



DEERFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

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Deerfield Parent Network-Transition to Deerfield High School

The differences between middle school and high school: there is so much more for a student to know and to remember in high school.

- We treat them like young adults. The student is held to a higher standard of responsibility for being a student
 - A. They have to know what cycle day it is - they must use the Deerfield Planner. They must know what the schedule is each day
 - B. They have to read their DHS email every day so that when staff email them, they are aware of what is being asked of them. They have to be in the know
 - C. There is more work and it is more involved than in middle school AND IT ALL COUNTS
 - D. They have to have their materials for class each day. Things cannot be left at home, especially their new fully-charged Chromebook or their fully-charged INSPIRE Calculator. No excuses are accepted for not being ready for class
 - E. They have to check their teacher websites on **Schoology** for homework assignments and calendars nightly, but especially if they miss a day of school. They should check **Schoology** at least once a week to make sure all of their work is turned in and check their grades
 - F. There is a greater reliance on technology: Google docs et al, Turnitin.com, Web Assign, Schoology, Infinite Campus, MAIA
 - G. Cell phone use is prohibited in classrooms, restrooms and locker rooms
- Some teachers have late policies where they take points off of assignments that are not turned in on time. Some teachers don't accept late work at all. Some teachers only accept late work until the unit test. It is always best to get work turned in on the due date
- Students can carry their backpacks with them, but they need to avoid having the backpacks get too heavy. They must make strategic use of their lockers throughout the school day
- At DHS, students have to buy all of their books, their INSPIRE Calculator and pay an annual fee for their Chromebook. They need to bring those books, their Chromebook and the calculator to class when the teacher expects them to have it. Students will also buy their paperback novels for English, which are best purchased at our DHS bookstore
- There is a cafeteria with hot lunch offerings and many other items for purchase. We also have outside vendors sometimes like Lou Malnati's. The students need to manage many more food choices, and not all of them are healthy. And there are vending machines and

pizza sold quite often after school. Money can be placed on their ID card via the Infinite Campus parent portal so no cash is required for purchases

- The student must look on their teachers' websites in Schoology for assignments when they miss class and then email his/her teachers if they need clarification or assistance with the assignment. It is always good for the student to let the teacher know that they are taking these steps and just check in after an absence. **And a parent/guardian needs to call the attendance office that same day to authorize the absence**
- The student has to approach his/her teachers if they need assistance. The student will need to initiate the appointment(s)
- The student must be thorough in his/her homework completion, even if it doesn't count towards their grade as this is good preparation for upcoming assessments
- The student must be aware and follow teacher direction more closely like when and where to turn in homework. Some teachers are now using Turnitin.com, Google Docs and Web Assign and some others want things emailed to them. There are quite a variety of ways now for work to be turned in
- Students need to be prepared for assessments at all times. The use of Quizlet and WebAssign as study tools is vital as well as using free tutoring services in the Academic Resource Center (ARC)
- Students must carry their ID card at all times, especially if money is placed on the card for food purchases. They must show their ID to purchase any food in the cafeteria
- It sounds funny, but students closing their locker and remembering their locker combinations are a must. Locker number and combination information will be listed on the student's Infinite Campus page
- Students must keep track of their belongings like books, calculators and their phones. If you can create an identifier, that is ideal
- We offer so many more activities, clubs and sports. There is so much to do besides studying. That is the good news. The bad news is there is so much to do and it is important to balance one's time and energy and stay focused on doing well academically
- There is much more of a time commitment to activities like sports or rehearsals with practices six days a week for 2.5 hours a day
- Learning the difference between doing homework and studying: probably 15 minutes of reviewing the material for each class, each day would be sufficient

Ways to help freshmen get more comfortable at DHS

- Joining fall sports and/or activities and clubs
- Walking their schedule and opening their locker several times before school starts
- Attending the book sale day for freshmen so they have all of their books and supplies before school starts
- Attending Warrior Welcome in August before school starts
- Advisory Class: four days a week with an Advisory teacher and two Senior Advisors: The primary purpose for this class, at least for first quarter, is to assist the students in making a smooth transition into high school
- Homeroom: four days a week with the same homeroom for four years: The primary purpose is to give students another adult in the building that they can access as a resource and to help build relationships among the students in a smaller group setting
- Trying out the clubs and activities we offer throughout freshman year

Ways for Parents to become more comfortable with the high school

- **Attend Warrior Welcome on August 15th, 6:30pm**
- Attend the Freshman Morning parent program offered throughout the year
- Attend PTO lunches with the principal. These will be listed on the school calendar
- Help your child navigate the increased demands of high school - in many ways, even though it will be August and they are officially in high school, they still don't have all of the skills yet to manage all of the demands of high school. The counselor, the advisory teacher, all freshmen homeroom teachers and all freshman teachers will help as well. Your child may still need your help to get and stay organized, but they don't need help completing their homework
- Watch the DHS website often for information and updates
- Look at Schoology once a week for grade updates and assignment completion
- Reach out to parents of upperclassmen for their perspectives (knowing that what you receive is just one perspective and may not be best for your child)
- Help your child strike a balance between academics and activities. Sometimes, they are so excited for a fresh start and they join too much and can't get all of the work done

Follow the acronym JAR

- A. **Join:** Join the PTO, join the Friends of the Arts and the Booster Club and especially join the Deerfield Parent Network. Get involved yourself, as that will allow you to meet other parents, network and know what is going on within school and within the community. You absolutely need to be "in the know"
- B. **Attend** the programs that those organizations listed above sponsor, the Freshman AM parent programs, Principals' lunches, the sporting events, the concerts, theater performances, parent night. Attend sporting events and performances sponsored by the high school even if your child is not participating in the event. Try to get to as many presentations as we offer for parents. Be very much a part of the DHS community. Be as active in our school as your child will be
- C. **Read:** Read the announcements that are emailed to you twice a week, read all of the messenger messages from Infinite Campus, read Deerprints, our school newspaper, read the website under the parent section as there are newsletters there and updates from the school, look for great information on the DHS website such as the Program of Studies, the list of activities we offer etc.

