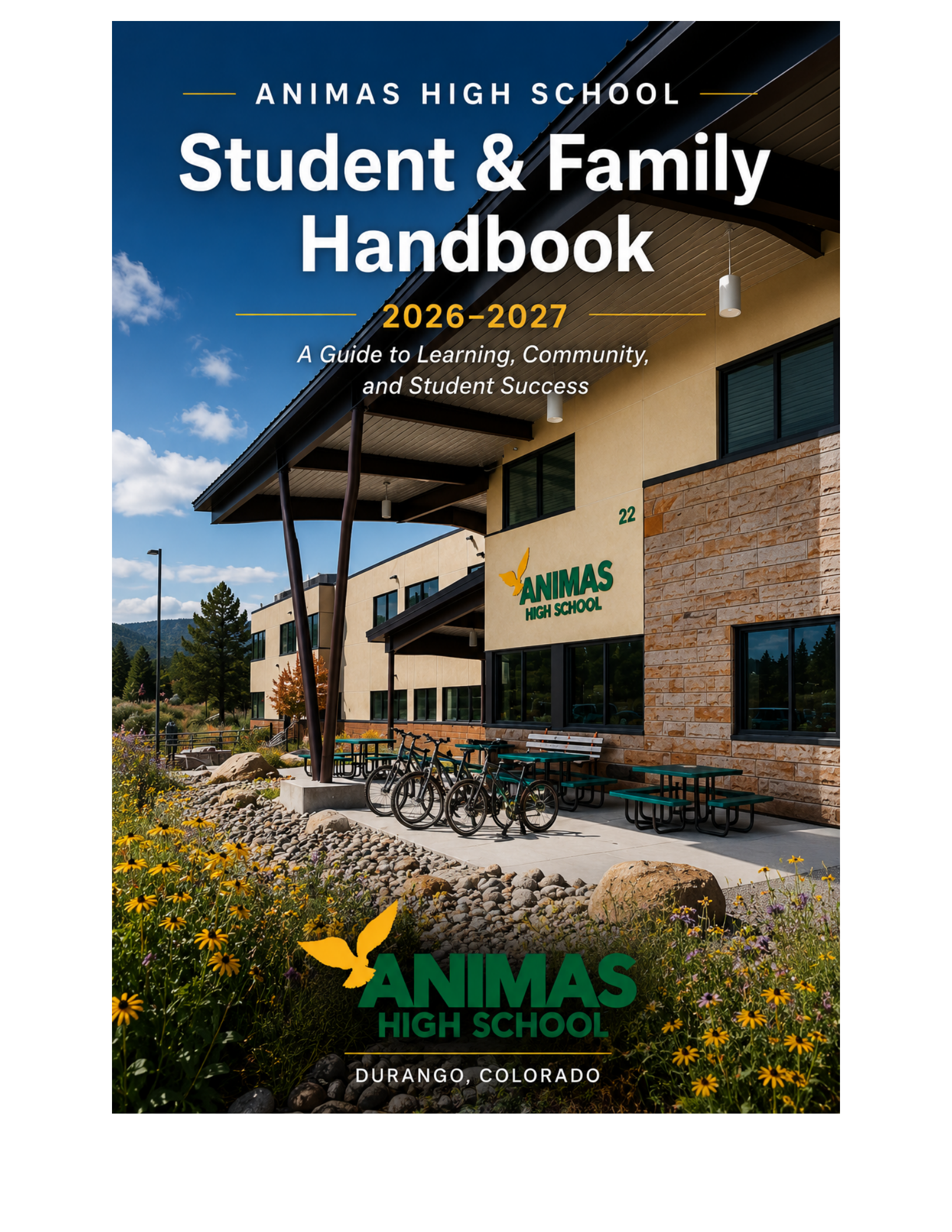




— ANIMAS HIGH SCHOOL —

Student & Family Handbook

— 2026–2027 —

*A Guide to Learning, Community,
and Student Success*



ANIMAS
HIGH SCHOOL

DURANGO, COLORADO

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Animas High School

Student & Family Handbook

2026–2027 Edition

This Student & Family Handbook has been prepared to help students and families understand the educational program, school expectations, operational practices, and community values of Animas High School.

The handbook serves as a practical guide throughout the school year by explaining how the school operates, identifying important student and family expectations, and directing readers to additional resources when appropriate.

Governance and Authority

Animas High School operates in accordance with applicable federal and state law, its Charter Contract, and the Board Policies adopted by the Animas High School Board of Directors.

This handbook summarizes many of the practices and procedures that support the daily operation of the school. It is intended to provide practical guidance and should not be interpreted as a complete statement of Board Policy or applicable law.

When a conflict exists between this handbook and an officially adopted Board Policy or applicable law, the governing law or Board Policy shall control.

The Head of School is responsible for implementing Board Policies through administrative procedures necessary for the effective operation of the school.

Handbook Revisions

This handbook is reviewed annually and may be revised periodically to reflect:

- changes in Board Policy;
- changes in federal or Colorado law;
- improvements to administrative procedures;
- organizational or operational improvements;
- publication corrections; or
- evolving educational practices.

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ABOUT ANIMAS HIGH SCHOOL

History

Located in Durango, CO, Animas High School opened in the fall of 2009 to offer rigorous, individualized college preparation based on the design principles of the nationally acclaimed [High Tech High](#) model. Animas High School is a public charter school serving approximately 200 students in grades 9-12. We are chartered through the [Colorado Charter School Institute](#). AHS graduated its first class of seniors in 2013. Our dedicated faculty and staff are lifelong learners who are invested in our school and students. View faculty profiles on the school's website at <https://animashighschool.com/faculty-staff/>.

Mission and Values

Animas High School prepares all students for college and post-secondary success by creating critical thinkers and engaged citizens through an innovative, student-centered, project-based curriculum.

AHS Values: Engagement, Challenge, Shared Intellectual Work, Responsibility to Others and Self-Awareness

Animas High School is committed to offering a transformative educational experience to students of all backgrounds and ability levels. In preparing students for postsecondary success, AHS fosters the fundamental attributes of perspective taking, advocacy, perseverance, evidence use and refinement. Students strive to cultivate personal, academic and cultural excellence and learn to embody professional standards of behavior and scholarship. Ultimately, students will become active and informed citizens who meaningfully engage in their communities.

Awards and Distinctions

AHS has received recognition in the following ways:

- Colorado Department of Education Promising Practice for TWIGS Family Engagement Program (2023)
- Colorado Charter School Institute Charter Champion: Zoell Lhomi Nuppa '24 (2023)
- Colorado Charter School Institute Distinction School (2013-2021, 2023)
- Colorado League of Charter Schools Charter School Teacher of the Year Finalist: Humanities Teacher Ashley Carruth (2020)
- Colorado League of Charter Schools Charter School Lifetime Achievement Finalist: Board Member Tom Morrissey (2020)
- College Success Award from Great Schools (2018)
- Colorado Department of Education ICAP Honorable Mention Award for Career Exploration Program (2018)
- John Irwin Schools of Excellence Award (2011)

- Colorado League of Charter Schools Charter School Advocate of the Year: AHS Co-Founder Jesse Hutt (2019)
- Colorado League of Charter Schools Charter School Teacher of the Year Finalist: Science Teacher Dave Heerschap (2012)
- Colorado League of Charter Schools Charter School Leader of the Year Finalist: Head of School Michael Ackerman (2012)
- UC Boulder Outstanding Colorado Educator Award: Foreign Language Teacher Susy Raleigh (2017), Math Teacher Hannah Starbuck (2018)
- Colorado STAR Teacher Council appointees: Humanities Teacher Lori Fisher (2011), Humanities Teacher Ashley Carruth (2011), and Science Teacher Steve Smith (2014)
- Jared Polis Award: Humanities Teacher John Fisher (2011)
- Boettcher Scholarship Alternate (2016, 2017)
- Daniels Fund Scholarship Finalist (2016)
- National Merit Scholar (2012, 2016)
- DaVinci Science Center Student Award (2016, 2017)

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Non-Discrimination Notice and Equal Educational Opportunity

Animas High School is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment where every member of the school community is treated with dignity and respect. The school does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, admissions, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or Colorado law.

