Student Handbook

The Excel Center
15445 East Iliff Avenue
Aurora, CO 80013
720-864-9674
excelcentercolorado.org







GENERAL OVERVIEW

School Mission

The mission of The Excel Center (TEC) is to provide adults aged 22 and older with the opportunity and support to earn a Colorado high school diploma and begin post-secondary education while developing career paths in sectors of the local economy that offer better-than-average employment and growth opportunities. The school will “meet students where they are” in their educational journey by providing a flexible structure and supportive relationships to help them manage work, life and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals.

The Excel Center Model

The Excel Center is operated by Goodwill of Colorado and operates on three main pillars: an academic philosophy that meets the goals and needs of adult students, a focus on college and career readiness and student support services designed to address barriers that may impede continued educational success. TEC provides adults aged 22 and older the opportunity and support to earn a Colorado high school diploma and begin post-secondary education. The program provides transportation assistance for travel within the Denver metro area, drop-in childcare while the student is on campus taking classes and are assigned a Student Advocate.

Academic Instruction

Students enroll at The Excel Center at various education levels, have different amounts of school credits to earn and face various life obstacles, including work and family obligations. Therefore, each student will establish educational goals. The Excel Center staff will work with each student to fit their specific needs within the Colorado Department of Education guidelines.

Career and College Readiness Specialist (CCRS)

At The Excel Center, our goal for students is to have knowledge and skills in workforce development and post-secondary opportunities when they graduate. A diploma from The Excel Center means that students are exposed to pathways for certificate programs, 2-year and 4-year degrees, apprenticeships and internships, as well as elevated job-seeking or building a personal business.

Student Support Services Specialists (SSSS)

Student Advocates help students with academic advising and address the life barriers and issues that often prevent students from being successful. The relationship Student Advocates create with each student provides security and encouragement and builds confidence for students to persevere when work becomes challenging and life barriers become difficult to manage.

Program Schedule

The Excel Center operates year-round and offers classes throughout five, eight-week terms. Enrollment is open year-round. Course offerings change at the end of each term to meet the needs of the student body. As a result, some courses (including basic skills instruction) will be offered every term, while others (higher-level math and English courses) will be offered throughout the year. Below is the schedule The Excel Center will follow:

Monday – Thursday	**Friday – The Excel Center is open 8:00a – 4:30p**
Period 1: 9:00 am-10:25 am	Students will engage in self-directed learning.
Period 2: 10:30-11:55 am	Tutoring is available.
Lunch: 11:55-12:40 pm	The computer/learning lab is available for student use.
Period 3: 12:40-2:05 pm	Student Advocates are available.
Period 4: 2:10-3:35 pm	The Adventure Center daycare is open and available for use.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Enrollment Procedure

Anyone who left high school before graduating and earning a high school diploma and anyone who has a GED can enroll. However, The Excel Center is designed for adults 22 years and older. Applicants may apply online at excelcentercolorado.org or may call (720) 864-9674. The Excel Center is an in-person school. Students must attend in-person, Monday through Thursday. Students who enroll at The Excel Center agree they are attending with the overall goal of achieving their high school diploma.

Students are required to submit necessary documentation in the application packet prior to receiving an invitation to attend The Excel Center orientation. Enrolled students will read and acknowledge The Excel Center student handbook and provide their signature indicating they agree to comply with the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook.

There are five steps to become a student at The Excel Center:

Step 1: Application - Adults interested in enrolling at The Excel Center should apply online at excelcentercolorado.org. You must be a Colorado resident to attend The Excel Center.

Step 2: Obtain a transcript - Students applying to attend The Excel Center should contact the last high school they attended and obtain their transcript. Transcripts must be obtained prior to attending the new student orientation (NSO) and students must bring their transcript with them when attending the orientation. In cases when a student has difficulty obtaining their transcript, The Excel Center staff may aid in obtaining the transcript. Students will not receive all/full credit from a previous transcript if transcripts are not received by the week prior to the term start.

Step 3: Attend New Student Orientation (NSO) - Students will receive an invitation to attend New Student Orientation. Attendance at the New Student Orientation is required before classes begin. Please bring proof of your Colorado address to orientation. Proof of address can include, but is not limited to, a Colorado Driver's License, a Colorado ID, a utility bill, a rent or mortgage statement or any other mail indicating your name and current address.

Step 4: Assessment Test - Students will complete a math, reading and writing placement test to help determine the best classes for them to begin. For multi-language learners, there will be a placement test to determine their appropriate skill level.

Step 5: First Day of Classes - Students will receive class schedule confirmation from their Student Advocate. Steps one through four must be completed for an applicant to begin classes at The Excel Center. If a student fails to attend the first week of the term, they will be dropped from their classes.

