide the student a meaningful opportunity to respond.

Disciplinary decisions will be based on the available facts and circumstances. Consequences will be determined reasonably, proportionate to the conduct, and consistent with the Disciplinary Points Program, Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law. Discipline will not be imposed arbitrarily or inconsistently.

Parents or guardians will be notified when a disciplinary matter results in significant consequences, including the assignment of 10 or more disciplinary points, an in-school suspension, an out-of-school suspension, a referral to law enforcement, or a recommendation for expulsion. The school may also notify parents or guardians in other situations when communication is appropriate to support student accountability, safety, or school success.

Student disciplinary records are **confidential student records** under applicable law, including [Iowa Code § 22.7](#) and the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#). Such records will be maintained and disclosed only as permitted by law, including to school officials with a legitimate educational interest or as otherwise required or authorized by applicable legal requirements.

Students and families may request review or appeal of disciplinary actions in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable legal safeguards. These procedures are intended to ensure that disciplinary decisions are fair, reasonable, properly documented, and lawfully administered.

DISCIPLINARY APPEALS

Parents, guardians, and students may appeal a disciplinary decision they believe is inconsistent with district policy, unsupported by the record, or improperly applied.

Appeals must be submitted in writing within ***five school days*** of receiving the disciplinary decision. The written appeal must clearly state the basis for the appeal and include any supporting documentation.

An appeal should first be submitted to the building principal. If the building principal was directly involved in issuing the disciplinary action, the appeal may be submitted to the superintendent. For matters that remain unresolved after the superintendent's review, a final written appeal may be submitted to the Board of Education when permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Except when necessary to consider new information, an appeal will generally be limited to a review of the existing record. This may include the disciplinary decision, relevant documentation, information considered during the original review or hearing, and any written materials submitted as part of the appeal. An appeal is not intended to provide a new investigation or a new hearing unless required by law or determined necessary by the district.

The basis for an appeal is generally limited to one or more of the following:

1. A substantial deviation from established procedures that may have affected the outcome.
2. A conflict of interest or bias by the investigator, decision maker, administrator, or Board member that may have affected the outcome.
3. New information or relevant facts that were not known or reasonably available at the time of the original decision and that may be sufficient to alter the outcome.

The Board of Education's decision on a final appeal is final and binding, subject to applicable Board policy and state or federal law.

APPENDIX 1: DECORAH HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER DISCIPLINARY REPORT SYSTEM

To ensure consistency, faculty members use a standardized Disciplinary Report that aligns offenses with the Points Program.

Teacher's Disciplinary Report for Each Offense (Revised June 2026)

Teacher's Name: _____ Student's Name: _____

Date: _____ Grade: _____ Points Given: _____

A. Time-Related Offenses

- _____ A.1 3 points - Each tardy.
- _____ A.2 3 points - For being in an unassigned area with no pass.
- _____ A.3 Failure to sign out - 2 hours.
- _____ A.4 Truancy 1st offense -double time missed in Detention - minimum time served: 4 hours.
- _____ A.5 Truancy 2nd offense -double time missed in Detention - minimum time served: 4 hours.
- _____ A.6 Truancy 3rd offense - In-School-Suspension
- _____ A.7 Truancy 4th offense - in and/or out-of-school suspension.
- _____ A.8 Additional offenses may result in additional days of in and/or out-of-school suspension.

B. Physical Behavior Offenses -- _____

B.1 3 points - Inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior.

- _____ B.2 5 points - Push/shove/trip/kick.
- _____ B.3 10-60 points - Repeated and/or chronic behavioral issues.
- _____ B.4 Punches thrown - (automatic 1-3 days out of school).
- _____ B.5 Personal injury - (automatic 1-3 days out of school).

C. Property Related Offenses

- _____ C.1 3 points – cell phone, ear buds, or smart watch misuse.
- _____ C.2 10-60 points - Property theft, restitution is required. Probable referral to police.
- _____ C.3 10-60 points - Vandalism, restitution is required. Probable referral to police.

D. Communication Related Offenses

- _____ D.1 3 points - Disrespect or Disruption
- _____ D.2 5 points - Inappropriate clothing.
- _____ D.3 3-10 points - Inappropriate comments(Be specific on back).
- _____ D.4 10-60 points - Insubordination and/or non-compliance.
- _____ D.5 10-60 points - Profanity, Bullying, or Insults directed at another person.
- _____ D.6 10-50 points - Harassment (such as slurs) of another person.

E. Integrity Related Offenses

- _____ E.1 5-60 points - Lying, cheating, using AI (Be specific on back).
- _____ E.2 3 points - using an internet site without permission (i.e., Snap, TikTok, YouTube).
- _____ E.3 10-60 points – Inappropriate use of electronic networks and resources.

F. Controlled Substance-Related Offenses

- _____ F.1 Use, distribution, or possession of drugs or alcohol on school grounds (automatic out-of-school).
- _____ F.2 Tobacco use in school or school property (automatic out-of-school).

_____ Total Points

APPENDIX 2: DECORAH HIGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY POINTS SYSTEM

STEP 1: ONE-HALF DAY (3 hours) DETENTION: (10 points)

- Phone contact by the school office official and/or a letter sent home.

STEP 2: ONE-HALF DAY (3 hours) DETENTION: (20 points)

- Phone contact by the school office official and/or a letter sent home.

STEP 3: ONE DAY (6 hours) DETENTION: (30 points)

- Phone contact by the school office official and/or a letter sent home.

STEP 4: ONE DAY (6 hours) DETENTION: (40 points)

- Phone contact by the school office official and/or a letter sent home. A potential meeting will be held with the student, parents/guardians, and administrator(s) to discuss points incurred for any infraction deemed serious misbehavior. Excessive points accumulated may warrant more severe consequences.
- Students will also risk suspension from co-curricular activities under the policy on standards and eligibility for participation.

STEP 5: ONE DAY IN AND/OR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION: (50 points)

- Phone contact by a school office official and/or a letter sent home. A potential meeting will be held with the student, parents/guardians, and administrator(s) to discuss points incurred for any infraction deemed serious misbehavior. Excessive points accumulated may warrant more severe consequences.
- Students will also risk suspension from co-curricular activities under the policy on standards and eligibility for participation.
- Students will lose their off-campus and lunch privileges.

STEP 6: TWO or THREE DAY IN AND/OR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION: (60 points)

- Phone contact by school office official and/or letter sent home. Meeting with the student, parents/guardians, and administrator(s) to discuss points incurred for any serious infraction; excessive points accumulated may warrant recommendations for more severe consequences.
- Students will also risk suspension from co-curricular activities under the policy on standards and eligibility for participation.
- One or more days of suspension may be served during a Saturday Service Suspension, as determined by the administration. This will be contingent on the student's academic standing and ability to complete work during an in-school suspension.

STEP 7: THREE or FOUR DAY IN AND/OR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION: (70 points)

- Phone contact by a school office official and/or a letter sent home. Meeting with the student, parents/guardians, and administrator(s) to discuss points incurred for any serious infraction; excessive points accumulated may warrant recommendations for more severe consequences.
- Students will also risk suspension from co-curricular activities under the policy on standards and eligibility for participation.

STEP 8: FIVE DAY IN AND/OR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION: (80 points)

- Phone contact by a school office official and/or a letter sent home. Meeting with the student, parents/guardians, and administrator(s) to discuss points incurred for any serious misbehavior; excessive points accumulated may warrant recommendations for expulsion and/or alternative educational placement.

Students will also risk suspension from co-curricular activities under the policy on standards and eligibility for participation.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH SERVICES

ACCOUNTABILITY, COMMUNICATION, AND PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT

A healthy student body and a safe, secure campus are essential to effective learning. Decorah High School implements health, safety, and security practices in accordance with Iowa law, Board policy, and district procedures while protecting each student's privacy, dignity, and access to education.

The information in this section outlines expectations and procedures related to enrollment, student health services, daily care, emergency preparedness, building security, visitor management, accident response, and related safety measures. These procedures are intended to protect student well-being, support responsible supervision, and maintain an orderly and supportive school environment.

The district is committed to clear procedures, timely communication, and strong partnerships with families, healthcare providers, and community partners. Parents and guardians with questions about immunizations, medications, individual health plans, emergency protocols, accident insurance, building security, or other health and safety concerns are encouraged to contact the school nurse or a building administrator.

By working together, students, families, and school staff help create the conditions necessary for students to learn, grow, and participate in school with confidence and security.

HEALTH ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

([Iowa Code § 139A.8](#) and [DCSD Board Policies 507.1–507.6](#))

To support a safe and healthy learning environment, students must comply with state health and immunization requirements and provide required medical documentation when applicable.

State Required Immunizations

Before attending school, each student must have a valid Certificate of Immunization on file with the district, unless the student has an approved exemption or qualifies for provisional enrollment under Iowa law. The certificate must show that the student has received the immunizations required by the State of Iowa, which may include protection against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, varicella, hepatitis B, and meningococcal disease, depending on the student's age, grade level, and applicable state requirements.

A student who has started, but not yet completed, a required vaccine series may be allowed to enroll provisionally if the remaining doses are received according to the required schedule. Medical and religious exemptions must be submitted on the official Iowa forms. Exemptions may be subject to limitations during an epidemic, outbreak, or declared public health emergency as provided by law.

The district submits required immunization information to the appropriate state agency and may assist families in locating low-cost vaccination options when needed.

Health Certificates

Students enrolling in the Decorah Community School District for the first time may be asked to provide a general Certificate of Health from a licensed healthcare provider in addition to required immunization records.

Athletic Participation Requirements

Students who participate in school athletics must have a current physical examination form on file before participating in any practice or competition. The form must be completed and signed by an authorized healthcare provider and must certify that the student is medically eligible to participate in athletic activities.

A student who does not have the required physical examination form on file will not be allowed to practice or compete until the documentation has been properly submitted. Families who need assistance locating low-cost physical examination options may contact the coach, Activities Director, school nurse, or building principal.

Activity Participation Requirements

The school may request additional health documentation for certain curricular or extracurricular activities when required by safety guidelines, program expectations, district procedures, or state regulations. These activities may include field trips, overnight events, career and technical education activities, or other programs with specific health or safety requirements. Failure to provide required documentation may result in the student being unable to participate in the activity.

Questions and Assistance

Families are encouraged to complete all health requirements promptly and keep student records current. Up-to-date health documentation helps protect the individual student and supports the health and safety of the broader school community.

Questions about immunizations, exemptions, physical examination forms, health certificates, or other medical documentation should be directed to the school nurse or main office. Additional information is also available through the [Iowa Department of Education's Student Health Requirements webpage](#).

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION TO STUDENTS (BOARD POLICY 507.2)

Medication may be administered at school only with proper authorization and in accordance with district policy, school procedures, and applicable law. Written permission from a parent or guardian is required before prescription or nonprescription medication may be administered at school.

Authorization may be submitted through the district medication permission form or through the district's approved electronic registration system, including PowerSchool. Verbal permission from a parent or guardian may be accepted only in limited or emergency circumstances and must be documented by school personnel. Written authorization may still be required after verbal permission is given.

Prescription medication must be provided in the original pharmacy-labeled container with current dosage instructions. Nonprescription medication must be provided in the original manufacturer's container. Additional authorization from a licensed healthcare provider may be required for certain medications or circumstances, as provided by state law, Board policy, or district procedures.

Medication will be administered only by authorized school personnel or by individuals otherwise permitted by law or district policy. Students are responsible for reporting to the office or designated location at the time medication is to be taken. School personnel may remind students when appropriate, but students and families remain responsible for following the approved medication schedule.

Emergency procedures are in place for medication-related reactions, errors, or complications. Unused, discontinued, or expired medication should be picked up by a parent or guardian when requested by the school. Medication that is not picked up may be disposed of in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements.

Self Administration

Students may carry or self-administer medication at school or during school-sponsored activities only when authorized by the school in accordance with district policy and applicable law.