The school prohibits discrimination, harassment, bullying based on a protected characteristic, and retaliation against any individual who reports concerns or participates in an investigation. Students, families, employees, and community members are encouraged to report concerns promptly so that supportive measures and appropriate responses can be provided. Reports involving discrimination, harassment, or Title IX concerns may be made to the school's Title IX Coordinator or another school administrator.

Additional information regarding reporting procedures, complaint resolution, supportive measures, and Title IX is available in the Board-adopted [Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity Policy](#).

Enrollment

Animas High School is an open-enrollment public charter high school serving students in grades 9–12. The school is committed to providing equitable access to all eligible students and conducts its enrollment process in accordance with Colorado law and Board Policy.

Enrollment for the following school year begins each winter through the school's published Intent to Enroll process. If applications exceed available seats at a grade level, students are admitted through a public enrollment lottery conducted according to Board Policy.

Board Policy establishes enrollment priorities for certain applicants, including eligible siblings of current students and limited priority for children of employees, Board members, or founders, as permitted by law.

Students offered admission must complete the required registration process by the published deadline. Applicants who are not immediately offered admission are placed on a waiting list and may be offered enrollment if space becomes available.

Animas High School also offers a limited January enrollment process for eligible students in grades 9–11, subject to available capacity and Board Policy.

Current enrollment procedures, registration timelines, lottery information, and required forms are available on the school's website and in the Board-adopted [AHS Enrollment Policy](#)

Visitors and Guests

Parents, guardians and community members are welcome and encouraged to visit Animas High School at any time. Please speak directly with our staff and administrative team to set up appointments with individuals directly.

In general, Animas High School does not permit student visitors on campus unless they have been invited to participate in a specific class or activity. During lunch, student visitors will be allowed on campus at the discretion of the Head of School. Any student visitor must sign-in at the Main Office.

AHS students may invite non-AHS guests to AHS sponsored off-campus events. Each Osprey may bring one non-Osprey guest who attends a different high school and/or is under 21. When they arrive, the Osprey will sign in his/her guest with the staff member at the door. AHS students are responsible for the behavior of their guests and all attendees are expected to follow AHS rules, whether they attend AHS or not.

Hours of Operation

During the school year, the school is open from 8am to 4pm Monday-Friday.

Contact Information

Animas High School
22 Osprey Way, Durango, CO 81301 (physical address)
P.O. Box 3496, Durango, CO 81302 (mailing address)
Phone: (970) 247-2474
Fax: (970) 247-2483
www.animashighschool.com

COMMUNICATION AT ANIMAS HIGH SCHOOL

Strategies for Staying Informed and Keeping Communication Open

At Animas High School, we value open, direct and honest communication and we encourage students and families to reach out to us when questions, concerns and ideas arise.

- **Communicating as a Family**--We encourage families to discuss the Animas High School experience daily and feel that this is probably the most important part of the whole process!
- **Communicating with AHS Faculty**--We encourage students to speak directly with teachers when they have questions, issues or ideas. The most effective way for parents/guardians to communicate with faculty is email; contact information for all Animas High School staff and faculty is on our website.
- **Communicating with AHS Administrators**--Students are welcome to meet with administrators when they would like to discuss concerns or ideas about the school. Parents/guardians can email administrators or call the main office to arrange an appointment.
- **Infinite Campus**--Animas High School uses an online information system called Infinite Campus (IC) that allows students and parents/guardians to keep track of individual class grades and attendance. Our teachers update grades regularly in IC. IC also tracks fees.
- **Digital Portfolios**--Each teacher and student at Animas High School maintains a Digital Portfolio (DP). Faculty DPs are websites that the teachers use to post information about their courses, including syllabi, policies, etc. DPs are great resources for students and parents to stay up to date with each class; links to faculty DPs are listed on our website (<http://animashighschool.com/faculty/>). Students use their DPs to showcase projects and reflect upon their learning; links to student DPs are also on the AHS website (<http://animashighschool.com/digital-portfolios/>).
- **News from the Nest**--Each week, Animas High School sends out an electronic newsletter, *News from the Nest*, which announces upcoming events, highlights recent successes, addresses community issues, etc. Please make sure your email address is correct in IC and with our enrollment office to ensure that you receive these emails.
- **AHS Main Office**--The Animas High School front desk is staffed from 8:00am to 4:00 pm each school day. You can call the main office at (970) 247-2474 or email mainoffice@animashighschool.com at any time with any sort of question. And, of course, you can always walk in the front door to talk to us!

Communication about School Closures

Animas High School will communicate with students/parents regarding weather closures in the following ways:

- By 6:30am, AHS will have a message on the [AHS Facebook page](#) regarding any closures/delays.

- By 6:30am AHS will send a phone message and text message to families via our emergency communication system (IC). Note: families must have current information in our student information system Infinite Campus in order to receive these messages.

Student Records, Privacy & Fees

Maintaining accurate student records helps Animas High School provide safe, effective, and responsive educational services. Families are responsible for notifying the Main Office promptly whenever contact information, mailing addresses, emergency contacts, or legal custody information changes.

Parents, guardians, and eligible students may request access to educational records in accordance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**. Requests for transcripts, enrollment verification, attendance records, or other official student records should be directed to the **Registrar**.

The school protects confidential student information in accordance with federal and state law. Personally identifiable student information is released only as permitted by law or with appropriate authorization.

In accordance with Board Policy, Animas High School does **not** collect or disclose information regarding a student's or family's immigration or citizenship status except when specifically required by law. School employees may not provide personal identifying information to federal immigration authorities without appropriate legal authorization as required by Board Policy.

Additional information regarding student records, privacy protections, FERPA rights, and immigration-related privacy safeguards is available in Chapter 7 and applicable Board policies.

School Fees

Certain courses, activities, and programs may require fees to offset instructional materials, specialized equipment, travel, certifications, or other educational expenses.

Whenever possible, Animas High School works to ensure that fees do not prevent student participation. Fee waivers or reductions are available for families who qualify under school procedures.

Current fees, payment deadlines, and financial assistance information are available through the Main Office and on the school's website.

Animas High School has the following fee schedule:

Type of Fee	Cost	Purpose	For Whom	Alternative
Annual Technology Fee	\$100	Offsets cost of providing technology infrastructure for school	Mandatory for all	Waived or reduced for those who qualify
X-block	\$10-\$150	Offsets cost of providing physical education	Mandatory; cost depends on which course student selects	Waived or reduced for those who qualify
Osprey Blocks	\$10-\$300	Offsets cost of excursions and courses	Mandatory; cost depends on which course student selects	Waived or reduced for those who qualify

Fees are waived for students that qualify. Families can fill out a Meal Application Form to qualify.

Protecting Student Information

Animas High School is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of students and families.

The school:

- Maintains educational records in accordance with FERPA.
- Protects confidential student information.
- Does not request or collect immigration status except where required by law.
- Does not disclose personal identifying information to federal immigration authorities unless required by a valid judicial order and Board Policy.
- Provides annual staff training regarding privacy and confidentiality obligations.

