

Durham Nativity School



**Community Handbook
for Parents & Students
2024-2025**

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BELIEFS

The Durham Nativity School is prepared to embark on its twenty-second year of "Daring to Dream Big." We recognize and appreciate that the success of our mission is a team effort with our parents leading the way. We look forward to partnering with you to provide an excellent educational experience for your son focused on mind, body, and spirit. Please join us as we dare to dream big, never give up, and strive to excel.

As we strive to give and be our best each day, we ask for your support. Please read the Parent-Student Handbook carefully with your son. Once you have thoroughly reviewed the expectations, please read and sign the last page and return it to the school as your pledge to be actively involved in the educational success of your child. Please remember that Durham Nativity School is your school, and your son's success is dependent upon how well we all work together to ensure excellence in every aspect of our educational program. Remember to show your DNS pride!

Mission Statement

Durham Nativity School provides an excellent education for young men, empowering them to make a difference in the world.

Durham Nativity School is dedicated to providing a nurturing and enriching learning environment along with a comprehensive twelve-year support system tailored for middle school boys. Our aim is to empower students who possess the determination to excel academically, but may lack the means for a high-quality independent school education. By integrating comprehensive academics and growth, we nurture the inherent potential of every child, placing significant emphasis on the value of knowledge, ethical principles, academic competence, self-control, and the cultivation of character. Achieved through the implementation of smaller class sizes, extended school hours, and an enriched academic calendar, our approach is dedicated to instilling a sense of selflessness, shaping the next generation of exemplary individuals, and fostering pioneers within our community.

Vision Statement

It is the vision of our founder Dr. Joseph Moylan that Durham Nativity School provide a learning environment for eligible boys in grades five through eight which supports them in their personal, social, moral, and intellectual development and positions them to be successful at an independent college preparatory high school. Promoting an academic program that fosters excellence in traditional liberal arts disciplines and a focus on Judeo-Christian values, DNS strives to help students engage in activities that promote sound physical and mental health, artistic achievement, and character development guided by a faculty and staff who believe in each student as an individual. The ultimate goal of DNS is to provide a holistic learning experience for its students, inspiring them to develop the skills and critical thinking necessary to become educated leaders and role models within the community.

Inclusion Statement

Durham Nativity School values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. In the admission of students and our employment practices, we do not discriminate based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national origin, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status.

Guiding Principles

As an organization, Durham Nativity School believes that we have a profound responsibility to keep children safe, help them grow, and empower them to achieve their own personal goals. We seek to remove any barriers that will prevent our young men from succeeding. Those barriers include the risk of physical, mental, emotional, and sexual exploitation. Durham Nativity School recognizes that we have a responsibility to keep children safe and ensure that others around them take this responsibility seriously as well. Part of our mission is to ensure that children are emotionally and physically healthy, supported, and able to thrive.

Durham Nativity School Creed (DNS Man Creed)

As DNS Men we will:
Dare to dream big!
Dare to be our best and disciplined in all we do.
Dare to dedicate our lives to the transformation of our community.

As DNS Men we will:
Never give up!
Never be silenced by injustice, ignorance or prejudice.
Never be alone, for God and our DNS brothers are with us always.

As DNS Men we will:
Strive to excel!
Strive to be strong in character and humble in spirit.
Strive to be instruments of God's peace, justice, and truth.

DNS Learner Expectations

The DNS Learner Expectations derive from the DNS Mission and Inclusion Statements, Guiding Principles (p. 4), the DNS Man Creed, and the DNS Community Norms (see p. 18).

DNS Tigers

1. Are present, on time, and prepared to learn
2. Are disciplined and hardworking
3. Always do their best and persevere
4. Are respectful of different points of view
5. Pay attention and participate
6. Actively listen
7. Complete and turn in work on time
8. Display integrity and honesty

EDUCATIONAL TEAM

Instructional Team

The instructional team is responsible for upholding and furthering our mission, effective instructional planning, facilitating the daily instruction of students, supporting one and other by collaborating, team teaching, integrating lessons, and sharing best practices, and assisting the leadership team.

Core Curriculum

Fifth Grade

Mr. Cameron Cole

Foreign Language

Tiffany Chavis

English Language Arts

Jeremy Tolleson

Mathematics

Michael Lappin

Science

Starlyn Robinson

Academic Services Coordinator

Florida DeVaul-Dudley

Enrichment Programs/Courses

Music Education

Mr. Charles Sands

Community Service & Character Education

Mr. Orin Robinson

High School Prep

QuRita Hunter

Study & Test Taking Skills, IXL, Project

Mr. Mitch Cox

Social Skills and UNC SUPER

Ms. Tyme Nunn & Ms. Allen-Albright

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Mr. Anthony Holley

Leadership Team

Tiffany Alrefae
Brittany Allen-Albright
Mitch Cox
Orin Robinson
QuRita Hunger
John Zambenini
Kevin Mahoney

Head of School
Assistant Head of School
Dean of Faculty
Dean of Students
Director of Graduate Support
Director of Institutional Support
Director of Recruiting & Admissions & College Support

School Life Team

Tyme Nunn
Brittany Harris
Angel Whitehead
Samuel Scannell

School Social Worker
Community Connection Assistant
Administrative Assistant – Student Life
Director of Athletics & Student Life Mentor

Board of Trustees

Jim Baker, Chair
Anthony Dilweg
Manal El-Ramly
Gil Fitts
Polly Hardie
Mark Higgins
Jeanne Howard
Brendan Moylan
Deven Patel
Harrison Shannon

Ruby Thompkins
Yholima Vargas Pedroza
Stephon Walton

PARENTAL SUPPORT

Parental engagement is vital to the growth and development of your sons. Join us and support the teaching and learning process by:

1. asking your son each day what he learned, discovered, and created in class
2. asking what your son's homework assignment is for each class
3. checking and signing planners/agendas daily
4. making sure that your son has the necessary materials to complete school assignments and projects
5. making sure that your son reads at least 30 minutes each night
6. making sure that your son is at school on time every day
7. making sure that your son is organized and has proper time management and study skills
8. making sure your son has an appropriate space to study & complete homework assignments at home
9. making sure that your son goes to bed early each night ensuring a good night's sleep
10. monitoring your son's progress on Jupiter Ed, the online grading system, and communicating with the teachers and administration regularly

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

It is the belief of the Durham Nativity School Board of Trustees, school administration, faculty, and staff that our students receive a quality education, enabling them to compete locally, nationally, and internationally with other young scholars. We are committed to developing and delivering an all-encompassing, comprehensive curriculum driven by the North Carolina Common Core and Essential Standards and/or the NC SDPI Learning Standards as well as the Educational Records Bureau Comprehensive Testing Program Learning Standards. In addition to an academic standard of excellence, we are also offering Character-Leadership Education, career awareness, team sports, and arts enrichment to our educational program. We believe that an exemplary educational program serves the needs of the "whole child," building all of the necessary skills for each young man to become a leader and change agent within their community.

Course Offerings

The curriculum offerings at Durham Nativity School include:

Core Curriculum

- Foreign Language (Latin and Spanish)
- Mathematics for Grades 5-8
- English Language Arts/Humanities for Grades 5-8
- Science for Grades 5-8
- Social Studies for Grade 5
- Ambassadors of Learning (In AOL, our Academic Services Coordinator and Learning Specialist works closely with students, teachers, parents, and administrators to provide tailored academic support, identify learning challenges, and create effective strategies for student growth and development.)

Enrichment Classes/Programs

- Character Education & Community Service Learning for Grades 5-8
- Music Education for Grades 5-8
- Study & Test Taking Skills for Grades 6 (Year) & 7 (Quarter 2)
- High School Prep for Grade 8 (Semester 1) & Grade 7 (Semester 2) & Interdisciplinary Project for Grade 8 (Semester 2)
- Social Skills for Grades 5-8 & UNC SUPER for Grade 7 (Quarter 1)
- IXL for Grades 6 & 7 (selected seventh graders) & AI for Grades 8 & 7 (selected seventh graders)

Also, all 6-8 students participate in Homework Help on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. They participate in PE/team sports during the extended day hours from 4:30-5:45 PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fifth grade students are offered an optional hour study two days a week from 3:00 to 4:00 PM.

