

Family Handbook 2015-2016

Reawaken Your Love of Learning

September
high school

Mission Statement

September School is an intimate and supportive community that fosters individual development and reawakens the love of learning. We empower ourselves to become critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible citizens.

Dear September School Families,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to another year at September School. Our returning students and staff are ready to carry on the traditions of excellence in education and community building that we value so highly, and we're excited to welcome and embrace all newcomers. The 2015-2016 academic year holds great promise for all of us at September School, and we know that this wonderful program will continue to grow and thrive at the hands of those in our uniquely powerful community.

In the pages of the Family Handbook, you'll find some overviews of our history and philosophy along with information that will help you stay informed about and involved in our program. Please read the following material carefully, and discuss it with your students. If you have any questions about the content of this handbook, please contact the school, and we'll happily go over the information with you.

On behalf of our teachers and administration, please accept my enthusiastic welcome to another banner year at September School. This group of people is unmatched in their passion and prowess, and we are dedicated to providing the very best educational experience available. Here's to the continued success of Boulder's premier independent school.

Cheers,

John Dunn

Head of School

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About September School

Contact and Communication Information

Office Hours and Appointments

The main building is open **Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm** through the school year. Families must account for their students by 4:00 pm. To meet with privately with John and/or faculty members, please contact the school for an appointment.

Phone and Fax

Phone: (303) 443-9933 Fax: (303) 444-5027

Please do not leave sensitive student information on the school's voicemail system. Alternatively, you can email Mia Davis at mia@septemberschool.org for non-emergency questions and concerns, and she will respond during business hours.

Email

The school regularly communicates with families through email, including all-school updates distributed either from Mia's email address or through Mail Chimp. Messages from the office will be addressed from John, Mia, and/or Sarah. Email individual instructors and academic advisors regarding specific class questions and concerns.

Faculty and Staff Contacts

John Dunn, Head of School, john@septemberschool.org
Mia Davis, Office Manager and Administration, mia@septemberschool.org
Sarah Leversee, Billing and Tuition, sarah@septemberschool.org

Angela Beloian, Art angela@septemberschool.org
Cameron Hays, Social Studies cameron@septemberschool.org
Dan Beliveau, Math dan@septemberschool.org
Eve Halpern, Spanish and English eve@septemberschool.org
Jeff Hamilton, PE/Health/Performing Arts jeff@septemberschool.org
Leslie Gustason, School Counselor leslie@septemberschool.org
Rob Donoho, Science and Photography rob@septemberschool.org
Ann Mitchell, English ann@septemberschool.org

Hazardous Weather Delays and Cancellations

For weather-related school delays or cancellations, September School follows Boulder Valley School District weather decisions for Boulder High School, which can be accessed at bvsd.org

School History

In the fall of 1973, September School was one of 5000 independent schools across the nation that opened their doors to students for the first time. Each school had its own set of dedicated families and teachers, and its own vision for independent education. Despite the heartfelt efforts put forth by many people, most of these schools were unable to sustain themselves over time. In fact, by 2001, all but 2% of these schools had to close. September School has thrived for 42 years because it has been carried forward on the shoulders of an energetic, committed faculty that has inspired hundreds of students. Our community of families, students, staff, and alumni has supported the school's growth into the thriving educational center that it is today.

Though the words of the mission have evolved over time, our underlying intention has remained the same. Over the years we have transformed the lives of hundreds of teens in this community, and we believe it is the mutually powerful relationship with our community that has sustained us so well over time. We put everything we can into what we do, and it works. Students from September School graduate with well-rounded academic skills, in-depth exposure to the arts, and the experience of belonging to a community. This combination prepares the student well for challenges beyond high school. Over eighty percent of September School graduates continue their education at the college or university level. When they leave us, they leave prepared not only for college, but prepared for life.

Educational Philosophy

September School's commitment to a small staff to student ratio allows us to be the intimate and supportive community that our mission statement proclaims. Many new students come to us disenchanted with their former experiences, which is why we focus on reawakening their love of learning. At September School, staff and students develop close personal relationships based on trust and acceptance. We celebrate individuality, and encourage students to pursue their interests in becoming who they want to be. We welcome all students with patience and nurturing, so that they may feel comfortable sharing their whole selves with the community. We honor the differences between students' abilities and experiences by creating instruction that meets each student wherever he or she is academically, developmentally, and emotionally.

In the classroom, students are encouraged to share the responsibility of finding solutions to their personal and academic problems. Our students navigate challenges by becoming critical thinkers, which is a process we facilitate by posing open-ended and compelling questions both in and out of the classroom. When given the space and resources to discover and develop passions, students are inspired to pursue their own lifelong learning paths. Each student is empowered to find his or her own truth as he or she learns the values of and means to self-advocacy. September School graduates leave our classrooms believing that challenges are opportunities to learn and grow, and they go into the world seeking experience and knowledge. Because they have developed their personalities and talents, September School graduates become effective leaders in and contributors to community. (See related information in, *Academics*.)

Behavior Management Philosophy

We believe it is our role to help teens develop internal controls over time rather than training them to rely on external controls and boundaries to regulate their behavior. We acknowledge the importance for adolescents to internalize a personal set of values, to develop a voice, and to think independently and make choices best for themselves.

Our primary tool for effective behavior management comes from our ability to create a safe environment and as a staff to create a sense of belonging for our students. It is the quality of our relationships that provide a foundation for any behavioral intervention. The connections we foster with teens are second to none, and these types of relationships decrease the frequency and intensity of behavioral problems while providing a greater path to success.