Questions regarding student records or privacy protections should be directed to the Head of School or Registrar.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Public Exhibitions of Work

Students have opportunities to present their work to authentic audiences in ways including Exhibitions, Student Led Conferences (SLCs) and Presentations of Learning (POLs). *All* of these are mandatory for students. Students who miss one of these events will have an incomplete in their classes, at teacher discretion, until the experience is remediated. These

unique learning measures and alternative assessment opportunities augment state accountability requirements. They offer ways to gauge and demonstrate the levels of attainment in vital aspects of our design principles that are not readily or adequately measured by standardized assessment.

Exhibitions

Projects are presented publicly by students to authentic audiences consisting of their peers, teachers, parents and/or community members. Showing students' work is important because it's motivating; exhibitions increase students' effort and improve the quality of the final product. Animas High School sponsors multiple exhibitions each year, some on campus and others offsite to encourage community attendance and promote public access to students' work. Exhibition is an essential experience for all AHS students. Professional dress and participation are mandatory.

Student Led Conferences (SLCs)

Student Led Conferences are similar to traditional Parent-Teacher Conferences but the SLC is facilitated by the student. Students lead a focused dialogue with their parents/guardians concerning their performance and growth at Animas High School. SLCs are an integral part of the reflective process and result in a clear understanding and agreement of "where students are at." SLCs occur once a semester and require professional dress. SLCs are mandatory for students and at least one parent/guardian.

Presentations of Learning (POLs)

A Presentation of Learning is a formal presentation given by students to a panel of peers, community members, administrators, teachers and/or parents at the end of each semester. Before POLs, students practice their presentations, focus on specific public-speaking skills, receive feedback from teachers and peers and finally refine and rehearse their POL delivery. At the end of the second semester, transitional presentations are used to determine whether students are ready to advance to the next grade. Requirements for TPOLs are grade-level specific, but typically include an oral presentation, use of the student's digital portfolio and evidence or artifacts from their core classes. Students who attempt but do not pass POLs/TPOLs are given additional opportunities to present once they have refined their work based upon the review panel's feedback. Students must continue to redo their POL/TPOL until they pass.

Curriculum and Credits

Animas High School is characterized by a rigorous curriculum. Within their core classes, students will find numerous opportunities to go deeper through project choices and challenge extensions. Students looking for more challenge also have the opportunity to take electives offered by AHS teachers, dual enrollment classes offered on campus and concurrent enrollment at local colleges when it does not conflict with core classes or the ability to be considered a full-time student at AHS.

Graduation Requirements

To earn an Animas High School diploma, students must successfully complete all Board-approved graduation requirements, including required coursework, credit requirements, Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) expectations, and demonstrations of College and Career Readiness.

Graduation requirements are established by the Board of Directors and are periodically reviewed to ensure alignment with Colorado graduation guidelines, postsecondary expectations, and the mission of Animas High School.

Students and families are encouraged to review graduation progress annually with school staff to ensure timely completion of all requirements.

Note that a semester-long course is the equivalent of 0.5 credit hours; see [AHS Credit Review Form](#) for details.

Discipline or Project	Requirements
Language Arts (included in core Humanities)	4.0 credits
Social Studies (included in core Humanities)	4.0 credits
Math	4.0 credits
Science	3.0 credits
World Language	1.0 credit (must be 2 semesters of same world language)
Art	1.0 credit
Electives	7.0 credits
XBlock (physical education)	1.5 credits (equivalent of 3 years, with each quarter-long class .125 credit)
LINK Internship	1.0 credit
Senior Project	1 year (non credit-bearing, part of Humanities 12)

9th Grade REQUIRED CORE CLASSES	9th Grade ELECTIVE CHOICES
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All 9th graders will be automatically placed into the following courses, which are required: • Humanities 9 (2 periods) • Biology • Math 1* • Digital Art Foundations (1 semester, fall or spring) <i>In addition, all 9th graders are required to enroll in a fall Osprey Block</i>	In addition to their required classes, 9th grade students have 2 periods available for electives one semester and 3 periods available the other semester. <i>Freshpeople at AHS may not have free periods</i>
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10th Grade REQUIRED CORE CLASSES	10th Grade ELECTIVE CHOICES
All 10th graders will be automatically placed into the following courses, which are required: • Humanities 10 (2 periods)* • Physics • Math 2* <i>In addition, all 10th graders are required to enroll in a fall Osprey Block</i> <i>* Humanities 10 meets Genocide and Holocaust Studies State Standards</i>	In addition to their required classes, 10th grade students have 3 periods available for electives. <i>Sophomores at AHS may not have free periods.</i>

11th Grade REQUIRED CORE CLASSES	11th Grade ELECTIVE CHOICES
All 11th graders will be automatically placed into the following courses, which are required: • Humanities 11 (2 periods)* • Chemistry • Math 3* <i>In addition, all 11th graders are required to enroll in a fall Osprey Block</i> <i>* Humanities 11 meets Civics/Government State Standards</i>	In addition to their required classes, 11th grade students have 3 periods available for electives. <i>Juniors at AHS may have 1 free period. If they are taking a concurrent enrollment class they may have 2 free periods.</i>

12th Grade REQUIRED CORE CLASSES	12th Grade ELECTIVE CHOICES
All 12th graders will be automatically placed into the following courses, which are required: • Humanities 12 (2 periods) • Statistics* • Algebra for College <i>In addition, all 12th graders are required to enroll in a fall Osprey Block</i>	In addition to their required classes, 12th grade students have 4 periods available for electives. <i>In addition to Humanities 12 and Statistics, seniors must take at least 2 electives OR 1 concurrent enrollment course (3 credit hours).</i>

**Please note: Students can place out of grade-level math classes. See [AHS Mathematics Program Overview](#) for details.*

Elective Registration Priority

Because we are committed to keeping class sizes small, some elective classes may fill and some students may not receive their 1st choice. We give priority in the following ways:

1. Seniors get 1st priority (with a specific eye towards what they need to graduate)
2. Juniors get 2nd priority
3. Sophomores get 3rd priority
4. Freshmen get 4th priority

Elective Grading

Elective classes are academically rigorous and specialized in their content. All elective courses are graded (with the exception of Core Content Support), and will factor into a student's GPA.

Independent Study

AHS does not accommodate independent study requests.

Online Classes

AHS does not accept **online classes** in place of core classes or elective credits, except in these cases, each which must be approved by administration:

- students transfer to AHS with accredited online coursework on their transcript
- students have exhausted sequential course offerings (for example, in math or world languages)
- students are unable to take a class necessary to meet graduation requirements due to the structure of the AHS course schedule
- students complete accredited courses in their own time, and at their own expense

AHS will not assume the cost of online classes unless a student has exhausted sequential course offerings. AHS will not assume the cost of online courses taken for credit recovery.

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment

AHS students have the opportunity to take classes for concurrent high school and college credit at Fort Lewis College (FLC), Pueblo Community College (PCC), Pike's Peak State College and Western Colorado University. FLC classes are taught on the FLC campus, by FLC instructors. PCC classes are taught both at AHS, by AHS credentialed instructors and at PCC regional campuses, taught by PCC instructors. Pikes Peak and Western classes are taught by credentialed instructors on our campus. For more information about concurrent and dual enrollment, please see the [Concurrent/Dual Enrollment Guidelines, Procedure, and Agreement](#)

Early Graduation

We believe that most students benefit from four years of high school experience. However, in some cases, students are ready for postsecondary education or other opportunities at an earlier age. Therefore, the Head of School may grant permission to students wishing to graduate early, provided the student has met all graduation requirements.

