“Intelligence must be defined in terms of the degree to which it solves your problems.”

Dr. Amos Wilson

This book is a guide that sets the standard for what is expected of you as an Empower student. You will find in these pages information about academics, behavior, rules and policies. Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. You will find yourself referring to it when you have questions about issues ranging from our mission and values to campus safety procedure to the discipline system.

The rules and policies of Empower Community High School are set by the Board, faculty and administration, and may be revised during the school year. If changes occur during the school year, Empower will notify students and their families. All students are expected to follow the most recent rules and policies. Procedures outlined in this book apply under normal circumstances. On occasion, however, a situation may require an immediate, nonstandard response. In such circumstances, Empower reserves the right to take actions deemed to be in the best interest of the Academy, its faculty and its students. This document as written does not limit the authority of Empower to alter its rules and procedures to accommodate any unusual or changed circumstances.

If you have any questions about the contents of this book or anything else about life at Empower Community High School, please feel free to ask. Your teachers, counselors, administrators, peers, and community partners are here to help you.

Empower Community High School
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Aurora, CO
Tel (720) 621-5094
www.empowerhighschool.org

2019 by the Administration and Board of Directors of Empower Community H.S.
Starting in October 2017, a Community Design Team of students, families, educators, and community members met bi-monthly to design an innovative school for the community and by the community. Empower Community High School holds as its vision that our students will claim their rightful place as agents of change, growth and
social progress. The world is ours, and we must educate and foster the scholars, writers, artists and innovators who will build a just and equitable world.

Our mission is founded and sustained by an education program that provides authentic real-world work. This work will be informed by community needs and led by students. Students claim ownership of their academic progress by designing and personalizing standards-based educational experiences in order to fulfill a genuine need in the community.

Students develop agency by identifying community needs and using these needs as opportunities to solve problems with a fresh and reasoned application of academic and technical skills. Competencies in the required applications will be guided by educators and informed by the Common Core State Standards for English and Mathematics, and the Next Generation Science Standards. We will integrate school and community concerns so that all learning is grounded in an authentic purpose.

**CO-CREATED WITH COMMUNITY**

Co-creation is central to our design as it ensures that students feel a sense of ownership and reasoned purpose. Our instructional approach is dynamic; the co-creation process ensures that instruction and learning is always personally, culturally and civically relevant. Every lesson, every course, every project has meaning to the individual student and to her community. This is guaranteed because nothing is designed, planned or implemented in isolation from the learners.

**STUDENT-LED**

Students are the engines of learning in all academic subject areas as they work to recognize and assess real community needs. They are motivated to learn in order to design solutions for meaningful and innovative change. This community-responsive curriculum demands varied competencies, and all competencies in any field are acquired through applied practice. A student-led instructional approach integrates applied practice of all academic fields by grounding learning in student-designed projects.

**GUIDED BY EDUCATORS**

Revolutionary, humanist educators allow learners to discover and construct new knowledge of themselves. Our educators will guide applied practice in all academic fields to strengthen the student-designed curriculum and to support the acquisition of requisite skills. This commitment to truly collaborative work provides the challenges and opportunities that are necessary for revelatory self-constructed agency and learning.

**FAMILY**
The board and administrative team at EMPOWER delegate to all faculty, the responsibility for carrying out academic policies and procedures. The principal is in charge of the administration of said policies.

Every EMPOWER student is assigned an advisor with whom they will visit during Family block. Students are encouraged to consult their advisers on school and personal issues, keeping in mind that the advisor is a teacher and as such is also a mandatory reporter in accordance with state law. The advisor is an essential link between family and school.

**STRUCTURE & DAILY SCHEDULE**

**SCHEDULE COMPONENTS**

- **FAMILY**
  Advisory block designed to build stronger relationships, trust, and community with an ECHS staff member and a group of ten or fewer peers.

- **FLEX**
  60 minute of targeted intervention: English Language Development or personalized supplementary programming.

- **FUTURE**
  120 minute core content blocks designed for rapid acceleration through highly-engaging, personalized instruction.

- **FLOW**
  60-120 minute block of unstructured time to engage in student-led, standards-aligned, project-based learning that is grounded in reality and bringing real value to the community.

**BELL SCHEDULE**
The ECHS school day will begin at 8:00 am and ends at 3:20 pm. We use a block schedule that alternates between Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday. With an average of 6 hours of instruction per day and 195 instructional days, ECHS will exceed the required 1,080 hours of instruction per school year, per APS Board Policy ID.

Sample 9th Grade Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAYS &amp; THURSDAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:04-12:04</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:52-2:04</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:08-3:20</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TUESDAYS &amp; FRIDAYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:52-2:04</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:08-3:20</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:50</td>
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<td>8:54-9:44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:48-10:38</td>
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<td>10:42-11:32</td>
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<td>11:36-12:16</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:20-12:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:54-2:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:09-3:20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FUTURE**

Each day at ECHS begins with a 3-hour block of standards-aligned courses, taught by highly qualified teachers equipped with the skills and tools to deliver highly engaging, highly differentiated instruction to students.