DNS follows a traditional schedule to facilitate instruction that promotes critical thinking, project-based learning, differentiation, reading & writing across the curriculum,

Durham Nativity School Daily Schedule Semester One 2023-2024

GRADE 6							
<i>Time</i>	MONDAY	<i>Time</i>	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	<i>Time</i>	FRIDAY
8-8:20	Assembly	8-8:20	Assembly	Chapel	Assembly	8-8:20	Assembly
8:25-9:20	ELA	8:25-9:25	ELA	ELA	ELA	8:20- 9:15	Flex Time Faculty Meetings
9:25-10:20	Ambassadors of Learning (AOL)	9:30-10:30	AOL	AOL	AOL	9:20- 10:20	ELA
10:25-11:20	Math	10:35- 11:35	Math	Math	Math	10:25- 11:25	AOL
11:25-11:55	Lunch	11:40- 12:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	11:30- 12:30	Math
12:00-12:55	Latin	12:25-1:25	Latin	Latin	Latin	12:35- 1:15	Lunch
1:00-1:55	Science	1:30-2:30	Science	Science	Science	1:20- 2:20	Latin
2:00-3:15	Com. Service (CPE)	2:35-3:30	Study Skills 6	Music/Choir 1	Enrichment Rotation	2:25- 3:25	Science
3:20-4:25	Homework Help	3:35-4:25	Homework Help	IXL	Homework Help	3:30- 4:25	Advisory/Clubs
-----	-----	4:35-5:45	Sports/PE	-----	Sports/PE	-----	-----

Grade 7							
<i>Time</i>	MONDAY	<i>Time</i>	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	<i>Time</i>	FRIDAY
8-8:20	Assembly	8-8:20	Assembly	Chapel	Assembly	8-8:20	Assembly
8:25-9:20	Spanish	8:25-9:25	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	8:20- 9:15	Flex Time Faculty Meetings
9:25-10:20	ELA	9:30-10:30	ELA	ELA	ELA	9:20- 10:20	Spanish
10:25-11:20	Science	10:35- 11:35	Science	Science	Science	10:25- 11:25	ELA
11:25-11:55	Lunch	11:40- 12:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	11:30- 12:30	Science
12:00-12:55	Math	12:25-1:25	Math	Math	Math	12:35- 1:15	Lunch
1:00-1:55	Ambassadors of Learning (AOL)	9:30-10:30	AOL	AOL	AOL	1:20- 2:20	Math
2:00-3:15	Com. Service (CPE)	2:35-3:30	SUPER - Q1 Enrichment Rotation-Q2	SUPER - Q1 Study Skills 7 -Q2	AI Class w/ Anthony Holley OR IXL	2:25- 3:25	AOL
3:20-4:25	Homework Help	3:35-4:25	Homework Help	Music/Choir 2	Homework Help	3:30- 4:25	Advisory/Clubs
-----	-----	4:35-5:45	Sports/PE	-----	Sports/PE	-----	-----

GRADE 8							
<i>Time</i>	MONDAY	<i>Time</i>	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	<i>Time</i>	FRIDAY
8-8:20	Assembly	8-8:20	Assembly	Chapel	Assembly	8-8:20	Assembly
8:25-9:20	Math	8:25-9:25	Math	Math	Math	8:20- 9:15	Flex Time Faculty Meetings
9:25-10:20	Science	9:30-10:30	Science	Science	Science	9:20- 10:20	Math
10:25-11:20	Ambassadors of Learning (AOL)	10:35- 11:35	AOL	AOL	AOL	10:25- 11:25	Science
11:25-11:55	Lunch	11:40- 12:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	11:30- 12:30	AOL
12:00-12:55	ELA	12:25-1:25	ELA	ELA	ELA	12:35- 1:15	Lunch
1:00-1:55	Spanish	1:30-2:30	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	1:20- 2:20	ELA
2:00-3:15	Com. Service (CPE)	2:35-3:30	Enrichment Rotation	HS Prep	AI Class w/Anthony Holley	2:25- 3:25	Spanish
3:20-4:25	Homework Help	3:35-4:25	Homework Help	Music/Choir 2	Homework Help	3:30- 4:25	Advisory/Clubs
-----	-----	4:35-5:45	Sports/PE	-----	Sports/PE	-----	-----

Fifth Grade Daily/Weekly Schedule

	M	T	W	TR*	Friday
8:00-8:30	Morning Assembly	Morning Assembly	Chapel	Morning Assembly	Morning Assembly
8:30-9:00	ReadWorks & IXL Work	ReadWorks & IXL Work	ReadWorks & IXL Work	ReadWorks & IXL Work	Morning Recess (Collaboration)
9:00-9:10	Vocabulary Review (9:00-9:30)	IXL Work (9:00-9:30)	ReadWorks & IXL Work (8:30-9:30)	ReadWorks & IXL Work (8:30-9:30)	IXL Work (9:00-9:30)
9:20-10:00	Math	English	Math	Math	Math
10:00-11:00	English	Math	Sign Language	English	English
11:10-12:00	Grammar & Cursive	History	Grammar & Cursive	Science	Grammar & Cursive
12:00-1:00	Lunch Then Recess	Lunch Then Recess	Lunch Then Recess	Lunch Then Recess	Lunch Then Recess
1:00-1:45	P.E. (Scannell)	Music (1:00-2:00)	P.E. (Scannell)	Music (1:00-2:00)	Hangtime with Tyme (1:00-2:00)
1:45-2:00	Transition Time: Reading		Transition Time: Reading		
2:00-2:45	Science (S. Robinson)	Homework Help	Character Ed/ Com. Service (O. Robinson)	Homework Help	Science
2:45-3:00	Transition: HW Review, Pack-up	Transition: HW Review, Pack-up	Transition: HW Review, Pack-up	Transition: HW Review, Pack-up	Transition: HW Review, Pack-up
Specials with flexible start times:	N/A	Math 1-1 Mr.Helfer	N/A	Math 1-1	N/A

Morning Assembly Program

The Durham Nativity School Morning Assembly and specifically the [morning assembly speech](#) are our signature program, a part of the **enriched learning environment** and **rigorous academics** enshrined in our **mission statement**. The series of assignments leading to a student-written and orally delivered speech reflects various aspects of the [DNS Definition of Learning](#): *differentiated* (students get a choice among a series of quotations), *culturally relevant* and *experiential* (students select quotations from an ethnically diverse group of people of all genders and orientations and

based their supporting evidence on personal, cultural experiences), *continuous and ongoing* (students begin speeches in fifth grade and grow in maturity and sophistication in their composition and delivery), and *independent and collaborative* (students write their own individual speeches but work with a group of multi-age peers and an adult adviser to revise and edit).

Each day, a student leads the staff and his peers in reciting the [DNS Man Creed](#) and the Pledge of Allegiance; each day, a second student closes the program by reading the announcements for the day and ending the session with a prayer. On every day except Wednesday (our chapel day), during the middle of our program, a third student delivers a speech based on a motivational quotation he has read, analyzed, and reflected on over the previous four weeks.

At the conclusion of the speech, each student receives critical and positive, oral feedback (based on the [Morning Assembly Public Speaking Rubric](#)) from faculty on delivery (voice and pacing, eye contact, gestures, and poise) and content and organization of and preparation for the speech. From the second quarter through the rest of the school year, each time a student delivers a speech, a grade for that speech is recorded in each of the students' five core academic classes: ELA, science, social studies, math, and Latin for sixth graders and Spanish for seventh and eighth graders. During a week in May, just before the changing of the tie ceremony (our fifth graders wear bowties, and our upper school students wear neckties), our fifth graders deliver their first morning assembly speech, as part of their transition into the upper school.

