



**NORTHWEST EXPEDITION ACADEMY**  
**Student Handbook**  
**FOR FAMILIES AND STUDENTS**

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**2023 – 2024**

2008 W. Prairie Avenue, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815  
(208) 763-0800 • [www.cdaschools.org/nexa](http://www.cdaschools.org/nexa)

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## A Message from the Principal

Welcome to NExA. I'm so very excited to begin my second year here at NExA and my 7th year as principal. I served as principal in New Mexico for my first two years and the last four years here in Coeur d' Alene. This year marks my 27th year in education.

NExa is a unique school in that our staff employs a project based approach to teaching and learning. All content is delivered in a workshop model. Students take physical and academic journeys to enhance their learning. Learning is evidenced through an authentic and student driven project. PBL units incorporate cross-curricular content as well as encourage student inquiry, discourse, collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, and communication.

Relationships are imperative to me and I strive to connect with our students and families. I work hard to communicate frequently and transparently. You can expect a weekly newsletter from the school each week, and I am always open to meet with you. The office staff will be happy to make an appointment for you or you may email me directly at [jpeak@cdaschools.org](mailto:jpeak@cdaschools.org).

In my spare time, you can find me on the sports field cheering on one of my three sons. My family loves to raft, boat, camp, bike and enjoy the beauty of North Idaho. We also enjoy walks around the neighborhood with our four year old husky, Rio.

Last year was a big year of transition for our community. I am excited to continue growing NExA into a thriving community of learning and curiosity!

## A Message from the Assistant Principal

Greetings, Otter families! I can't fully express how thrilled I am to be on the Northwest Expedition Academy team. I have served in education in a variety of roles, all in North Idaho public schools, for the last fifteen years. Prior to joining NExA, I served the Coeur d'Alene School District as Director of Federal Programs. My three younger children have attended NExA, and I'm so thankful for their experiences in our wonderful school. They have learned to be much better collaborators, problem solvers, critical thinkers, and curious learners thanks to the talented staff and PBL model embraced at NExA.

As I continue to grow my leadership skills, I feel blessed to have such a solid mentor in Principal Jen Peak. Your student (and mine) are in great hands! Together, we have set ambitious goals for ourselves and the NExA staff. We welcome your input, support, and expertise as we continue cutting trails to maximize the school experience for all students. There are *so many opportunities* for you to participate in--and contribute to--our community's learning. NExA is a special place, made all the more wonderful by the many hands, minds, and hearts involved in the good work. Please consider donating your time, talent, and resources to a project or initiative at Northwest Expedition Academy. Join the PTO,

chaperone an expedition, volunteer at an evening event, help us build our outdoor classroom, be a guest speaker or serve on a panel... the options are endless. Most importantly, be an advocate for your student. Show interest in their project, read with them at night, play math games, ask them open-ended questions, and make sure they get to bed on time :).

Together, we will create a memorable, meaningful year for you and your child; one filled with challenge, joy, friendship, and lots of learning! Thank you for sending your child to our school each day and for trusting us as a partner in their learning journey.

## **History of NExA**

Northwest Expedition Academy was founded in 2017. The older building on Hayden and Government, called Hayden Lake Elementary, was once a one room schoolhouse that served as the only school for students living in the Hayden area. Hayden Lake Elementary opened in 1936.

Since 2005, the site has been used for a variety of purposes. It housed a “kindercenter,” where kindergarten students from the school district’s northern schools attended classes, and has also served as a temporary home for Winton Elementary students during the 2015-2016 school year during the building of their new school. It was NExA’s home from 2017 to the opening of the new building on Prairie in 2020. This marks our third year in our beautiful new site.

# NExA Daily Schedule

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8:40—Cafe Open for breakfast

8:40—All Students Enter: Coverage in various locations

8:55—First Bell

9:00—School Starts

## **Lunch Schedule**

11:18- Kindergarten

11:28- Second Grade

11:38- First Grade Lunch

12:03- Fifth Grade Lunch

12:18- Third Grade Lunch

12:33- Fourth Grade Lunch

3:20- Kindergarten Dismissal

3:25- Car Lane Dismissal

3:30- Bus Dismissal

**\* DO NOT drop students off before 8:40 AM. Doing so puts the child at risk as there is no supervision and outer doors are locked.**

# Our Premise of Teaching and Learning

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## Vision

We are a community of inclusive, creative problem solvers who positively contribute to the world around us as we learn and grow.