When behavioral management becomes elevated, we typically increase the level of contact and support the student is receiving. We will frequently involve the student in a community mediation circle, a highly effective intervention that utilizes the strength of the community to help the student get back on track. When problems persist, or are severe at the onset, we work with the families to find an appropriate solution.

Behavioral Policies

Although September School avoids the restrictions that unilateral policies impose, it is important to understand that violence and substance abuse have no place within our walls.

Community Safety

September School is a safe environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Because of our commitment to community, we rarely see incidents of violent or abusive behavior. Nonetheless, to ensure the continued safety of all parties at September School, we must make some things clear. Violence and abuse can be physical or emotional, and September School will not condone any behaviors that violate another community member's feelings of personal safety and security. If any person experiences or observes a violation of personal safety, he or she is encouraged to report the incident to a staff member.

When violations of community safety occur, members of the staff will approach all parties involved and decide upon a course of action. Examples of possible disciplinary actions include: notification of parents, a mediated conversation, restriction of open-campus privileges, extra-curricular involvement, community service, suspension, and in extreme cases, expulsion. These violations are exceedingly rare.

Substance Abuse Policy

September School is a drug and alcohol free campus and we require the commitment from all community members to maintain our sober campus. The school reserves the right to enforce consequences as the administration sees fit in an effort to enforce this policy.

We take a comprehensive approach to preventing substance use that includes educating our students about the risks of substance use, supporting our student to make healthy choices and develop good coping skills, and enforcing clear boundaries as outlined in our policy. We will work with each teen and family to develop a specific strategy for intervention and positive growth.

All community members must remain free of the influence of drugs or alcohol during school hours, or during any community activity, including school trips and special events. Possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia or engaging in any dealings involving drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited.

When a student is suspected of being in violation of the Substance Abuse Policy, one or more faculty will approach them to determine the truth and degree of any violation. Faculty reserve the right to question and search the student's person and possessions, including vehicles.

If it is determined that a student is in violation of the Substance Abuse Policy, or a student refuses to be questioned or searched, the student's parents will be immediately contacted and the student will be sent home. Prior to returning to a normal school schedule, the student and parent(s) will meet with the Head of School (and possibly other faculty) to discuss the occurrence, the consequences, and create a plan of action that may include any of the following:

- Participation in an approved after school intensive outpatient programming
- Weekly or biweekly meetings with the school counselor and/or an outside therapist
- Substance prevention classes, such as the Natural Highs course in our After Hour Arts program
- Documented results from randomly scheduled drug screens
- Restriction from leaving campus during school hours
- Probationary status at the school, meaning no second chance if boundaries are violated.

Any violation of the Substance Abuse Policy could result in immediate and permanent expulsion.

Smoking Policy

Consistent with Colorado law, smoking is prohibited at September School. The School believes that smoking and the use of any tobacco product is detrimental to the health and well being of the school staff and student body. As with all illegally used and addictive substances, we strive to support students holistically in making better life choices. The School is also concerned that allowing smoking on campus increases the risks for non-smokers and encourages students to smoke who may otherwise not make this choice. Furthermore, as an educational institution, allowing smoking on our campuses and in our buildings illustrates practices which conflict with our beliefs and expectations. The School believes that the development of a total wellness concept for all employees and students is basic to sound education and overall health and wellbeing.

Smoking and the use of tobacco products on and around school grounds is not permitted at any time. These restrictions apply to school buildings, school grounds, school-owned vehicles and school-sponsored events. Students and staff shall not use tobacco products within sight of the September School campus nor any school sponsored events. These restrictions on the use of tobacco products also extend to all citizens and patrons attending school-sponsored events and meetings held in school buildings and to any group or organization contracting for public or private use of school facilities.

Parents may request that we inform them if we notice their student is using tobacco. If a parent believes that tobacco products might be an issue for their student, they may contact the school to assist in the prevention process. September School is committed to supporting students with educational information and programs that will assist them in making healthy life choices around tobacco use.

Per Colorado Tobacco Use and Prevention Act – C.R.S. 18-13-121, C.R.S. 25-14-301, C.R.S. 25-14-103.5

Attire Policy

Although we support students who wish to express themselves through their attire, clothing and personal accessories deemed inappropriate, offensive, or distracting to the educational process for any reason must be changed or the student may be asked to leave campus. Inappropriate attire includes the following:

- Excessively revealing clothing
- Clothing that carries logos, wording, or artwork that depicts or supports the use/abuse of drugs and alcohol, and associated paraphernalia
- Clothing that carries slogans or wording that are intended to offend specific groups of people as it applies to their race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, or gender.

Internet Use & Personal Technology

Usage of any personal technology device must be approved teachers. Related permissions may be revoked or modified, at each instructor's discretion. At their discretion, school staff is also authorized to confiscate and keep a cell phone or other personal technology device for the duration of one class period or a full school day.

Wi-Fi Connection Log-In

Students may use the guest login to access the school's Wi-Fi connection. Students can contact the office for the login information.

Cell Phones

Cell phones should be either off or on silent while in class, and their usage is explicitly not allowed. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Laptop Computers

With permission from the instructor, laptops may be used in classrooms. Students are welcome to bring their laptops to school for work outside of class time, unless allowed by the instructor.

iPods/mp3 Players

The use of Personal Music Devices (iPods, mp3 players, music-enabled cell phones) is generally not allowed in the classroom. However, some students may request use of these devices during individual study time. Students who bring personal devices to school do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, stolen, or "borrowed but not returned" personal technology.