Each week a different advisory is responsible for the speakers and program. Students select their inspirational quotation about a month in advance and then work through a series of assignments with their advisers and advisory peers to plan, draft, revise, edit, and rehearse their speeches. Parents/caregivers are invited to hear their students' presentations.

The morning assembly speech is a complex assignment that involves the **application of higher order thinking skills**, beginning with the student paraphrase of the quotation (the thesis of the speech): comprehension, abstraction, reorganization of ideas, sometimes metaphorical thinking, analysis, and synthesis. As students research the person to whom the quote is attributed, they must make inferences to analyze how the meaning of the quotation is manifested in that person's life. In the act of composing the speech, students must apply the meaning of the quotation to their own lives and the lives of others as they use personal experience and research to illustrate that meaning with examples and explanations.

A week ahead of time, the Dean of Faculty or adviser of the advisory on duty issues an invitation to the parents of the speakers.

Visitors to our school and admissions directors at the high schools our students attend often comment on how articulate and comfortable our young men are when talking to adults or speaking in public. Some of our shyest fifth and sixth graders go on to become graduation speakers by the end of eighth grade. We are very proud of the growth that each of our students makes over the course of three years of public speaking at Durham Nativity, a school at which young men receive the kind of education that empowers them to make a difference in the world.

Grading Policy

Student grades should reflect a holistic view. Since they are confidential, other students and volunteers will not be involved with deciding or seeing graded work. All students are given a fair chance to succeed in all aspects of school life, including their academic assignments. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide variety of alternative means of assessment to address different learning styles. The grading system at the Durham Nativity School is based on a seven-point numerical scale and achievement letter grades with numerical effort grades, according to the following scale:

Numerical Grade Scale		GPA	Effort Grade
A+ (100-97)	Excellent performance	4.3	4 = Excellent Effort-student consistently exceeds expectations
A (96-93)		4.0	
			3 = Good Effort-student consistently meets expectations and works to his ability
B+ (92-89)	Good performance	3.3	
B (88-85)		3.0	
			2 = Unsatisfactory Effort-student fails to meet expectations and work consistently to his ability
C+ (84-81)	Satisfactory performance	2.3	
C (80-77)		2.0	
			1 = Poor or No Effort-student is disengaged from learning
D+ (76-73)	Unsatisfactory performance	1.3	
D (72-69)	Significant weakness	1.0	
F (68 or lower)	Failing/inadequate performance	0.0	

Semester Reports & Parent Conferences

The school provides grades and narrative reports four times a year: Quarter 1 Progress Report, Semester 1 Progress Report, Third Quarter Progress Report, and Semester 2/Year Report Card. At each of these grading periods, students receive an effort grade in each of their core classes. At the end of the first quarter, all new students and their parents must participate in a parent-teacher conference as well as any student on academic probation. At or after the conference, students on academic probation receive an action or success plan that details the responsibilities of the teacher/school, the parents, and the students to ensure the academic improvement of the student. The Dean of Faculty and Dean of Students, in collaboration with teachers, monitor the progress of students in completing the success plan and making adequate academic progress. Additionally, a student success committee meets each week to discuss progress of students in academic jeopardy or needing additional socio-emotional support. This committee also plans activities (including awards programs) to support the academic achievement and general social-emotional health of our students. At the end of the semester and third quarter, parent conferences are held for any students still struggling academically, emotionally, or behaviorally. At the end of the year, the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and Dean of Students hold conferences with parents and students for whom any concerns still remain. Each Semester Report Card is shared with parents at the end of each semester on the dates listed on the master school calendar.

Parents are encouraged to regularly monitor student status and progress on our online grading system, Jupiter Ed.

Categories of assessment for grades 6-8 are as follows in the five core classes:

Tests, Projects	= 40%
Quizzes	= 24%
Homework, Classwork, Labs, Other	= 16%
Exam	= <u>20%</u>
	100%

Tests

Tests focus on large amounts of material, usually at the end of a unit, to determine a student's mastery of the concepts and their application. Tests will always be announced at least a week in advance. Absences will be handled on an individual basis.

Quizzes

Quizzes focus on smaller quantities of material to assess whether or not students have mastered the concept well enough to be prepared to move on in the course. Quizzes may be either announced or unannounced.

Exams

Near the end of the semester, teachers administer exams at grades six, seven, and eight. In the seventh and eighth grades, exams are cumulative, assessing what students have learned in the semester; in sixth grade, they function more like an end-of-unit test, focusing on the last unit studied. While teachers are certainly welcome to give traditional multiple-choice exams, teachers may also incorporate authentic assessments (compositions, projects, performances) as part of an exam. For students who fail to show proficiency in subject matter assessed on an exam (an exam grade lower than a C), students will, under the direct supervision of the teacher, make the necessary exam corrections to display competency in the subject matter. The student's initial exam grade will stand as the recorded grade.

Assessment categories for the **fifth grade** are as follows:

Tests & Projects:	50%
Assignments:	20%
Quizzes:	<u>30%</u>
	100%

Awards Assemblies

In order to cultivate a culture where students are dreaming big, striving to excel, and never giving up, Durham Nativity School has an awards assembly at the end of each quarter. Students are chosen in each discipline and honored for achievement/excellence and effort. Similarly, a student may be honored for overall contribution to the community, emulating the Man Creed, and/or carrying out the embodiment of what it means to be a DNS Man beyond our school community.

Additionally, approximately once a month, one student is selected as a World Changer, recognized by faculty and staff for the characteristics of zest, grit, optimism, self-control, gratitude, social intelligence, curiosity, growth mindset, and purpose.

Adult Mentors will all have a voice in selecting which students are honored at the end of each term.

Academic Notice

Each week teachers post and update student grades in Jupiter Ed, our online grading system. Parents are responsible for monitoring their sons' standing and progress in each subject by logging into their online account. Parents of students experiencing academic difficulty are notified by teachers or the administration at the earliest signs of difficulty. Parents receive a formal notification at mid-semester and semester conferences and on report cards.

Academic Warning

A student will be placed on Academic Warning if the student receives:

1. A failing grade for a course
2. Two or more grades below C
3. One grade below C and two or more effort marks below 3
4. Three or more effort marks below 3

Consequences

The administration determines the consequences for students on Academic Warning on a case-by-case basis with input from faculty and, on occasion, parents. Typically, the following options are considered:

1. The student may not participate in extracurricular activities.
2. The student may be assigned tutoring and/or mandatory help sessions with faculty.

Note: Eighth graders placed on Academic Warning will have nine weeks to earn their way off of Academic Warning. Failure to do so will automatically result in the student being placed on Academic Probation. At that point, he will have nine weeks to earn his way off of Academic Probation or be dismissed.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on Academic Probation if:

1. The student fails two or more courses
2. The student fails one course and receives three effort marks below 3
3. Three or more grades below C
4. Two grades below C and three effort marks below 3

Once placed on Academic Probation, failure to earn your way off Academic Probation by the end of the following semester will result in dismissal from Durham Nativity School. The administration determines the consequences for students on Academic Probation on a case-by-case basis with input from faculty and, on occasion, parents. Typically, the following options are considered:

1. The student may not participate in extracurricular activities.
2. The student may be assigned tutoring and/or mandatory help sessions with faculty.

Note: Eighth graders placed on Academic Probation at the mid-semester must improve their status to at least Academic Warning by the end of that semester, or they will be dismissed by the end of that semester. If an eighth-grader is placed on Academic Probation at the end of the semester but was not on Academic Warning at the mid-semester, he will have nine weeks to earn his way off of Academic Probation. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from Durham Nativity.

While students may have probation consequences removed due to improved performance, they remain on probation for the entire semester. Consequences may be reinstated if improved academic performance does not continue.