Re-Enrollment

Students who withdraw from the school can re-enroll by contacting their Student Advocate.

Waiting List Procedure

In the event The Excel Center student body reaches capacity, the school will begin to add students to a waiting list. Students will be selected from the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis. The waiting list will be maintained, as needed, year-round.

Scheduling

The Excel Center staff will create schedules according to students' credit needs and their availability to attend classes each term. Students will receive their schedule at the beginning of each 8-week term.

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Advocates

Each student at The Excel Center will be assigned to a Student Advocate. The Student Advocate will help students address concerns in their life and facilitate access to supportive services to help them stay in school and achieve their goals. The Student Advocate will meet with students individually and in small groups to provide a forum for students to share concerns and address barriers they may be facing. Regular meetings may be scheduled based on the students' individual needs. Student Advocates are also responsible for tracking students' academic progress and supporting post-secondary plans.

The Adventure Center Childcare

The Excel Center operates a drop-in childcare center, called The Adventure Center, for students who have children between the ages of 1 and 12. The Adventure Center is accessible when a student is attending classes on-site and parents are required to remain on-site while utilizing The Adventure Center. A child may stay in the drop-in center for a maximum of 3 hours per day. The Adventure Center provides an introductory curriculum for children who engage with this service. The Adventure Center is available from 8:45am – 4:30pm and will be closed for lunch. Students are responsible for picking up their child at lunchtime and providing lunch for their child. Vending machines, microwaves and tables are available throughout The Excel Center.

There is no cost for this service. Students who leave The Excel Center campus while their child is in The Adventure Center will not be allowed to use The Adventure Center. Students will need to register their child for The Adventure Center directly with the daycare staff.

Transportation Assistance

The Excel Center will provide public transportation assistance to students, which is a cost-effective way for students to attend class. Passes are distributed two passes at a time in the front office. Passes are available to students who are enrolled in the current term. If a student misuses or misplaces their transportation pass, additional passes will not be provided.

Special Education/Academic Accommodations

Students with physical, emotional and/or cognitive disabilities qualify for a 504 plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These students will be offered the opportunity to collaborate with the 504 Coordinator to develop an individualized 504 plan that meets their needs. 504 plans ensure reasonable and personalized accommodation for qualifying students. To successfully execute a 504 plan, students will be required to schedule an intake meeting with the 504 Coordinator. They will also be asked to provide a body of evidence (BOE) for their specified disabilities (i.e. IEP, doctor's note, letter from past teacher). In the event that a student cannot provide a BOE they will be placed on a two-week pending observation status. During this time, they will be given a generic plan until the academic team can determine appropriate accommodations for the student. All 504 plans are subject to change at the discretion of each student and the 504 Coordinator. If a student has concerns about their 504 plans, they should first meet with their classroom teacher. If unresolved, they may then meet with the 504 Coordinator. If the classroom teacher is also the 504 Coordinator and concerns persist, the student may escalate the issue to the Lead Teacher.

Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal Law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. This act protects a student's personal information from being distributed to third parties. The Excel Center must have written consent from a student before personal information can be released to a third party (i.e., spouse, parent, employer, etc.). Student records are maintained in a secure

student information system. The Excel Center does not require students to submit health records. All staff of The Excel Center have access to student records for advising and support services purposes.

Throughout the year, Goodwill of Colorado will provide the Colorado Department of Education and other current and potential funders with aggregate student data. This data will NOT contain any identifying student information.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To graduate, a student must fulfill the graduation requirements for the State of Colorado as established by the Department of Education. Graduation requirements are as follows:

- English - 4 credits
- Math - 4 credits (one of which is Financial Literacy)
- Science - 3 credits
- Social Studies - 3 credits
- College & Career Readiness/Senior Seminar - 1 credit
- Introduction to The Excel Center Tools – 1 credit (will count as an elective credit)
- Elective & Additional Core Academic Courses - 5 credits (one of which is the above listed Introduction to The Excel Center Tools course)

Earning Credits

Students receive face-to-face instruction. Students earn credits by demonstrating satisfactory completion of a course with a passing grade of at least 60%. The Excel Center uses the following grading scale:

A = 90% - 100%
B = 80% - 89%
C = 70% - 79%
D = 60% - 69%
F = 0% - 59%

Transfer Credits

Student transcripts from other schools will be reviewed to determine if any coursework completed prior to enrolling at the Excel Center may also apply to the graduation requirements. Foreign transcripts and transcripts 10 years old or older will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to teach the necessary content and skills to grant students a Colorado high school diploma, focusing on the following academic subjects: English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and electives. Courses are designed to develop the skills required to be successful in modern careers. All classes will incorporate lessons in employability skills and include, but are not limited to: interview skills, mock interview opportunities, email and phone etiquette, resume creation, volunteer opportunities, job shadowing, digital literacy training, etc.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

Daily attendance is essential to student success. Students must show their student ID at the front desk before going to class. Due to the accelerated pace of classes at The Excel Center, students who miss too much class time may need to retake courses to successfully complete them. Students should be present and arrive on time for each scheduled class. If tardiness or absence is unavoidable, the student must contact their Student Advocate and teacher(s).