Vertical alignment across grade levels in core content is ensured by following Colorado Academic Standards, as all standards build up to mastery of content and graduation. The Colorado Academic Standards detail expectations for what students should be able to accomplish at the end of each grade level.

Horizontal alignment across content areas is ensured through strategic collaborative planning time for teachers across subject areas as well as the daily FLOW block, during which students apply their learning in interdisciplinary, standards-aligned projects.
All core instruction at ECHS is guided by an authentic educational approach and grounded in culturally-relevant and community-responsive curriculum because we know that our collective survival and liberation depends upon recognition of truth when it is spoken and lived. Core instruction cannot be disconnected from the truth lived by students, families and community. All subjects are driven by the ultimate goal of cultivating critically conscious and empowered individuals who recognize their truth and liberate themselves and their community from the violent and destructive systems of oppression in the pursuit of a just and equitable world.

**FUTURE includes:**

- 120 minute core content blocks in ethnic studies, science, math and world languages designed for rapid acceleration through highly-engaging, personalized instruction.
- Interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies (Humanities) course co-taught by the English Language Arts teacher and the Social Studies teacher focused on delivering rigorous content and skill development through a multicultural lens.

**FLOW**

FLOW is a block of time to engage in student-led, standards-aligned, project-based learning that is grounded in reality and bringing real value to the community. Traditional education has served as a tool of colonization, teaching students allegiance to the dominant culture of power. Unlike traditional curricula codified by past generations, ours is co-created by students, families, community, and educators, and it teaches innovation and change. This co-creation process is central to our design as it ensures that students feel a sense of ownership and reasoned purpose. Our instructional approach is dynamic; the co-creation process ensures that instruction and learning is always personally, culturally, and civically relevant.
Family is an advisory block used in many schools to create cohesion and community in high school. Family at ECHS is a key way we build positive student and adult culture. On one day of the week, family occurs during lunch. The goal is to create a tight-knit feeling of inclusion so students have a safe space or belonging within the school community. Family features seminar-style conversations about the week’s goals and how students and staff will meet them or about relevant topics impacting students (relationships, workload, home life). Overall, it is a great way to build relationships, teach interpersonal skills, and reinforce personal success factors.

FAMILY will have a student to staff ratio of 10 to 1. The staff member will guide support of students’ progress and goal setting, communicating consistently with families, facilitating conversations about social/emotional skills, establishing relationships with and between kids, supporting students with college/career readiness, etc. Students will also have the opportunity to develop skills around conflict resolution, equity, and counseling during their Family time.

**Community Meeting**
Each week on Thursday, FAMILY is combined with lunch for the whole school to gather for 60 minutes to celebrate culture, discuss important issues, vote on key decisions, and share knowledge. The agenda is student-developed and the meeting is student-led. Each advisory takes a turn leading the meeting.
FLEX block is designed to ensure students have access to specialized supports as needed. Targeted English Language Development (ELD), pull-out special education programming, G/T and accelerated programming also happens during this time. Flex block objectives are determined by student interest and need as informed by input from adults and the MTSS process.

HEALTH

Health:

_Immunizations:_ The Colorado Board of Health requires specific immunizations for compliance with the School Immunization Law and admission into public school. **Children can be denied admission to, or may be suspended from, any Colorado public school if not properly immunized or exempt.** The school requires an updated copy of a student’s immunization record at the start of the school year. Students not in compliance will be given two weeks to comply before the policy to exclude is enforced.

_Medications:_ The health office at Empower Community High School will not have over-the-counter medication for students (such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or Benadryl). If over-the-counter medication is needed at school, families will need to provide it for their child AND complete the _Permission to Administer Medication_ form, which will need to be completed by an authorized medical provider and signed by a parent/guardian.

_The school will allow students to self-carry ONE dose of over-the-counter medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) for one-time use. Any students caught abusing this policy will not be allowed this privilege._

Any other prescription or emergency medications such as asthma inhalers or epinephrine will require a signed _Permission to Administer Medication_ form that can be obtained from the school front office. Students with Asthma or Severe Allergies will require specific forms that can also be obtained from the front desk or online. All forms for medication must be signed by an authorized medical provider and a parent/guardian. Students may also self-carry their emergency medication, but the school does require a signed form from the school nurse.

_Parents must supply all medication in the original label container with the original packaging._

*General Guidelines for Keeping Students Home Due to Illness*

It is sometimes difficult to know when to keep students home due to illness. Below are some general guidelines that will help you make the decision about whether or not to
send your teen to school. Feel free to contact the school nurse or your health paraprofessional with any questions. Please keep your child home if he or she:

- is too sick to fully participate in the school day.
- may spread a contagious illness to other children and staff.
  - any temperature at or above 100.4 degrees (temporal scanner)
  - fever accompanied by a behavioral change or rash
  - new or unusual wide-spread rash that could be contagious
  - vomiting, diarrhea stools
  - continuous, hacky cough

If your child is being treated with antibiotics for the treatment of routine illness such as strep throat or impetigo, he or she may return to school 24 hours after taking the first dose of antibiotics. Please make sure your child is fever-free without medication for 24 hours.