Academic Dismissal

In addition to the reasons previously listed for academic dismissal, the following also apply:

1. If a student fails a course for the year, then Durham Nativity reserves the right to retain or dismiss the student.
2. If a student consistently lacks effort and/or desire to learn, then Durham Nativity reserves the right to dismiss the student.
3. If a student is not on track to earn a scholarship as a viable candidate to an independent, college preparatory high school, then Durham Nativity reserves the right to dismiss the student.
4. If a student is excessively tardy or absent from school, then Durham Nativity reserves the right to dismiss the student.

Homework Policy & Schedule

Homework reinforces content presented and taught in the classroom; it provides students the opportunity to practice what they learned and is an integral part of learning. Teachers are encouraged to assign homework that reinforces the curriculum. Homework will be assigned based on the following schedule:

- 7th & 8th Grade: Homework from most or all subjects (M,T,TR,F)
- 6th Grade:
 - M & TR: Math/Science
 - W: Latin
 - T & F: ELA/Social Studies

Except for sixth grade Latin, we typically do not give homework on Wednesdays. We do not give homework on Thursdays when a PEP meeting (parent meeting) occurs.

A standing homework assignment is reading: students are expected to read daily (at least 30 minutes a day).

Homework and Agendas

All students are responsible for completing all homework assignments to become proficient in their academic skills. Planners/Agendas are given to each student for the recording of all assignments, and students are responsible for bringing their planner to every class period. Homework must be the student's work with appropriate assistance when needed from a parent/guardian or teacher. Students may work together when the assignment calls explicitly for collaboration and teaming with others as communicated by the teacher.

All homework assignments should be recorded in the student's planner; the teacher will then initial the planner, indicating that the assignment was written down correctly. Once the student finishes his homework, the parent should then initial the planner, indicating that the homework was reviewed for completion and accuracy.

First period teachers will check for parent signatures in student planners and communicate via Jupiter to remind parents if a parent has forgotten to sign a student's planner; parents may also receive notification from subject-area via Jupiter Ed of missing or incomplete assignments. Again, parents are encouraged to regularly check their son's grades in Jupiter Ed. All assignments are due on the date provided by the teacher; late submissions are subject to a 15% penalty.

Library Resources

The DNS middle school library is open and available to students throughout the day, and the collection includes a range of books that relate to the school curriculum and are freely available for student use. The Dean of Faculty and the ELA instructor oversee selection and checking out of middle school library materials. The fifth grade has its own separate library located in the fifth grade classroom. DNS works with the Durham County Public Library, whose main branch is within walking distance of the school, to ensure that our students have library cards and access to the library. Each grade level makes a field trip at least once a year to that library.

Computer Use, Acceptable Use Policy, & School Chromebook Policy & Pledge

DNS is a one-to-one school, providing each student with a Chromebook to use at school during the school day. Additionally, DNS has a lending program that provides a take-home Chromebook for students who do not have a computer or pad device at home.

Students and parents must read, sign, and agree to both our [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and the [School Chromebook Policy and Pledge](#) to use our school network and laptops. While we attempt to supervise student use of school computers directly, we cannot guarantee direct oversight of all computer and internet activity.

School computers and the school network are for educational purposes only. Students who choose to use school computers and the school network for personal use and or inappropriately may lose their privilege to use school computers, be suspended, or expelled. Accessing inappropriate material or using internet sources without identifying the author and/or website is prohibited.

Academic Integrity Policy

Durham Nativity School encourages students to demonstrate the ability to work individually and collaboratively. In both instances, students should act responsibly and ethically, **following the written rules and guidelines established for every assignment by teachers.** Demonstrating academic integrity means not cheating or plagiarizing. Cheating is violating established rules and codes of ethics. Plagiarizing is falsely claiming authorship or in the words of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "stealing and passing off the ideas of or words of another as one's own, using another's production as one's own without crediting the source, or presenting as new and original an idea derived from an existing source."

An integral part of learning is discovering and expressing new and fresh ideas and thoughts. Students, however, who choose to plagiarize or cheat will receive a zero for assignments that include instances of plagiarism or cheating and may face suspension. Repeated incidents of plagiarism and cheating may result in dismissal from our school program.

Challenge to Instructional Materials Policy

In order to fulfill its mission "to provide an excellent education for young men" and "to promote a rigorous academic program," Durham Nativity School offers educational resources and opportunities from various viewpoints to stimulate

critical thinking necessary to be knowledgeable and effective citizens and workers in the twenty-first century. [See also [DNS Selections Material Policy, which is available upon request, and the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights](#), which Durham Nativity School endorses.]

Consequently, students may encounter instructional materials with ideas and attitudes some members of the school community may find controversial, inappropriate, or offensive. Durham Nativity recognizes the right of parents and caregivers to raise concerns about our educational resources and welcome such situations as an opportunity for educational dialogue between parents/caregivers and the school. That said, Durham Nativity acknowledges that no parents or guardians have the right to determine academic or recreational resources for students other than their own.

To ensure the hearing of potential objections and to direct appropriate action, we have put in place the following process to enable differing viewpoints to be clearly and openly articulated at the same time we maintain principles of intellectual freedom and school's professional responsibility and integrity.

Parents/caregivers and school employees not directly involved in the selection of the school's educational materials may use this process to challenge learning resources used in the school's education program.

Request for Informal Reconsideration

Upon receiving a complaint regarding any educational material, the school shall try to resolve the issue informally.

The Dean of Faculty or Assistant Head of School or other appropriate staff shall explain to the challenger the procedures and criteria for choosing educational materials as well as the qualifications of the person(s) who made the particular selection; that staff member will also indicate the specific place the questioned material has within the curriculum, its educational purpose, and other pertinent information regarding its use.

Request for Formal Reconsideration

If the person questioning the use of a particular resource wishes to file a formal challenge, the school shall provide the challenger with a copy of a Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources form. The challenger will then complete and sign the form, filing it with the Dean of Faculty or Assistant Head of School.

A committee composed of the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Dean of Faculty, and two faculty members will review the challenged resource and determine whether it meets the school's mission and curriculum goals as well as the goals and objectives of the course. The reconsideration committee may consider the following:

- 1) critical, professional reviews of the challenged material
- 2) the challenged material as a whole rather than passages or sections taken out of context
- 3) the challenged material in the context of the educational program
- 4) the arguments of the challenger where appropriate

The intended educational use will be the major criterion for the final decision regarding the appropriateness of the material.

The committee will issue a written report and inform the challenger by letter of the resolution of the reconsideration request. The Head of School will retain the written report and discuss the report with the challenger if the challenger so requests. Once filed, the written report is confidential and available for examination by trustees and appropriate officials only.

Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.

A decision to sustain a challenge shall not necessarily be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility by the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

Eighth Grade Graduation Requirements

In addition to upholding the standards and requirements of being a DNS man, as a student at Durham Nativity School, the expectation is for each young man to be well prepared for entry into the finest private high schools and premier universities. It is a college admissions requirement and job interview preference to have a personal/professional portfolio establishing you as an ideal student or candidate. Students should understand that they must be able to prove their academic excellence by making good grades in all classes and have an outstanding work ethic. Also, students must show their leadership potential and excellent character traits through their active

participation in community service-learning projects, extracurricular activities, and their ability to present themselves and their accomplishments to various audiences. Each school year, each 8th-grade student is required to develop a graduation portfolio and present themselves to the Durham community, interested high schools for admissions purposes, and to their DNS family.

The portfolio will consist of a compilation of middle school student accomplishments displayed in the following sections:

- ☐ High School Acceptance Letter & Student Commentary
- ☐ Graduation Speech
- ☐ English Language Arts: Exemplary Student Work & Commentary
- ☐ Mathematics: Exemplary Student Work & Commentary
- ☐ Science: Exemplary Student Work & Commentary
- ☐ Social Studies: Exemplary Student Work & Commentary
- ☐ Foreign Language: Exemplary Student Work & Commentary
- ☐ A personal self-reflection
- ☐ Special Projects, Service Interests, Future Service Goals
- ☐ Extracurricular/Sports Accomplishments

In addition to the formal portfolio, eighth grade students participate in an interdisciplinary research project and make a formal multimedia presentation on their research findings to the DNS community and parents.