Campus Resources & Policies

Parking and Bus Stops

The School is located a few blocks east from the regional bus terminal in downtown Boulder and ½ block west of a local bus stop on Walnut Street.

Parking is available in the lot to the south of the Main Building and around the Science Building. There is also limited street parking along 19th Street near the Arts & Science Building and along Walnut Street near the main building. The Office can provide parking map for the local area.

Telephones

With permission from a staff member, students may use the school telephone located in the reception area.

Pets Policy

Students are not permitted to bring pets on campus at any time, unless previously authorized by the Head of School. Families may need to provide proof of immunization at the school's discretion. Service animals are welcome per ADA guidelines. Emotional support animals are not trained assistance animals; their presence on campus requires a letter from a licensed therapist in addition to Head of School authorization.

Student Responsibility for Personal Belongings

Assumption Of Responsibility

September School is a safe, caring community. Nevertheless, the reality of theft is a part of any high school. The School assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property. The School is not responsible for mediating loans of property or money between students. Students are discouraged from bringing valuables to campus and from making transactions with other students. Students are solely responsible for their own possessions.

Personal Lockers

Lockers are available for students who want to secure their possessions while at school. Students must supply their own combination locks and provide the Office with the combination. Although we work hard to develop a strong relationship and don't want to be invasive, the school reserves the right to search student lockers at the discretion of the Head of School.

Classrooms & Classroom Property

A key component of the Community Member Agreement (see Appendices) is the concept of respect. This respect extends to the physical spaces at September School as well as the property within and the property of other members of the community. Willful disrespect or damage of school property, buildings, or grounds will be addressed and may require reimbursement from the student for cleaning or replacement costs.

Students are issued most textbooks and study materials at no charge. Please maintain all materials in good condition; charges are assessed for lost or damaged books and materials.

Computer Lab & Computer Use Agreement

September School has a number of computers available for student use for educational purposes. Each student has an account assigned by the school and is provided orientation for proper use and storage.

In order to use the school computers, students must sign the Computer Use Agreement. This agreement specifies times of use, allowable use, and prohibits food and beverage from the room or area.

Community Kitchen & Kitchen Use

The Main Building has a full kitchen that is available for student use provided that they clean up after themselves and respect one another's property. The refrigerator will be emptied of all unmarked items on a regular basis. At the Head of School's discretion, the kitchen may be closed to student use or utensils and dishware removed if it is determined that the space is not being properly respected.

Teachers' Lounge

The teachers' lounge is located in the southwest corner of the main building. **Students are not allowed to enter without accompaniment by a faculty member.**

Visitor Policies

Guests Of Students

Visitors are always welcome, but their visit requires advance notice and permission. All guests are required to check in when they first arrive, no matter how long they are planning to stay. **Prior permission is required.** Guests under 18 must provide emergency contact information and have parent or guardian written or verbal consent to be present on our campus during school hours.

Shadow Students

Shadow students are prospective students from outside the community who pair up with one of our students to sit in on classes for the day. This is a great way for prospective students to experience the school. Current students may apply to pair up with a shadow student.

Visiting Teachers, Professionals & Other Guests

The school welcomes those who have an interest in teen education, and it is proud of the program and the amount of interest it generates from the community. Those interested in learning more about the school is encouraged to visit. Guests must make an appointment and check in with the office when they arrive.

Attendance Policies

Families must contact the office as soon as possible when a student will be late or absent. Absences for illnesses, travel, weather hazards, and education-related work excused. Students are responsible for missed class work and must talk with teachers for missed work. Makeup work for unexcused absences is at teachers' discretion.

Excessive absences, excused or unexcused, affect the number of credits that a student earns for a class. Reduced credits are at the discretion of faculty and the Head of School.

Absences And Tardies

A student who is not in class receives an Absent for that class period. Students who miss a significant portion of class or exhibit poor classroom behavior may also receive an Absent for that period. At the teacher's discretion, students may lose credit from a course due to absences, especially for participation-based classes.

A student receives a Late when he or she is more than 5 minutes late for class and a Very Late when he or she is more than 15 minutes late for class. Faculty may modify these policies as appropriate for their classes and individual situations and may, at their discretion, allow students to make up credits through additional work.

Open Campus

September School is an open campus. Students may leave campus during breaks and lunch. This is a privilege, and as such may be revoked at the discretion of the office for school violations and misuse. Families who prefer their students not leave campus may contact the office.

Extended Absences

When students are gone for an extended period of time, the family and instructors create a plan for how the student will make up for the missing time. An alternative solution may include earning credits based on the portion of time that they attended school. Please contact the office as early as possible to inform the school of an extended absence.

Academics

Academic Honesty Policy

The Academic Honesty Policy fosters the integrity and individual responsibility. Academic honesty creates an educational community based on trust in which individuals are treated fairly and recognized for their individual achievement.

Students are expected to turn in honest, timely and individual work; plagiarism will not be tolerated. In cooperative learning activities, students are expected to complete individual assignments on time and fully share information with a partner or small group. Participation in group discussion and completion of assignments is expected. Allowing others to take credit for work they did not do, not fulfilling responsibilities, and being distracting to the group will not be tolerated.

Students must give credit for all ideas and information taken from sources and to ask for help when needed to meet this expectation. Presenting work or ideas of someone else without giving credit is considered plagiarism and will not be tolerated. Teachers instruct students on sourcing expectations and requirements for classroom projects.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy

When faculty suspects violations of the Academic Honesty Policy, they will discuss the situation privately with the student or students involved. The student(s) will be given the opportunity to explain the situation, and following the discussion the individual teacher will make a determination if a violation has occurred.