**Physical/Mental Health Concerns-** If a student has a serious physical or mental health concern, we strongly advise a meeting with the parent and school personnel so we can prepare how to adequately meet the student’s needs.

In accordance with APS district guidelines, if a student has been treated by a mental health facility, we require a Re-Entry meeting with the student and parent to complete a Safety Contract before the student returns to school. In this case, we also require the parent to sign a Release of Information.

Staff- The school does not have a full-time school nurse on staff. Our nurse is here monthly. The health office is staffed by school staff training in First Aid/CPR and Medication administration. Please call the school to get in touch with the school nurse for any questions.

**GRADING/ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS**

Academic standards are high at EMPOWER. Students should expect to feel challenged and prepared for post secondary success in a variety of college and career pathways. Grades received will be earned. To obtain a passing grade in a particular course, students must achieve an overall average of 75% or higher. Academic distinctions can be achieved by earning an average of 85% or higher. Midterm grades will be used as indicators to faculty, students, families and advisers of student progress. Grades issued at the end of a semester become the official grade of record. Grade changes will only be considered for clerical or calculation error. In the rare case that a student is unable to complete work before the end of a semester due to illness (verified by a medical physician) or other extenuating circumstances, a teacher may enter an Incomplete (I) instead of a grade. In such situations, students will make arrangements with each teacher to submit missing assignments or assessments. All work must be submitted within four weeks after the end of the term.
GRADING POLICY

The Purpose of Grades
Empower High School will establish a grading system to record grades, report progress to parents and determine the relationship of grades to extra curricular activities.

Grades reflect student performance and progress toward the mastery of district content standards. Grades are an integral part of the district’s instructional program by providing
✔ information for parents about the achievement of their children,
✔ feedback for student self-evaluation,
✔ documentation of student performance to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs,
✔ an incentive for students to improve,
✔ guidance to teachers for instructional planning and intervention and
✔ data for counselors to plan for student matriculation, retention and future course work.

EMPOWER COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL GRADING SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value on a 4-point scale</th>
<th>Value on a 5.2 point scale</th>
<th>Percent Based</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student demonstrates thorough knowledge and mastery of skills that allow him/her to function independently above their current educational level.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of all relevant information to the topic at level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The student demonstrates comprehension and understanding of knowledge and skills above his/her grade level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The student can perform skills or processes independently without any significant errors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student demonstrates mastery of knowledge and skills that allow them to function independently on all major concepts and skills related to their educational level.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of all information relevant to the topic, at level.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student can perform skills or processes independently without any significant errors.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student demonstrates basic knowledge and skills usage but cannot operate independently on concepts and skills related to his/her educational level. Requires remediation and assistance to complete tasks without significant errors.</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student has an incomplete knowledge of the topic and/or misconceptions about some information.</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student requires assistance and coaching to complete tasks without errors.</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student demonstrates some skills and knowledge, but requires remediation to complete basic skills or knowledge sets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student can demonstrate some knowledge in content area, but displays misconceptions about some information.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student can complete skill set, but requires significant coaching and assistance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of evidence and/or unsatisfactory performance on assessment and evaluations of student work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Rationale**

The course grade for each student is summative and reflects multiple measures of performance that demonstrate the extent to which the student has achieved the content standards and competencies associated with the particular course.

Grades are awarded based upon work products. Grades may not be based on a comparison of one student’s performance of other students. Grades may be based on student attendance to the extent that a student’s presence is necessary to document mastery of standards and competencies associated with a particular course. Please refer to the instructor’s syllabus.

**Pass/Fail**

Grades of “Pass/Fail” or “Credit/No Credit” may not be issued without the approval of the principal or their designee.
Incompletes
A grade of “Incomplete” can only be given when a student has been absent for the latter part of a course and was already passing while regularly attending the first half. An “Incomplete” will be viewed as an “F” for the purpose of athletic eligibility.

Schedule Changes
Since Empower is a small community school it may not always be possible to honor student requests for schedule changes. Whenever possible and favorable to the students’ success and achievement, schedule changes may be honored provided that they are requested within the first 4 weeks of a course. No schedule changes will be made after the 4th week of a course.

1. Student must first request a change form,
2. student and parent conference with the existing teacher,
3. accepting teacher must validate student change,
4. counselor submits change form to administrator
5. and then the administrator will have the final say on any requests for class changes.

Makeup Work
Makeup Work will be provided for all excused absences or suspensions and full credit will be given for all makeup work completed in a timely fashion. Parents, guardians and students may request makeup work.

Comparative Grading
Grades will not be based on a comparison of one student’s performance to another’s.

IEP’s/504 Plans
Grading procedures will take into consideration IEPs and 504 plans for students with disabilities.