Standardized Testing

To ensure that all of the students at Durham Nativity School are progressing appropriately in their academics and mastering the skills required for each grade level, standardized testing is conducted three times per school year for all grades. Three standardized tests are used at Durham Nativity School: the Educational Records Bureau Comprehensive Testing Program–5 (ERB-CTP-5), ERB Independent Schools Entrance Exam (ISEE), and the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) MAP Growth Tests. Grade 5 takes the ERB CTP-5 in the fall, establishing their baseline; the test is also administered in April to Grades 5, 6, and 7. Eighth graders take the ISEE test in December, and the results of those tests are shared with the high schools to which eighth graders are applying. The CTP-5 is a good predictor of how students will perform on the ISSE, and both tests measure academic growth in reading, math, writing, and verbal and quantitative reasoning.

Grade 5 also takes the NWEA MAP Growth Tests three times a year to track progress in reading/language arts and mathematics.

In 2023, DNS plans to administer the MAP Growth tests to Grades 6, 7, and 8 as well. The data collected from the test will be used in conjunction with IXL, a subscription-based learning site that will provide online personalized instruction in reading/language arts and math.

Students who have a good work ethic, complete all class and homework assignments, and have excellent study skills throughout the school year tend to perform well on the standardized exam. Student test results are discussed with parents individually and collectively.

Use of Portable Electronic Devices

Students are prohibited from bringing portable electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, iPads, smart watches, and handheld games to school without the approval of the Assistant Head of School. Failure to comply will result in the device being taken and held for up to ten school days. The device will then only be returned to a parent or guardian. Repeated violations may result in suspension from school.

Teachers may permit the use of headphones for school-related purposes that enhance an instructional program. Teachers will closely monitor student use for content.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Durham Nativity School, regular attendance is required. Parents are expected to ensure that their sons are in school each day no later than 7:50 a.m., prepared with homework, class materials, and appropriately dressed in their DNS uniforms. Please do not permit your son to miss a day of school except for serious illness. Excessive absences are considered a violation of the Parental Agreement and may result in grade retention or dismissal from Durham Nativity. It is expected that all attendance guidelines are followed without exception. Students are required to participate in the full day of instruction. Students who arrive after third period are counted absent for the day.

All absences-excused or unexcused are considered absences. School suspensions are considered absences. If a student is going to be absent due to illness or some other emergency, the parent/guardian is to contact the school no later than 8:00 a.m. and alert school administration. Once the student returns to school, he is to turn in an official note from the doctor or parent, indicating the reason for the absence. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assignments due to his absence. For each day of absence, the student has one day to complete missed assignments. For example, if the student is absent Monday, all missed assignments are due to teachers on Wednesday morning.

Excessive absences or a pattern of absences will result in a parent conference with an administrator. At this meeting, an attendance plan will be discussed and implemented. Further absences may result in dismissal from the program.

Please schedule medical/dental appointments outside of school time. Parents are encouraged to make all medical/dental appointments either after school hours or on the specified teacher workdays and/or non- instructional days for students (see master calendar).

Arrival and Departure

All students are required to arrive at DNS no later than 7:50 a.m. each morning and report directly to the Sanctuary for Morning Assembly. Morning Assembly lasts until 8:20. At 8:25, the students begin their 1st period classes. All parents/guardians are to pick up their sons no later than 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday and no later than 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. A parent who wishes for their son to ride home with another student must phone or give school administration a signed note permitting them to leave with another student's parent.

Students arriving late for any reason must be accompanied to the school office by a parent to sign the Parent Sign-In Book and indicate the reason for their lateness.

Students are expected to stay in school until the day's end at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, and Thursday and 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. If a parent/guardian needs to pick up a child early from school, the parent must sign the Parent Sign-Out Book located in the school office and indicate the reason for the early dismissal. If a parent/guardian arrives at school to pick up their son more than ten minutes late, they are required to sign the Parent Sign-Out Book located in the school office.

Student Tardiness

A student is tardy or late if he is not in Morning Assembly by 7:50 a.m. All students are required to report to the Sanctuary to participate in the Morning Assembly as part of the instructional day. Students who arrive after 7:50 a.m. report to the main office and remain in the conference room reading until dismissed by Ms. Whitehead. Students who arrive after Morning Assembly also report to the office to receive a tardy pass, put up their lunches and other materials if in grades 6-8, and quickly move onto class. Again, students arriving late to school must be accompanied by a parent to sign the Parent Sign-In Book and indicate the reason for their lateness. If a student acquires three tardies in a semester, a parent conference will be scheduled by the school administration to discuss the situation and to explore ways that ensure the student's on-time arrival. Finally, continued tardiness to school or classes may result in academic probation and possible expulsion from the DNS educational program.

Early Dismissal

In non-emergency situations where students will be dismissed early, parents will be notified in advance either by e-mail and/or text. In emergencies where students must be dismissed early from school, phone calls, emails, or text messages will be sent to parents/guardians and emergency contact persons to ensure that students will be picked up in a timely fashion and placed in the care of their family.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, school closing and delays are posted on the Durham Nativity School website home page, www.durhamnativity.org, and reported to WRAL-TV and WNCN-TV. Also, an email via Jupiter is sent to all parents regarding the status of school for that day. When in doubt, watch the TV stations listed above. If there is no announcement, school is open and beginning at the usual time. **Please note:** Durham Nativity School does not necessarily follow the school closing/delay decisions of Durham County schools.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND DRESS CODE

Statement of Philosophy

We believe the school community at Durham Nativity School, including students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, volunteers, and Board, must work together to provide a safe and supportive environment that promotes effective teaching and learning. Expectations are conveyed and implemented for successful academic and social behavior, and discipline is used in a positive, nurturing, and appropriate manner. Such discipline reflects a comprehensive view of each student, his behavioral history, family dynamic, academic profile and any other contributing factors. The goal of discipline is to strengthen and teach students the knowledge and skills needed to live a happy and successful life through behavior modification. We are not seeking punishment of students, but education in the distinction between right and wrong. Nevertheless, there are still consequences for inappropriate actions, including but not limited to bullying and harassing behaviors.

Self-discipline and proper conduct are essential and characteristic for successful DNS men. The faculty and staff expect students to conduct themselves as gentlemen at all times. Students are expected to be respectful, understanding, and polite while at school, at home, and in the community. DNS men are men of integrity who are trustworthy and cooperative. They understand that they should take responsibility for their learning, for their actions, and their attitude.

It is expected that Durham Nativity School students will build healthy, thriving relationships with classmates, faculty/staff members, and volunteers. Appropriate conversation without the use of inappropriate language or slang will be used at all times. Students acknowledge all adults, including faculty/staff, volunteers, and guests with politeness, cordial eye contact, and respectful body language, saying, "Yes sir and No sir." "Yes, ma'am and No ma'am." Visitors are greeted using the following statement, "Hello, my name is (first and last name), and I would like to welcome you to Durham Nativity School."

Restorative Discipline Model

Our Dean of Students oversees student discipline. Classroom management is first handled by the teacher. If a student is unable to accept redirection or cooperate with the teacher, the student will be referred to the Dean of Students.

The Dean of Students will meet with each student, assess the situation, and enter into a restorative practice with the student. The student will be expected to engage in self-reflection to get to the root of the underlying issue causing the behavior or situation at hand. The student may have to partake in an assigned campus project, guided writing, and/or time away from campus to reset and try to fully engage in school life at Durham Nativity School.

When a student is asked to take time away from the community, upon return they will be expected to engage in support with a re-integration team consisting of the Dean of Students, Assistant Head of School, and their advisor.