If the teacher determines that a violation has occurred, the office will notify families, and the student will receive no credit for the assignment. Incidents of such violations will be reported to the Head of School, even if the consequence is handled entirely by the teacher. Second offenses may result in an instant F for the course. Third offenses would warrant full academic reviews, which may result in academic probation or expulsion from the school.

Academic Probation

A probation contract will designate what specific steps need to be taken, how they will be measured, and what the consequences will be if the expectations are not met. Students on academic probation are ineligible to re-register until the contract provisions are met and the academic probation is formally lifted.

Graduation Requirements

General Requirements

September School requires 240 credits for graduation, including core curriculum requirements. A minimum of 255 credits is recommended for college applicants. Refer to the 2015-2016 Graduation Requirements appendix for details.

Transfer Credit

Students transferring from a previous educational program are required to provide an official transcript detailing credit earned and any additional information necessary to interpret the transcript. September School faculty and staff evaluate and approve incoming transfer credit, including credit earned through online programs. Failure to provide complete information about a student's educational history and all previous institutions attended may result in loss or omission of credit.

Petition for Early Graduation

High school is typically a four-year journey. Early graduation is not encouraged due to the benefit of completing the academic, personal, and community opportunities provided during the September School experience.

Simply completing the minimum number of credits required is not justification for early graduation. Most students should accumulate more credits to have a well-rounded academic experience and be more fully prepared for college. However, students may petition for early graduation if it is determined to be in their interest. Students who are interested in graduating early should discuss this with their academic advisors, families, and the Head of School.

Independent Track Option

Students interested in specific course content or taking Honors coursework are encouraged to meet with their advisor or content area teacher to discuss options that allow for limited reorganization and specialization of some credit requirements.

Examples of this independent track towards graduation include:

- Establishing a comprehensive portfolio for attending an art institute
- Developing intensive foreign language skills while studying abroad
- Participating in an internship or apprentice program
- Taking Honors courses or preparing for Advanced Placement testing
- Enrolling in college courses concurrent with high school enrollment

Graduation Ceremonies And Receipt Of Diploma

Candidates for graduation cannot be deficient more than 10 credits to be recommended for matriculation. If a student has earned at least 230 of the 240 credits required for graduation and has a *documented plan* in place to earn the remaining credit, he or she can request to participate in graduation ceremonies.

Graduating senior students must be current with all tuition bills and fees in order to participate in graduation ceremonies. Diplomas will only be issued upon successful completion of the credit deficiencies and full payment of any outstanding tuition statements.

Release of Transcripts

Students can request transcripts in person or by contacting the office. Requests are handled free of charge and will be processed within two weeks. Students must provide pre-stamped envelopes for mailing if postal service is required (transcripts are often emailed or faxed). Rushed transcript requests are available for a \$15 fee. Transcripts (official or unofficial) will not be available for release until all outstanding debts are resolved and any September School property is returned.

Seniors requesting transcripts for college applications must not have outstanding tuition payments and be approved by the office for release of records. **Final transcripts must be requested in writing by graduating seniors prior to the end of the school year to ensure receipt by your college or program in a timely manner for fall semester.**

Class Registration

Pre-Registration

Records and transcripts are updated and reviewed each semester to determine enrollment for core curriculum classes and used for determining course demand. Students will be pre-registered for core classes required for graduation and will be advised per their post-graduation plans. Recommendations are given for summer courses or alternative credit opportunities. Contact the office with questions about credits, graduation, or registration.

Registration Day

All students must participate in person during registration. We strongly encourage at least one parent or guardian to attend as well. This helps to improve communication about the upcoming semester schedule and expectations. While some classes will be pre-registered, there will be a number of options for students to select from while determining their final schedule. Seniors register first, followed by juniors, sophomores, and freshmen.

Drop/Add Process

Students have **two weeks** after the start of the semester to request a schedule change. Students must meet with their advisor to discuss any schedule changes and obtain a Drop/Add Form from the office. This form requires authorization signatures from 1) the instructor of the class being dropped, and 2) the instructor of the added course. Schedule changes are finalized upon receipt of form and confirmation by the Head of School. Family notification and authorization may be necessary for some schedules.

Classes dropped after two weeks into the new semester will appear as withdrawn (W) on transcripts.

Alternative Credit Options

Students who desire to go above and beyond core requirements, and those who need to earn credit outside of September School have options to do so. Below are listed some of the possibilities. Students should ask their instructor or academic advisor for more information on any of these options.

Honors Options And Credit

30 hours of work outside of the classroom. Courses taken for Honors credit earn students an extra grade point. An A received through Honors credit is a 5.0 on a 4.0 GPA scale.

Independent Study

A student may attempt to earn up to five credits (at 18 hours a credit) through independent study. Independent study projects will include a written proposal from the student and a faculty sponsor.

Concurrent Credit Courses

Local universities and colleges offer programs to enroll high school students in college level courses, allowing credit to be earned concurrently for both. Please note that tuition for these programs is billed independently of September School and students should carefully weigh their ability to balance the rigorous demands of college courses when committing to enroll.

Online Coursework

There are many online programs available to help students recover lost credit or to work more in depth with content in which they are interested. Faculty must approve online coursework for it to count towards September School credit.

Directed Study Hall

With permission of the faculty, a student can elect to work silently and alone for a period. This option is a useful study strategy for many students. Students are expected to sign in, discuss plans for the period, report to the assigned room, and sign out upon conclusion of the period.