Teacher Requests

We are thoughtful and intentional about how we determine a student's schedule, and we do not place students in classes based upon individual student or parent requests for a particular teacher. Please understand that we believe this to be the most fair and equitable system for all of our students.

Grading Scale

For AHS courses as well as select Pueblo Community College concurrent enrollment courses, AHS uses a 4-point grading scale to evaluate academic work, where a grade of A equals 4.0 points, A- equals 3.7 points, with the scale continuing as indicated below. The minimum passing grade is C-. No credit is assigned below a C-, but points are still calculated into the GPA. A grade of "A" represents academic achievement of 94% or higher.

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

Some classes are graded on a pass/fail, including XBlock and LINK. If a student drops an elective class in the first two weeks it will not appear on the transcript.

Fort Lewis College dual enrollment classes and select Pueblo Community College concurrent enrollment classes, AHS uses a 5-point (weighted) calculation to factor into students' GPA. Weighted classes are indicated as such in the AHS Course Catalog.

A grade of A in a weighted course equals 5.0 points, B equals 4.0 points, with the scale continuing as indicated below. The minimum passing grade is C. No credit is assigned below a C, but points are still calculated into the GPA

A = 5.00	B = 4.00	C = 3.00	D = 2.00	F = 1.00
	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D- = 0.67	

Remediating Credits

Animas High School requires that students receive a C- (70%) or higher in all core academic courses and electives in order to receive credit. Sometimes students enter AHS as transfer students and are missing credits due to the curriculum at the prior school being different from

the AHS curriculum. For students who are short on credits, either because they have failed a class or came in as a transfer missing a course, options for remediating that credit include:

- Participate in AHS Summer School
- Remediate credits through an accredited online program under supervision of AHS staff, either during summer or during the school year; online courses labeled as “Credit Recovery” must match the *specific* courses a student has taken and failed (e.g. to make up a failed Physics class by taking an online class, the student must take online Physics Credit Recovery; an online Biology Credit Recovery would *not* count)
- Remediate credits through an elective in the same academic discipline as the course they did not pass
- Repeat a core course if they are repeating a grade level
- Students who do not pass their core math class during the regular academic year will need to remediate that credit. There are a few ways students might do this:
 - Option 1: Online Math Remediation (over the summer):
 - Students complete and pass an approved summer math course equivalent to the curriculum of the failed course.
 - Should there be a cost for the summer class, it will be at the expense of the student and/or their caretakers.
 - The summer course must be completed with a passing grade (70% or higher) to be eligible for enrollment in the next math level.
 - Option 2: Supported Online Math Remediation (during the school year)
 - Students may enroll in an approved online remediation course equivalent to the curriculum of the failed course.
 - The student will be enrolled in a one period support class aimed at helping them fill in skills gaps as they complete the online course.
 - The online course must be completed with a passing grade (70% or higher) to be eligible for enrollment in the next math level.
 - Option 3: Double Up on Math Classes (by teacher recommendation only)
 - Upon teacher recommendation, a student may take the option of taking two core math classes the following year.
 - Option 3: Math Foundations (by teacher recommendation only)
 - Upon teacher recommendation, a student may be given the opportunity to take a math foundations class concurrently with their regular core math class in the semester following the failed math core class.
 - If the student successfully passes both their core math class AND the math foundations class (70% or higher), this would remediate one prior semester of failed core math

All Animas High School core courses are approved and transferable to other schools, and are recognized by colleges and universities. Animas High School does not offer the same courses or the same sequence of courses as many other high schools. In some instances, this has caused 11th and 12th grade students transferring to other schools to make-up courses that were not offered in the traditional sequence, or at all, at Animas High School. Students and

parents/guardians are advised to take Animas High School's unique academic program into account when making decisions to enroll at Animas High School and to transfer to other schools.

Osprey Blocks

Osprey Blocks are multi-week long required courses designed to engage students through academically rigorous, cross-disciplinary, immersive studies that connect classroom learning to powerful, real-world experiences. The world becomes our classroom, and Osprey Block classes take advantage of the shift in our schedule by engaging in more frequent off-campus excursions and activities, including wilderness-based expeditions and travel. Osprey Blocks are team-taught, and students receive academic credit upon successful completion.

Just like classes that have course fees for special materials or activities, most of our Osprey Blocks have a cost. The cost may cover certification in content such as Wilderness First Aid, raft rentals, transportation, food or overnight trips. If a family struggles to pay the cost of a Block, we will work with them and figure out a way to attend the Block of their choice. Please note that Osprey Blocks that include international travel are open to students who have previously attended AHS, not to incoming 9th graders or transfer students.

LINK Internships

At Animas High School, learning is connected to the world beyond our classrooms. As a graduation requirement, all juniors complete a LINK Internship for three weeks, participating in a year-long curriculum that prepares them for the experience. LINK stands for Leading Internships for New Knowledge. Students create resumes, engage in interviews and document the internship experience through digital portfolios. LINK culminates in an exhibition in which students showcase their learning and their internship projects. Through an internship, students connect their coursework to the working world, learn how to thrive in a professional environment, refine college and career goals and give back to the local and global community. Students have participated in internships across the nation and around the world.

Senior Project

All students must successfully complete a Senior Project to graduate. Senior Project is an in-depth study of a focused, individually-selected research topic, under the guidance of a Senior Project Advisor. Senior Projects include a college-level research paper, an action project, a thesis defense TED-style talk and an exhibition of learning.

SCHOOL CULTURE

At AHS, we believe that student wellbeing and belonging are a critical foundation for learning. We have developed an array of programs and practices to cultivate physical, mental, social and academic health for all students, including Clubs, NEST Meetings, Osprey Block Advisory Group Meetings and XBlock. Our goal is that every student finds a place where they can belong and connect with other students and adults.

Advisory

Advisory provides students with the opportunity to meet weekly during the school day in mixed-grade groups led by multiple advisors. More than a scheduled meeting, Advisory serves as a consistent home base where every student is known, supported, challenged, and connected. It creates a space for personal growth, community building, and reflection, fostering meaningful relationships with both adults and peers. Through these experiences, students develop a stronger sense of belonging while taking increasing ownership of their learning, personal development, and contributions to the broader school community.

NEST Meetings

AHS Student Council leads all-school meetings several times a year. We call these gatherings NEST Meetings, an acronym that stands for **N**ews, **E**ntertainment, **S**ophistication and **T**alent. NEST Meetings build positive school culture and provide a forum for Ospreys to celebrate and appreciate excellence.

XBlock Classes

Students and teachers exercise together weekly through the AHS XBlock program. Using the community as our classroom, Ospreys choose new XBlock classes each quarter that align with their fitness goals and interests.

Culture of Excellence

The Animas High School community is built on mutual respect, personal responsibility, intellectual curiosity, and care for others. Every member of the school community contributes to creating a learning environment where students feel physically safe, emotionally supported, academically challenged, and personally valued.

Community expectations are intended to promote learning, strengthen relationships, and prepare students for success in college, careers, and civic life. When concerns arise, the school emphasizes education, accountability, restoration, and growth whenever appropriate.

As a student at Animas High School, you have the right to expect:

- a free education in a supportive learning environment where you can express your opinions and ideas
- a safe school
- to be treated fairly and not be subjected to discrimination
- clear communication about school rules and policies
- faculty, staff and administrators who will respectfully listen to you when you come to them with your concerns, questions and ideas
- faculty, staff and administrators who are committed to open, solution-oriented dialogue

Respect for Self, Others and the School Community

Every student shares responsibility for creating a respectful, inclusive, and productive school environment.