If all efforts in our restorative model do not bear the fruit of the student fully engaging in all areas of school life at Durham Nativity School, the student and family will be asked to meet with the Enrollment Management Team and the student may be dismissed from Durham Nativity School.

Community Norms

Durham Nativity School adheres to the following Community Norms and any students struggling to adhere to these will meet with the Dean of Students. DNS Tigers will:

1. Treat others as they would like to be treated.
2. Respect the person and property of everyone in the community.
3. Take responsibility for their actions.
4. Resolve conflicts and problems prayerfully, positively, and peacefully.
5. Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control, striving to live out the DNS Man Creed.

Dress Code

The Durham Nativity School uniform helps promote a safe, positive, and professional environment for all students and teachers. If any student arrives at school in violation of the school dress policy, the parent/guardian will be called to bring the appropriate uniform, or the student will be provided with a temporary uniform to wear for that specific day. Repeated violations to the school dress policy will result in a parent conference with administration and an ultimate decision of possible expulsion from the Durham Nativity School educational program. It is also essential for DNS men to be clean, well-groomed, and neat in appearance each day. Please make sure that you discuss and check your child's hygiene habits and dress each morning before leaving for school.

The Durham Nativity School uniform consists of the following:

- ☐ Khaki-colored long pants
- ☐ French blue dress shirt (long sleeve)
- ☐ DNS striped necktie
- ☐ Black dress socks (not white or athletic socks)
- ☐ Black, polished dress shoes, either slip-on or tie-up (boots are not acceptable, but ankle cut dress shoes are appropriate)
- ☐ Black belt
- ☐ Athletic shoes and socks, sweatpants, or shorts and a t-shirt should be brought to school for PE and team sports.

Further notes on the daily appearance of the DNS man:

- ☐ Jewelry is not to be worn, except for a modest, inexpensive watch.
- ☐ Hats are not to be worn inside the school.
- ☐ Top shirt buttons are to be fastened with the necktie formally worn at all times.
- ☐ All shirts must be clean, pressed, and tucked into pants at all times
- ☐ Belts must be fastened and hold pants up at the waist.

THE DNS CULTURE AND EXPERIENCE

It is a privilege and an honor to be chosen to participate in the Durham Nativity School educational program.

The Board of Trustees is committed to serving a maximum of 60 students at the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade level, providing a private school education at the nominal cost of a monthly activity fee for each student. Therefore, each family must understand that their participation in the DNS educational program is a contractual relationship where the student and his family are committing to specific guidelines, expectations, and responsibilities to ensure educational success as it is being provided through a wonderful private school opportunity.

Also, the Board of Trustees is committed to assisting each family with the admissions process for 8th-grade graduates into premier, private high schools. This assistance is individualized based upon each family's overall need for graduate student support. This assistance varies; for example, some families may need help completing the application and admissions process. Some families may need assistance with scheduling school visits/tours and/or applying for scholarships/grants/financial aid. Some families need help in understanding the overall expectations of the high schools and/or assistance in finding supplemental funding. Please know that if you have committed to the Durham Nativity School educational program and experience, you are committing yourself to the educational success

of your child and you will be responsible for supporting the overall program during the twelve years that the Board of Trustees is committed to assisting each student and his family.

Family Participation Statement

The partnership between students, their families, and our educational program plays a pivotal role in the growth of each young individual involved. We encourage all students to actively engage in community service both within and outside of school, contributing a minimum of 12 hours. All students completing the 12 hours (six hours per semester) will earn credit, a "CR" on their report cards and transcripts. Students who do not complete the 12 hours (six hours per semester) will not earn credit and will receive an "NCR" on their report cards and transcripts. We extend the same commitment to parents, expecting their genuine involvement in various facets of the DNS educational program. Parents are required to volunteer for at least 6 hours each semester, totaling 12 hours throughout the school year. Notably, this obligation excludes mandatory attendance at Parent-Teacher Conferences and Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) Meetings. Within the parent volunteer initiative, a minimum of 6 hours out of the 12 should involve participating in community service projects alongside their children.

To ensure clarity, please be sure to read, review, and sign the Parental Agreement giving further details regarding this contractual agreement. We are confident that all parents understand the exceptional education and enriching experience that each student is afforded and, therefore, will uphold the tenets of the DNS Parental Agreement. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation!

Activity Fees

Activity fees are used to support the many opportunities, activities, and services afforded our students and families. The activity fee is to be paid in the school office each month (September thru May) by the first of the month. Please note: report cards and transcripts will not be released to parents and schools, and students will not attend Durham Nativity School unless activity fees are paid by the fifteenth of each month or other arrangements have been discussed and mutually agreed to.

Advisory Program

At DNS, each student in grades sixth through eighth, is assigned to an advisory group. Advisory groups usually consist of between 6 to 9 students from different grade levels and an adult adviser/mentor.

Throughout the school's orientation week at the beginning of the year, the adviser/mentor meets with his/her advisory group, engaging students in getting-to-know you and team-building activities. The last hour on Fridays during the first month of school is also a designated meeting time for advisories so that advisers and advisees get to know each other.

During the school year, advisories meet with their advisers three days a week for an hour Homework Help session. In these sessions, the adviser monitors and assists students with homework. Younger students are able to work with older students, who mentor the younger pupils in projects such as the morning assembly speech.

To build camaraderie, advisers and their advisories also eat lunch together each day in the assembly hall.

Approximately every five weeks, each advisory is in charge of running the [Morning Assembly Program](#) and overseeing clean-up after lunch in the assembly hall.

Year-Round/Holistic Educational Concept

Based upon educational studies, the year-round educational concept is touted for affording students the opportunity to practice, review, and retain skills that are frequently lost during summer months when students are traditionally out of school. At Durham Nativity School we believe that our students should receive a "holistic education" which embraces the concept of instruction taking place in more than just the regular classroom, but in various venues for students to discover knowledge about themselves, the core curriculum, other people with whom they interact and the world in which they live. Therefore, our students receive a combination of traditional classroom instruction along with field experiences, camp experiences, educational travel, and cultural experiences. DNS students will be involved in one or more of these types of educational experiences for 11 months out of the year. The traditional instructional year spans from August – June. Summer educational experiences span from June – August.

It is imperative that each student participates in all educational experiences being offered through our educational program to: provide for continuity in teaching, learn the full curriculum, foster healthy social relationships, build character traits, and promote positive behavior.

Camp/Educational Field Experiences

During the summer, Durham Nativity School students will experience at least one week of camp, attend a summer academic program, or participate in an educational field trip. All DNS students are required to participate in camp/educational field experiences as a part of the commitment/agreement to be an active participant in the Durham Nativity School educational program.

Athletics Code of Conduct

As parents, players, spectators, and fans, we have an opportunity and responsibility to live out and model our commitment to honor integrity, courage, discipline, and sportsmanship. Every parent, player, spectator, and fan is expected to:

- A. Learn and respect the rules of the game being played
- B. Show respect and courtesy to game officials, coaches, and players at all times.
- C. Respect the game officials and refrain from questioning their decisions or from addressing them in a loud, disrespectful, or abusive manner.
- D. Positively cheer for your team, refraining at all times from making negative or abusive remarks about the opposing team.
- E. Maintain control of your emotions and avoid actions, language, and/or gestures that may be interpreted as hostile and humiliating.
- F. Demonstrate appropriate gestures of sportsmanship after a game, win, or lose.
- G. Teach and practice good sportsmanship and fair play by personally demonstrating a commitment to these virtues.