Parent/Guardian Contact
Teachers, counselors and administrators are encouraged to contact parents or guardians by phone, email, U.S. mail, home visits or conferences to discuss your academic and behavioral progress at any point throughout the school year for any student who is 1) failing a particular course; and/or
2) in the opinion of the teacher, not performing to potential.

Progress Reports
You will also receive progress reports regularly from your teachers, and you will be able to review your grades on Infinite Campus at any time. Understanding, concern and involvement are necessary among family, student and teachers to make communication about student progress most effective.

Teacher Responsibility
- Teachers are responsible for issuing grades to all students enrolled in their classes consistent with this policy.
All grades must be recorded electronically in Infinite Campus.
Grades must be recorded on the cumulative record and on the electronic transcript only from official transcripts.
Once a grade has been issued, other than an “Incomplete,” it may not be changed without just cause and the approval of the principal (or administrative designee) and the teacher.
When a student officially withdraws from school, grades must be entered if the student has enrolled twenty or more days of school.

Student Concerns
Students who have concerns about a course or faculty member should consult with the teacher, their adviser, or if necessary, the counselor or principal.

Plagiarism and Cheating Policy
Empower will be supported by Turn It In, a plagiarism essay program used by Universities across the country to identify academic dishonesty issues. Information that is generally well known, such as the earth is 5 billion years old, need not be cited because it is readily available in hundreds of publications. However, if you find information that says sportswriters protected Babe Ruth by concealing his bad personal habits, a fact not generally known, a citation is required.
The following situations constitute plagiarism and must always be avoided:
- Turning in another student’s work as your own – this includes papers, worksheets, lab reports, etc.
- Copying a part of another student’s paper and incorporating it into your own paper.
- Quoting a source word for word without using quotation marks or adding a citation.
- Paraphrasing, adopting, or summarizing a source’s ideas without giving a citation.
- Claiming an internet translation of a foreign language as your own.
- Giving work for someone else to copy. This is just as much a violation as copying someone else’s work without their permission. Both acts earn the same penalty.

Consequences:
The assignment can not be made up later. The teacher will also notify the student’s parents or guardian of the violation. Repeat offenders will merit more severe punishment.

Other Academic Corrective Action
Outside of the realm of plagiarism, other academic infractions including students’ refusal to work, or to respond appropriately to feedback will result in corrective action.
- Verbal exhortation is the first stage of formal action. Appropriate intervention will be identified by teachers and implemented at this time. Often the attention paid at this level is sufficient for students to turn their academic performance around.
Written exhortation is the second stage of formal action. This level of action requires acknowledgement and assistance from your adviser, parent, guardian or community partner, several teachers and administrators who may be a part of the Intervention team. This team will be notified that your AYC (Adequate Yearly Credit) may be in jeopardy.

If no resolve can be found after the second stage, students may be required to repeat the course. Since EMPOWER is a small community school, there is no guarantee that you will be able to repeat a course within a school-calendar year. You may have to wait until the following year to retake the course and your projected on-time graduation date may be delayed.

HOMEWORK AND ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of homework or outside of class-work is to develop student self-discipline and the ability to work independently. That said, homework assignments should be meaningful, connected to larger learning goals, and require a reasonable amount of time to complete.

As an EMPOWER student, you will be equipped with study, and critical thinking skills and tips that will help you process, retain and synthesize information needed to succeed in coursework. Some of these include:

- Practicing Active Recall
- Practicing Spaced Repetition
- Using your sense of smell
- Listening to affirming music.

Assessment Lead Time

The date and topic of all short cycle assessments, midterms, finals, papers, and projects must be announced by staff at least one week in advance. However, short papers such as essays, quizzes, debates and other assignments that require only the length of one homework assignment do not require one weeks’ advanced notice.

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights to equal access to programs and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In order to access these rights, a student must present documentation indicating that the disability substantially limits some major life activity, including learning.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be punctual and attend class consistently. Regular attendance has a direct effect on student progress and achievement. Students may not be absent more than one day per month. Any student with more than 20 unexcused period absences, tardies or a combination of both per semester could put their AYS (Adequate Yearly Credit) in jeopardy.

Full Day Excused Absences
An absence is defined as non-attendance in class. Please have your parent/guardian fax, email or send a note to the attendance office within TWO days of your return to school. Phone calls, even though a courtesy, are not adequate official documentation.

*The following reasons constitute an excused absence:* 

- Illness 
- Medical/dental appointment 
- Court date 
- Funeral 
- Religious holiday 
- Personal reasons/Extenuating circumstances

*All written emails and notes must include:* 

- Student’s full name and Student ID# 
- Date(s) and reason for absence 
- A valid parent/guardian signature 
- A daytime phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached

Students have two days for each excused absence to make up the missed work. The student or family is responsible for initiating make up work.

