

ASPIRE HIGH STUDENT HANDBOOK

A Note to Students

ASPIRE exists for one reason and that is to give you an opportunity for a solid high school education. The staff has endeavored to develop a program that will help meet your special needs. We understand that due to age, need to work, family obligations and/or personal reasons, many students are unable to complete high school. That is why ASPIRE was born. However, no school, no matter how unique or new, will provide that solid education unless there is a commitment by the student. There is a magic formula for school success:

Good Attitude +
Good Attendance +
Good Work =
GRADUATION

The formula is simple. The magician is you. You must make it work with the desire and commitment you bring. We are glad you have chosen ASPIRE. Let us know how we can help you reach your special goals. We look forward to seeing you in class everyday! We especially look forward to seeing you in your cap and gown as soon as possible!

A Note to Parents

We expect the custodial parents of our students to take an active role in monitoring their child's attendance and progress in the school. School staff will inform a student, by phone or letter, if their lack of attendance is threatening their continued enrollment. However, parents are urged to inquire, at the school office, if they fear a potential attendance problem.

Students in good attendance will be proud of their progress reports. Parents should expect to see them about every three (3) weeks. If you have not seen a progress report, contact ASPIRE.

We need your support and will make every effort to cooperate with you. Your child's success in school can more easily become a reality.

Attendance/Work Completion Policies

All ASPIRE students are expected to attend classes on a regular basis. Students who fail to maintain adequate attendance may jeopardize their enrollment in the alternative school program. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the teacher if an extended period of absenteeism is expected (illness, illness in student's family, family emergencies, etc.). A specific attendance policy is supplied each student upon enrollment.

It is vital for the student to remember that should a withdrawal be made for any reason, ASPIRE cannot guarantee that the student may be re-enrolled. A conference with the student, parents, home school principal and/or counselor, and alternative school staff may be required before re-enrollment.

A student, who is working in Carnegie units (73 hours of seat time), is expected to complete one-half credit approximately each three weeks of school. A student may be awarded a progress report prior to Carnegie unit time if all competencies are fulfilled. Difficult classes may require more time. No student will be held back from completing a class due to motivation and intellectual ability. Progress will be assessed by the classroom teacher.

Parents are invited to inquire regarding their child's attendance and progress. It is advisable to call the school office during the time session your child attends.

It is very important for all ASPIRE students and parents to understand that enrollment in the alternative school program represents a commitment on their part to accept the attendance and academic policies of the school.

Graduation Requirements

The following requirements must be met to earn a South Dakota high school diploma for the 2006-2007 school year:

English 4 credits

1 and 1/2 units of Writing

1 and 1/2 units of Literature

1/2 unit of American Literature (some school district combine American Literature with Composition and make it a 1 unit class)

1/2 unit of Speech

Science 3 credits (3 credit if planning to attend a state university)

1 unit of Physical Science (Plato curriculum)

1 unit of Biology

1 unit of Advanced Biology (Anatomy + Scientific Terminology) if required by school district

Mathematics 3 credits (3 credits if planning to attend a state university, must be Algebra I or above). These classes are taught using the Plato curriculum.

Social Science 3 credit

1/2 unit of Geography

1 unit of American History

1 unit of American Government

1/2 unit of elective in Social Science (eg. Psychology, Street Law, Sociology, Economics, etc.)

Computer Science 1/2 credit

Fine Art 1 credit

Electives 9 credits

One-half credit is equal to passing a class for one semester. One credit is equal to passing a class for two semesters.

Note that your referring school district may have differing requirements for Computer Science and Fine Art as well as Science and Math.

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22 credits

The student's home school may have varying graduation requirements. These requirements will be noted at the time of enrollment and development of the student's plan of study.

Individual school policies regarding graduation ceremonies and distribution of diplomas vary. Students should check with alternative school staff regarding their home school's policy.

A course description handbook will be provided to all students, allowing them to make class choices. Students will be counseled on a regular basis about amount of credits earned and needed for graduation.

Confidentiality

Any information regarding an ASPIRE student is available to the custodial parent of any student, ages 14-18. Information will not be released to a non-custodial parent without written consent of the custodial parent. Information regarding married students of any age or students 18 or over is strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone without written consent of the student. This includes wives, husbands, aunts, uncles, stepparents, etc. We ask all individuals to honor the rights of privacy of our students.

Student Guidelines

1. Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend class in accordance with the program's attendance policy.
2. No smoking is allowed in or around the school facility. Students are prohibited from smoking in front of the school and must have left campus even if they are of age to legally use tobacco.
3. Alcohol and controlled substances are contraband items. Their presence will not be tolerated in the facility.
4. Disruptive or objectionable attire is not acceptable.
5. Interfering with other students' opportunities to learn is prohibited.