Before a student may carry or self-administer medication, written authorization must be submitted by a parent or guardian and, when required, by a licensed healthcare provider. Authorization may be completed through signed district forms or through the district's approved electronic registration system, including PowerSchool. The student must demonstrate the ability to safely and responsibly possess and self-administer the medication.

Medication approved for self-administration must be kept in the original labeled container or in another approved container, as required by law, Board policy, and school procedures. Students may not share medication with others or possess unauthorized medication at school, on district property, in district vehicles, or during school-sponsored activities.

The school may revoke self-administration privileges if the student does not follow school rules, misuses the medication, shares medication, carries unauthorized medication, or if student safety is at risk. The district is not responsible for injury resulting from self-administration except as otherwise provided by law.

INDIVIDUAL HEALTH PLANS (IHPs)

Students with complex health needs may require an Individual Health Plan (IHP). The IHP is developed by the school nurse in collaboration with the student's parent or guardian, healthcare provider, and appropriate school staff. The IHP outlines the student's health needs, required equipment and supplies, staff responsibilities, staff training requirements, and emergency procedures. Families are responsible for providing and maintaining needed equipment and supplies. IHPs are reviewed annually or whenever the student's health needs change.

STUDENT ILLNESS, INJURY, AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL

Decorah Health Services follows established procedures for responding to student illness, injury, and communicable disease concerns in accordance with district procedures, state guidance, and applicable law.

Parents and guardians are responsible for completing and updating student emergency and medical information each year. This includes allergies, medications, physician and hospital information, emergency contacts, activity restrictions, and any health conditions or concerns that may affect the student during the school day or at school-sponsored activities.

Parents and guardians must notify the school nurse or main office of student illnesses, injuries, medications, communicable diseases, treatments, activity restrictions, or changes to emergency contact or medical information.

Students who become ill or injured during the school day or a school-sponsored activity must report the concern to a staff member immediately. School personnel will provide basic care, first aid, or emergency response as appropriate until a parent, guardian, or medical professional assumes care. Parents or guardians will be notified when needed.

Students may be sent home when symptoms or health concerns interfere with participation in school or create a potential health risk to others. This may include a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, vomiting or diarrhea, severe cold symptoms, a persistent cough, an unexplained rash, eye redness or discharge, a diagnosed communicable disease, or other symptoms requiring further evaluation.

Students with a fever must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school. Students with vomiting or diarrhea must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning.

Students with a communicable or contagious illness may return to school when they no longer pose a health risk to others and meet applicable public health guidance. Physician clearance may be required when appropriate. Students sent home by the school nurse for illness or a medical concern will be recorded in accordance with district attendance procedures. Students with compromised immune systems or

ongoing medical needs may receive appropriate supports based on physician recommendations, communication from parents or guardians, and consultation with school staff.

State law requires students to be enrolled in and participate in physical education unless they are medically excused or qualify for an approved exemption. If a physician restricts a student's participation in physical education, athletics, or other physical activities, the parent or guardian must provide written medical documentation specifying the restrictions.

Before returning to full participation after an injury or medical restriction, the student may be required to provide written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider. This requirement helps ensure that students are medically ready to participate safely and reduces the risk of complications or reinjury.

Families and school staff share responsibility for maintaining a healthy and safe school environment by reporting illnesses and injuries, keeping medical information up to date, following health protocols, and communicating with the school nurse or the main office when concerns arise.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE OPTION (BOARD POLICY 507.6)

Decorah High School provides all families the opportunity to purchase a low-cost student health and accident insurance plan. This option is available to every student, regardless of whether they participate in athletics, extracurricular activities, or other school-sponsored events.

Enrollment in this insurance plan is entirely voluntary. All premium costs are the sole responsibility of the student, the parent, or the guardian. Coverage is arranged directly between the family and the insurance provider; the school district's involvement is limited to providing informational brochures outlining the plan's benefits, coverage options, and costs. The school does not process insurance claims and assumes no liability or responsibility for the administration, approval, or payment of benefits under the policy. Families who elect to participate should contact the insurance carrier directly with questions about coverage or claims.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND REQUIRED DRILLS (Board Policy 507.5)

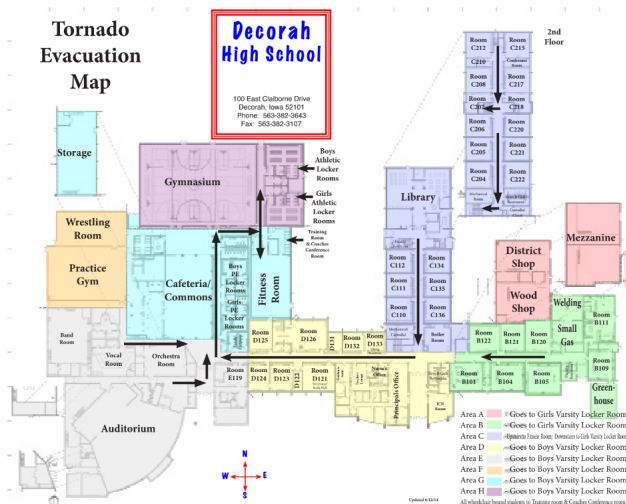
Decorah High School maintains a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan aligned with state law and district policy. This plan assigns staff responsibilities, explains alarm signals (with accommodations for individuals with hearing impairments), maps evacuation routes and fire containment measures, identifies locations of firefighting equipment, and details relocation procedures.

Iowa law mandates four drills for each significant hazard every school year: two fire drills and two tornado drills must occur before December 31, with two additional drills of each type after January 1. Drills take priority over all other activities and are

All staff participate in every drill. Licensed employees must instruct students in proper procedures, supervise the safe execution of each exercise, and assist in evaluating the results. After each drill, administrators review response times, route efficiency, communication clarity, and any issues, updating the plan as necessary. Students needing special accommodations for drills should notify the office in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

A continuous loud horn signals a fire drill. Exit routes are posted above each classroom door; students must know primary and alternate routes for every room they use. When the alarm sounds, students walk calmly with their class to the designated assembly area outside and remain there until staff verify attendance and give the all-clear.

Tornado warnings are broadcast over the public-address system. Upon the signal, students immediately move to the locker rooms and stay there until the all-clear is announced.



Physical restraint or seclusion may be used only when a student's behavior presents an imminent risk of bodily injury to the student or others, or when otherwise permitted by law. These interventions are not used as punishment, discipline, retaliation, or for staff convenience. When used, restraint or seclusion must be limited to the least restrictive intervention necessary to protect safety and must end as soon as the risk has been resolved.

Physical restraint means a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces a student's ability to move freely. It does not include reasonable physical contact used for safety, comfort, redirection, assistance, or instruction when such contact does not restrict the student's freedom of movement.

Seclusion means the involuntary confinement of a student in a room or area from which the student is prevented or prohibited from leaving.

Only employees who have received required training may implement physical restraint or seclusion, except as otherwise permitted in an emergency under applicable law. Staff must continuously monitor the student during the intervention, protect the student's dignity and safety, and use the intervention only for the amount of time necessary to restore safety. Any use extending beyond the time limits established by Chapter 103 requires appropriate administrative review or approval as required by law and district procedures.

Each use of physical restraint or seclusion must be documented and reported in accordance with Chapter 103. Parents or guardians will be notified as required by law, generally on the same day whenever possible and no later than the end of the next school day. The district will also complete the required review, follow-up, and debriefing procedures, including consideration of whether the student's supports, behavior plan, or educational programming should be reviewed or revised.

Seclusion areas, if used, must meet applicable safety requirements. If a required condition cannot be met during an emergency, staff must document the circumstances and the reason for the deviation.

The superintendent or designee will review allegations of improper use of physical restraint or seclusion. Corrective action may be taken if a violation is found. When the concern involves a student, the parent or guardian will be informed of the outcome as required by law and district procedures.

Physical restraint or seclusion may be used without prior consent from a parent or guardian when necessary to protect a student or others from imminent harm. The district will continue to follow required safeguards to protect student rights, safety, dignity, and access to a free, appropriate public education.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE (Board Policy 502.8)

District property, including lockers, desks, classrooms, parking lots, storage areas, technology systems, and other school facilities, is owned or controlled by the Decorah Community School District and is maintained for school purposes. Students should understand that they have a limited expectation of privacy in district property and areas provided for student use, including lockers and desks.

School officials may conduct a search when there is ***reasonable suspicion*** that a student possesses illegal, unauthorized, or contraband items, or evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, school rules, or district procedures. Reasonable suspicion may be based on direct observation, reliable information, suspicious behavior, safety concerns, prior related conduct, or other specific facts and circumstances. No single factor is automatically determinative.

The scope and manner of a search must be reasonable under the circumstances. In determining whether and how to search, school officials may consider the student's age, the nature and seriousness of the suspected violation, the item being sought, the reliability of the information, and any safety concerns.

Personal belongings, including backpacks, purses, bags, electronic devices, and other items under a student's control, may be searched when reasonable suspicion exists. More intrusive searches will be conducted with additional care and only when justified by the circumstances. When appropriate, such searches will be conducted privately, by a staff member of the same sex when practicable, and with another adult present.

Lockers, desks, and other district property remain subject to inspection by school officials at any time. Inspections may be routine, random, or targeted and may occur with or without the student present.

Parking on school property is a privilege. A student vehicle parked on district property may be searched when school officials have reasonable suspicion that it contains contraband, unauthorized items, or evidence of a violation.

Law enforcement may be contacted when a search involves illegal items, safety concerns, or other circumstances requiring their involvement. Law enforcement searches on school property will be conducted in accordance with applicable legal standards. The district will comply with valid court orders, warrants, subpoenas, and other legal requirements while also taking reasonable steps to protect student rights and confidentiality.

To support a safe and drug-free school environment, the superintendent or designee may authorize unannounced canine sweeps by trained detection dogs and certified handlers. Canine sweeps may include lockers, desks, classrooms, hallways, parking

lots, vehicles, common areas, and other district property. Detection dogs will not be used to sniff students directly.

Notice of the district's canine search practice, provided through the student handbook or district communications, serves as notice to students and families. Specific dates, times, or locations of canine sweeps will not be announced in advance.

If a detection dog alerts to a locker, vehicle, item, or area, school officials may conduct a follow-up search consistent with Board policy and applicable law. When practicable, an administrator will conduct the search with another adult present. If a dog alerts to a locked vehicle, the student may be asked to unlock the vehicle or otherwise provide access consistent with district procedures and applicable law.

Illegal, unauthorized, or contraband items discovered during a search may be confiscated, documented, secured, returned to a parent or guardian when appropriate, or turned over to law enforcement. Possession, use, or distribution of contraband may result in disciplinary action, including detention, loss of privileges, suspension, recommendation for expulsion, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

INTERVIEWS BY OUTSIDE AGENCIES ([Board Policy 502.9](#))

During the school day, students are generally subject to supervision and direction by district officials and employees. Requests by outside individuals or agencies to interview a student at school, including requests from law enforcement, Area Education Agency personnel, community mental health providers, social service agencies, or other third parties, must be directed to the building principal or designee. The principal or designee will determine whether access is appropriate under Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law.

Parent and Guardian Notification

Except when prohibited by law, impractical under the circumstances, or inconsistent with the nature of the investigation, the principal or designee will make reasonable efforts to notify a parent or guardian before permitting an outside agency interview. When appropriate, the parent or guardian may be invited to attend the interview. Interviews requested by community service providers, private agencies, or similar outside providers generally require parent or guardian permission and must be arranged through the principal's office.

Child Abuse Investigations

In matters involving suspected child abuse, the district will cooperate with authorized investigators as required by Iowa law. When access is legally required, the principal or designee will provide confidential access to the student named in the report and, when appropriate, to other students who may have relevant information.

Decisions regarding parent or guardian notification, interview location, and who may be present during the interview will be made in accordance with applicable law and the direction of the authorized investigating agency.