## Mission

Every member of Northwest Expedition Academy engages in expeditionary experiences rooted in discovery, connection, and project based learning so that all students flourish with the world as their classroom.

## What are Expeditions?

Our students will go on academic and physical expeditions of learning. We believe students must learn outside the walls of the traditional school. Students will visit their community, job sites, businesses, lakes, forests, colleges, parks, mountains and museums to broaden their understanding of the world. Students will learn from real people, doing real work in the real world.

During these journeys, students use critical thinking, hands-on learning, journaling, observation, exploration, collaborative learning and strategic and scientific methods to truly get to understand their world. Using the Idaho Core Standards, academic work is rigorous, challenging and purposeful.

## What is Project Based Learning?

Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge.

Learning must be purposeful and make a true difference in the community we live. For this reason, an authentic audience with community partnerships are paramount for all Project Based Learning (PBL) at Northwest Expedition Academy.

## What is an Exhibition?

Exhibitions are an opportunity for students to exhibit the learning they are doing. The audience for these exhibitions will be parents, teachers, students, and community members. Students will be evaluated on the authenticity of their project, the project's focus on making a positive difference in the community, the academic rigor of the project and the student's ability to present the project.

# Attendance and Tardies

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## ATTENDANCE – [Policy 3040/522](#)

The right to attend school is fundamental and purposeful. Along with this right is the responsibility to attend school faithfully and regularly. This responsibility rests with the student and with the parent/legal guardian, and is basic in order to meet the instructional goals of District 271.

The instructional program of the District is based upon regular daily instruction and interaction between the student and teacher. Poor attendance is a disruption to the instructional programs of students who attend school on a regular basis.

The following attendance procedures information applies to all students in grades K-12: *The complete policy/procedure can be found on the District website.*

### Absence and Excuse Procedures for Grades K-8:

1. A student who is absent 10 or more days during a grading period may be referred to the Board of Trustees for determination as a habitual truant;
2. To ensure the safety of the student, it is required that parents/legal guardians contact/communicate to the school regarding each day or portion thereof that their child is absent;
3. If a student is to be out of school for an approved extended absence, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to make arrangements for assignments with the teacher prior to such absence, understanding that many assignments can only be made up after returning to school. In all absentee cases, class assignments must be completed within the specified time frame for the student to receive credit.
4. Inadequate and unacceptable academic progress due to absences may result in loss of credit and/or retention in the current grade, if appropriate to that particular student.
5. Documented notification will be sent to parents from the school when a student has accrued 4, 7 and 10 excused and/or unexcused absences in a grading period.

## Tardies

The school bell will ring for all students at 8:40. Students are allowed to enter the school at this time. A warning bell will ring at 8:55. The final bell rings at 9:00. If students arrive after the tardy bell at 9:00 (10:00 on Mondays), please report to the office to receive a tardy slip to take to class.

## Leaving Early/Arriving Late

If a child must leave early during the school day, the parent must stop by the office to sign him/her out. We will have your child meet you at the office. For your child's safety we will not release any student to anyone other than parents or legal guardians without permission from parents. Students who are tardy or are returning to school from an appointment must check in at the office. To facilitate a smooth and safe departure, **early dismissal will NOT occur after 3:20.**

## After School Pick Up Procedures

To ensure the safety of all children, any child not collected by 3:45 will be taken to the "School Plus" site. **Parents will be charged for this service.**

## Medication at School- [Policy 3510](#)

The role of the District regarding medication administration is to protect the health and safety of all students. Whenever possible, medications should be dispensed to students before and/or after school hours under the supervision of the parent/guardian. The District recognizes that students attending school may be required to take medication while at school, either on a short-term or long-term basis. Medications should be dispensed at school only when necessary to meet the health needs of the student.