*Individual teachers may also have additional tardy policies to which students will be held accountable.*

An absence becomes unexcused after two days without an acceptable excuse from a parent. Work missed due to an unexcused absence will be marked as missing in Infinite Campus and make up work will be permitted only at teacher’s discretion.

**Partial Absences**

Please provide 24-hours notice. All partials must be confirmed by a parent/guardian before a student can be dismissed. If you will be returning from your partial, please remember to check back in with the attendance office.

*All written notes must include:* 

- Student’s full name 
- Time the student must leave 
- Reason for partial 
- A valid parent/guardian signature 
- A daytime phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached

The note will be confirmed by calling the parent/guardian. The attendance office personnel will enter the excused absence codes on the computer for the partial absence. It
is the student’s responsibility to return to the attendance office to pick up the partial pass in order to leave the building.

Leaving school without checking out through the attendance office is considered an unexcused absence.

Bringing an excuse note one or two days later does not apply to excused tardies and partials. These must be excused on the day they occurred.

**Tardy to Class**
Students are expected to be on time! Students arriving after the bell has rung are considered tardy. Students arriving to class more than 10 minutes after the bell has rung will be marked absent. Any student arriving late to class will receive a classroom assigned consequence. Repeated defiance to the tardy policy will result in progressive disciplinary action.

Tardies to school will be excused with a note or phone call from the parent/guardian at the time of arrival. Please check in with the Attendance Office.

**Absences for School Related Activities**
School-related activities will include those items covered under Colorado law and district policy such as suspensions and school-sponsored activities. All will allow for credit from make-up work.

**Absences for School Sponsored Activities**
In any school-sponsored activity, a list of those students participating in the activity will be initiated by an administrator and given to the Attendance Secretary. Additionally, out-of-school activities require a School Excursion Notification form that is completed and signed by the sponsoring teacher. It becomes the student’s responsibility to obtain each of his/her teachers’ signatures and to return the School Excursion Notification form to the sponsoring teacher by that sponsor’s due date. The sponsoring teacher then turns this form to the Attendance Office. On this form, a classroom teacher has the option to recommend that a student not participate in the activity. It is the classroom teacher’s responsibility to notify the sponsoring teacher(s) of any students they feel should not participate in the activity. (Large groups, i.e. ROTC, instrumental/vocal music, etc., may be exempt from the School Excursion Notification Form)

Following any school-related/sponsored activity, the Attendance Secretary will be informed of students who were absent from the activity.

**MEDICAL EXCUSE FROM PE**
Students who are unable to participate in physical activity due to a medical issue must follow the procedures that follow:
- Bring your medical note to the Nurses’ Office. The note must be signed by a health care provider, stating the extent of injury or illness, specific limitations, and duration of absence.
- The Nurses’ Office will process the medical note and provide you with a pass (print out of medical excuse)
- Medically excused students should arrive on time each day during their PE class period for the duration of the medical excuse. Students will be given written PE assignments provided by the PE teacher or supervising PE teacher on duty.
- Students are responsible to report back to PE on the specified medical release date.

**Participation in Graduation Ceremony**

It is the responsibility of the student to continually monitor student progress, grades and graduation status. A student may only participate in the Empower Community High School graduation ceremony if he/she has completed APS graduation requirements and earned the minimum of 240 credit/24 unit hours including all required courses. Students must also meet the ECHS attendance requirement of a minimum of 92% and positive behavior expectations. Students are urged to stay in close contact with their adviser for current progress and status information.

**WITHDRAWAL**

Any student who needs to withdraw from Empower should see the office staff in charge of registration and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The student needs to clear any and all financial obligations, return all school materials and complete a withdrawal survey before the withdrawal process can be completed. Official transcripts will not be forwarded until all financial obligations are cleared.

**BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

EMPOWER assumes that its students enter the school with a serious purpose and that conscience and good sense are a sufficient guide to behavior. EMPOWER expects honesty, self-governance and self-awareness from its students. The staff intend to help develop among students a sense of responsibility for personal conduct and for the well-being of the larger community. To that end EMPOWER encourages freedom, within reasonable limitations and enforces rules defining those limitations, which are necessary to maintain relative freedom for all.

**All faculty** members accept the responsibility to advise students and to guide their conduct at any time or in any place while they are enrolled at EMPOWER. The students, in turn, through their representatives, participate in the shaping of disciplinary policy by helping faculty to define essential rules and regulations and to enforce them.

**CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES**
● Cell phones and certain electronic devices may be used in classrooms for instructional purposes as directed by teachers or school staff, and may be used in hallways between classes, in cafeterias during lunch periods, and during unscheduled school time.

● Otherwise, cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off or muted during instructional time, and before entering offices, libraries, instructional spaces, or academic areas.

● Each teacher has the discretion to allow and regulate the use of cell phones/electronic devices in the classroom.

● The use of school-issued Chromebooks during instructional time is expected and allowed at the discretion of the teacher.

● Students in possession of a cell phone/electronic device during school hours and school activities must comply primarily, with the expectation to follow adult directions, and the school’s Behavioral Expectations.