Law Enforcement Access

Law enforcement officers may be contacted or permitted access to students when necessary to address safety concerns, protect persons or property, prevent disruption to school operations, investigate possible criminal conduct, or comply with legal requirements. When law enforcement seeks to interview a student at school, the request must be directed to the principal or designee.

An administrator or designated staff member may remain present during law enforcement questioning when appropriate and legally permissible. The district will not interfere with a lawful investigation, court order, warrant, arrest, or other legal process. A student may be released to law enforcement when the student is placed under arrest, removed pursuant to lawful authority, released with parent or guardian consent, or, if the student is legally an adult, released with the student's consent or as otherwise required by law.

District Initiated Interviews

District officials and employees may interview students regarding school-related matters, including alleged violations of school rules, Board policy, safety concerns, attendance matters, or other issues affecting the school environment. Prior notification to parents or guardians is not required for internal school investigations or disciplinary interviews. The district will conduct such interviews in a manner consistent with student rights, school safety, and applicable law.

PRIVACY OF RECORDS

Student health records, including immunization certificates, physical examination forms, Individual Health Plans, medication authorization and administration records, injury or illness reports, and related health documentation, are confidential.

These records will be maintained securely and handled in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, applicable Iowa law, Board policy, and district procedures. Access to student health records is limited to school officials and employees who have a legitimate educational interest or health and safety need related to the student, or as otherwise permitted or required by law. The district will take reasonable steps to protect student privacy while ensuring that appropriate staff have the information necessary to support student health, safety, supervision, and emergency response.

REPORTING ABUSE OF STUDENTS ([Board Policy 402.3](#))

The Decorah Community School District strictly prohibits physical abuse, sexual abuse, inappropriate sexual conduct, exploitation, or other mistreatment of students by district employees, volunteers, or other individuals acting on behalf of or under

the supervision of the district. Any substantiated violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and may also result in referral to law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.

All district employees are mandatory reporters under Iowa law and must report suspected child abuse as provided by Iowa Code sections [232.69](#) and [232.70](#), Board policy, and district procedures. This obligation applies to suspected abuse by any person, including a district employee, volunteer, parent, guardian, caregiver, or other adult.

When an employee has reason to believe that a student may have been abused, the employee must make the required report promptly to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and comply with any additional district reporting procedures. Reporting to a supervisor, administrator, or other school employee does not replace the employee's legal obligation to make a required report. Failure to report suspected abuse as required by law may result in disciplinary action and legal consequences.

All allegations of abuse involving students will be taken seriously and addressed promptly, appropriately, and with due regard for student safety, privacy, and legal requirements. Employees and volunteers are expected to cooperate fully with district reviews and with investigations conducted by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, law enforcement, or other authorized agencies.

Information related to an abuse report or investigation is confidential. It may be shared only with individuals who are legally authorized to receive it or have a legitimate need to know to protect student safety, comply with the law, or carry out official responsibilities. The superintendent or designee is responsible for maintaining procedures to implement this policy, support required reporting, and ensure that employees receive mandatory reporter training as required by law.

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS AND CAMPUS SECURITY

To promote the safety and security of students, staff, visitors, and district property, Decorah High School may use video surveillance systems to monitor designated indoor and outdoor areas of campus. These areas may include building entrances, hallways, common areas, parking lots, exterior grounds, and other locations where supervision and security are appropriate.

Surveillance cameras will not be installed in restrooms, locker rooms, changing areas, or other locations where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, consistent with applicable state and federal law.

Video recordings are the property of the Decorah Community School District. Recordings may be accessed, reviewed, retained, or disclosed by authorized district officials when necessary to support school safety, maintain order, investigate

possible violations of law or school rules, protect district property, respond to incidents, or assist law enforcement or other governmental agencies as permitted or required by law.

Surveillance recordings may be used as evidence in student disciplinary matters, employee matters, investigations involving theft, vandalism, safety concerns, or other incidents affecting the school environment. Access to recordings is limited to individuals with a legitimate need to know or as otherwise authorized by law, Board policy, or district procedures.

All access, storage, retention, disclosure, and disposal of surveillance recordings will be handled in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Iowa law, Board policy, and district procedures. The superintendent or designee is responsible for establishing and maintaining procedures governing the use, review, retention, and disposal of surveillance footage.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FOUNDATIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A safe, orderly, respectful, and supportive school environment is essential to student learning. Decorah High School is committed to maintaining this environment in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable state and federal law. Every student has the right to learn in an environment that is reasonably free from substantial disruption, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, threats, and conduct that interferes with others' educational rights. With that right comes the responsibility to follow school expectations, respect others' rights and dignity, and contribute positively to the school community.

Decorah High School values the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives that students bring to the classroom, activities, and school community. Students are encouraged to express their ideas and beliefs, but must do so in a civil, respectful, and lawful manner.

Freedom of expression is protected and encouraged within the limits established by law and Board policy. Speech, conduct, or expression that substantially disrupts learning, infringes on the rights of others, constitutes harassment or discrimination, threatens safety, or promotes unlawful behavior is not permitted.

When disagreements or conflicts occur, students are expected to address them constructively. Students should use respectful dialogue, seek to understand differing perspectives, and ask for assistance from a teacher, counselor, administrator, or other trusted school employee when needed.

Retaliation, intimidation, harassment, threats, or conduct that escalates conflict is inconsistent with school expectations and may result in disciplinary action.

Students are expected to treat people, property, learning spaces, and the academic process with respect. By exercising their rights responsibly, demonstrating accountability, and showing respect for others, students help maintain an inclusive, safe, and productive educational environment for the entire Decorah High School community.

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are part of the school's educational program and may be held for enrichment, celebration, recognition, instruction, or other school-related purposes. Students are expected to treat assemblies with the same respect and attention expected in the classroom. Students needing special accommodations for assemblies should notify the office in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Students should store books, laptops, backpacks, and other personal items in their locker or other designated area before entering the assembly location, unless otherwise directed by staff. Students are expected to report promptly to their assigned homeroom or designated seating section, remain seated unless permitted to move, and give appropriate attention to speakers, performers, presenters, and staff until dismissed.

HALLWAY CONDUCT

Students are expected to move through hallways, stairways, and common areas in an orderly, courteous, and safe manner. Students should walk on the right side of hallways and staircases, keep their voices at a reasonable level, avoid running or horseplay, and refrain from forming groups that block traffic or interfere with supervision. Students are expected to be mindful of classmates, staff, visitors, and individuals with limited mobility. Conduct in hallways and common areas should reflect respect for others, personal safety, and the orderly operation of the school day.

Backpacks and Large Bags

For the safety, security, and orderly operation of the school day, backpacks and large bags must be stored in student lockers immediately upon arrival. They may not be carried from class to class during the school day. Exceptions may be made only when required by a documented accommodation, approved health need, or administrative authorization. Protective laptop cases may remain with students for instructional purposes.

Locker Use and Responsibility

Lockers are district property and are assigned to students for their convenience and use during the school year. Students are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness, condition, and security of their assigned lockers. Students may not share lockers, switch lockers, or disclose their locker combination to others without approval from the school administration. Students remain responsible for all items stored in their

assigned locker and are expected to keep the locker closed and locked when not in use. Lockers remain subject to inspection by school officials in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law.

Physical Education Lockers and Valuables

Students are responsible for securing personal belongings in designated physical education lockers or other approved storage areas and ensuring that lockers are properly locked when unattended. Students should avoid bringing unnecessary valuables to school. The district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.

CAFETERIA PROCEDURES AND MEAL ACCOUNTS

Breakfast is served daily beginning at 7:00 a.m., and lunch is provided according to the established daily schedule. Students may bring meals from home or purchase school meals using their district meal account. Deposits to meal accounts may be made before school in the cafeteria or main office.

A la carte items that do not qualify as a complete meal under federal nutrition standards may be purchased only when the student's meal account has a positive balance, and no parent or guardian spending restrictions have been placed on the account. Lost or damaged lunch tickets will be replaced for a fee of \$5.00 per ticket.

Students are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and responsibly in the cafeteria. Students must keep dining areas clean, place trash and waste in designated receptacles, return trays and utensils to the dishwashing area, and leave tables and surrounding spaces clean for others.

To maintain safety, orderly movement, and compliance with Fire Marshal expectations, laptops, laptop bags, textbooks, binders, backpacks, and other school supplies must be stored in assigned lockers or designated storage areas. These items may not be left in the cafeteria lobby, physical education locker rooms, hallways, or on common-area floors. Failure to follow these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Food and beverages, other than water, may be consumed only in the cafeteria unless otherwise authorized by school staff or required by a documented Individual Health Plan, Individualized Education Program, or Section 504 Plan.

During lunch, students must remain in the cafeteria until the designated dismissal signal or until an authorized staff member permits them to report to an approved alternate location, such as the library. Students may not access classrooms or hallways during lunch periods unless approved by staff. Students must use the cafeteria restrooms during lunch.

Behavior that disrupts the cafeteria environment, including throwing food, stealing food items, misusing food or beverages, creating unsafe conditions, or failing to follow staff directions, is prohibited. Consequences may include disciplinary points, assigned cleaning responsibilities, restitution, loss of privileges, detention, suspension, or other action permitted by school procedures and Board policy. Students referred to the office for a disciplinary infraction that results in disciplinary points may be ineligible for after-school activities on the day of the infraction.

BUS TRANSPORTATION AND RIDER CONDUCT ([BOARD POLICY 711.2](#))

District bus routes are established to support student safety, operational efficiency, and responsible use of district resources. Riding a school bus is a school-related privilege and requires students to follow all transportation rules, driver directions, Board policy, and school expectations.

All district buses are equipped with audio and video recording systems. Recordings are district records and may be confidential student records under applicable state and federal law. Recordings may be reviewed by authorized district personnel when necessary to investigate reported incidents, address safety concerns, or ensure compliance with transportation rules and student conduct expectations.

Students are expected to arrive at their designated bus stop on time and wait in a safe, orderly, and respectful manner. Students must board the bus as directed, promptly take a seat, remain seated when required, and keep aisles, steps, and emergency exits clear. Students must keep their arms, legs, heads, and personal belongings inside the bus at all times. Windows may be opened only with the driver's permission.

Quiet, ordinary conversation is permitted. Shouting, horseplay, throwing objects, distracting the driver, refusing to follow directions, damaging property, blocking aisles, or engaging in any conduct that creates a safety concern or disrupts transportation is prohibited.

Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, vaping devices, controlled substances, weapons, dangerous objects, or look-alike items on a school bus is strictly prohibited and may result in significant disciplinary action.

Students are responsible for respecting the cleanliness, condition, and safety of the bus. Damage to seats, equipment, fixtures, or other bus property must be reported promptly. Students and families may be required to pay restitution for damage caused by misuse, vandalism, or other misconduct.

Students may exit the bus only at their assigned stop unless prior approval has been granted in accordance with district procedures. Alternate transportation arrangements must be approved in advance and may require written permission from a parent or guardian.

Bus drivers are authorized to maintain order, enforce transportation rules, assign seats when appropriate, and report student misconduct to school administration. Minor or first-time violations may result in a warning, notification to a parent or guardian, assigned seating, or other corrective action.

Repeated, serious, or unsafe conduct may result in detention, suspension of bus riding privileges, school discipline, referral to law enforcement, suspension from school, recommendation for expulsion, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Appeals of transportation discipline decisions will be handled in accordance with district procedures. Students who lose bus riding privileges remain responsible for attending school unless otherwise required by law or district policy.

Parents, guardians, students, and motorists share responsibility for school transportation safety. Iowa law requires motorists to stop when school bus stop arms and flashing lights are activated. Families are encouraged to review safe bus stop behavior, loading and unloading procedures, and respectful rider conduct with students. Following these expectations helps maintain safe, orderly, and respectful transportation for all students.

STUDY HALL RULES

A study hall is a supervised academic period intended for independent study, reading, completion of coursework, academic support, and other school-approved learning activities. Students are expected to use the full period productively and maintain a quiet, orderly, and respectful environment that supports others' learning.