Pursuant to the written authorization of a physician or dentist, as well as the written authorization of a parent or guardian, designated school staff may administer medication to students. The medication authorization form must specify directions for administering the medication and include the parent's/guardian's signature. This form must be received before any medication will be given to the student.

## Behavior Expectations

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### Behavior (Policy 539)

Students are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner as not to interfere with the orderly operation of the educational program.

### DRESS CODE – [Policy 3255](#)

It is the policy of this school District that students shall dress in a manner which is appropriate for an effective educational environment. While recognizing the importance of allowing students to express their individuality through their attire, the school is responsible for ensuring that student dress is conducive to a positive and respectful environment for all students. All students are, therefore, required to dress in a manner that promotes a safe and healthy school environment, and is not disruptive of the educational climate and process. Students are reminded that their appearance, clothing, and grooming, significantly affect the way others respond to them. *The building administrator or designee may identify additional dress code requirements to address specific needs within a building or for a specific activity.*

**Shirts/Blouses/Tops/T-shirts** – Blouses/shirts should be constructed so that the tops of the shoulders are covered with no less than a 2 ½ inch strap (e.g. no halter tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, or bare shoulder tops of any type will be allowed). Blouses/shirts that expose any portion of the waist, hips, midriff or breast are not allowed. (If you raise your arms to shoulder level and the stomach shows, the top is unacceptable.) Other blouses/shirts that are not appropriate for school include, but are not limited to, low cut, breast revealing, see through, backless, or tube tops. Undergarments (bras, tank undershirts, etc.) will not be visible. Bedroom clothing, pajamas or sleepwear is not allowed unless worn as part of a spirit or designated day.

**Shorts/skirts/Pants** – All shorts and skirts must be no shorter than mid-thigh from the bottom of the knee. Nylon tights, biker pants or boxer shorts worn as an outer garment are strictly prohibited. Slits in the skirts cannot be above mid-thigh. Waistline of shorts/skirts/pants must be on or above the hips with no underwear showing. Bedroom clothing, pajamas or sleepwear is not allowed. All belts must be properly fastened around the waist. The belt will not be excessive in length and will not be hanging from either side of the body.

# General Information

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## Cell Phones

**Cell phones and all electronic devices including smart watches**, must be turned off and placed in the students' backpack during the school day. If a cell phone is heard or seen, it will be confiscated and turned into the teacher or the office. After an initial warning, the child's parent will be called to pick up the cell phone

## Student Tracking Devices – Policy 3266

Because of student privacy concerns, the District requires automatic listen-in technology to be disabled while any student tracking device is at school, on District-provided transportation, and at school events. This does not include cell phones, which are addressed in Policy 3265.

## Transportation

Parent drop off and pick up is located at the south end of our campus off of Pronghorn. Please follow the signs and proceed around the loop unless you are dropping off a kindergarten student or walking your child into the building. In this case, you may park in the main parking lot and walk into the building. When dropping off your child in the car lane, please have them exit your car on the left side to avoid safety risks.

All visitors to Northwest Expedition Academy must be buzzed into the school by a school employee and may be asked to **show an ID before** they are buzzed in. Visitors will then check in at the office. If they have not previously visited the school, their ID will be scanned through the school's security program. They must also check out at the office when they leave.

## Lost and Found Information

Our Lost and Found is located near our cafeteria next to the gym. Valuable lost items such as keys and electronic items are kept in the office. Unclaimed items are donated to local charities during Winter Break and at the end of the school year.

## Library

The NExA Library is the place to hear (and say), "I love this book!" Every week, students have structured time in the library where the librarian helps find the right book for each student, reads stories and introduces everyone to new authors and books. Students also learn to be responsible for the books they borrow, including paying for any book they lose or damage. An option to work off the cost of a book can also be negotiated. Students with overdue books lose the privilege of checking out anything new.

## Student messages

Please call the front office with any messages for your student **by 3:00 pm**. Messages go out to students at this time. It is very difficult for us to get messages to students after 3:00 pm and your message may not be delivered after this time.