● Students may not use cell phones or electronic devices in any manner that disrupts the educational environment or violates the rights of others, including criminal encroachment of one’s privacy, recording someone without their express permission, bullying or posting derogatory statements about students, teachers, or staff via text message or social media.

Contents of a cell phone/electronic device may be reviewed and searched if there exists a reasonable suspicion that it may have been used in an activity prohibited by Empower’s Behavioral Expectations. Cell phones that ring or vibrate excessively, or in any other way disrupt the educational process of a class, are grounds for confiscation of the device by school staff.

ECHS is not responsible for lost or stolen student property, including cell phones/electronic devices.

**PHONE MESSAGES, SCHOOL PHONE USE & DELIVERIES TO STUDENTS**

In order to limit disruption to the classroom, ECHS employees will not deliver messages to students except in cases of extreme emergency. Students will not be allowed to use school phones for personal use except in cases of extreme emergency and with staff permission. School employees are not able to deliver items to students, or coordinate drop off of items such as food or beverages, athletic equipment, homework assignments, money, notes that require a student to come home (unless it is an emergency), calculators, cell phones, flowers, or gifts. Inflated balloons may not be brought to school, delivered to school, or carried around.

**ID CARDS**

Empower Community High School issues a photo identification card (ID) to each student and employee. The ID card serves as proof of status with ECHS and provides access to many campus resources such as cafeterias and school meal payment, use of libraries and media centers, access to study centers, as well as providing basic access to the school
building and certain school events. The front office staff issues all ECHS ID cards to students and employees. Students and staff are expected to have their current, valid ECHS IDs at all times on campus and at school sponsored events.

**Replacing a Missing or Damaged ECHS ID Card.**
The fee for replacing a missing or lost card is $10. A cardholder can obtain a replacement ECHS ID card by paying a $10 replacement fee at the front office. Students may request a temporary printed ID card at no cost, valid for one day only, in the front office during normal office hours.

**Expectations**
The ID holder is responsible for the care and safekeeping of their ECHS ID. Any transfer, alteration, falsification, or forgery of an ECHS employee ID card, or student ID card constitutes a violation of School policy and may result in disciplinary action. In addition, fraudulent or illegal use of an ECHS student or employee ID may result in criminal charges and/or civil proceedings.

**TEXTBOOKS & TECHNOLOGY**
Students will receive textbooks for all courses in which they are registered. Students must return books to the teacher by the end of each school semester. Damaged or lost textbooks must be paid for before replacement books are issued. Replacement books purchased privately are not an acceptable form of payment.

**Chromebooks**
Students who are new to ECHS will receive Chromebook laptops during the first week of school. OA technology fee is included as part of the annual school fee. Student families will own their issued Chromebook after four (4) years of paying the annual school fee. The school tech support director provides students and staff with technical support for their Chromebook.

**Loaners**
All students will be issued a chrome book at the beginning of the school year. Students are expected to bring their charged chrome book to class every day. We will not issue any chrome book or charger loaners.

**HALL PASSES**
Students are expected to be in class during instructional time and should reach a supervised space for learning, studying, or eating by the end of each passing period. Students must have a valid hall pass from their teacher or an ECHS staff member when traveling in the hallways after the bell rings. This includes during lunch periods and unscheduled time, and when needing to visit the Nurses’ Office. Students must have their
ECHS ID card along with their hall pass. Students without a valid hall pass and ID, or those found in areas for which the pass is not intended, will face school consequences.

**STUDENT PROPERTY & SEARCHES**

- Students may be subject to personal searches, as well as bookbag, cell phone/electronic device, and locker searches.
- School property, including desks, and parking lots, is owned by ECHS and may be searched by school authorities at any time, including random searches as well as canine searches. These searches do not require advance notice, student consent, or a search warrant. Vehicles on school property or at a school function may also be searched. Hand-held metal detectors may be used when appropriate.

**Seizure of Property.**
If a search produces evidence that a student has violated or is violating either the law or the school district’s rules or policies, evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities, and disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, evidence may be transferred to law-enforcement authorities.

**Student Personal Property**
Empower does not assume responsibility for any lost, damaged, or stolen personal property brought to school or to a school activity. Students are advised not to bring valuables to school. Be sure lockers are fully locked.

**School Property Restitution**
Students will be held responsible for the replacement cost of any damage they cause to school property.

**LOST & FOUND**

The ECHS maintains a lost and found for misplaced items found around campus. The most commonly located items include keys, wallets, glasses, cell phones, and student ID cards.

**Reporting Lost Items**
If you have lost an item on campus, you can check the school’s lost or fill out a Lost Property Report Form. ECHS School Safety will check all existing lost property upon receipt of your form and will contact you if they have an item matching your lost item’s description. If there is nothing matching your lost item, they will continue to check your report with all future items that are turned in during the course of the school year.