Students must report directly to their assigned study hall location at the beginning of the period, sit in their assigned seats, and remain there unless permitted by the study hall supervisor. Attendance will be taken each period. A student who fails to report to the study hall, leaves without permission, or does not return from an approved pass may be marked absent, unexcused, or truant, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Students are expected to arrive prepared with the materials needed to remain academically productive, including textbooks, notebooks, laptops, assignments, reading materials, and other required course materials. Students may not use the study hall as a social period, free period, or unsupervised time.

Student movement during study hall is limited and must be approved in advance. Passes to the library, main office, counselor, nurse, or another teacher must be obtained before the period begins or otherwise approved by the study hall supervisor in accordance with school procedures.

Students must sign out before leaving and sign back in immediately upon return. A student granted a library pass is expected to remain in the library for the approved period unless directed otherwise by staff.

Restroom use is limited to one student at a time and should be brief and reasonable. Students must use the nearest approved restroom unless otherwise directed by staff. Misuse of restroom privileges, extended absence from study hall, wandering, or failure to return promptly may result in loss of pass privileges or other disciplinary consequences. Genuine emergencies will be addressed at the supervisor's discretion.

Food, soda, snacks, and other non-approved beverages are not permitted in the study hall unless authorized by staff or required by a documented health plan, Individualized Education Program, or Section 504 Plan. Water may be permitted when used appropriately. Students are expected to keep the study hall clean and to dispose of any trash properly.

Conversation must be limited and may occur only with the study hall supervisor's permission. Students must speak quietly, avoid disruptions, and respect others' academic needs. Students are expected to remain seated, work independently unless otherwise approved, and follow all directions from the supervisor.

District-issued devices may be used for school-related purposes only. Headphones or earbuds connected to a district-issued device may be used only when permitted by the study hall supervisor and only for appropriate academic purposes. Personal cell phones, personal electronic devices, gaming, streaming, social media, messaging, or other non-academic technology use are not permitted unless specifically authorized by staff for a legitimate school purpose.

Students remain subject to all school rules during study hall, including expectations related to academic integrity, technology use, respectful conduct, attendance, and compliance with staff directives. Cheating, copying work, unauthorized collaboration, misuse of technology, disruptive behavior, insubordination, or leaving without permission may result in disciplinary action.

Study hall supervisors have the authority to assign seats, limit movement, revoke pass privileges, redirect behavior, confiscate unauthorized items in accordance with school procedures, and refer students to the office when expectations are not met.

Repeated or serious violations may result in loss of privileges, detention, disciplinary points, removal from the study hall, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and school procedures. Adherence to these expectations helps ensure that the study hall remains a supervised, productive, and respectful academic environment for all students.

BUILDING-USE HOURS AND AFTER-SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Decorah High School opens to students at 7:00 a.m. on regular school days. Breakfast and quiet study are available in the cafeteria. Early Bird Physical Education begins at 7:30 a.m., Strength and Conditioning begins at 7:45 a.m., and regular classes begin at 8:00 a.m. The academic day ends at 3:00 p.m.

Before and after the regular school day, students may be in the building only in approved and supervised areas. Students who are not participating in a supervised class, practice, rehearsal, meeting, help session, or school-sponsored activity must report to and remain in the cafeteria or another location specifically approved by school staff. Students may not remain unsupervised in hallways, classrooms, locker rooms, gyms, offices, stairwells, or other areas of the building.

Students in the building outside regular class hours are expected to maintain quiet, respectful, and purposeful behavior. Students must follow all staff directions, respect school property, and avoid behavior that disrupts supervision, school operations, or others' activities.

Any study session, academic support session, or independent work time held outside regular school hours is subject to the same expectations that apply during study hall, including attendance accountability, appropriate use of technology, limited movement, respectful conduct, and compliance with staff supervision.

Students who fail to follow building use expectations may be directed to leave the building, lose the privilege of remaining in the building outside regular school hours, or receive disciplinary consequences consistent with Board policy and school procedures.

DRESS EXPECTATIONS (DRESS CODE POLICY) ([Board Policy 502.1](#))

Decorah High School recognizes that student appearance can affect student mindset, peer interactions, safety, and the broader school climate. Dress expectations are intended to support a respectful, focused, and educationally appropriate environment while allowing students reasonable opportunities for personal expression.

General Standards

Students are expected to arrive at school wearing clean, safe, and appropriate clothing and footwear for the school setting. Primary responsibility for student dress rests with students and families. However, the school may restrict clothing, accessories, or items that pose a safety concern, substantially disrupt, or are reasonably likely to disrupt the learning environment, interfere with school operations, or violate Board policy or school expectations.

The building principal or designee has the authority to determine whether student attire complies with these expectations.

Prohibited Attire and Items

Students may not wear or display clothing, jewelry, accessories, or other items that include profanity, hate symbols, discriminatory messages, sexually explicit content, threats, gang-related symbols, or messages that promote violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, illegal activity, or other conduct inconsistent with school expectations.

Clothing must provide appropriate coverage for the school environment. Shirts and tops must cover the chest, back, and sides in a manner consistent with a respectful educational setting. Incidental midriff exposure caused by normal movement is acceptable, but clothing intentionally designed to leave most of the abdomen, ribcage, chest, or back uncovered is not permitted. Pants, shorts, skirts, and similar clothing must be worn to conceal undergarments and provide appropriate coverage.

Clothing and footwear must also meet reasonable standards of health, hygiene, and safety. Footwear must be worn at all times and must protect the soles of the feet. Footwear or clothing that creates a safety concern in hallways, laboratories, shops, physical education areas, kitchens, or other instructional settings may be restricted.

Hats, hoods, sunglasses, and similar head or face coverings may not be worn inside the building during instructional hours unless permitted by administration or required for a documented medical, religious, cultural, safety, or educational reason. These items must be stored in lockers, vehicles, or other approved locations. They may not be carried around the building in a manner that interferes with the enforcement of this expectation.

Students may not possess or carry tools, pocket knives, self-defense items, pepper spray, tactical keychains, or other potentially dangerous objects at school, on district property, in district vehicles, or at school-sponsored activities unless specifically authorized by school administration for a legitimate educational purpose.

Physical Education and Strength Training

Students must wear clean, functional, and safe athletic clothing for physical education, strength training, and other physical activities. Appropriate attire may include T-shirts or athletic tops, shorts, sweatpants, leggings, and closed-toe athletic shoes that provide adequate support.

Physical education and strength training attire must allow for safe movement, maintain appropriate coverage during activity, support hygiene, and reduce the risk of injury. Students who are not properly dressed for physical activity may be restricted from participation and may be subject to course expectations.

Special Considerations

Decorah High School respects the religious, cultural, medical, disability related, and other legally protected rights and needs of students. Requests for exceptions to

dress expectations will be reviewed on an individual basis in collaboration with the student, family, and administration. Exceptions may be granted when required by law or when appropriate, provided that the attire does not pose a safety risk or substantially disrupt the educational environment.

Enforcement

Teachers, staff, and administrators share responsibility for monitoring dress expectations. Concerns will be addressed as discreetly and respectfully as possible to minimize embarrassment and disruption to instruction.

In most situations, a reminder or redirection will be sufficient, and students are expected to comply promptly. When an immediate correction is needed, the student may be directed to the office or another appropriate location for a private discussion. The student may be allowed to correct the concern by changing into school-provided clothing, layering clothing, removing or storing the item, or arranging for appropriate clothing to be brought from home.

When a student corrects the issue promptly and respectfully, disciplinary points will generally not be assigned. Refusal to comply, repeated violations, or failure to correct the concern may result in notification to the parent or guardian, loss of privileges, disciplinary points for noncompliance, removal from class or activity, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and school procedures.

While parent or guardian input is welcome, final authority regarding compliance with dress expectations rests with the building principal or designee.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (CELL PHONE POLICY)

Decorah High School recognizes that personal electronic devices can create significant distractions, interfere with instruction, compromise student privacy, contribute to academic dishonesty, and disrupt the orderly operation of the school day. In accordance with [Iowa House File 782](#) and aligned with [Decorah Board Policy 503.9](#), student use of personal electronic devices is restricted during instructional time and in designated restricted areas.

Definitions

A **personal electronic device** includes any student-owned device used to send, receive, access, store, record, capture, create, display, or transmit information, images, audio, video, messages, or digital content. Examples include cell phones, smartwatches when used or capable of being used for communication, personal laptops, tablets, headphones, earbuds, handheld gaming devices, portable media players, cameras, recording devices, and similar technology.

This definition also includes personal applications, messaging platforms, communication tools, or other student-controlled technology used on school-issued equipment in a manner that is not authorized for school purposes.

Smartwatches may be worn during the school day, but shall not be used for communication, messaging, recording, photography, internet access, or other prohibited functions during instructional time. Headphones and earbuds are prohibited during instructional time. They shall not be worn during the day unless specifically authorized by a teacher or supervising staff member for an approved instructional purpose.

Instructional time includes any period during which a student is assigned to or supervised by licensed instructional staff, instructional assistants, substitutes, or other school personnel for instruction, academic work, intervention, enrichment, assessment, study hall, or other structured school activities.

The **school day** includes instructional time, passing periods, lunch, and other supervised times unless a specific exception is provided by this policy or authorized by school administration.

Devices required for a verified legal, medical, health, safety, disability related, or educational need will be permitted only as provided in an approved Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, Individual Health Plan, medical plan, safety plan, or other written authorization approved by the district.

General Rule

District-issued technology is available to support instructional needs. Students are expected to use district-issued devices and approved school technology for school-related purposes.

During **instructional time**, personal electronic devices must be silenced, stored, and kept out of sight unless a teacher or supervising staff member has given clear, specific permission for a limited instructional purpose. Students shall not use personal electronic devices during instructional time for calls, texting, messaging, social media, photography, recording, gaming, streaming, internet browsing, or any other unauthorized purpose.

Whenever feasible, personal electronic devices should be stored in student lockers. When locker storage is not practical, devices must be secured in the classroom storage location designated by the teacher. Each classroom may use a cell phone holder or other approved storage system. Students shall place personal electronic devices in the designated storage location upon entering the classroom and shall leave the device there for the duration of the class period.

Students shall not remove a personal electronic device from a classroom storage location during instructional time, including restroom breaks, hallway passes, office passes, or other temporary departures from class, unless specifically authorized by the teacher, a supervising staff member, or the administration.

Parent and Guardian Communication

Parents and guardians who need to contact a student during the school day should contact the main office. Office staff will relay messages or assist with urgent communication when appropriate.

Students will not generally be excused from class to make or receive personal phone calls. Exceptions shall be limited to verified emergencies or other circumstances approved by school staff. Official school or district alerts will be sent to parents and guardians through district communication systems.

Permitted Instructional Use

Personal electronic devices may be used during instructional time only when a teacher or supervising staff member gives clear, specific, and advance permission for a purpose directly connected to the lesson, activity, or approved school function. Permission to use a device in one class, activity, or circumstance does not create permission to use the device at other times or in other settings.

A teacher or supervising staff member may revoke permission at any time if the device use becomes distracting, unsafe, inconsistent with the approved purpose, or otherwise contrary to school expectations.

Exceptions for Documented Needs

A parent or guardian may request permission for a student to use a personal electronic device during instructional time to support a documented health, safety, disability related, or educational need. The request must be supported by appropriate documentation and reviewed by school personnel.

Students with an Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, Individual Health Plan, medical plan, safety plan, or other approved written plan shall use a device only for the purposes specifically authorized in that plan. A general preference for access to a personal device is not sufficient to create an exception.

If a request for an exception is denied, the parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the superintendent or designee in accordance with district procedures. The parent or guardian is responsible for providing documentation sufficient to demonstrate the need for the requested exception.

Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Privacy Sensitive Areas

Personal electronic devices are strictly prohibited in restrooms, locker rooms, changing areas, and other privacy-sensitive locations. This restriction applies regardless of whether the device is being actively used. Students shall not photograph, record, livestream, transmit, or share images, audio, or video of another person in any setting where privacy is expected. Violations involving recording, photography, or transmission of images or video will result in significant disciplinary action and shall be referred to law enforcement when appropriate.