## Valuables at school

It is best to leave valuable items, especially jewelry, electronics, or treasured toys, at home. **NExA is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

## **PTA**

PTA stands for Parent Teacher Association. The Northwest Expedition Academy PTA is an organization dedicated to providing any and all activities outside of the classroom to NExA students. The PTA supports teachers and staff in their mission to provide quality education in a socially responsible and positive climate.

These experiences can range from:

- special assemblies
- field trips
- enrichment programs
- after school clubs
- Exhibition nights

We formally meet on the 2nd Tuesday every other month and everyone is welcome to attend our meetings. Our meetings consist of what's happened, what's going to happen and lively discussions on how to get there! All input is valued and everyone is encouraged to offer opinions and give feedback.

This is a volunteer group of dedicated parents who want more for their children! Get involved in Northwest Expedition Academy PTA! Contact the school for more information or email us directly at [nexapta@gmail.com](mailto:nexapta@gmail.com).

## **Cold Weather/Snow Days**

Please prepare your child for current weather/temperature conditions. If a child is well enough to come to school, they are well enough to go outside. Notes requesting a student stay in at recess will not be accepted unless special arrangements have been made with the principal. Some winters result in canceling school due to weather conditions. Please tune in to radio (KVNI-1080 AM), your local TV stations KREM-2, KXLY-4 or KHQ-6, social media or the district website [cdaschools.org](http://cdaschools.org) for closure information. If school sponsored events are scheduled on an emergency closure day, all events are canceled.

## **Additional NExA Resources/Programs**

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### **Clothing Closet**

NExA operates a clothing closet for students who need clothing assistance or who may need to change clothes during the day due to an accident or playground incident. Parents are always notified when their student has accessed the closet. If a parent is interested in utilizing the closet for their child, the parent should contact the school counselor. Gently worn items are always appreciated!

### **Counseling Program**

NExA's school counselor supports student growth in the following areas: academic development, personal/social development and career/college readiness. The school counselor does this through monthly classroom guidance lessons, small groups that meet during lunch time on different topics such as social skills and friendship skills and meeting with individuals and groups of students. The counselor also

acts as liaison between school staff, students and families. In addition, the counselor can refer families in need to community resources. The counselor does not provide in-depth mental health counseling, but rather works with all students in the school to make sure they are learning and growing in a healthy school environment.

## **Mental Health Services & Blue**

NExA participates in our district's new Facility Dog Program. Policy related to the program can be found on our district website: [Mental Health Team / Meet Our Certified Therapy Dog "Blue"](#) Please contact Erin Duncan at [eduncan@cdaschools.org](mailto:eduncan@cdaschools.org) for additional information.

## **Life Skills**

The NExA Life Skills program is designed for students who function significantly below their age level peers in intellectual ability. The Life Skills students may require ongoing support in the areas of academics, mobility, communication, self-care and self-sufficiency. The students receive academic, behavioral and self-sufficiency instruction in a manner that follows their specific individual program. Our goal, in the Life Skills setting, is to assist students in developing their fullest potential; promoting independence and lifelong learning.

## **Resource Room**

The NExA Resource Room is a classroom where the special education teachers and paraprofessionals instruct and assist students identified with a disability. These students receive special instruction in an individualized or group setting for a portion of the day. Individual needs are supported in the Resource Rooms as defined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

## **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Process**

Students may be referred to the MTSS team by their classroom teacher. The MTSS team consists of the classroom teacher, principal, counselor, Title 1 teacher, school psychologist and parents. The school-based team meets together and brainstorms interventions and remediation options. **Parents will be notified by the fall conferences if their student is initially placed on the MTSS schedule.** All students on MTSS will have an IPlan.

## **School Psychologist**

NExA employs a school psychologist certified by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) to provide a range of services to support students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach. We use our expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to students' growth and achievement socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and academically. School Psychologists are committed to working with families, district staff and outside agencies to help all of our students to strive, grow and thrive.