**Reporting Stolen Items.**
If you believe your lost property has actually been stolen, you will need to speak to a Safety Department staff member in person to make an official incident report, in addition to filing a Lost Property Report with ECHS. As a first step, fill out and submit the Lost
Property Report Form. Next, visit the Front Office during school business hours. In the event of suspected theft, parents/guardians and students can also file a report with the Aurora Police Department.

**Retrieving Lost or Stolen Items**
Anyone claiming lost or stolen property must have proof of submitting a Lost Property Report Form and must show a current, valid form of identification such as an ECHS student ID, passport, or a driver’s license. Anyone claiming stolen property also must have proof of submitting an official incident report with the Safety Department staff.

**Turning In Found Items**
If you have found an item on campus belonging to someone else, please turn it in at the Front Office during school business hours.

**Unclaimed Property**
Unclaimed items will be held for at least 90 days, after which time items may be discarded or donated to a charitable organization. ECHS does not assume responsibility for any lost, damaged, or stolen personal property brought to school or to a school activity.

**INTERPRETATION & TRANSLATION SERVICES**
Translator and interpreter service for parents and guardians who speak a language other than English will be provided, as needed/requested. Families in need of translation or interpretation services must contact the main office and submit a request.

**VISITORS**
Empower encourages parents/guardians and community members to visit the high school and believes that there are many potential benefits which can result from increased interaction with the public. At the same time, the high school has a legitimate interest in avoiding disruption to the educational process, protecting the safety and welfare of the students and staff, and protecting the district’s facilities and equipment from misuse or vandalism. The following guidelines are required for visitors:

**General Requirements for Visitors:**
A visitor is defined as any person seeking to enter a school building who is not an employee of the school district or a student currently enrolled in that building.

- All visitors must enter through the main entrance and obtain a visitor pass from the Front Office. A valid, government-issued photo ID is required. All visitors will be escorted to and from their intended destinations while visiting ECHS. Visitor passes must be clearly displayed and worn at all times.
- Whenever possible, visitors should schedule an appointment in advance with the person(s) they wish to see. At the discretion of the administration, such prior authorization may be waived. Visitors wishing to conference with teachers or
administrators during the course of the school day are encouraged to make arrangements in advance.

- Students attending ECHS may not bring guests to school.
- ECHS reserves the right to deny any individual the right to visit.
- Visits may be prohibited at certain times, such as the first and last weeks of school, immediately before or after vacations or other breaks, and while standardized testing or other student assessments are being conducted.
- All school visitors must comply at all times with Board of Education policies, administrative rules and school regulations.
- Convicted child sex offenders are not permitted on the campus unless certain conditions exist and they have received prior approval from school officials.
- The administration has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.
- Classrooms and other instructional areas are the most vulnerable to disruption. Therefore, access to classrooms or other instructional areas of the school may be restricted upon the recommendation of the teacher or as otherwise deemed necessary by the administration.

STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Students of Empower Community High School have the right to equitable treatment and equitable access to the educational program. Students also have the right of due process, a presumption of innocence, free expression and association and the privacy of one’s own thoughts. Together, with these rights, students of Empower Community High School also have certain responsibilities. This section outlines those rights and responsibilities.

Student Expression
Students may distribute and/or post flyers and other materials ONLY with prior approval from school administration. Students have the right to voice an opinion as long as they do not threaten to disrupt school activity, injure or offend others. Offensive material is that which is considered to be obscene, false, abusive, prejudicial, or threatening against a person or group. It is inappropriate to distribute religious materials, take payment for distributing material, or use school equipment without permission to produce material. It is a violation of Policy to distribute materials that advertise or promote the interests of any commercial company or political candidates or parties. Students are responsible for the content of the materials they post or distribute.

Student Participation
Students have the right and responsibility to participate in creating or changing any ECHS policy that affects them. Students can participate through student government representatives or through other student organizations. The school may involve students by including student government representatives at meetings or by asking them directly
what they think about policies. The Principal will make every effort to inform students of changes in policy before they take effect.

Student Safety
Empower Community High School respects the right of every student to be free from personal harm and unfair treatment by staff members or other students. If a student has experienced discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, dating violence, or any other prohibited conduct, they should report their claim to their teacher and the administrative team.

School-related Events
Students are encouraged to attend school-related events and extracurricular activities at ECHS and off campus, such as concerts, theatre productions, school dances and athletic events. For certain events, students and guests may be subject to drug and alcohol evaluation and breathalyzer tests and may be subject to searches. All school rules and policies are in effect at school events. Students who violate the behavior expectations will be required to leave the event immediately and their parent/guardian will be contacted.