Academic Integrity and Assessment Security

The use of a personal electronic device to cheat, plagiarize, access unauthorized information, communicate during an assessment, photograph or distribute test materials, use artificial intelligence without authorization, or otherwise compromise academic integrity is prohibited. Such conduct will be addressed under the school's academic integrity expectations, assessment security procedures, technology rules, and disciplinary policies.

Disciplinary Consequences for Misuse

Violations of this policy will result in progressive disciplinary action. Standard consequences include the surrender of the device to school staff, notification to a parent or guardian, disciplinary points, loss of privileges, and required device check-in, as outlined below.

Additional consequences may be imposed when the violation involves refusal to comply, academic dishonesty, harassment, threats, bullying, privacy violations, recording or sharing images or video, disruption to school operations, or other serious misconduct.

For a ***first offense***, the device will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day. Three disciplinary points will be assigned. Students participating in extracurricular activities will be required to check the device in with the office for five consecutive school days to retain eligibility.

For a ***second offense***, the device will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day. Three additional disciplinary points will be assigned. The student will be required to check the device in with the office daily for nine weeks.

For a ***third offense***, the device will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day. Three additional disciplinary points will be assigned. The student will be required to check the device in with the office daily for the remainder of the semester.

For a ***fourth or subsequent offense***, the device will be released only to a verified parent or guardian. Three additional disciplinary points will be assigned. The student will be required to check the device in with the office daily for the remainder of the school year.

The administration may impose more significant consequences when the violation involves harassment, threats, bullying, academic dishonesty, recording or sharing images or videos, privacy violations, refusal to comply, disruption of school operations, or other serious misconduct.

Refusal to surrender a personal electronic device when directed by school staff constitutes insubordination and will result in additional disciplinary action.

Enforcement

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Decorah High School. Students are responsible for knowing and following the expectations for personal electronic devices during the school day and at school-sponsored activities.

School staff may direct students to store, surrender, or stop using a personal electronic device when it is used in violation of this policy or when it interferes with instruction, supervision, safety, privacy, or the orderly operation of the school. Confiscated personal electronic devices will be handled in accordance with school procedures.

This policy is intended to ensure that technology supports learning rather than distracts from it, compromises safety, or interferes with others' rights and learning.

TECHNOLOGY AND ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

The Decorah Community School District provides students with access to network resources, district-issued devices, internet access, digital platforms, and specialized instructional equipment to support approved educational programs and school-related activities.

Use of district technology is a privilege, not a right. Access shall be used only for lawful, appropriate, and educational purposes. It will be restricted, suspended, or revoked when a student misuses technology or violates Board policy, district procedures, school expectations, or applicable law.

Authorized Use and Academic Integrity

Students must use district technology responsibly and only for legitimate educational purposes. Students shall comply with copyright law, licensing agreements, academic integrity expectations, and all applicable school rules when using district devices, accounts, networks, software, applications, or internet access.

Students must properly cite sources and shall not use district technology to plagiarize, cheat, misrepresent their work, access unauthorized information during assessments, or submit work created by another person, service, website, or artificial intelligence tool unless specifically permitted by the teacher.

Students shall not access, create, download, post, transmit, share, or display material that is obscene, profane, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, sexually explicit, disruptive, or otherwise inconsistent with Board policy, school expectations, or applicable law.

Harassment, cyberbullying, intimidation, threats, retaliation, or conduct that targets another person through district technology is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Students shall not engage in conduct that compromises or attempts to compromise the integrity, security, availability, or appropriate use of district technology. Prohibited conduct includes bypassing or attempting to bypass filters, firewalls, monitoring systems, access restrictions, or administrative controls; installing unauthorized software, applications, extensions, or profiles; introducing malware or harmful code; interfering with another user's access; or attempting to gain unauthorized access to accounts, files, systems, or networks.

Creating or using false accounts, impersonating another person, misrepresenting identity, sending messages under another person's name, or using another person's account or credentials is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, which may include loss of technology privileges, suspension, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and law.

Account Security and Confidentiality

Students are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and security of all usernames, passwords, accounts, and access credentials assigned to them. Students shall not share login information with another student, staff member, or outside party unless specifically directed by authorized district personnel for a legitimate school purpose.

Students shall not use another person's login credentials, attempt to access another person's account, or allow another person to use their assigned account. Violations involving account misuse, unauthorized access, credential sharing, or impersonation will result in disciplinary consequences, loss of privileges, and possible further action under Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law.

Monitoring and No Expectation of Privacy

District devices, accounts, networks, internet access, applications, files, messages, and digital activity may be monitored, accessed, reviewed, searched, logged, preserved, or disclosed by authorized district personnel at any time. Students shall not expect privacy when using district technology, district accounts, district networks, or school-provided digital resources.

The district may review technology use to maintain system security, investigate misconduct, protect student and staff safety, comply with legal obligations, support instruction, or enforce Board policy and school rules. Information discovered through district technology systems may be used in student discipline, school investigations, safety reviews, or referrals to law enforcement when appropriate.

Care of District-Issued Devices and Equipment

Students are responsible for the proper care, use, and return of district-issued devices, chargers, cases, identification tags, accessories, and other assigned technology. Devices must be handled carefully, transported safely, kept secure, and used only in accordance with district expectations.

Students shall not intentionally damage, alter, deface, disable, remove identifying labels, tamper with settings, or interfere with the operation of district-issued devices or technology equipment. Students must promptly report any loss, theft, damage, malfunction, or security concerns to school staff or technology personnel.

Financial Responsibility for Misuse, Loss, or Damage

Students and families are financially responsible for costs resulting from unauthorized use, intentional damage, preventable damage, loss, theft caused by negligence, unauthorized purchases, service charges, or misuse of district devices, accounts, systems, or technology resources.

If repair costs exceed the district-provided insurance deductible, the student's account will be charged the applicable deductible amount, currently \$250. The replacement cost for a lost or stolen device is approximately \$900 and will be billed when appropriate. Missing accessories will also be billed, including a computer charger at \$79.00, a computer case at \$20.00, and a personal identification tag at \$5.00, unless otherwise adjusted by the district based on the circumstances.

Payment of costs or restitution does not prevent the district from assigning additional disciplinary consequences when the underlying conduct violates school rules, Board policy, or law.

Authorized Educational Technologies

District-issued and district-supported technologies may include student devices such as iPads and Mac laptops; teacher devices such as district-issued laptops and iPads; classroom technologies such as interactive whiteboards, document cameras, digital projectors, wireless display adapters, printers, and scanners; and specialized instructional equipment such as robotics kits, three-dimensional printers, digital microscopes, graphing calculators, and other program-specific tools.

Students shall use specialized equipment only when authorized and supervised by school staff. Program-specific equipment must be used in accordance with teacher directions, safety procedures, and course expectations.

Compliance and Enforcement

All use of district technology is subject to Board policy, administrative rules, school procedures, and applicable state and federal law. Any violation will result in appropriate corrective or disciplinary action.

Consequences may include parent or guardian notification, loss or restriction of technology privileges, disciplinary points, detention, restitution, suspension, a recommendation for expulsion, a referral to law enforcement, or other actions permitted by Board policy and law.

By accepting access to district technology, each student and parent or guardian agrees to follow these guidelines, to accept responsibility for the proper use and

care of district resources, and to cooperate fully with any investigation of suspected misuse. Technology is provided to support learning. Students are expected to use it in a manner that demonstrates responsibility, integrity, respect for others, and respect for the security and operation of district systems.

POSTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF NON-CURRICULAR MATERIALS

([Board Policies 903.5](#) and [903.5R1](#))

Decorah High School recognizes the right of students to engage in lawful and respectful expression. At the same time, the district has the authority and responsibility to maintain an orderly, safe, and focused educational environment, protect others' rights, and ensure that school facilities and resources are used in a manner consistent with Board policy and the district's educational mission.

Approval Requirement

All noncurricular materials must be submitted to the building principal or designee for prior review and approval before posting, distribution, display, or circulation on school property, through school resources, or at school-sponsored activities. Noncurricular materials include printed, written, visual, electronic, or digital materials that are not produced by the district, officially adopted by the district, or directly connected to an approved curricular program or school-sponsored activity.

Materials must be submitted at least twenty-four hours in advance of the requested posting or distribution. The principal or designee will review the material in accordance with Board policy and applicable law. Written or signed approval will authorize posting or distribution only in the manner, at the location, and at the time approved by the school. Approval to post or distribute material does not constitute district sponsorship, endorsement, or approval of the viewpoint expressed.

Approval Criteria

A request to post or distribute noncurricular material shall be denied if the material is obscene, vulgar, lewd, or plainly inappropriate for the school setting; is libelous, defamatory, or knowingly false; invades the rights or privacy of others; promotes illegal activity or the use of illegal products or services; advertises products or activities that are prohibited for students; contains threats, harassment, intimidation, discriminatory language, or hate based content; encourages violation of school rules; or is reasonably likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to school operations, instruction, student safety, or the rights of others. The district may also deny or limit posting or distribution when the proposed time, place, or manner of distribution would interfere with supervision, traffic flow, building security, instructional time, school activities, or the orderly operation of the school.

Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions

Approved materials shall be posted or distributed only in designated areas and only during approved times. Distribution shall not occur during instructional time,

interfere with classes, block entrances or hallways, interrupt meetings or activities, or pressure students or staff to accept materials.

Materials shall not be placed on vehicles, lockers, classroom desks, cafeteria tables, walls, windows, doors, floors, restrooms, or other surfaces unless expressly authorized by the principal or designee. Materials posted without approval, posted in unauthorized locations, or left after the approved posting period will be removed.

Students distributing approved materials are responsible for doing so respectfully and without coercion, disruption, littering, or interference with others' rights. The district may establish reasonable limits on the number of copies, the size of materials, the duration of posting, the location of posting, and the method of distribution.

Appeals and Enforcement

If a request is denied, the student or requesting party may appeal the decision in writing to the superintendent or designee in accordance with Board policy and district procedures. The written appeal must identify the material at issue, the requested posting or distribution, and the reason for challenging the denial.

Students who post, distribute, display, or circulate materials in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Nonstudents who fail to comply with this policy may be denied permission to distribute materials, directed to leave district property, restricted from future access to school facilities, or referred to law enforcement when warranted.

Annual Notice

Posting and distribution procedures will be published in the student handbook or otherwise communicated to students and families so that students understand their rights, responsibilities, and the procedures required before posting or distributing noncurricular materials at school.

STUDENT EXPRESSION AND PUBLICATIONS (Board Policy 502.3)

Decorah High School recognizes and respects students' right to lawful expression, including expression through official school publications. Official school publications may include school newspapers, yearbooks, literary magazines, broadcast media, digital publications, and other student media produced as part of an approved school program under the supervision of faculty advisers and administration.

Student publications shall operate in accordance with Board policy, applicable Iowa law, professional journalism standards, and the educational purposes of the school. Student media provide important opportunities for students to develop communication skills, civic understanding, ethical judgment, responsibility, and respect for others' rights.

Content Standards

Student expression in official school publications shall not be obscene, libelous, or slanderous; shall not constitute harassment, discrimination, threats, or intimidation; shall not invade the rights or privacy of others; shall not promote unlawful conduct; shall not encourage violation of school rules; and shall not create, or be reasonably forecast to create, a material and substantial disruption to the orderly operation of the school.

Students are expected to produce work that reflects accuracy, fairness, balance, responsible sourcing, appropriate attribution, sound judgment, and respect for journalistic ethics. Faculty advisers shall provide instruction, guidance, and supervision to help students meet these standards, including expectations related to accuracy, grammar, editing, source verification, copyright, attribution, privacy, and lawful publication practices.

Faculty advisers and administrators shall not censor lawful student expression in official school publications except as permitted by Board policy and applicable law. Official school publications shall not be subject to prior restraint except when the content falls outside legally protected student expression or violates applicable standards.