Snow Days

ASPIRE classes may be canceled due to inclement weather. Students are urged to pay close attention to television and radio reports concerning school closings due to snow and other winter conditions.

Students and parents are asked to make careful decisions regarding travel to school during questionable weather and road conditions.

Telephone Usage/Messages

School telephones are for business use only and students should only ask to use them in case of emergency. Pay phones are available adjacent to the school facility and can be used for all personal calls. Students are urged to use the pay phones before and after class and during breaks only.

The school staff cannot take responsibility for taking phone messages for students. We ask families not to request staff to interrupt classes unless there is an emergency requiring such action.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) In School Youth-Career Program

This program is designed to allow students, 16-21 years of age, an opportunity to attend school on a flexible schedule while gaining work experience in a part-time job. After students obtain pre-employment and work maturity skills training, they will work with a job development specialist who will assist them in finding a part-time job.

All students are required to be employed or to be involved in an active job/career search.

Smoking

ASPIRE is a smoke-free facility. No smoking or tobacco use is permitted in the building, or on campus. Students who violate our no smoking policy face disciplinary action. We encourage all of our students to quit smoking and we will provide educational information of how to quit.

Radios

Students are discouraged from bringing radios (tape and disc players, etc.) to class. School staff can assume no responsibility for such items brought into the facility.

Cellular Phones

We do not allow cellular phones into the facility. There are a few exceptions in which we will allow a student to bring in a cell phone and those are only for emergency purposes. A student must seek instructor permission to do so.

Dress Code

Students are advised to use good judgment in choosing clothing worn in class. Bare midriffs, tank-tops, short shorts, and clothing printed with vulgar language are not appropriate for school.

Unauthorized Areas

Office areas, files, storage areas, and teachers' desks are unauthorized areas for students. Similarly, living organisms in the science area must not be disturbed.

Summer Enrollment

ASPIRE offers a six-week summer session which emphasizes biology and physical science. Other classes are offered on an as-needed basis. Students are encouraged to enroll in these classes. If family schedules or work schedules do not permit this enrollment, it is important that the student inform the school staff prior to nonattendance.

Visitors

ASPIRE makes no provisions for students wishing to bring guests to school. Due to staff/student considerations, students may not bring friends or relatives to classes.

We also ask our students not to request permission to bring their children to class. We understand that unexpected problems may arise regarding availability of daycare services. However, younger children in the classroom create distractions to the learning process.

Custodial parents are always welcome to visit their child's classes and are encouraged to make appointments to do so.

Transportation

ASPIRE High students and their parents are responsible for transportation to and from the school site. Transportation becomes the responsibility of the student when the decision is made to attend classes at the alternative school rather than the home high school.

Car pooling is advised. Students are cautioned to be aware of changing road and weather conditions.

Breaks

Adequate breaks are scheduled for each class schedule. Students are encouraged to bring a lunch from home (a refrigerator is available); snacks may be purchased nearby.

Students must abide by the time constraints of the break periods and properly dispose of refuse. No smoking is allowed on or near campus.

Grades & Grade Reporting

Individual credits are awarded as they are completed and a progress report is issued at that time. Parents are urged to inquire regarding academic progress of their children. All students receive progress reports, personally. No progress reports are mailed home.

Homework

Course work at ASPIRE is done within the classroom. Texts and workbooks are never removed from the classroom. All daily assignments and tests must be done in class under teacher supervision.

Students may, on occasion, have work they choose to do at home as an enrichment exercise. Students also may have supplemental assignments to Carnegie credits work that may be done at home.

Students must complete one assignment at a time to be reviewed by the teacher. If a passing score is not achieved, the assignment must be redone or an alternate exercise completed. This process insures that the student understands the work and minimizes failure.

Plagiarism

The internet has made searching and copying another writer's work very easy. ASPIRE High Alternative School has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. The trust and process of learning is compromised by this act.

What is Plagiarism?

"Plagiarism is a difficult concept to define. It includes a range of actions from failure to use proper citation to wholesale cheating. A student who plagiarizes may do so unintentionally or with malicious deliberation. In 'Helping Students Avoid Plagiarism' Stephen Wilhoit lists the following types of plagiarism:

- Buying a paper from a research service or term paper mill.
- Turning in another student's work without that student's knowledge.
- Turning in a paper a peer has written for the student.
- Copying a paper from a source text without proper acknowledgment / citation.
- Copying materials from a source text, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks.
- Paraphrasing materials from a source text without appropriate documentation."

Student Consequences

Plagiarism will not be tolerated as it undermines the integrity of the academic community. This is the consequence for plagiarism on any composition or exam:

- A mandatory zero will be given for the assignment/exam.

Time Accountability

Students are required in "clock in and out" of class every day using the time clock. Students are to "clock in and out" for themselves only. Students who fail to "clock in" jeopardize their official documentation of their attendance.