School psychologists accomplish this growth using a variety of methods and tools. Some difficulties that our students experience can be solved by changing their classroom environment for example, by moving the student closer to the front of the classroom or away from a distracting peer. Sometimes we conduct

specialized assessments to help teachers find a more effective way to teach your child, or as part of the Special Education process

## **Speech & Language Services**

NExA offers Speech and Language Services to students who demonstrate the need for extra support with speech or language skills. An American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) Certified Speech Language Pathologist is employed at NExA in order to evaluate the need for services and then provide those services. Programs offered include individual or group therapy for students needing direct training in the areas of: speech articulation, receptive or expressive language, augmentative or alternative communication, voice, fluency, and pragmatic language (social language and conversational skills).

## **Title I Services**

Title I is a national reading program funded through the federal government. This program is designed to assist students toward mastering grade-level expectancies. To obtain this goal, Title I focuses on skills necessary for proficient reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

All students are given specialized reading instruction in small groups according to their needs and strengths in reading, phonics, and writing skills within their individual classrooms. The Title I Reading Specialist and the classroom teachers work hard to differentiate all reading instruction according to individual student abilities. Title I instructional reading time focuses on the foundational skills of reading for all ability levels. Progress is closely monitored to ensure that the instruction planned is meeting the needs of the child.

Our goal is to help children become confident readers who enjoy the many aspects of reading. Through a partnership with parents, we will support the efforts of the children we serve to become lifelong readers.

Funding for our program is based on the percentage of free and reduced lunches for which our families apply. Therefore, it is ESSENTIAL that our families apply for free and reduced lunch at our school. Even if our families choose not to participate in this program, their application goes toward our funding. Forms may be picked up at the office or in the cafeteria. For more information, visit the [\*\*U.S. Department of Education\*\*](#) website.

## **Discipline**

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Students are expected to be in control of their body and emotions. If a student makes a poor choice, is out of control of his or her body and/or emotions or needs a break from his or her environment, the student is offered numerous opportunities to regain control.

## **Office Referral**

- Teacher sends the student to the office and completes the Referral form after three infractions.
- If the child is being referred to the office for a history of minor offenses, it is expected parent contact has been made by the classroom teacher and the parent is aware of the escalating concern.
- Offenses include:

- A history of minor offenses: three or more
- The child's 4<sup>th</sup> Office Assistance Request in one week.
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Swearing/Cursing—when heard by an adult
- Throwing items including rocks and snow
- Fighting
- Weapons

This referral may result in the following:

- Conference with the counselor with phone call home
- Recess detention/ Alternate recess
- Parent notification by the principal
- Possible strategic interventions through Response to Intervention process
- Suspension (in school or out of school)
- Expulsion

## Suspension

In school suspension may be a result of repeated office referrals. Students and administration will call parents to notify them of this consequence. The student will spend the remainder of their school day completing academic tasks in the office separate from their classroom and peers.

Out of school suspensions may be a result of repeated major offenses. Parents will be required to pick up their child and remove them from school. Suspensions may be short term (1 or 3 days) or long term (5 days pending expulsion).

## Expulsion

Expulsion is a serious consequence to major offenses that are not able to be remediated through school interventions.

## Staff Contact List

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**NExA Office-** 208-763-0800

**Michelle Olson-** Secretary [molson@cdaschools.org](mailto:molson@cdaschools.org)

**Kristen Mysee-** Attendance Clerk [kmysse@cdaschools.org](mailto:kmysse@cdaschools.org)

**Jennifer Peak-Principal** [jpeak@cdaschools.org](mailto:jpeak@cdaschools.org)

**Kate Keinert-Assistant Principal** [kkeinert@cdaschools.org](mailto:kkeinert@cdaschools.org)

**Michelle Olson-Office Manager** [molson@cdaschools.org](mailto:molson@cdaschools.org)

**Kristen Mysee-Secretary** [kmysse@cdaschools.org](mailto:kmysse@cdaschools.org)

**Clarissa Kraack-Counselor** [ckraack@cdaschools.org](mailto:ckraack@cdaschools.org)

**Ashley Jameson-Nurse** [ajameson@cdaschools.org](mailto:ajameson@cdaschools.org)

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### **Kinder Team**

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### **First Grade Team**

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### **Second Grade Team**

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### **Third Grade Team**

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### **Fourth Grade Team**

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### **Fifth Grade Team**

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