Accommodations & Academic Support

Accommodations are changes that are made to classroom or testing materials and procedures that help students with disabilities learn and participate. An accommodation is not intended to change the standard of learning nor lower the expectations for performance that have been set for all students; accommodations "level the playing field" by allowing students to bypass or partially bypass the effects of a disability in order to learn and perform at the levels expected of students without disabilities.

Students and families should share information about any diagnosed conditions, as well as information on the types of supports and services that have been helpful in providing the best academic and social environment for the student. The school strives to accommodate all students with learning disabilities and find strategies and solutions that best fit a student's needs and goals. Some solutions may involve referral to resources outside of the school program while other support solutions may be found within the regular school day.

Withdrawal

Families who wish to withdraw their students from the school must provide the administration with a 30-day written notice, deliverable by email or post to the administration office. Withdrawal dates are formalized on student transcripts. Credits are calculated based on final grades and withdrawal dates. Please see the Tuition Policies appendix for details regarding tuition refunds. Families are strongly encouraged to contact the school and discuss transfer arrangements.

Assessment & Evaluations

Grading Scale And Policy

A student's performance in a class is measured by a letter grade or pass/fail, as well as by the number of credits received, which reflects the amount of work completed and the amount of effort put into the course. Courses that meet 5 times a week typically are worth 5 credits, while split courses may be worth 2 or 3 credits.

Mid-Quarter Reports

Parents will be notified at mid-quarter if the student is in danger of losing credit in a course (usually due to excessive absences or tardies) or receiving a grade of D or lower. While staff will communicate with students regularly to try to keep this situation from happening, we use this as an opportunity to work both with you and your student to get things back on track.

Quarterly Evaluation Conferences

Students and families meet with teachers at the end of each quarter in a unique forum to discuss the student's life at September School. Referred to as Evals, these conferences last 30 minutes and is a great opportunity for celebrating successes over the semester and sharing strategies for overcoming obstacles. Academics and social/behavioral well being are discussed.

Evals are a critical component of the high quality of contact we maintain with students and families. **At least one parent or guardian is expected to attend each evaluation conference.** You will be reminded to set up an Evals appointment as we approach the end of the quarter. Students who miss Evals must meet with the Head of School before returning to class.

Semester Report Cards

Grades are assessed at the end of each semester, provided to families at Evals, and are recorded on student transcripts. Written reports are available at mid-semester evaluations.

Other Options

Contacting Instructors Directly

Families can contact instructors via email about assignments or progress. Please see the faculty contact list at the beginning of this handbook for email addresses.

Bi-Weekly Spot Checks

Spot Checks are more frequent updates to parents with students who may be struggling with their work. Spot Check reports happen on a scheduled, bi-weekly basis and are provided to parents via email. Weekly spot checks are available on request and with Head of School approval.

Post-Graduation Preparation

Students prepare for adulthood by preparing for their lives after high school. Preparation takes many forms— researching colleges and taking placement exams, exploring gap year programs, securing an apprenticeship or internship, or directly training for work.

The process formally begins in the 11th grade, when students are provided structured support to start the necessary steps towards their goals. Families are encouraged to contact their student's academic advisor as needed.

Students can check in with the school counselor and their academic dean during the process of researching and applying for post-graduation programs. The work itself, however, is the student's responsibility. The school encourages families to have frequent conversations about goals and interests, and to attend information sessions and college fairs for resources. Questions about placement exams (ACT, SAT), testing resources, and testing preparation can be directed to the office or to academic advisors.

Testing

While standardized testing is not generally used at September School, we are committed to preparing students to be successful beyond high school. In the spirit of keeping as many doors open as possible as our students determine their post-graduation paths, we require all juniors to take the PLAN and PSAT as precursors to the ACT and SAT. The PSAT exam serves as the qualifying exam for the National Merit Scholarship Program for juniors.

The PLAN and the PSAT are administered on campus in October. Students who wish to take the ACT and/or SAT register with the ACT and College Board respectively.

Official test preparation and registration help are available upon request. The office posts general information, including registration deadlines and resources for both the ACT and SAT exams.

Starting Resources For Testing And College Planning

www.collegeincolorado.com

Featuring a free online account to help students track progress towards graduation, start the college application process, research financial aid and much more.

www.bigfuture.org

SAT information and online registration. Also has info about preparing for the PSAT.

www.collegeboard.org

SAT information and online registration. Also has info about preparing for the PSAT.

www.actstudent.org

ACT information and online registration. Also has information about the PLAN.

www.princetonreview.com

The Princeton Review official website.

www.kaplan.com

Kaplan Test Prep for both ACT and SAT and guidance for admissions.

www.bvsd.com/lifelonglearning

Boulder Valley School District Lifelong Learning program. Offers prep courses for SAT and ACT.

Special September School Programs

Community Class

Community is our opportunity several times per week to meet as an entire community. Community class is an opportunity to build and strengthen our school culture through open dialogue about important issues, exercise leadership, and deepen our relationships with one another. We do many fun activities through this class, talk about issues important to the school community, share announcements and experiences together. Every student is required to attend Community Class during second period, and credit is based on both attendance and participation.

Many students talk about the family atmosphere or feeling of home that is a part of our community. This is a place where they learn how to become concerned citizens, strong team members, responsible friends, and tomorrow's leaders. Community is an important component of the school program that facilitates this positive school culture.

Gladys Programming

Gladys is our unique name for our all-school programs. We bring guest speakers and outside performances, or use the time for community programs, discussions, or field trips. Gladys is also utilized for advisee groups and goal setting activities throughout the year. Please contact the office with programming suggestions for Gladys.