EXPECTATIONS OF AN ECHS STUDENT
1. Attend school each and every day, participate, and prepare for college and/or your career.
2. Report to class regularly and on time.
3. Bring required materials to class, participate, and complete all classwork and assignments.
4. Respect yourself, and the rights and property of others.
5. Look out for others (your teachers, faculty, staff) and take care of all school spaces.
6. Obtain a valid hall pass from your teacher or a staff member if you must be in the halls during class time.
7. Students should reach a supervised space for learning, studying, or eating by the end of each passing period.
8. Have your Student ID on you at all times while on campus, coming to and leaving campus.
9. Identify yourself when asked to do so by a staff member.
10. Comply with all reasonable requests of a staff member.
11. Do not use, possess or sell drugs, alcohol, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine.
12. Do everything in your power to safely avoid involvement in a physical altercation or fight.
13. Report any information about a possible dangerous situation to a staff member.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Dress Code Philosophy
Empower Community High School’s student dress code supports equitable educational access and is written in a manner that intends to not reinforce stereotypes. To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.

Our Values

- All students should be able to dress comfortably for school and engage in the educational environment without fear of or actual unnecessary discipline or body shaming.
- All students and staff should understand that they are responsible for managing their own personal "distractions" without regulating individual students' clothing/self expression.
- Student dress code enforcement should not result in unnecessary barriers to school attendance.
- School staff should be trained and able to use student/body-positive language to explain the code and to address code violations.
- Teachers should focus on teaching without the additional and often uncomfortable burden of dress code enforcement.
- Reasons for conflict and inconsistent and/or inequitable discipline should be minimized whenever possible.

Our student dress code is designed to accomplish several goals:

- Maintain a safe learning environment in classes where protective or supportive clothing is needed, such as chemistry/biology (eye or body protection), dance (bare feet, tights/leotards), or PE (athletic attire/shoes).
- Allow students to wear clothing of their choice that is comfortable.
- Allow students to wear clothing that expresses their self-identified gender.
- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories with offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech, and pornography.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that denote, suggest, display or reference alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia or other illegal conduct or activities.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that will interfere with the operation of the school, disrupt the educational process, invade the rights of others, or create a reasonably foreseeable risk of such interference or invasion of rights.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that reasonably can be construed as being or including content that is racist, lewd, vulgar or obscene, or that reasonably can be construed as containing fighting words, speech that incites others to imminent lawless action, defamatory speech, or threats to others.
- Ensure that all students are treated equitably regardless of race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.
Dress Code
Empower Community High School expects that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or for any school sponsored event. Student dress choices should respect the District’s intent to sustain a community that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. The primary responsibility for a student’s attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The school district is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and that dress code enforcement does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size. Any restrictions to the way a student dresses must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and must be explained within this dress code.

Basic Principles
Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times. Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, breasts, and nipples are fully covered with opaque fabric. However, cleavage should not have coverage requirements. All items listed in the “must wear” and “may wear” categories below must meet this basic principle.

Students Must Wear*, while following the basic principle above:
- A Shirt (with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms), AND
- Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts), AND Shoes.
*Courses that include attire as part of the curriculum (for example, professionalism, public speaking, and job readiness) may include assignment-specific dress, but should not focus on covering bodies in a particular way or promoting culturally-specific attire. Activity-specific shoes requirements are permitted (for example, athletic shoes for PE).

Students May Wear, as long as these items do not violate the basic principle above:
- Hats facing straight forward or straight backward. Hats must allow the face to be visible to staff, and not interfere with the line of sight of any student or staff.
- Religious headwear
- Hoodie sweatshirts (wearing the hood overhead is allowed, but the face and ears must be visible to school staff).
- Fitted pants, including opaque leggings, yoga pants and “skinny jeans”
- Pajamas
- Ripped jeans, as long as underwear and buttocks are not exposed.
- Tank tops, including spaghetti straps; halter tops
- Athletic attire
- Visible waistbands on undergarments or visible straps on undergarments worn under other clothing (as long as this is done in a way that does not violate the basic principles above).
Students Cannot Wear:

- Violent language or images.
- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity).
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups.
- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (visible waistbands and visible straps are allowed)
- Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice).
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon.
- Any item that obscures the face or ears (except as a religious observance).

Dress Code Enforcement

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below. School administration and staff shall not have discretion to vary the requirements in ways that lead to discriminatory enforcement.

- Students will only be removed from spaces, hallways, or classrooms as a result of a dress code violation as outlined above.
- Students in violation of the dress code will be provided three (3) options to be dressed more to code during the school day:
  - Students will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school, to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
  - Students will be provided with temporary school clothing to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
  - If necessary, students’ parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.

- No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.
- School staff shall not enforce the school’s dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.
- Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school.

“Shaming” includes, but is not limited to:

- kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
- measuring straps or skirt length;
- asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
- calling out students in spaces, in hallways, or in classrooms about perceived dress code violations in front of others; in particular, directing students to correct sagged pants that do not expose the entire undergarment, or confronting students
about visible bra straps, since visible waistbands and straps on undergarments are permitted; and,

- accusing students of “distracting” other students with their clothing.

These dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days and summer school days, as well as any school-related events and activities, such as graduation ceremonies, dances and prom. Student athletic apparel will be defined by safety and competitive performance standards. Students who feel they have been subject to discriminatory enforcement of the dress code should contact the Principal immediately.