Active Student Policy and Withdrawal

To effectively fulfill The Excel Center's mission of assisting students toward earning their high school diploma and preparing them for the next steps, students must consistently make progress toward their academic goals. However, The Excel Center recognizes that life challenges can cause disruptions to a student's education.

If at any time a student's progression towards graduation is interrupted, there is a policy in place to withdraw.

As an active student, students can withdraw from The Excel Center by one of the following options/circumstances:

- Submit an official withdrawal notice
- By default, after 10 specific class absences in a session, a withdrawal will be submitted on the student's behalf, provided there has not been communication between the student and TEC staff

By signing the Student Handbook, students acknowledge and agree they have read and understand the above options/circumstances as an active student, and consent for a withdrawal to be submitted on the student's behalf under said circumstances. Student Advocates can aid in obtaining and/or clarifying the information included in this handbook.

Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct is to provide fair and reasonable procedures to promote student development and to ensure students engage in conduct that supports a productive learning environment for themselves and others. If a student chooses to engage in behaviors that interfere with the education of students, he or she may be immediately dismissed from The Excel Center temporarily or permanently.

The following are examples of disruptive behaviors in the areas of attendance, use of technology, dress code and respect. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Attendance

- Persistent or excessive absences or tardiness
- Absence without a valid reason
- Tardiness without contacting the Teacher, Office Administrator and/or Student Advocate in advance
- Leaving the classroom without permission

Use of Technology

- Talking on the phone or texting during class
- Failing to set phone to silent or vibrate during class time
- Leaving class for non-emergency phone calls

Dress Code

- Clothing that reveals the breasts, midriff or hips below the waist
- Attire that is not neat, clean or appropriate for school
- Attire that displays weapons and/or promotes violence

Respect

- Any behavior that is disruptive to the orderly process of classroom instruction
- Language that may be offensive to others (cursing, profanity, racial slurs, etc.)
- Refusal to actively participate in class activities or complete assigned tasks
- Persistent defiance to the requests and guidance of school staff

Other unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Threats, bullying or intimidation
- Physical harm to self or others (including fighting)
- Bringing, using or possessing a weapon at TEC campus
- Possession or use of a drug, controlled substance, or alcohol
- Vaping or smoking in the building
- Assault
- Theft or robbery
- Cheating or plagiarism

Acceptable Use of Technology

The primary purpose of using the internet at school is the promotion of educational excellence through increased access to information and innovative instruction. Student access to the network resources is a privilege, not a right. Students will be expected to use the resources for the educational purposes for which they are provided. Just as they are responsible for good behavior in the classroom, students are expected to show the same type of consideration while using the internet.

Disciplinary Action

The purpose of disciplinary action at The Excel Center is to ensure both individual students and the school community remain focused on growth and learning. Depending on the nature of the infraction and the student's past performance, any or all the following consequences may be appropriate and must be documented:

- Warning – Oral or Written - immediate resolution of the issue is expected.
- Participation in instructional program - a student may be expected to meet with a staff member to discuss topics such as anger management, conflict resolution, peer mediation or stress reduction.

Expulsion

After an investigation and hearing, a student may be expelled when their behavior renders it appropriate.

Poor attendance or repeated offenses can lead to expulsion. When the school Director or designee makes a recommendation for expulsion of a student, the school Director or designee may suspend the student until the conclusion of expulsion proceedings. This may occur if the school Director believes the student must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of:

- Interference with an educational function or school purposes.
- A physical injury to themselves, other students, school employees or visitors to the school
- Expulsion is mandatory for the following reasons:
- Bringing, using or possessing a weapon on school grounds. Expulsion from school for a period of no less than one year shall be mandated for a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school, except that the school Director may modify the expulsion order on a case by-case basis.
- Theft or robbery.
- Commission of an act, which, if committed by an adult, would be first- or second-degree assault as defined in Colorado law.
- The possession of a drug or controlled substance as defined in Colorado law.

- Threats, bullying and/or intimidation will not be tolerated at The Excel Center or in connection with students, families and staff of The Excel Center. Students will be subject to expulsion for verified acts which threaten, bully or intimidate others.
- Fighting will not be tolerated at The Excel Center. A student who physically strikes another individual will be subject to expulsion.

Restorative Justice Procedures

Purpose:

- To assist the student in understanding a performance problem and opportunity for improvement exists.
- To assist the student in overcoming performance problems and satisfy The Excel Center expectations.
- Preparing students for conduct that is expected in the workplace.
- To provide students with opportunities for due process in disciplinary actions.