Student opinions expressed in official school publications do not necessarily represent the views of the Decorah Community School District, the Board of Education, administration, faculty advisers, or district employees. The district, Board, and employees shall not be considered to have endorsed student expression merely because the expression appears in an official student publication.

Distribution and Advertising

Printed, digital, or broadcast student publications shall be distributed, posted, or made available at times, places, and in a manner that does not interfere with instruction, school operations, supervision, safety, or the rights of others. Advertisements or sponsored content shall comply with Board policy, school procedures, and applicable law. Advertising for illegal products or services, products or services not lawfully available to minors, or content inconsistent with the school's educational mission shall not be accepted.

Appeals and Grievances

A student who believes their expression has been improperly restricted may seek review in accordance with Board policy and district procedures. Individuals who believe they have been harmed by material published in a student publication may file a complaint or grievance under applicable Board policy.

Students and families seeking additional guidance regarding student expression, official school publications, or the Student Publications Code should contact the building principal or review [Board Policy 502.3](#).

PROM GUIDELINES

Prom is Decorah High School's only school-sponsored dance and is subject to all Decorah Community School District Board policies, school rules, and administrative expectations. These guidelines apply to Decorah High School students and to all registered guests, regardless of whether the event is held on or off school property.

Prom is intended to provide a safe, respectful, and enjoyable formal event for eligible students and approved guests. The event will be supervised by school staff and approved adult chaperones. Students and guests are expected to follow all directions from school personnel, event staff, law enforcement, venue personnel, and chaperones.

Entry and Identification

Admission requires a valid ticket and current photo identification. Students and guests must present identification upon request. Bags, coats, and personal belongings are subject to inspection as a condition of entry. Items brought into the event may be required to be checked or stored in a designated location. Once an attendee exits the venue, reentry will not be permitted unless specifically authorized by administration or event supervisors.

Guest Eligibility and Registration

Guests must be **under twenty years of age** and must be approved in advance through the high school office. Guests should generally be high school students, preferably juniors or seniors. Students in eighth grade or younger will not be permitted to attend Prom.

A Decorah High School student who wishes to bring a guest from another school must submit a completed Guest Permission Slip by the stated deadline. The guest's school administrator must sign the form. Guests who are not currently enrolled in school must provide any information requested by the high school office for review and approval.

Guest approval is not automatic. Decorah High School reserves the right to deny or revoke guest approval based on age, school status, disciplinary history, safety concerns, incomplete paperwork, missed deadlines, or other circumstances deemed relevant by administration. The Decorah High School student who registers a guest is responsible for ensuring that the guest understands and follows all school rules and event expectations.

Conduct and Behavior

All school rules and Board policies apply at Prom. Students and guests must conduct themselves in a respectful, safe, and appropriate manner throughout the event. Conduct that is disruptive, unsafe, disrespectful, sexually explicit, threatening, harassing, or otherwise inconsistent with school expectations is prohibited.

Students and guests must follow established dance expectations. Sexually explicit or inappropriate dancing, including grinding or other conduct that staff determines is inconsistent with a school-sponsored event, is not permitted. A student or guest who violates this expectation will be redirected and may be removed from the event.

Possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, tobacco, nicotine products, vaping devices, drug paraphernalia, look-alike substances, weapons, or other prohibited items is strictly prohibited. Any student or guest suspected of violating these expectations will be subject to investigation by school administration and may be referred to law enforcement.

Confirmed violations may result in removal from the event, notification to the parent or guardian, school discipline, loss of privileges, suspension, referral to law enforcement, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law. Guests who violate school expectations may be removed from the event and may be denied attendance at future school events.

By attending Prom, students and guests agree to follow all school rules, event procedures, and staff directions. These expectations help ensure that Prom remains a safe, respectful, and memorable event for all participants.

SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS AT EVENTS

Attendance at athletic contests, concerts, performances, and other school-sponsored events of the Decorah Community School District is a privilege. Students, parents, guardians, and community members who attend district events shall conduct themselves in a manner that supports safety, respect, sportsmanship, decorum, and the orderly operation of the event. All attendees are expected to comply with applicable laws, Board policies, school rules, event procedures, and host venue expectations.

Extension of School Conduct Standards

Student conduct expectations apply to school-sponsored events, whether held at Decorah High School, another district facility, an away venue, or another approved location. Students remain subject to school rules regarding respectful behavior, appropriate language, lawful conduct, harassment, threats, intimidation, bullying, and disruption.

Spectator conduct that interferes with the orderly conduct of an event, creates a safety concern, disrupts participants or performers, undermines fair competition, or reflects poorly on the school community is prohibited. Prohibited conduct includes booing or ridiculing officials, taunting opponents, harassing athletes, performers, coaches, directors, officials, staff, or spectators, using obscene or threatening language, engaging in disruptive behavior, or refusing to follow directions from event personnel.

Conduct in Stands and Viewing Areas

Spectators shall remain in designated viewing areas and shall not enter restricted areas, playing surfaces, performance areas, locker rooms, team areas, backstage areas, or other locations not open to the public. Students and spectators must not create unsafe conditions, block aisles or exits, interfere with supervision, or distract athletes, performers, officials, judges, directors, coaches, or other attendees.

Items that obstruct sightlines, create hazards, cause litter, damage facilities, or disrupt the event are prohibited unless specifically authorized by event supervisors and permitted by host venue rules. Such items may include noisemakers, confetti, powder, glitter, glow sticks, oversized signs, banners, props, or other materials that interfere with the event or create cleanup, safety, or supervision concerns.

Student Dress-Up Themes

Student dress-up themes may be permitted when they support positive school spirit and comply with school dress expectations. Costumes, clothing, props, signs, and accessories must be respectful, safe, and appropriate for a school-sponsored event. Items shall not include profanity, obscene content, discriminatory messages, hate symbols, threats, references to illegal activity, or material that is disruptive or inconsistent with district expectations.

Items prohibited by contest rules, activity association rules, host venue policies, or school administration shall not be brought to or used at an event. Administration and event supervisors retain authority to require removal of any item, costume, sign, prop, or accessory that violates these expectations.

Respect for Event Personnel and Officials

Spectators shall treat contest officials, judges, performers, athletes, coaches, directors, supervisors, administrators, building staff, law enforcement, and host venue personnel with courtesy and respect. Disagreement with a call, ruling, performance result, or administrative decision does not excuse disrespectful, disruptive, threatening, or harassing behavior. Failure to comply with directions from event supervisors, school officials, law enforcement, or venue personnel will be treated as a violation of these expectations. It may result in removal from the event and, when appropriate, additional consequences.

Stewardship of Facilities

All attendees are expected to respect district and host site facilities. Spectators shall keep stands, seating areas, restrooms, parking areas, and common spaces clean and orderly. Personal items, trash, signs, costume materials, and other belongings must be removed or disposed of properly before leaving the event. Damage, vandalism, littering, misuse of facilities, or failure to clean up after oneself may result in removal from the event, restitution, loss of future attendance privileges, school discipline for students, or referral to law enforcement when warranted.

Enforcement and Consequences

Administrators, event supervisors, and designated school personnel shall have authority to enforce these expectations. A spectator whose conduct violates these standards or raises concerns about safety, supervision, or disruption will be directed to correct the behavior and may be removed from the event.

Students who violate these expectations may receive disciplinary consequences under school rules and Board policy. Consequences may include notification to a parent or guardian, removal from the event, disciplinary points, loss of privileges, suspension from attending future events, school discipline, or referral to law enforcement.

Parents, guardians, community members, and other nonstudent spectators who violate these expectations may be removed from the event, denied admission to future district events, restricted from district property, or referred to law enforcement when warranted.

By attending a district event, spectators agree to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on Decorah High School, the Decorah Community School District, and the broader community. These expectations help preserve a safe, respectful, competitive, and supportive environment for all participants and attendees.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Students are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and appropriately during the school day, on district property, in district vehicles, and at school-sponsored activities or events. Public displays of affection that are overly intimate, disruptive, or inconsistent with the school setting are not appropriate.

Prohibited conduct may include kissing, prolonged hugging, sitting on another student's lap, inappropriate touching, or other intimate physical contact that disrupts the learning environment, interferes with supervision, or is inconsistent with the respectful and professional climate expected at school.

Staff will address concerns as discreetly and respectfully as possible. Students are expected to comply promptly when redirected. Repeated violations, refusal to comply, or conduct that is inappropriate, unwanted, or otherwise violates school expectations may result in notification to a parent or guardian, disciplinary action, or other consequences permitted by Board policy and school procedures.

PRIVILEGES AND EXTENDED OPPORTUNITIES

OPEN CAMPUS AND OPEN LUNCH PRIVILEGES

Open Campus and Open Lunch are discretionary privileges authorized through the annual registration process and require documented consent from a parent or guardian. These privileges are intended for students who demonstrate maturity, responsibility, academic progress, punctuality, and consistent compliance with school expectations.

Senior Open Campus allows eligible seniors to leave campus during study halls. **Junior and Senior Open Lunch** allows eligible juniors and seniors to leave campus during their assigned lunch period. Students may exercise these privileges only during approved times and only in accordance with school procedures.

Open Campus and Open Lunch are privileges, not rights. Administration shall have authority to grant, suspend, restrict, or revoke these privileges consistent with Board policy, school procedures, and applicable law. Once a student leaves school grounds under either privilege, responsibility for the student's conduct, location, transportation, and safety rests with the student and parent or guardian.

To **remain eligible**, students must maintain passing grades of C- or higher at each grade check, have no outstanding fees or fines, have current permission from a parent or guardian on file, and remain free of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and unserved detention hours. Administration may also consider attendance, behavior, academic progress, and overall responsibility when determining whether a student may continue to exercise these privileges.

Students using Open Campus or Open Lunch must leave and return at appropriate times, park only in approved student parking areas, reenter the building through Door 1, and report to class, lunch, study hall, or other assigned locations on time. Students who remain on campus during lunch or Open Campus must report to and remain in approved areas. Students must comply with all schedule changes, including assemblies, modified schedules, early dismissals, weather delays, testing schedules, and other school-directed adjustments.

Privileges shall be **suspended or revoked** when a student accumulates ten tardies, fifty disciplinary points, four or more truancy incidents, any substance abuse or weapons violation, unserved detention hours, or any in-school or out-of-school suspension.

Privileges shall also be suspended or revoked when a student fails to check in at the cafeteria or study hall when remaining on campus, parks in an unauthorized location, leaves campus at an unauthorized time, returns late, transports unauthorized students, misuses the privilege, or violates school rules while exercising the privilege.

Depending on the nature, seriousness, and frequency of the violation, loss of Open Campus or Open Lunch privileges may last for a specified period, the remainder of the quarter, the remainder of the semester, or the remainder of the school year. Administration may impose additional disciplinary consequences when the underlying conduct also violates attendance, conduct, parking, substance abuse, weapons, or other school rules.

All administrative determinations regarding Open Campus and Open Lunch privileges are final within the building-level process, except as otherwise required by Board policy or applicable law.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS ([Board Policy 504.2](#))

Decorah High School supports student organizations that enhance the school experience, promote leadership, encourage responsible student engagement, and contribute positively to the school community. Student organizations shall operate in a manner that supports the district's educational mission, preserves the primary focus on learning, and complies with Board policy, school rules, and applicable law.

All student organizations and student group meetings must receive prior approval from the building principal or designee. Meetings shall be scheduled outside instructional time unless specifically authorized by administration. Student organizations shall not interfere with instruction, supervision, school operations, scheduled activities, student safety, or the rights of others.

Curriculum Related Groups

Curriculum-related student organizations are directly connected to the school's curriculum, extend classroom instruction, relate to coursework, or support school-sponsored academic programs. These groups shall operate under the supervision of an approved staff member. The staff sponsor is responsible for providing appropriate oversight, guidance, active assistance, and supervision consistent with the group's purpose and district expectations.