Adapted from the R.H.S Code of Conduct

Family Financial Accountability

When choosing students to participate in the Durham Nativity School educational program, priority is given to students and families who qualify for the federal meal program. Although DNS does not participate in the federal meal program, this financial application is one of the identifying factors in determining if a student is qualified to participate in the Durham Nativity School educational program and receive financial assistance in paying for a private school education. Therefore, the parent/guardian of all rising 5th-grade students must complete a federal meal program financial form and provide a copy of their most current tax information as part of the application process. All sixth and seventh grade families are also required to complete the federal meal program financial form. In preparation for determining the financial aid needed for high school placement, eighth grade parents must complete and submit a federal meal program financial form along with a copy of their most recent tax information updating the status of the family's financial portfolio. This information is needed for the administration to determine how much, if any, financial assistance may be needed once the student has been accepted into a private high school. Each family is expected to contribute financially to their son's high school scholarship plan, as determined by the financial needs assessment.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Communication between home and school is paramount to the educational success of each student. We desire to make sure that all students and parents are well informed and realize that they have a voice within the DNS family. DNS is more than a school; it is a small, structured, family-friendly learning environment where all are valued, respected, and appreciated. The best way to show how much one is valued is through effective communication and concern for the well-being of all. It is the expectation that all students, parents, faculty/staff, and school administration will maintain open lines of communication so that Durham Nativity School can genuinely live up to its vision and mission.

Parent Empowerment Program

To ensure that parents are informed and actively involved in the educational program, attendance at monthly Parent Empowerment Program meetings is mandatory. These meetings address specific topics that the parents and staff agree need to be discussed and enhance the overall educational program. Also, these meetings are held as a forum for parents to share "best practices" in parenting and to receive additional ideas and suggestions about raising pre-adolescent and adolescents. As a part of the contractual agreement with DNS, all parents are required to attend the monthly PEP meetings. These meetings are scheduled by the parents for the parents.

Grade Level Parent Meetings

Each school year, there may be grade-level parent meetings with school faculty/staff and administration to discuss specific grade level concerns, expectations, and requirements. All parents will receive plenty of advance notice regarding the date and time of these intimate sessions and are expected to attend.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Throughout the school year, Durham Nativity School will hold Parent-Teacher Conferences to discuss student progress with parents. Some of these conferences are mandatory and necessary for parents to get a clear picture of how their child is progressing at Durham Nativity School. Parents are encouraged to plan to attend these conferences as agreed to in the signed Parental Agreement. These meetings are essential, and the dates are already set in the school's master calendar. Parents and teachers may schedule additional conferences or visits during the school year, as necessary.



Durham Nativity School Calendar 2023-2024 School Year



August 2023

14th-21st: Teacher Workdays
21st: Back to School Night
 (6:00pm-7:30pm)
22nd and 23rd: Orientation
 for ALL students (8:00am-3:00pm)
****24th: First day of Classes**

24th-25th: 4:30pm Dismissal
for GRADES 6TH-8th
3:00pm Dismissal: 5th

September 2023

4th: Labor Day- No School
7th: Board of Trustees Meeting
21st: PEP @ 6pm
22nd: Life Touch Pictures

October 2023

9th: Columbus Day- NO SCHOOL
19th: PEP @ 6pm
20th: Teacher Workday
26th: Early Release @12pm
26th & 27th: Parent Teacher Conferences

November 2023

10th: Veterans Day- No School
16th: PEP @ 6pm
20th-24th: Fall Break
27th: School Resumes

December 2023

7th: Board of Trustees Meeting
11th-15th: Semester One Exams
15th: Winter Break Begins @12:00pm
Dec 15th-Jan. 2nd: Winter Break

January 2024

3rd: Teacher Workday
4th: Classes Resume
11th: End of Semester One
12th: Teacher Workday
15th: Martin Luther King Jr. Day- No School
18th: PEP @ 6pm

February 2024

15th: PEP @ 6pm
16th-19th: Long Winter Weekend & Presidents Day: No School

March 2024

7th: Board of Trustees Meeting
15th: End of Third Quarter/Teacher Workday
21st: PEP@6pm
18th-19th: Spring Holiday
22nd: Parent Teacher Conferences (as needed)
29th: Start of Spring Break

April 2024

April 1st-7th: Spring Break Continues
April 8th: Teacher Workday
April 9th: Classes Resume
18th: PEP @ 6pm
22nd-25th: ERB's Testing: Early Dismissal & 8th Grade DC Trio

May 2024











2nd: Board of Trustees Meeting
23rd: PEP @ 6pm
27th: Memorial Day: No School
May 31st- 2nd Semester Exams begin

June 2024

May 31st- June 6th: Semester two exams
June 7th: Graduation and Last Day of School!!
June 10th-12th: Teacher Workdays
*****Summer Reading Camp (Dates TBD)*****

Please see the back for a color-coded key

Durham Nativity School Calendar 2023-2024 School Year

 Teacher Workdays: NO SCHOOL	 Parent Teacher Conferences: NO SCHOOL
 Holidays: NO SCHOOL	 Semester Exams
 PEP	 Picture Day
 Board of Trustees Meeting	 Early Release Days @12pm
 School-Wide Breaks: NO SCHOOL	 Back to School Week Events

SAFETY INFORMATION & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A more [detailed version of this information, along with the DNS Crisis Management Plan](#) is available online.

Asbestos Management Plan

Durham Nativity School is aware of state and federal regulations regarding asbestos management in schools. This facility has submitted a management plan and subsequent re-inspection reports to the NC Department of Health and Human Services, and we are in compliance with the management plan requirements. A copy of the management plan is available for review in the administration office. For questions, please contact Tiffany Alrefae (Head of School) or Angel Whitehead at 919-680-3790.

Fire Drill Evacuation Procedure

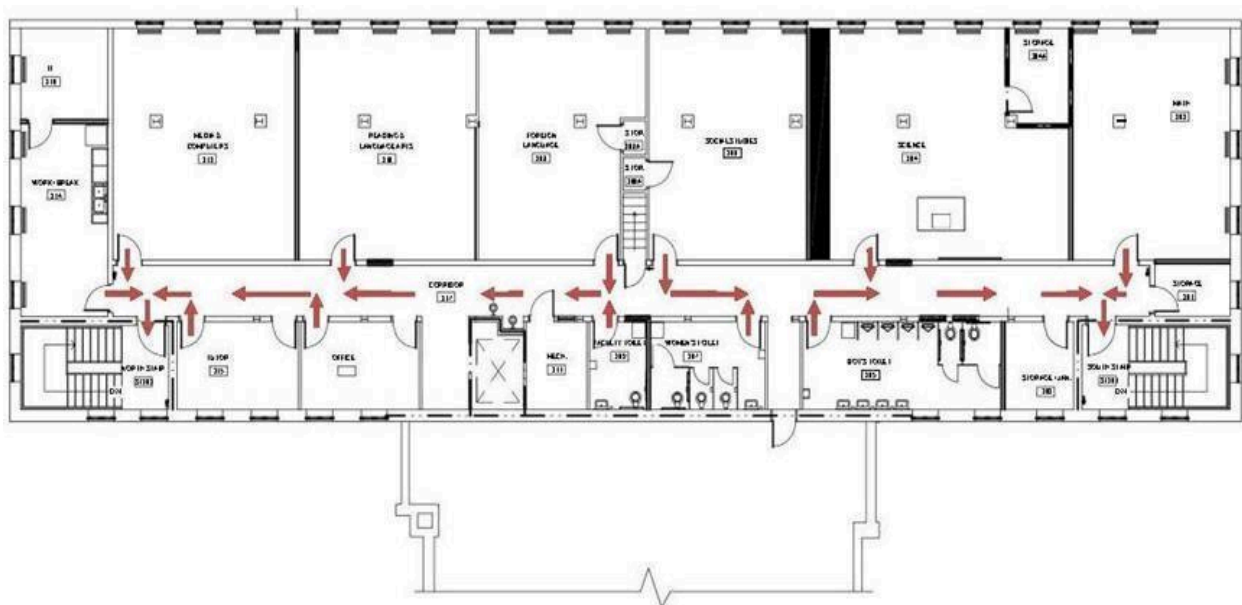
In the event of a Fire or Fire Drill:

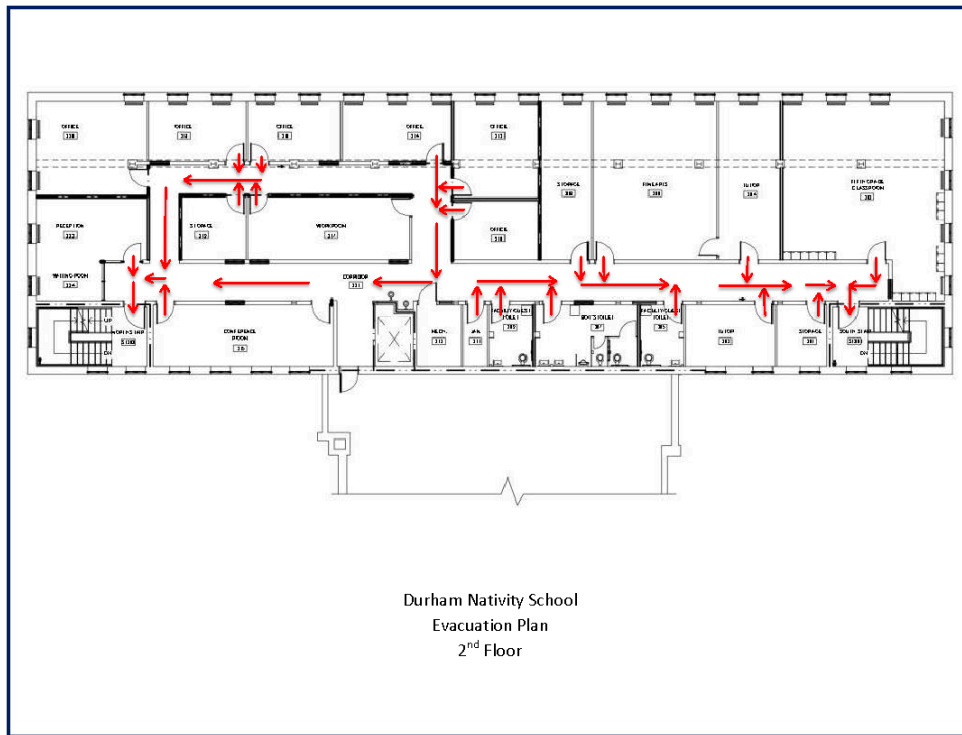
- the school signal to evacuate is a loud, continuous alarm
- at this signal, teachers will direct students to line up and exit the classroom and building in an orderly manner via the assigned evacuation route; in all cases, select the safest way, not just the designated route.
- one designated staff member near each building exit will inspect the exit to see if it is a safe evacuation route. If it is not, the teacher directs the classes to alternate routes.
- the teacher will pick up the student roster located in their classroom to ensure that all students have evacuated & will close, but not lock the classroom door
- teachers will lead their students quietly and in a straight line to designated "safe area," where they wait until given clearance to re-enter the building

Note:

- students should leave the buildings in an orderly fashion and inline
- students should leave their belongings in the classroom
- classroom doors should be closed, but not locked
- teachers should lead the students in an orderly line back into the building once it has been cleared to re-enter
- teachers should take a few moments to remind students that both a real event and a drill should be taken with the same seriousness no matter how many times they occur

Third Floor Evacuation Plan





Tornado/Storm Procedure

In the event of a tornado watch, all outdoor activities will be postponed. If a tornado warning is issued for our immediate area, teachers and students will be notified via classroom intercom to proceed to predetermined school safety zones. If the building's power is out, teachers will be notified directly by personnel. Once the storm threat has been lifted, teachers and students may return to their classrooms if the areas are clear.

Inclement and Severe Weather

In the event of inclement weather, school closings and delays are posted on the Durham Nativity School website home page, www.durhamnativity.org, and reported to WRAL-TV and WNCN-TV. Also, an email via Jupiter Ed is sent to all parents, faculty, and staff regarding the status of school for that day. When in doubt, watch the TV stations listed above. If there is no announcement, school is open and beginning at the usual time.

Please note: Durham Nativity School does not necessarily follow the school closing/delay decisions of Durham County schools.

Lockdown

Lockdown is a procedure used when there is an immediate threat to the school, such as in the case of a school intruder. Lockdown minimizes access to the school and secures staff and students in rooms. As part of this procedure, everyone must remain in the room until the situation has been declared safe by an authorized person such as a member of the administration.

PURPOSE

To protect faculty, staff, students, and visitors in situations involving dangerous intruders or other incidents that may result in harm to persons inside or outside the school building(s). A lockout/lockdown will be initiated when it is safer to remain in a secured building than to be outdoors.

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

1. Administrator will order a "LOCKDOWN".
2. Notification: Administrator will immediately:
Utilize the campus intercom system to repeatedly announce clearly and concisely:
"ATTENTION. DNS IS UNDER LOCKDOWN. PROCEED TO THE NEAREST SECURE LOCATION AND LOCK YOUR DOORS."
Immediately notify 911 or ensure that the Durham Police Officer at the scene has done so and give as much detail as possible.
3. All Faculty, staff, students, and visitors must immediately proceed, if possible, out of line of sight of windows and doorways, to the nearest classroom or secure space. Administrators will assist with this movement and ensure that everyone remains quiet and calm.
4. Faculty/Staff should check corridors outside their classrooms or offices for nearby students and direct any students in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or office. Faculty/Staff should not leave the classroom or office to get students.
5. Lock classroom doors. If there is no lock, barricade the door with available objects.
6. Turn off all lights and electrical devices. Put your cell phone on silent mode.
7. Close all window shades or blinds if applicable. Stay away from the windows and doors.
8. Seek cover or concealment. If gunshots or explosives are heard, stay behind cover or concealment and lie on the floor or get as close to the floor as possible without giving up your cover.
9. If possible, faculty/ staff should record the names of students who are in the room. Any missing and/or extra students should be noted. Faculty/Staff should provide these details to administrators as requested.
10. Teachers should text their position and status to the administrators or designated person.
11. If possible, administrators should send text messages to students and parents to alert them to a lockdown, so that students who are not on-site know that it is not safe to return to school.
12. Do not evacuate the building even if the audible fire alarm is heard. This could be a ruse to get people into the hallways.
13. Do not respond to anyone at the door until administrators announce "all clear."
14. All faculty, students, and visitors should remain in lockdown situation until the "all clear" is given by school administrator
15. Administrators shall account for the safety of all faculty/staff, students, and known visitors immediately after the incident.

NOTE: If circumstances warrant, students will be evacuated from the school property by school vehicles to be picked up by parents at an off-campus location. Parents are requested not to call or come to the school campus during an evacuation or other emergency. Driving to the school will cause congestion that could potentially interfere with the arrival of emergency vehicles should they be needed. Parent phone calls, likewise, will tie-up phone lines at a crucial time.

VIRTUAL AND BLENDED LEARNING

Virtual Learning: In [the Spring of 2020](#) and in the [2020-2021 school year](#), DNS implemented its first remote and hybrid learning plans, linked in this document (parents may request a printed copy if they cannot access the link on the electronic version of the handbook). These plans will function as a starting point should we need to pivot to virtual or hybrid learning again.

Blended Learning: While we no longer offer virtual or remote learning opportunities, our teachers do use blended instruction, interweaving technology daily and weekly into the curriculum. Our students and staff have access via their school Google accounts to the Google G Suite (Google Classroom, Google Docs, Google Spreadsheets, Google Slides, etc.). Google Classroom is our Learning Management System (LMS), on which teachers post and students can access daily digital copies of class agendas, homework agendas, class work assignments, and homework assignments.

If a student is absent for a day or an extended period of time, he can keep up with assignments and "see" what is going on in the classroom. Parents are invited at the beginning of the year by teachers to receive Google Classroom summary updates.

Additionally, teachers are constantly using technology to help students grow as learners. Some of the online resources teachers use include: IXL (reading, ELA, and math), Quizlet (digital flashcards), QuizIzz, EdPuzzle, Prodigy, and many more.