And then there is **L for listen** and **Q for asking questions**. Who would have guessed that minivans were the best things ever invented after sliced bread. Carpools are still the very best way to hear what is being thought about and said.

You will also need to think about if you are comfortable if upperclassmen will be driving your child, usually to and from events. You don't always know them personally, but it tends to be very convenient. There might other considerations to think about. Ask questions.

I say **Q for asking questions** because there is lots of information that floats around the community. Not all of it is true and not all of it is right for your child. Ask questions of school personnel like the counselor, the sponsor or coach, the advisory teacher or homeroom teacher or go directly to the teachers themselves; of course encourage your student get the information first.

Mythbusters, tips and tricks

- No one gets sold an elevator pass or shoved into a locker. We pride ourselves on taking good care of all of our students, but especially our freshmen
- The building is not that big. Students find their way around rather quickly
- The student will figure out our cycle schedule very quickly and will also figure out how to manage their homework load with two classes taken out of the mix each day
- Freshmen will probably stick closely to the friends they left middle school with and spent the summer with, but usually by the start of second semester of their freshman year, they begin to make many more new friends and their circle of friends widens
- Not everyone drinks or uses substances. There are plenty of students who have no interest in drinking or using
- Students who participate in activities and clubs generally do better academically in school. We all like to see our freshmen connected to at least one activity in the fall
- Strong attendance is an important key to success at DHS. Missing school increases a student's level of anxiety and it is easy to fall behind when they miss instruction

Tips and tricks:

- Say “no” when something does not sound right to you. It is truly okay (and appropriate) to say no sometimes. No to spring break in Mexico. No to a limo for homecoming. No to boy/girl sleepovers, if that makes you uncomfortable
- Don't host a large party! You certainly can host pictures ahead of homecoming for example, but no other large gatherings. It will not be worth it. But having said that, it is great to host small or informal or impromptu gatherings as this will help you to get to know your child's friends. And it gives you a golden opportunity to listen in when you casually (and often) bring in the treats for those hungry teenagers!
- Network with other parents. Call to find out if they will be home AND watching what is happening at their house. Don't expect your child to know this information
- Ask for access to their Facebook page. Follow them on Twitter. Monitor Schoology. You need to be active and aware of what is happening with them as much as possible
- Be the one to offer to carpool or drive. You will learn so much through the kids' conversation - unless they are texting each other and there is silence in the vehicle
- Look for the ISBN numbers for textbooks on the DHS website. Buying used books online will save you quite a bit of money
- Consider buying a second set of books to keep at home, if possible
- Think about how often you will drop off “stuff” your child forgot at home: hopefully almost never. Students need to be responsible for bringing everything they need to school every day. They must learn this skill and not rely on you each time they forget to bring something. You don't want to keep running stuff into school all of the time
- **Look ahead to traffic safety** - figure out when your student will take the course and if it will be at the high school or done privately
- Watch Schoology for grades and assignments being turned in - maybe once a week - not much more than that
- On Infinite Campus, you can see what your child is purchasing in the cafeteria. You may or may not want to see this?
- Don't be afraid to call or email teachers for information, but have your child speak with the teacher first

- Allow your child to take on more responsibility like getting themselves out of bed in the morning, making their own lunch, doing their own laundry, managing their daily schedule, etc. They need to become more independent and they need to become better problem solvers. They need to learn to think fast on their feet
- **Don't text with your child during the school day** unless you just created an emergency doctor's appointment and they really need to know that they must leave school early. You might get all worked up over something that your child said to you, but by the time they got home, it was all resolved and no big deal. **Please direct your child to use the school resources like their counselor rather than texting you to help them resolve whatever the situation happens to be**
- Don't take them out of school for doctors' appointments or orthodontist appointments or vacations if there is any way to avoid it. Missing hours of instruction is detrimental. It adds to the student's stress level
- Unless the student is really sick, they need to be in school. We have two wonderful nurses so if the student gets sick during the day, the student sees one of them first and then the nurse would call you if she thinks a student should go home. Students must check out through the health service if they are ill and need to go home. They can't just text you to come get them. And don't fall for the old line "nothing is happening in school today"
- Don't call them out of classes or authorize an absence on the premise that "it's not that important." PE is just as important as Math
- Try your very best to have dinner together every night. Schedules get chaotic sometimes, but this is one of the best ways to stay connected and to be in the know

My very best advice: Enjoy your child's time in high school. Don't wish it away. Get to everything you can. In a few short years, they will be gone and off doing their own thing. Enjoy every moment with them!

Get excited about the Warrior Way where we live the concepts of courage, respect, kindness, gratitude, purpose and passion.