Group Class

Led by the school counselor, Group is an opportunity for students to talk about school concerns, teen issues, or their own personal issues in a confidential group space. Students sign up for group like a regular class and receive health credit for their participation. Group can be an especially helpful way for new students to socialize and learn how to function with other people

Students are encouraged to challenge themselves personally and emotionally, in addition to developing identities and forming trusting relationships. The school counselor helps them identify and communicate their feelings about relevant life issues. Students develop strategies for problem solving, stress management, and healthy lifestyle choices.

Senior Mysteries

Senior Mysteries is a special program for graduating seniors, consisting of several surprise activities throughout the year. It supports students emotionally through group meetings and rites-of-passage activities as they prepare for adulthood. This program is a mix of group and individual activities, and it is a critical component of senior-year development. All graduating seniors are required to participate. Details will be provided during the first quarter.

Off-Campus Programs & Special Activities

All September School policies are in effect during off-campus and after school programming, including class or all school field trips, college visit days, prom, follies, all-school trips and any other official school programs. If your student needs to be removed from off-campus programming for any violation of SHS policies, you will be contacted to make arrangements to provide transportation for your student.

Transportation To Off-Site Programs

In general, the school will provide transportation to off-site programs. Students should never drive their vehicles to off-site programs without permission from the office. Students are not allowed to drive other students without permission from all families involved and the office.

Extracurricular Sports And Activities

In many cases, students in independent schools are allowed to participate in extracurricular sports and activities offered by the Boulder Valley School District. September School encourages our students to take advantage of this opportunity. Each year, we typically have several students involved in after school sports with their home school. Families who are interested in this option should set it up directly with the school district. Students who participate in extracurricular sports may be eligible for physical education credit from September School.

Internship Program

Internships are scheduled for one day per month, instead of regular classes, and students spend the day engaging in and learning about different business and creative practices. All September School students participate in internships with local businesses and organizations across a variety of industries. Internships have included opportunities to work with the following agencies: The Humane Society of Boulder Valley, Colorado state government lobbyists, Special Effects Makeup, Dairy Center for the Arts, KGNU radio, Pachamama Farms, and many others. A September School staff member always accompanies students on all internship days.

Visiting Artists

September School invites several professional artists, who work as professionals in different creative media, to our campus each year. The artists spend time teaching our students about artistic processes and the business practices that support their work. Visiting Artists may be on campus for many days, or for many hours on a single day. Students who are interested in learning from a Visiting Artist can join the sessions as long as they receive instructor approval for any regularly scheduled classes that they may miss.

School Community

Community Member Agreement

At the beginning of each year, all students sign the Community Member Agreement, which has been included in the back of this handbook for reference. This is an important agreement for our community, and it establishes the expectations of how we respect others, the school, and ourselves.

The Community Member Agreement is referred to throughout the year. It represents the guidelines in place to ensure that September School continues to be a special place where students thrive. We take time on trips and during Community to meet in small groups and reflect on the four commitments we are all making as community members. Many of our goal-setting activities work in concert with these commitments.

Community Class

See the section on Special Programs for more details.

Fall and Winter Trips (September and February)

Every autumn and winter all students and staff attend a three-day, two-night adventure filled with new experiences, personal reflections, and community connections. During this time, the community will work and play together to cook meals, explore new challenges, identify personal and academic goals, and get to know one another outside of the normal school setting. Students room with other students and an instructor, collaborate with advisee groups for community tasks and goal setting, and have lots of free time to relax and play. **School trips are a mandatory part of the program.** Families who need exceptions/exemptions must contact the Head of School for approval and to discuss a substitute activity or assignment.

Spring Trips (May)

Spring Trips allow students to translate their understanding of community beyond our local area. They take a variety of forms, but generally involve a smaller group of staff and students exploring a new activity or personal challenge while away from school on a four-day overnight adventure. Trips in the past have included: whitewater rafting, mountain biking, backpacking, horseback riding, archaeology explorations, visiting art museums in Chicago, and much more. We offer an international option some years. **The cost of Spring Trips is NOT included in tuition.** Trip options and costs will vary depending on activities and number of participants, and will be communicated to families no later than April.

Family Community

Back to School Night

Back to School Night kicks off the new school year and provides an opportunity for families to meet and learn about plans for the coming school year. Attendance is strongly encouraged, as this event is the starting point for the ongoing conversation between parents and staff.

Winter and Spring Follies

For one evening each semester, the performing and visual art classes showcase student talent for families and friends. The community takes pride in a variety of art mediums—poetry reading, plays, photography, visual art, and sword demonstrations are just some of the different kinds of artistry on display. Potluck dinner is served, and the school supplies light refreshments.

Graduation

September School graduation is a unique and powerful experience that honors each graduate individually. While containing elements of a traditional graduation, our ceremony invites students and instructors to reflect on their journey and share thoughts with the audience of family, friends, alumni, and the community. We invite all families to attend (even those with non-graduating students) and take part in this important rite of passage and celebration of accomplishment.

Fall and Spring Cleanup

Cleanup days are an important part of September School's success. Twice a year, our community comes together to make improvements to the school grounds. These improvements include projects such as painting, gardening and landscaping, organization of storage spaces, and cleaning. All families and students are strongly encouraged to participate.

Volunteer Opportunities

September School thrives because so many of its community members become involved with the school. The program is continually evolving and we always welcome new ideas for programs and services. Families may contact the office if they have ideas that can supplement students' learning experiences and continue supporting the school.