Steps - Counseling by the Student Advocate in conjunction with input from the student's teachers, is the initial step to mentor or modify performance:

- Meet with the student and affirm expectations regarding performance.
- Discuss the performance deficit or behavioral concern.
- Provide a timeline and resources for improvement.
- Report on consequences for no improvement.

Verbal Redirection

After an investigation, the procedure outlined above will be followed for the counseling process. This process will include a discussion of previous informal efforts and the current warning.

Written Redirection

At this time, the Student Advocate or Teacher may consult the Director. After an investigation, the procedure outlined above for the counseling process will be followed, except for providing documentation to the staff in the letter of reprimand. The letter should outline previous informal efforts and the current issue. Tools such as attendance improvement plans, behavior improvement plans and performance improvement plans can be used at this stage. These plans can be used at increments of 30, 60 and 90 days. Signed copies of the signed letter and improvement plan will be provided to appropriate staff and added to the student file. The student may be referred for a hearing after two written reprimands.

Short Suspension (or equivalent)

A full investigation of the issue/concern, followed by a discussion with the student will occur. A summary of the previous progressive discipline and the current issue and a specific time frame for the suspension will be provided in writing. Identification of further discipline and possible termination as a potential consequence for not meeting and maintaining the standards for improvement may occur. A copy of the written reprimand will be provided to the student and staff. The student must have a hearing before returning to The Excel Center. A record of progressive discipline must be submitted to the panel of staff/students sitting in on the hearing.

Long Suspension (or equivalent)

A full investigation of the issue/concern, followed by a discussion with the student will occur. A summary of the previous progressive discipline and the current issue and a specific time frame for the suspension will be provided in writing. Identification of further discipline and possible termination as a potential consequence for not meeting and maintaining the standards for improvement may occur. A copy of the written reprimand will be provided to the student and staff. The student must have a hearing before returning to The Excel Center. A record of progressive discipline must be submitted to the panel of staff/students sitting in on the hearing.

Expulsion

Expulsion may be necessary when discipline is not successful in improving the student's performance or actions. The Student Advocate and/or Teacher should review the performance history and the record of progressive discipline with the Director. A final meeting will be scheduled with the student, Student Advocate and/or Teacher and Director. The student will be provided with a letter of expulsion. If necessary, the expulsion notice may be sent via certified mail.

Hearings

Hearings should consist of two staff who are responsible for determining guilt or innocence. Staff will make recommendations for retention or expulsion to the Director. They can impose additional consequences/ sanctions. The panel of staff will provide documentation for the hearing explaining the appeal process.

The student may have an advocate with them during this process.

Appeals

Students have the right to appeal recommendations made by the panel. An appeal must be made within 30 days of the hearing to the Director. The decision of the Director is final and may not be appealed.

Plagiarism

Definition - submitting another person's ideas or expressions in your writing as your own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Taking someone else's assignment or portion of an assignment and submitting it as your own work.
- Submitting material written by someone else or rephrasing the ideas of another without giving the author's name or source.
- Presenting the work of artificial intelligence (AI), tutors, parents, siblings or friends as one's own.
- Submitting purchased papers as one's own.
- Submitting papers from the Internet written by someone else as one's own.
- Supporting plagiarism by providing work for others, whether it is believed it will be copied or not.
- Not properly citing your sources, either in your work or in the works cited page.
- Insufficient citation of information is not held to be common knowledge (common knowledge is defined as facts readily available from a variety of sources).

Tips on avoiding plagiarism:

- Begin the writing process by stating your ideas, then go back to review the author's original work.
- Use quotation marks and credit the source when you copy the exact wording.
- Use your own words when paraphrasing, instead of copying directly when possible.
- When paraphrasing an author's writings, crediting the author is required.

INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

Student ID Badge

Your student ID badge must always be worn and visible while at The Excel Center. This is for the safety of students, staff and children in The Adventure Center. If you do not have your ID, you must sign in at the front desk and wear a temporary name badge. If you have lost your student ID, please contact the Office Administrator for a replacement. There will be a fee for replacement badges.

Responsibility of Valuables

The Excel Center is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal valuables that a student chooses to bring on the premises.

Parking

Accessible parking spaces are available for individuals with a current disability placard. Students should park in parking spots specifically assigned to The Excel Center. Students who park in parking spots specifically assigned to the Goodwill retail store will be towed at the owner's expense.

School Closings

School delays and closings will align with the Aurora Public Schools' delays and closings. Closings will be posted to the local television stations. Students with an email and/or phone number on file will receive an automated message related to delays and closings.

DISCLAIMER

Please be advised that the information contained in this Student Handbook is subject to change.