Curriculum-related groups may meet before school, after school, or at other approved times, provided the meeting does not interfere with the regular instructional program or other scheduled school activities.

Noncurriculum Related Groups

Non-curriculum-related student organizations are student-initiated groups that are not directly tied to academic coursework or the district's instructional program. Meetings of non-curriculum-related groups must be voluntary, student-initiated, and student-led. A staff member may be assigned to attend such meetings for the limited purpose of supervision, student safety, facility care, and compliance with school procedures. The staff member shall not direct, conduct, control, promote, or actively participate in the group's activities or viewpoints.

Non-curriculum-related groups shall be granted access to meet only in accordance with Board policy, district procedures, and applicable law. Approval to meet on school property does not constitute district sponsorship, endorsement, or approval of the group's views, speech, activities, or purpose.

General Requirements for All Student Groups

Students must submit a meeting request to the building principal or designee before holding any meeting or activity. The request shall include the name or purpose of the group, the requested meeting date and time, the requested location, the name of the student contact, the staff sponsor or supervisor, when applicable, and any other information reasonably required by the administration.

The administration shall approve room assignments and facility use.

Curriculum-related and school-sponsored activities will receive priority for scheduling, space, and equipment use. Approved student organizations may use designated school rooms and equipment during approved times, provided the use does not interfere with instruction, school operations, supervision, facility care, or previously scheduled activities.

All student organizations must comply with district expectations related to student conduct, nondiscrimination, harassment, bullying, hazing, facility use, safety, supervision, technology, posting and distribution of materials, and respect for school property. Students remain subject to school rules during all organization meetings, activities, and events.

The principal or designee may deny, limit, suspend, or revoke approval for a student organization or meeting when the group fails to follow Board policy or school procedures, creates a safety concern, substantially disrupts school operations, interferes with the rights of others, misuses district facilities or equipment, or otherwise acts in a manner inconsistent with the educational mission of the district. By following these expectations, students will have meaningful opportunities to explore common interests, develop leadership skills, exercise responsibility, and contribute positively to Decorah High School while maintaining a safe, respectful, and academically focused school environment.

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

- **Art Club:** An open, weekly gathering for all high school students interested in creating art and connecting with peers. Meetings follow an informal, open studio format and are held in the Art Room. Throughout the year, students have the opportunity to participate in collaborative projects that emphasize community engagement and service.
- **Community Club / TAATU:** The Community Club promotes volunteerism within the high school, district, and broader community locally, statewide, and internationally. A key component of the club is TAATU (Teens Against Alcohol and Tobacco Use), which empowers students to plan educational

events focused on raising awareness about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and vaping among their high school and middle school peers.

- **Envirothon**: A team-based competition that challenges students' knowledge of Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife, and Current Environmental Issues. Teams also deliver an oral presentation as part of the scoring. The Conservation Districts of Iowa organize the Iowa Envirothon in partnership with the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Smithfield Foods, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- **Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)**: a national student organization affiliated with Family and Consumer Sciences education. It prepares students for careers in areas such as Human Services, Hospitality and Tourism, Education and Training, and Visual Arts and Design. Through competitions, leadership roles, conferences, service, and networking, FCCLA helps students build real-world skills while becoming college-, career-, and community-ready.
- **Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)**: FBLA is a nationally recognized Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) offered through Decorah High School's business education program. It supports students interested in business-related fields, including marketing, finance, management, entrepreneurship, and information systems. Through academic competitions, leadership conferences, scholarships, networking, and real-world experiences, FBLA helps students explore postsecondary options while developing as career-ready, community-minded leaders.
- **National FFA Organization (FFA)**: FFA is an integral part of Decorah High School's agricultural education program, connecting students to more than 235 career opportunities in agriculture. Through classroom instruction and FFA activities, members develop leadership, personal growth, and career-ready skills. Formerly known as Future Farmers of America, the organization became The National FFA Organization in 1988 to reflect the broad scope of today's agricultural industry.
- **National Honor Society (NHS)**: NHS recognizes students who demonstrate scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Eligible students must be full-time juniors or seniors at DHS, have attended DHS full-time since 9th grade, and be on track to graduate. The minimum cumulative GPA requirement is 3.75. Eligible students are notified by letter and may meet with the sponsor to review the application process. Applicants submit a form, provide a non-relative, non-school employee reference, and write a reflective paper addressing leadership, service, and character. The Faculty Council reviews applications, and selected students are inducted during the annual ceremony. For more information, contact the Decorah High School office.
- **Robotics (FIRST Tech Challenge)**: The Robotics Team designs, builds, and programs robots to compete in alliance-based competitions. Students apply engineering principles, develop strategic game plans, and work

- collaboratively to create functional, competition-ready robots.
- **SkillsUSA:** A national workforce development organization that prepares students to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders, and engaged community members. Since 1965, SkillsUSA has supported more than 14.6 million members, promoting values such as integrity, respect, responsibility, service, and community.

SILVER CORD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Silver Cord Award honors Decorah High School students who demonstrate a strong commitment to community service. To earn the award, students must complete **200** volunteer hours by the time of graduation, which begins after the last day of 8th grade.

For transfer students, 50 hours of service are required per year, starting from the year of transfer. While 50 hours per year is the recommended pace, students may complete hours at any time during high school. All hours must be submitted and verified by the first Monday in May of senior year, and extra hours may roll over from one year to the next.

Volunteer hours must be approved by the Silver Cord Coordinator, who verifies submissions. Hours cannot be completed for parents or guardians, be court-ordered, or be part of a sanctioned detention service. Projects may not financially benefit an individual or group unless that group also performs an unpaid community service project. A list of pre-approved opportunities and required forms is available on the DHS website. Students may also request approval for other service activities from the Silver Cord Coordinator. The award is presented at Commencement.

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY AND EARLY-INTERVENTION SUPPORTS

The Decorah Community School District recognizes that substance use and substance abuse can present serious health, safety, behavioral, and educational concerns. The district also recognizes that early identification, appropriate intervention, and family involvement are important in helping students address substance-related concerns before they become more serious.

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for addressing a student's use of alcohol, controlled substances, tobacco, nicotine products, vaping products, or other prohibited substances. However, the district has a responsibility to respond when substance use, suspected use, possession, distribution, impairment, or related conduct affects student learning, behavior, safety, attendance, school operations, or the rights and welfare of others.

School employees who observe signs that may indicate substance use or impairment shall refer the concern to administration or other appropriate school personnel for

review. Such signs may include odor, physical symptoms, unusual behavior, possession of related items, credible reports, concerning statements, or other specific observations. The purpose of the referral is to allow the school to assess student safety, determine whether school rules or Board policy may have been violated, and identify whether support, intervention, or further action is needed.

When appropriate, the district may work with the student, parent or guardian, school counselor, school nurse, licensed providers, community agencies, or other appropriate supports to help connect the student and family with education, counseling, assessment, treatment, or other resources. Information related to substance use concerns will be handled in accordance with applicable confidentiality laws, student records requirements, Board policy, and district procedures.

Supportive intervention does not prevent the district from imposing disciplinary consequences when a student violates school rules, Board policy, or applicable law. The district's response will be based on the facts and circumstances of the situation, including the nature of the conduct, safety concerns, the student's needs, and the district's responsibility to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND JURISDICTION

Students are strictly prohibited from possessing, using, consuming, manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, selling, attempting to sell, transferring, sharing, or being under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, unauthorized prescription medication, nonprescription medication used improperly, tobacco, nicotine products, vaping products, drug paraphernalia, or look-alike substances.

This prohibition applies to all district property, in district vehicles, at school-sponsored activities or events, during school-related travel, and at any location or circumstance where the student's conduct is connected to the school, affects school safety, disrupts school operations, or falls within the district's authority under Board policy and applicable law.

A student suspected of violating this policy will be referred to the administration for immediate review. When appropriate, the student will be removed from class, an activity, or the school setting to protect student safety and preserve the orderly operation of the school. Parents or guardians will be notified promptly.

Incidents involving alcohol, controlled substances, distribution, suspected impairment, safety concerns, or possible criminal conduct will be referred to law enforcement when required or appropriate. Probation officers or other appropriate authorities will be notified when required by law, court order, or district procedure.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS

Substance-related violations will result in disciplinary action. Consequences will be determined based on the nature of the violation, the substance involved, the

student's intent, the student's prior conduct, safety concerns, the impact on the school environment, and any applicable Board policy, law, or educational plan.

For a **first offense**, parents or guardians will be notified. The student will serve a three-day suspension and shall complete an educational reflection, which may include a self-assessment, review of substance-related risks, and a follow-up meeting with a member of the Student Assistance Team or other designated school personnel. Law enforcement will be notified when required or appropriate.

For a **second offense**, parents or guardians and law enforcement will be notified when required or appropriate. The student will receive a suspension of two to five school days. The suspension may be reduced when the family arranges and pays for a professional substance use evaluation and agrees to follow the recommendations for treatment, counseling, education, or other intervention. Documentation of evaluation and active participation may be required.

For **subsequent offenses**, the district will follow the second offense protocol and may impose additional consequences based on the seriousness and pattern of behavior. If the student or family refuses recommended interventions, fails to participate in required supports, or if the conduct presents a continuing safety or educational concern, administration may recommend expulsion to the Board of Education. A student who provides documented evidence of active progress in an approved treatment or counseling program may be permitted to continue attending school and participating in school activities, subject to administrative approval, safety planning, eligibility rules, and any conditions established by the district.

Selling, Distributing, or Providing Substances

Selling, distributing, providing, transferring, sharing, or attempting to sell or distribute alcohol, controlled substances, unauthorized medication, vaping products, tobacco or nicotine products, drug paraphernalia, or look-alike substances is a serious violation of school rules and Board policy.

Because distribution-related conduct presents a substantial risk to the health, safety, and welfare of students and the school community, administration shall treat such incidents as serious misconduct. The district may also work with the student, parent or guardian, school counselor, Student Assistance Team, licensed providers, or appropriate community agencies to support crisis response, assessment, treatment, or other intervention when appropriate.

Law enforcement will be contacted in cases involving the sale, distribution, attempted distribution, or transfer of prohibited substances. Administration will review the matter for immediate removal from the school setting, suspension, referral to law enforcement, recommendation for expulsion, and other consequences permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: CODE OF CONDUCT **(BOARD POLICY 503.4)**

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

This Policy establishes the academic and conduct standards that govern the eligibility of students in grades 7–12 to participate in co-curricular activities offered by the Decorah Community School District (“District”). Participation in co-curricular activities is a privilege, not a right, and is contingent upon meeting these standards.

Philosophy

Participation in co-curricular activities positively influences students' character development, citizenship, sportsmanship, respect for rules and authority, self-discipline, leadership, teamwork, and commitment to personal health and well-being. The District recognizes the family's central role in shaping student behavior, but expects all participants to uphold high standards and serve as positive representatives of the school and community.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Board-approved activities, clubs, and organizations that extend beyond the regular academic curriculum. Examples include, but are not limited to: Art Club, Band, Baseball, Basketball, Bowling, Cheerleading, Choir, Community Club, Cross Country, D Club, Drama, Envirothon, Fire Squad, FFA, Flag Corps, Football, Gay-Straight Alliance, Golf, Mock Trial, Orchestra, National Honor Society, Robotics, Science Club, Soccer, Softball, Special Olympics, Speech, Student Council, Swimming, Tennis, Track, Yearbook, Volleyball, and Wrestling.

II. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

To participate in a co-curricular activity on a school day, a student must be in attendance for the afternoon session and **arrive by 11:30 a.m.**, unless the activity occurs on a non-school day. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed, and an exception may be granted at the discretion of the principal, activities director, or their designee.

III. ACTIVITY-SPECIFIC RULES

Activity sponsors may develop reasonable rules specific to their activities, subject to review and approval by the principal or designee. Violation of activity-specific rules or regulations may result in restriction, suspension, or revocation of privileges for that specific activity, in addition to any sanctions imposed under this Policy.