Students are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Support an environment where learning can occur without disruption.
- Respect school property and the property of others.
- Follow reasonable directions from school staff.
- Use technology responsibly.
- Help maintain a safe and welcoming community.

These expectations apply during school, on school property, during school-sponsored activities, while participating in internships or off-campus learning experiences, and in online conduct that substantially affects the school environment.

Attendance & Participation

Regular attendance is essential to student learning, successful collaboration, and participation in the project-based educational experience at Animas High School. Because much of the school's instructional program depends on active participation, discussions, presentations, fieldwork, laboratories, and collaborative projects, attendance is an important part of student success.

Students are expected to attend every scheduled class, arrive on time, and participate fully in learning activities.

Parents or guardians should notify the school as soon as possible whenever a student will be absent.

Excused absences generally include:

- Illness or injury
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observances
- Family emergencies
- School-approved activities
- Other circumstances approved by school administration

Families are encouraged to schedule appointments and personal travel outside the school day whenever possible.

Students are responsible for communicating with teachers regarding missed assignments and making up work within timelines established by classroom expectations.

Extended absences, excessive absences, or repeated patterns of absenteeism may result in attendance interventions, family conferences, attendance improvement plans, or other actions consistent with Board Policy and Colorado law.

Students who anticipate extended absences should contact the Main Office and teachers in advance whenever possible.

Additional attendance procedures, definitions, and legal requirements are established in the Board-adopted Attendance Policy.

See [AHS Attendance Policy](#)

State Assessments

Animas High School participates in Colorado's statewide assessment program as required by state and federal law.

State assessments provide one measure of student learning and help inform instructional improvement, school accountability, and educational planning.

Parents and guardians have the legal right to refuse participation in certain state assessments in accordance with Colorado law.

Students whose families choose to refuse participation:

- will not receive academic penalties,
- will not be excluded from school activities,
- and will be provided appropriate supervision during testing.

Families wishing to decline participation should submit written notice to the school's Testing Coordinator before the applicable testing window whenever possible.

The school's annual assessment calendar, testing windows, and additional information regarding assessment participation and parent refusal are available on the school website and in the [State Assessment and Parent Refusal Policy](#).

Closed Campus

To help maintain a safe and secure learning environment, Animas High School operates as a closed campus during the instructional day.

Students in grades 9 and 10 are expected to remain on campus throughout the school day unless released to a parent, guardian, or other authorized adult, or participating in a school-approved activity.

Juniors and seniors may leave campus during lunch or scheduled periods without classes, consistent with school expectations and Board Policy.

Students arriving on campus are expected to remain under school supervision and follow all school expectations until they leave for the day.

Additional procedures regarding campus access, supervision, and student release are established in the Board-adopted [AHS Closed Campus Policy](#).

Fort Lewis College Campus Expectations

Apart from concurrent enrollment students or those with off-campus privileges, during school hours, students are allowed to go onto the FLC campus only if accompanied by a teacher for an educational purpose. The frisbee golf course and the bike pump track, along with the woods and wildlands surrounding campus are off limits to students unless accompanied by a staff member. If an AHS student is found in the dorms at FLC during school hours, he/she may be suspended. FLC students are not allowed on the AHS campus unless they have a preapproved educational purpose.

Academic Integrity

The students of Animas High School, united in a spirit of mutual trust and fellowship, mindful of the values of a true education and the challenges posed by the world, agree to accept the responsibilities for honorable behavior in all academic activities, to assist one another in maintaining and promoting personal integrity and to follow the principles and procedures in our Code of Academic Integrity.

Plagiarism and cheating are two examples of violations of the Code of Academic Integrity. What is Plagiarism? Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means:

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward. But can words and ideas really be stolen? According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

Cheating results in a loss of integrity on the part of the individual committing the act and on the educational process that is undermined by the act of cheating. It is a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity for any student to gain or attempt to gain an unfair advantage over another student or to undermine the learning goals of an assignment by unfair or dishonest means. If you are unclear about an assignment, the methodology for the assignment, or the permissible bounds of assistance for completing your work, please speak to your teacher and ask for clarification.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is easy to access and readily available. This may occasionally be used by teachers in class for tasks such as sorting research or formatting citations but will not be used to replace thinking or skill development. AI can be a useful tool for subject experts and skilled writers, but that is what students at AHS are working to become. If there is a reason to believe that a student has plagiarized from other sources, or has used AI to compose writing, they will receive a zero on the assignment.

Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity may include receiving a zero on the assignment, failing the course, suspension, and/or expulsion from school.

Technology and Personal Electronics

Technology is an important tool for learning at Animas High School. Students are expected to use school technology and personal electronic devices responsibly, respectfully, and in ways that support learning.

Personal electronic devices including cell phones, smartwatches, headphones, and similar devices, may be used before school, after school, and during lunch.

During instructional time, personal electronic devices may only be used when specifically authorized by the classroom teacher for educational purposes. At all other times, devices should remain stored and silenced unless an approved exception applies.

Students are expected to use school networks, devices, and internet resources appropriately. Activities that interfere with instruction, compromise network security, or violate school expectations including unauthorized gaming, streaming, bypassing network protections, or accessing inappropriate content are prohibited.

Students bringing personal devices to school do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices.

Additional expectations, exceptions, and disciplinary procedures are established in the Board-adopted [AHS Student Personal Electronics Device Use Policy](#).

School Appropriate and Professional Dress

We value self-expression and have developed our dress code with the belief that it helps us create a professional, safe and respectful learning environment. The dress code applies to students and staff and is in effect during school hours on campus, field trips, site visits and other school-related activities. Appropriate attire for academic internships varies by workplace.

- No pictures or messages promoting discrimination, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual activity, profanity, violence, or gang-related themes
- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses can be worn, but teachers may ask students to remove them during class
- Teachers will let students know ahead of time when they will need to wear closed-toed shoes, otherwise open-toed shoes are acceptable; closed-toed shoes are required in the MakerSpace

Students who are not meeting dress code expectations will be asked to remove or cover up the item, change into clothing provided by the school or have a parent bring something more appropriate from home.

Exhibitions, SLCs, Ted Talks and POLs require *Professional Dress*, which means that in addition to the guidelines described above, students must wear a button-down shirt and tie, shirt with finished neck, sweater or blouse; a nice pair of pants (not in disrepair), skirt or dress; dress shoes (no sneakers, no excessively high heels). Would you wear this in a job interview? Please communicate with an adult at school if procuring professional dress clothes is cost-prohibitive; we will find a way to help!

Senior Yearbook Photos

Seniors may choose their own photographer for senior photos in the AHS yearbook. However, any portrait intended for the yearbook must be submitted prior to the deadline as determined by the Animas High School yearbook staff and is subject for review by the Animas High School yearbook staff and AHS administration. Requests for a new portrait may be made if the portrait is deemed sexually provocative, inappropriate or in violation of the Animas High School dress code, or if it is not in accordance with the ideals, values or mission of Animas High School.

Freedom of Speech

The US Supreme Court has called public schools a "marketplace of ideas" where the protections of the First Amendment are particularly important. "The vigilant protection of constitutional freedoms is nowhere more vital than in the community of American schools. " *Shelton v Tucker*, 364 U.S. 479, 487 (1960)

At the same time, the law is clear that a student's right to free speech is not unfettered and that the free speech/press protection does not prevent a school from imposing certain restrictions and/or imparting discipline for certain forms of speech that may be considered disruptive to the community, in violation of school policies and/or considered harassment, bullying, threats and/or intimidation. In short, Animas High School reserves the right to place reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on speech where the faculty and/or administration determine that such a restriction is appropriate.