Medical Care

Families are responsible to ensure that signed copies of medical forms referenced in this section are on file with the office and contain up-to-date information. September School employs a number of faculty and staff members with First Aid and CPR certification. First aid supplies are present in every building on campus.

OTC Medication Policy Change

As of August 2015, September School will cease providing Tylenol (acetaminophen), Advil (ibuprofen), and other OTC pain medication to students. The school has decided that it will no longer provide OTC pain medication in the interest of student safety. If your student requires these OTC medications, we will set up the OTC medication in our office as we do prescription medication (see Prescription Medication Release Form below).

Registration packets this year included an Authorization for Administration of Medications form that listed both these drugs; this decision was made after the registration packets were sent out. We will still have first aid products for minor cuts, scrapes, bruises, and allergic reactions, and we will administer them to your student per your direction on the signed form.

Emergency Injury or Illness

For injuries requiring professional treatment, September School will attempt to notify you immediately and determine the best course of action.

If you have provided a signed Emergency Information Form, September School will have:

- A list of alternative emergency contacts
- Your student's basic medical information
- Authorization to seek qualified medical treatment
- Medical insurance details that may be needed to facilitate emergency treatment.

Parents must coordinate with the office if their student needs EpiPens®, inhalers, or other emergency medication or procedures for allergies or illnesses.

Prescription Medication Release Form

Students are not permitted to carry controlled prescription medications on their person while at school or on any school trips, even if the prescription medication is in the student's own name. Parents or guardians must sign a Prescription Medication Release Form and provide a supply of prescription medication for the staff to safely administer. Prescription medication is locked away at all times, and students must take their medication in the presence of a staff member.

APPENDICES

- Daily Schedule
- 2015-2016 Graduation Requirements
- Tuition Policies
- Community Member Agreement
- 2015-2016 Academic Calendar

September School Daily Schedule

The office is open from 8 am to 4 pm during the school year.

8:30am – 9:20am	First Period
9:25am – 9:50am	Community
9:55am – 10:45am	Third Period
10:50am – 11:40am	Fourth Period
11:40am – 12:25pm	Lunch
12:30pm – 1:20pm	Fifth Period
1:25pm – 2:15pm	Sixth Period
2:20pm – 3:10pm	Seventh Period

TUESDAY SCHEDULE

8:30am – 9:20am	First Period
9:25am – 10:15am	Third Period
10:20am - 11:10am	Fourth Period
11:10am – 12:30pm	Lunch/Faculty Meeting
12:30pm – 1:20pm	Fifth Period
1:25pm – 2:15pm	Sixth Period
2:20pm – 3:10pm	Seventh Period

2015-2016 Graduation Requirements

A **minimum of 240 credits** over 4 years (8 semesters) of school in grades 9-12 are required to graduate from September High School. A full class schedule averages 32 credits per semester. A total of 260 credits or more is recommended for students who are continuing on to college after graduation.

A student who transfers from a previous educational program is required to provide an official transcript detailing the credits earned. Transferred credits, including those earned through approved online programs, will be evaluated by the administration.

Language Arts: 40 credits in grades 9-12

- These 40 credits can be completed through a combination of standard Language Arts classes and Language Arts electives; however, each student **must** complete Language Arts 2 (or an equivalent 11th grade level English course) prior to graduation.
- Language Arts 3 is strongly recommended for students who are continuing on to college after graduation.

Social Studies: 30 credits in grades 9-12

- 10 credits are required to be in American History.
- 5 credits are required to be in Government.
- 10 credits are required to be completed either in one year of World History (or equivalent) or in one semester of World History (or equivalent) and one semester of Geography.
- The remaining 5 credits may be completed in any Social Studies course.

Mathematics: 20 credits in grades 9-12

- 10 credits are required to be in either Algebra I or in a higher level math class.
- 10 credits are required to be in Geometry.
- An additional 10-20 credits in higher level math classes is strongly recommended for students who are continuing on to college after graduation.
- ***Each student is required to take an additional 10 credits of Math courses and/or Science courses, for a total of 50 credits earned in Math and Science.***

Science: 20 credits in grades 9-12

- 10 credits are required to be in a Life Sciences course such as Biology, Anatomy, or Ecology.
- 10 credits are required to be in a Physical Sciences course such as Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Meteorology, or Astronomy.
- An additional 10-20 credits in science courses is strongly recommended for students who are continuing on to college after graduation.
- ***Each student is required to take an additional 10 credits of Science courses and/or Math courses, for a total of 50 credits earned in Math and Science.***

Physical Education and Health: 15 credits in grades 9-12

- 5 credits are required to be in Physical Education courses such as Volleyball, Basketball, Weights, or Martial Arts. Credit may be available for a student's participation in extracurricular organized team sports.
- 5 credits are required to be in Health courses such as Human Issues, Mind Body Wellness, or Group class.
- The remaining 5 credits may be completed in any Physical Education or Health class.

Arts: 15 credits in grades 9-12

- These 15 credits can be completed through a combination of any Arts electives including, amongst a wide variety of offerings, Mixed Media, Photoshop, Music Workshop, Music Theory, and Theatre.

Foreign Language

To complete this requirement, a student must do one of the following:

- Complete 4 successive semesters of study in a foreign language with a grade of "C" or better in each semester. Exceptions may be made for students who receive a "D" in one or more semesters, but who are nonetheless, with instructor approval, progressed to the next level.
- Successfully complete both semesters of Spanish III.
- Demonstrate proficiency in Spanish or in another language.