IV. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A. State Requirements

Students in grades 9–12 must comply with the Iowa Department of Education's Scholarship Rules, IGHSAA, IHSAA, IHSSA, and IHSMA eligibility rules:

- Students must receive credit in at least four subjects at all times.

- Students must pass all courses to remain eligible and make progress toward graduation.
- A student who fails any course at the end of a grading period is ineligible to dress for and compete in contests for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days, starting with the first legal competition date for that activity.
- A student with an IEP shall not be denied eligibility on scholarship grounds if making progress toward IEP goals.
- Summer school may not be used to change failing grades for eligibility purposes.

B. Local Requirements

At the high school, students must pass all classes by the end of the first and third quarters and by midterms. Students failing any class at these checkpoints are required to attend a mandatory weekly Wednesday Study Table from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. until they achieve passing status. Failure to attend assigned study tables results in a restriction on participation until the student fulfills the requirement. See ***Appendix 1*** for clarifying examples.

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Time Period	Requirement
1 st Quarter Midterm	Study Table
1 st Quarter	Study Table
2 nd Quarter Midterm	Study Table
1 st Semester	30 Calendar Days
3 rd Quarter Midterm	Study Table
3 rd Quarter	Study Table
4 th Quarter	Study Table
2 nd Semester	30 Calendar Days

V. CONDUCT STANDARDS

A. Violations

A student may lose eligibility for participation if found to have engaged in any of the following:

- Possession, use, or purchase of tobacco, nicotine products, or vaping devices.
- Possession, use, purchase, attempted sale, or distribution of alcohol, controlled substances, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs without valid authorization.
- Selling or distributing alcohol or controlled substances.
- Engaging in any activity that constitutes a criminal act or is grounds for arrest or citation (excluding minor traffic or curfew violations).
- Engaging in disruptive, offensive, or inappropriate conduct that violates

District policy, disrupts the school environment, or infringes on the rights or safety of others (e.g., assault, vandalism, hazing, bullying, harassment, or refusal to cooperate with school officials or law enforcement).

- Accumulation of forty (40) or more disciplinary points, third offense truancy, or suspension under other applicable rules.

B. Determination and Investigation

The principal or designee shall promptly investigate allegations of misconduct. Students shall receive notice and an opportunity to respond. A preponderance of evidence standard applies. A finding may be based on credible witness statements, staff reports, juvenile referrals, or admission. A violation may be found regardless of whether criminal prosecution occurs.

C. Notice and Due Process

When a Good Conduct violation is determined, the student and parent or guardian will be notified in writing. The written notice shall identify the violation, summarize the facts supporting the determination, state the sanction imposed, and specify the effective date of the sanction.

A student, parent, or guardian may appeal the determination or sanction in writing. The appeal shall first be submitted to the building principal. If the matter remains unresolved after the principal's review, the decision may be appealed to the superintendent or designee. A final written appeal may be submitted to the Board of Education when permitted by Board policy and applicable law.

Except when necessary to consider new information, an appeal shall generally be limited to a review of the existing record, including the written determination, relevant documentation, information considered during the original review, and any written materials submitted as part of the appeal. An appeal is not intended to provide a new investigation or a new hearing unless required by law or determined necessary by the district.

The basis for an appeal is generally limited to one or more of the following:

1. A substantial deviation from established procedures that may have affected the outcome.
2. A conflict of interest or bias by the decision maker that may have affected the outcome.
3. New information or relevant facts that were not known or reasonably available at the time of the original decision and that may be sufficient to alter the outcome.

Good Conduct sanctions shall remain in effect during the appeal process unless modified by the building principal, superintendent, or designee, or Board of Education. The Board of Education's decision on a final appeal is final and binding, subject to applicable Board policy and state or federal law.

VI. SANCTIONS

First Offense

- Suspension from participation for up to six (6) weeks.
- If the student self-reports truthfully within four (4) calendar days and submits a signed confirmation, the penalty may be reduced to one-sixth (1/6) of the activity.

Second Offense

- Suspension from participation for up to twelve (12) weeks.
- Mandatory professional counseling at the student/family's expense; completion required to regain eligibility.

Third and Subsequent Offenses

- Suspension from participation for one (1) calendar year.
- Mandatory professional counseling at the student's/family's expense.

Selling or Distributing Substances

- Immediate referral to law enforcement.
- Immediate recommendation for expulsion to the Board of Education.

Implementation of Sanctions

Periods of ineligibility apply only during weeks when interscholastic competition or public performances occur and may extend into tournament competition if the event is incomplete. Multiple suspensions run concurrently. Violations accumulate throughout grades 7–8 and restart for high school.

Students must continue to practice and fulfill all team or group responsibilities; failure to do so will result in the sanction being carried over to the next activity season. A transfer student must complete any period of ineligibility imposed by a prior district, unless the principal adjusts it to ensure equity in accordance with this Policy. See **Appendix 2** for sample event counts and suspension examples.

VII. ADMINISTRATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This Policy applies twelve (12) months a year, on and off District property, beginning upon completion of grade 6 and concluding the summer following graduation. Violations of the District's Substance Use and Abuse Policy on school grounds or at a school event preclude the benefit of self-report reduction. Parents/guardians and students must acknowledge receipt of and understanding of this Policy annually through online registration.

APPENDIX 1 — ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

These examples clarify how the District's State and Local academic standards apply in typical scenarios. They do not override the controlling language of Policy 503.4 but illustrate consistent application.

Example A:

A Football-only participant fails a first-semester course. The student is ineligible for the first thirty (30) consecutive calendar days of the Football season, beginning on the first legal competition date (per State Scholarship Rule).

Example B:

A Football player fails a first-semester course but has never previously participated in Track. The student joins Track to circumvent ineligibility. The thirty (30) consecutive calendar days of ineligibility begin on the first legal competition date for Track. Football eligibility resumes if the penalty is served.

Example C:

A student participates in Girls Basketball and Madrigal Singers and fails a first-semester course. The student is ineligible for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days for Basketball contests (Athletic Rule) and for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days for non-graded Madrigal Singers events (State Music Rule).

Example D:

A Girls' Basketball and Fall Drama participant fails a first-semester course. The student is ineligible for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days in Basketball and thirty (30) consecutive calendar days for any Drama performances that do not constitute part of a graded course (Decorah Local Rule).

Example E:

A Cheerleader who is also in the Jazz Band fails a first-semester course. The student is ineligible for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days in Cheerleading (Decorah Local Rule) and thirty (30) consecutive calendar days for Jazz Band activities not tied to a course grade (State Music Rule).

Example F:

A student in Winter Cheerleading, Softball, and Band fails a second-semester course. The student serves thirty (30) consecutive calendar days of ineligibility during the Softball season (Athletic Rule). Cheerleading and Band are unaffected once the penalty is served.

Example G:

A student in Concert Choir and Boys Soccer fails a first-semester course. The student is ineligible for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days for Concert Choir (State Music Rule and Local Rule) and Boys Soccer (Athletic Rule).

Example H:

A Football player passes only two courses in the second semester. The student is ineligible for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days in Football the following fall (Athletic Rule).

Example I:

A student participates in Girls Soccer and Girls Golf and fails a first-semester course. The student is ineligible for thirty (30) consecutive calendar days in both activities, beginning with the first legal competition date of each sport (Athletic Rule).

APPENDIX 2 — SANCTION FRAMEWORK FOR CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

First Offense

- **Self-Report (within four days):** Ineligibility for one-sixth (1/6) of the activity.
- **Administrative Discovery:** Ineligibility for one-third (1/3) of the activity.
- **Counseling:** Recommended.

Second Offense

- **Self-Report or Administrative Discovery:** Ineligibility for one-half (1/2) of the activity.
- **Counseling:** Required at the student's or family's expense; completion required for reinstatement.

Third and Subsequent Offenses

- **Self-Report or Administrative Discovery:** Ineligibility for one (1) calendar year from the date of the violation.
- **Counseling:** Required at the student's or family's expense.

Selling or Distributing Substances

Any student found selling or distributing substances will be referred to law enforcement without exception and will face an immediate recommendation for expulsion to the Board of Education. There is no self-report reduction.

Key Administrative Rules:

Sanctions apply only during weeks when contests or performances occur and may extend into postseason competition. If a student receives multiple suspensions, they will run concurrently. Suspensions that are not fully served will carry over to subsequent activities.

During a suspension, a student must continue to practice and meet all team or group expectations; failure to do so will result in the penalty being extended. Any attempt to circumvent a suspension by joining a new activity late will result in the penalty being reassigned to the next related activity. Violations are cumulative for grades 7–8 and reset when a student enters grades 9–12.

Sanction Examples:

The following are examples of what the penalty **MIGHT** be in a typical season (fewer postseason appearances), using the current contest limitations defined by the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union and the Iowa High School Athletic Association, along with “typical” schedules for our Fine Arts Programs.

These are only **sample** suspension periods that the Activities Director or their designee may modify, and the actual number of events will be calculated annually.

Sanctions Examples

Activity	Dates / Games	First Offense w/ Self Report	First Offense w/ Administrative Discovery	Second Offense	Third Offense
Football	9 Games	2	3	5	1 Calendar Year
Volleyball	14	2	5	7	1 Calendar Year
Boys Cross Country	10	2	3	5	1 Calendar Year
Girls Cross Country	10	2	3	5	1 Calendar Year
Girls Swimming	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Boys Swimming	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Wrestling	15	3	5	8	1 Calendar Year
Boys Basketball	21 Games	4	7	11	1 Calendar Year
Girls Basketball	21 Games	4	7	11	1 Calendar Year
Boys Bowling	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Girls Bowling	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Boys Tennis	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Girls Tennis	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Boys Soccer	17	3	6	8	1 Calendar Year
Girls Soccer	17	3	6	8	1 Calendar Year
Boys Track	16	3	5	8	1 Calendar Year
Girls Track	16	3	5	8	1 Calendar Year
Boys Golf	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Girls Golf	12	2	4	6	1 Calendar Year
Baseball	40 Games	7	14	20	1 Calendar Year
Softball	40 Games	7	14	20	1 Calendar Year
Cheerleading*	Season Specific	TBD	TBD	TBD	1 Calendar Year
Band	TBD	4	8	12	1 Calendar Year
Vocal	TBD	4	8	12	1 Calendar Year
Orchestra	TBD	4	8	12	1 Calendar Year
Speech & Drama	8	1	2	4	1 Calendar Year
FFA	8	1	2	4	1 Calendar Year
Clubs	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	1 Calendar Year

*Cheerleading will be handled relative to the season in which the student is participating.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code § 279.8, Iowa Admin Code § 281–36.15(1)

Non-Graded Music Activities

Band	Vocal	Orchestra
UNI All-State Workshop	OPUS Honor Choir	Homecoming Coronation
All-State Auditions	Homecoming Coronation Singers	All-State Workshop
All-State Festival	UNI Honor Choir	Harvest Moon Dinner
NEIBA Honor Band	All-State Workshops	All-State Auditions
UNI Honor Band	All-State Auditions	Junior Honors Festival
Dorian Honor Band	All-State Festival	All-State Festival
NEIC Honor Festival	December Nursing Home	Madrigal Dinner
Madrigal Dinner	Performance	NEIC Music Festival
State Jazz Festival	Madrigal Nursing Home Performance	Dorian Orchestra Festival
UNI Tallcorn Jazz Festival	Madrigal Dinner	Chamber Orchestra Concert
Jazz Coffeehouse	Dorian Vocal Festival	Kennedy Honors Orchestra
Various Community	NEIC Music Festival	Orchestra Trip to UW-LaCrosse
Activities	Jazz Singers Concert	National Honor Society Inductions
	Iowa State University Honor Choir	Various Community Activities
	Solo and Ensemble Clinic at DHS	
	State Solo and Ensemble Music	
	Festival (Non-Graded for 2 of 3	
	choirs)	
	Spring Nursing Home Performance	
	Various Community Activities	