Examples of student speech that may be restricted include:

- speech which creates or threatens danger and/or unlawful acts
- speech which threatens or presents a violation of AHS rules and standards of conduct
- speech which creates or threatens a substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school
- speech which impinges on the rights of others
- vulgar, lewd, obscene, and plainly offensive speech or conduct

Code of Conduct

Animas High School is committed to maintaining a learning environment where every student feels safe, respected, and supported. The expectations below apply during the school day, on school property, during school-sponsored activities, while participating in internships or other school programs, and to off-campus or online conduct that materially disrupts the educational environment or threatens the safety of members of the school community. See [AHS Discipline Policy](#) for complete details and procedures

Students are expected to demonstrate integrity, responsibility, respect, and good judgment in all aspects of school life.

Respect for Others

Students are expected to contribute to a school community where every individual is treated with dignity and respect.

Conduct inconsistent with these expectations includes, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, intimidation, hazing, or cyberbullying.
- Discrimination or harassment based on a protected characteristic.
- Sexual harassment or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. [Harassment and Discrimination Investigation Procedures](#)
- Threats, intimidation, or acts of violence.
- Fighting or physical aggression.
- Retaliation against a person who reports a concern or participates in an investigation.

- Recording or photographing another person without permission where privacy is reasonably expected.

Respect for Learning

Students are expected to support an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn.

Examples of conduct that interfere with learning include:

- Repeated disruption of class.
- Refusal to follow reasonable staff directions.
- Continued willful disobedience.
- Interference with another student's learning.
- Misuse of technology during instructional time.
- Knowingly making false reports that disrupt school operations.

Repeated material and substantial disruption may result in a student being identified as habitually disruptive in accordance with Board Policy.

Respect for Property

Students are expected to care for school facilities, instructional materials, technology, and the personal property of others.

Examples include:

- Theft or attempted theft.
- Vandalism or intentional damage.
- Defacing school property.
- Tampering with safety equipment.
- Unauthorized possession of another person's property.

Students may be expected to repair damage, provide restitution, or participate in restorative measures when appropriate.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco & Nicotine

Students may not possess, use, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of:

- Alcohol.
- Illegal drugs.
- Controlled substances.
- Marijuana.
- Tobacco products.
- Nicotine or vaping products.

- Drug paraphernalia.
- Medication used contrary to school procedures.

Medication required during the school day must be managed according to school health procedures.

Weapons & Dangerous Items

Weapons and dangerous items are prohibited on school property, in school vehicles, during school-sponsored activities, and in any circumstance governed by Board Policy.

This includes:

- Firearms.
- Knives.
- Explosives.
- Dangerous instruments.
- Firearm facsimiles.
- Any item used to threaten or cause injury.

Possession of certain weapons may require mandatory disciplinary action under Colorado law and Board Policy.

Searches

When school administrators have reasonable suspicion to believe a student possesses prohibited, dangerous, stolen, or unlawful items, searches may be conducted in accordance with Board Policy and applicable law.

School-owned property, including lockers, desks, and school-issued technology, remains subject to school oversight.

Student Responsibility & Self-Reporting

Students are encouraged to demonstrate honesty and personal responsibility by promptly reporting:

- Safety concerns.
- Threats.
- Weapons.
- Substance use.
- Theft.
- Significant property damage.
- Situations that place members of the school community at risk.

When appropriate, honesty, accountability, cooperation, and efforts to repair harm may be considered when determining appropriate school responses.

When Expectations Are Not Met

Animas High School believes that discipline is most effective when it promotes learning, accountability, and restoration. Whenever appropriate, the school seeks to understand the circumstances surrounding student behavior, repair harm, strengthen relationships, and help students develop the skills needed for future success.

Responses to misconduct may include:

- Restorative conversations.
- Problem-solving meetings.
- Parent or guardian conferences.
- Restitution.
- Counseling or student support services.
- Behavior plans.
- Loss of privileges.
- Detention.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- Recommendation for expulsion when required or appropriate under Board Policy.

School administrators consider several factors when determining appropriate responses, including:

- Student age.
- Disciplinary history.
- Severity of the conduct.
- Threat to safety.
- Impact on others.
- Disability-related protections.
- Whether a lesser intervention would appropriately address the situation.

Whenever possible, discipline is intended to help students repair harm, rebuild trust, and successfully return to the school community.

As Animas High School is co-located on the Fort Lewis College campus, we work in partnership with the Fort Lewis College Police Department. When student behavior involves threatening behavior and/or language, the [Fort Lewis College Persona Non Gratis Policy](#) may be enforced for Animas High School students.

Suspension, Expulsion & Student Rights

In certain situations, student misconduct may result in suspension or expulsion proceedings consistent with Colorado law and Board Policy.

Grounds for suspension or expulsion include serious or repeated misconduct such as continued willful disobedience, repeated material disruption, threats to safety, possession of prohibited weapons or controlled substances, significant property damage, or other conduct identified in Board Policy.

Students and parents/guardians are entitled to the procedural protections established by Colorado law and Board Policy, including notice of disciplinary action and opportunities to be heard or appeal when applicable.

Additional information regarding suspension procedures, expulsion procedures, behavior plans, grievance rights, and appeals is available in the Board-adopted Discipline Policy.

Teacher Qualifications (Parent Right to Know)

As a parent of a student at Animas, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teacher who instructs your child. This is a requirement for all districts that receive Title I funds. Federal law allows you to request certain information about your student's classroom teacher. The law also requires the district to give you this information in a timely manner upon request. Listed below is the information about which you have the right to ask for regarding each of your student's classroom teachers:

- whether the Colorado Department of Education has licensed or endorsed your student's teacher for the grades and subjects taught.
- whether CDE has decided that your student's teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- the teacher's college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- whether any teachers' aides or similar paraeducators provide services to your child and, if they do, their qualifications.

Please contact Christine Imming, Director of Finance and Human Resources, at christine.imming@animashighschool.com if you would like to receive any of this information.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and those students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights include:

1. ***The right to inspect and review the student's "education records."*** Under Colorado law, the time for a response to a request for records is generally three business days.

Updated July 2026

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect to the Head of School.

2. ***The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.*** Parents or eligible students who wish to ask to amend their child's or their education record should write the Head of School, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.
3. ***The right not to have records disclosed without consent if the record includes personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except in those cases in which FERPA permits disclosure without consent.*** School officials with legitimate educational interests may access the records as needed, without consent. Such official include school employees, board members, volunteers, contractors or consultants and, certain officials of the school's authorizer, the Charter School Institute (CSI). In the case of volunteers, contractors, or consultants this must be a person who performs a service or function for which the school could use its own employees and who is under control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records. This may include a professional employed by the schools (such as an attorney or therapist) or a person who is assisting a school employee in fulfilling their responsibilities. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her assigned responsibility.

The School may also disclose educational records without consent in over a dozen other specific circumstances identified in the regulations implementing FERPA. These include, with certain requirements, such cases as health and safety emergencies and responding to judicial subpoenas. For more details refer to section 99.31 of the regulations:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/2012-final-regs.pdf>

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and Colorado law afford parents of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include, but are not limited to, the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;

5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility, or social security number.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of such surveys and:

1. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
2. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)

Inspect, upon request and in a timely manner:

1. Surveys of students covered by the PPRA;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.

Should the School undertake a survey or activity covered by PPRA, it will provide appropriate advance notice and opportunity to opt out, as required by law, at that time. The School may unilaterally undertake formal threat assessments or suicide assessments, report suspected child abuse or neglect, perform routine health screening required by law, administer educational exams, and allow journalism students to conduct surveys under teacher supervision.