Community

To complete this requirement, a student must be enrolled in the following:

- 1 Community Class credit per semester
- 1 Community Trip credit per semester

Independent Study

- Independent study contracts will be allowed for graduation credit.
- All contracts must be submitted in writing and must include the support of a sponsoring teacher and of the administration. The sponsoring teacher will monitor the project and will determine the student's grade.
- No more than 30 credits may be taken in Independent Study.

Elective Credits

- The remainder of the student's 240 required credits may be completed through any combination of further study in a core academic area, elective coursework, or independent study.

Honors Credits

- With instructor approval, a student may do additional extracurricular coursework in order to receive honors credit for a class in which they are enrolled.
- The honors credit program allows a student to get a weighted grade for a class in which they are enrolled, and **requires 30 hours of additional work outside of class.**
- The details of any honors program are to be worked out individually on a case-by-case basis between the student and instructor of the class in which honors credit is being sought.

September School Tuition Policies

Full year tuition for the 2015-2016 academic year is \$17,500. This amount includes the non-refundable \$300 deposit, which is due when the Registration Packet is turned in. International students pay an additional \$500 fee. Tuition is prorated for students who enroll during the school year. Tuition pays for materials and two mandatory school-sponsored trips, Fall Trip and Winter Trip. Tuition does not cover the mandatory Spring Trip.

Tuition is the responsibility of those guardians who sign the Billing Information and Fees Agreement in the Registration Packet. Signees agree to the following terms in the Registration Packet:

“(1) It is my responsibility to pay tuition and fees as outlined in the Tuition Payment Policies & Procedures Addendum for this form.

(2) Students may enroll at any point in the year. Tuition will be prorated accordingly. Enrollment at September High School is for a full year and tuition and fees are billed in increments delineated by a chosen payment plan option according to the signed 2015-2016 Billing Information and Fees Agreement. Refunds or reductions in tuition may be given to families whose students withdraw (with 30 days notice) or are expelled. There are no refunds or reductions in tuition for students who have an excessive amount of absences. Financial responsibility to September School for tuition and fees extends to the length of your payment plan unless prior arrangements have been made that dictate otherwise.

(3) I understand that if my payments are delinquent, September School reserves the right to execute the third party collections process described in the Tuition Payment Policies & Procedures Addendum for this form.

(4) No student records, including grades, transcripts, diplomas, or any other student information, will be released until a student’s tuition account balance is paid in full.

(5) Financial assistance at September School is need based and guided by an objective calculation provided by School and Student Services for Financial Aid (SSS) in Princeton, NJ. In most cases, financial aid awards are given in the form of an outright grant. In order to receive an award, families must demonstrate that they have a need for this type of assistance. Recipients of financial aid are expected to meet the same standards of performance as other students; they are not subject to special standards or other requirements that would treat them unequally.”

Signees set up payment plans and accounts with the office when they return the Registration Packet. Payments are made online through FACTS, a payment management company. Accounts in delinquency are reported to credit bureaus and are sent to collections.

Withdrawal: Per the terms of the Billing Information and Fees Agreement, 30 days’ notice in writing of a family’s intent to withdraw their student from September School is required in order to receive a refund or tuition reduction. This notice may be delivered via email or post to the administration office. Neither the student’s last day at school nor a verbal notice is considered proper notice of withdrawal.

Community Member Agreement

(Signed during the first week of school)

September High School is an intimate and supportive learning community that fosters individual development and reawakens the love of learning. We empower ourselves to be critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible citizens. Many of our students feel like this place is a second home to them. Everyone should feel welcome here and together we are all responsible for creating this unique place where we all are growing and learning.

To be successful in this community, we ask everyone to make the following **FOUR COMMITMENTS**:

SHOW UP

Showing up is about coming **on time**, being ready to participate, having whatever materials are needed, and having a clear mind, ready to focus.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

If you are not here to grow academically and as a whole person, then there is no purpose for you being here. This is a great place to challenge yourself to go further in your education, in who you are as a person, and in how you impact the community.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Whatever life throws at you, you will get better results if you look at what you yourself can do, instead of relying on or blaming others. No one can or should take responsibility for you. Part of becoming an adult is developing the skills that make you able to respond to anything that comes your way.

BE RESPECTFUL

Everyone deserves to feel like they are respected and are welcome in the community. Respect yourself, others, and the physical environment. This could mean throwing away your trash, going out of your way to be nice to someone, and abiding by the no-tobacco policy, among other things. Of the four agreements, being respectful has the most impact on the community.

We also have **TWO BOUNDARIES** that we need everyone to follow to make the community work well:

NO ABUSE

The opposite of being respectful is being abusive. This could be physical abuse (i.e. fighting) or emotional abuse (i.e. being mean to someone). You will see that this rarely happens at September High School, and when people cross this boundary it is taken seriously because it is a threat to the positive culture that we value and expect.

A SUBSTANCE FREE SCHOOL

There is no place for drugs and alcohol in our school. Using drugs or alcohol at school disrespects your teachers, other students, and the mission of the school. Our substance abuse policy lays out in detail the school's response to use or possession of substances or paraphernalia. When a student violates this boundary, the school intervenes with a comprehensive approach that emphasizes education, support and enforcement. Unfortunately, as in the past, students who are unable to respect this boundary despite other interventions from the school will be expelled.

By signing this agreement, I am stating that I would like to be a member of the September High School community. I will do my best to uphold the four agreements by showing up, taking responsibility, challenging myself, and being respectful. I understand and agree to follow the two boundaries of no abuse and a substance free school. I understand that the staff is here in part to help me stay on track with these agreements and boundaries and that if I violate them, I might not be able to remain here.