Questions or Concerns Regarding Student Privacy

Parents, guardians, and eligible students who believe their FERPA or PPRA rights have been violated are encouraged to first contact the Head of School or designee so concerns may be reviewed and addressed promptly.

Individuals also retain the right to file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education in accordance with federal law.

FERPA Notice and Consent for Directory Information

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Animas High School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Animas High School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the **Animas High School** to the contrary in accordance with Animas High School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Animas High School to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. **[Note: These laws are Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).]**

If you do not want Animas High School to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the Animas High School in writing by September 1st or within 2 weeks of enrollment. Animas High School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education

records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user

- A student ID number or other unique personal identifier that is displayed on a student ID badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

Parent Notification of Employee Conduct Policy

The Animas High School Board of Directors ("the Board") is committed to maintaining a professional workforce whose conduct conveys respect for themselves, their peers, our students, and the greater community we serve. While federal and state laws, regulations and other district policies impose expectations of staff and prohibitions on their actions, the purpose of this policy is to ensure timely notification to parents of students when the school learns that an employee has been convicted of certain felony crimes.

The Colorado legislature has provided a list of disqualifying offenses that it determined pose a risk to the educational setting. Animas High School recognizes that employees accused of committing these offenses are presumed innocent until proven guilty, but Animas High School understands and respects that these charges can be very concerning to our students and families. Consequently, when Animas High School receives notice that a current or former employee has been charged or convicted of any of the statutory enumerated offenses, Animas High School will provide parents and guardians information regarding the charge or conviction. Animas High School may partner with relevant law enforcement agencies to determine what information should be included in the notice regarding the charge or conviction.

Additionally, when Animas High School receives notice that an employee has been charged with one of these offenses and the underlying allegation implicates or poses an ongoing risk to students, Animas High School will place the employee on administrative leave. In accordance with state law, all employees convicted of one of these enumerated offenses will immediately be disqualified from continued employment.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) "Employee" means an employee of the school [TK3] whose employment requires or required the employee to be in contact with students or whose work area gives or gave the employee access to students. "Employee" includes a former employee if the individual was employed by the school at any time within 12 months before an offense is charged. If a school has contracted with a private entity to operate an online school, the employee of the private entity is deemed to be an employee of the school.

“Parent” means the biological or adoptive parent or the legal guardian or legal custodian of a student enrolled in a school at the time notification is made.

School’s Responsibility to Monitor Criminal Proceedings

School routinely receives reports from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (“CBI”) relating to employees who have previously been subject to a background check.

If Animas High School receives a report from the CBI that includes information that an employee has been arrested for any of the crimes listed below, the school shall monitor^[TK4] the criminal proceedings to determine whether the employee is charged with an offense listed below and whether a preliminary hearing has been held if the charge is eligible for a preliminary hearing.

In addition, any time Animas High School finds good cause to believe that an employee has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, other than a misdemeanor traffic offense or traffic infraction subsequent to such employment, Animas High School shall require the person to submit a complete set of his or her fingerprints for a fingerprint-based criminal history record check.

Crimes that require further monitoring and potential notification to parents are:

1. Felony child abuse;
2. A crime of violence, not including assault in the second degree unless the victim is a child;
3. A felony offense involving unlawful sexual behavior;
4. A felony, where it is alleged that the underlying factual basis of which includes an act of domestic violence;
5. Felony indecent exposure; or
6. A felony drug offense that is a Level 1 or Level 2 drug felony.

Notification Procedure

Within two school days after the preliminary hearing is held, waived or deemed waived by the employee, or within two school days after the date on which the employee is charged if the charged offense is not eligible for a preliminary hearing, the school shall provide notice to parents.

Notice should be sent to parents of all students who:

1. Were enrolled in the school in which the employee is employed or was employed at the time of the alleged offense; or
2. The school has reason to believe that the employee may have had contact with the student as part of the employee’s employment with the school.

The notification shall contain:

1. The name of the employee;
2. The employee's position;
3. Whether the employee continues to be employed by the local education provider;
4. The length of employment with the school
5. The alleged offense as set forth in the charging document, including the violation of statute or code; and
6. A statement that, under state and federal law, a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

If a school has already provided notice to parents about the employee's charge which substantially conforms with these notice requirements, the school need not provide additional notice of the charge.

A second notification is required within two school days after the school confirms the disposition, or outcome of the charge. The disposition notification shall provide notice to parents of the disposition of the charge and shall be in the same manner as the original notification.

Additional Parameters

Notifications shall be in the same manner by which the school notifies parents of important school business, which may include email, other electronic communication, or by first-class mail.

The school may provide additional information to parents regarding the underlying facts or circumstances relating to the charge but shall not disclose the identity of the alleged victim.

Parental notification may be delayed if requested by law enforcement.

Notification must be sent regardless of whether or not the circumstances of the charge occurred when the employee was off duty.

Notification When School is Out of Session

The duty to notify parents of qualifying charges and convictions against employees continues while school is out of session. Accordingly, [INSERT 1-2 RELEVANT INDIVIDUALS AT Animas High School shall continue to monitor CBI reports and criminal proceedings during scheduled breaks to ensure notification requirements are met.

Reporting to CDE and CSI

If an employee of the school is dismissed or resigns because of an allegation of any one of these enumerated crimes, and such allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence, the Board shall notify the Colorado Department of Education ("CDE") and the Colorado Charter School Institute ("CSI"). The Board shall provide any information requested by CDE or CSI concerning the circumstances of the dismissal or resignation. The school shall notify the employee that information concerning the employee's dismissal or resignation is being

forwarded to CDE and CSI unless the notice would conflict with the confidentiality requirements of the “Child Protection Act of 1987”, part 3 of article 3 of title 19, C.R.S.

If Animas High School learns from a source that a current or past employee of the school has been convicted of, pled guilty to, pled no contest, or has received a deferred sentence or deferred prosecution for any of the above enumerated crimes, the school shall notify CDE and CSI.

Safe School Plan

This policy is incorporated into Animas High School’s Safe School Plan.

Adopted: 9/27/2018

References:

C.R.S. 22-1-130 (Notice to parents of alleged criminal conduct by school employees – legislative declaration – definitions)

C.R.S. 22-30.5-110.5 (information provided to department)

C.R.S. 22-30.5-511.5 (Background investigations – prohibition against employing persons – institute charter school employees’ information provided to department)

C.R.S. 22-32-109.8(6.5) (Prohibition against employing persons)

Restraint and Seclusion Policy

See [Use of Physical Intervention, Restraint and Seclusion Policy](#)

Cora Requests Policy

This regulation applies to all requests submitted pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-72-201 *et seq.*, to inspect public records in the custody or control of Animas High School. Animas High School is committed to the guiding principles of openness, transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

This policy is intended to balance the demands of the Colorado Open Records Act and Animas High School’s obligations as a public school within the State of Colorado.

Protocols for Requests

Before making a request for records pursuant to this policy, requesters should refer to the school’s website, [\[animashighschool.com\]](http://animashighschool.com) to see if the information sought is posted and already publicly available. If there are any questions regarding what type of information is posted on Animas High School’s website, or the posting schedule, please contact our head of school.

Updated July 2026

Requests for records:

Animas High School is required to produce records in response to qualifying requests made pursuant to CORA. Animas High School strives to be as transparent as possible; however, not all documents maintained by the school are available for public inspection. Some documents must be kept confidential to respect the privacy of students and families or otherwise comply with relevant laws.

For the fastest and best response, requesters should avoid vaguely worded inquiries. Each request must be as specific, clear, and narrow as possible. Requests should include:

- Subject matter, in the most descriptive terms possible;
- Date range for search;
- Types of documents to be searched (emails, written documents, reports, etc.);
- Names of persons who you believe created the records, are in possession of the records, are the subject of the records, or transmitted the records;
- Other information that will help the school provide the correct records; and
- Contact information of the requester.

A statement explaining the requester's reason for making the request is helpful for Animas High School to fulfill the request, but not required. If more information is needed to process the request, Animas High School will make reasonable efforts to contact the requester at the contact information provided within the timeframe for responding to the request.

Requests to inspect public records must be in writing to the Custodian of Records. Requests may be mailed or faxed to :

Head of School, Animas High School
PO Box 3496, Durango Colorado 81302
Fax Number: (970) 247-2483

****As a general matter, the school will neither accept nor respond to requests for public records that are submitted via email. The reason for this rule is that, due to the school's spam filters and staff turnover resulting in inactive or incorrect email information, the school cannot guarantee that such requests will be received. Requests to inspect public records may not be made by phone.**

Public records not subject to disclosure

The school is prohibited by law from disclosing certain confidential records. Additionally, some records are not subject to disclosure because they are privileged under the law.

Below are examples of records generally not subject to disclosure. For a full list of records not public, please see C.R.S. 24-72-202 – 204.

Records generally **not** subject to disclosure include, but are not limited to:

- Addresses and telephone numbers of students
 - Pursuant to FERPA, the school may not be permitted to release directory information
- Personnel files which includes home addresses, telephone numbers, financial information, and other information maintained because of the employer-employee relationship [BM9]
 - Personnel files **may not** include applications of past or current employees, employment agreements, any amount paid or benefit provided incident to termination of employment, performance ratings , or any compensation, including expense allowances and benefits, paid to employees by the state, its agencies, institutions, or political subdivisions.
 - **NOTE:** While some personnel files may be disclosed, the school must still redact personally identifying information like home addresses or social security numbers that may be included.
- Proprietary information including trade secrets and privileged information.
- Specialized details of security procedures/arrangements or investigatory files compiled for any law enforcement purpose
- Certain medical, mental health, sociological, and scholastic achievement data, and electronic health records on individual persons
- Attorney-client privileged information
- Other records required by federal or state law and/or regulations or judicial decisions to remain confidential and/or not subject to disclosure

Sometimes the records requested do not exist. CORA is not a record retention statute and the school is not obligated to create records that do not exist or maintain records outside of relevant legal guidelines or school's policy on records retention.

General questions and requests for information

As described above, not all information constitutes a public record for purposes of a CORA request. General questions and requests for information that are not submitted in writing pursuant to this policy are not requests for "public records" as defined by the law. Therefore, the school is not required to respond to them according to CORA's specifications. Although it is not required, the school may respond to all such questions and requests for information.

Responses to Requests

Time for response to records requests shall be as follows:

- The normal time for production shall be three (3) working days, beginning on the first business day after the request is received.
- Such a period may be extended upon determination by the SCHOOL that extenuating circumstances exist. Such period of extension shall not normally exceed seven (7)

working days. The requester shall be notified of the extension within the three-day period.

Requests to inspect records will not take priority over the regular work activities of school's employees.

Charges for copies of requested records shall be as follows:

1. The normal cost for requested documents shall be \$.25 per page or, for documents in non-standard formats, the actual duplication costs.
2. Animas High School may charge a research and retrieval fee based on the actual cost of responding to the request; provided, however, that the hourly rate for employee time is[BM11] \$30 per hour, and there shall be no charge for the first hour of employee time. If the custodian charges research and retrieval fees under this paragraph, copying shall be charged at a rate of \$.15 per page.
3. Payment must be received prior to the requestor receiving copies.

If charges are expected to exceed \$25, Animas High School will provide the requestor with an estimate of the cost of responding prior to responding and may require a deposit. If the requestor wishes to proceed once receiving an estimate, he or she must respond in writing. By responding in writing, the requestor agrees to pay all fees associated with responding to the request. The time between the date of the custodian's estimate and the receipt by the custodian of a written response to proceed will not be counted against the time period set forth above for responding to the CORA request.

If a requester wishes to inspect available records in advance of receiving copies, such inspection shall be by appointment only during normal working hours. Such inspection must be supervised by a school representative and the requestor may be charged for any employee time exceeding one hour associated with such inspection.

Manipulation of Records

Animas High School may manipulate existing records to redact or exclude information not subject to disclosure or, at its sole discretion, create a new record in order to respond to a request. If the school is required to manipulate data to generate the record, the school may charge an hourly fee that applies in the same manner as the research or retrieval of records.

Generally, if a public record is stored in a digital format, it should be provided in that format to the requester, including any searchable or sortable functions unless doing so would violate a copyright or licensing agreement, result in the release of a third party's proprietary information, or if it is not feasible to permanently remove any information that is excluded from the request without need for additional software or programming. The actual costs of manipulating such data and generating such records will be assessed. This may include the hourly fee that applies to research and retrieval as well as any additional actual costs, such as a fee equal to the

incremental costs of maintaining a computer database or running a computer program used to analyze or compile data into a single report.

For questions related to CORA requests please contact our head of school at 970-247-2474 or rebecca.ruland@animashighschool.com

State Assessments & Parent Refusal

Colorado law provides parents and guardians the right to excuse their student from participation in certain statewide assessments.

Students whose families exercise this right:

- will not receive academic penalties,
- will not be excluded from classroom instruction or school activities,
- and will be supervised appropriately during testing.

Families wishing to decline participation should submit written notice to the school's Testing Coordinator prior to the assessment window whenever practical.

Additional information, testing schedules, and refusal procedures are available in the Board-adopted State Assessment Administration and Parent Refusal Policy.

Protection of Personal Information

Animas High School is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of students, families, employees, and visitors.

Except where required by law, the school does not collect information regarding immigration or citizenship status.

The school will not disclose personally identifiable information to federal immigration authorities unless required by a valid judicial order or other legal authorization consistent with Board Policy.

Questions regarding student privacy or confidentiality should be directed to the Head of School.

Title IX & Equal Educational Opportunity

Animas High School is committed to providing a learning environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, in accordance with Title IX and applicable federal and state law.

Students, employees, and members of the school community have the right to learn and work in an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Individuals who experience or witness conduct that may violate Title IX are encouraged to report concerns promptly to the school's Title IX Coordinator or another school administrator.

The school responds promptly and fairly to reports while respecting the rights of all individuals involved.

Complete procedures are available in the Board-adopted Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity Policy.

HEALTH POLICIES

Required Immunizations

Colorado law requires students who attend a public, private or parochial kindergarten through 12th grade school to be vaccinated against many of the diseases vaccines can prevent. Please review information from the Colorado Department of Public Health [here](#) to learn more.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Animas High School recognizes that even in an organization with excellent communication processes grievances may arise. In the event that these issues arise, parents and staff are encouraged to use the [Grievance Policy](#). Throughout this process, AHS expects all adults to be models of good character, even if the circumstances are difficult. If any step of this policy requires you to report a concern with discriminatory harassment to the person you believe is engaged in harassment, you can skip that step and go to the next step.

NOTE: A grievant is not required to address the issue with the person directly involved if the grievant is alleging harassment or discrimination. In case of grievances relating to allegations of harassment or discrimination, please see the school's [Sexual Harassment Investigation Procedures](#) and [Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Policy](#).