

*Star of the North*

*Secondary School*

*Career Education Center North Pole Campus*



*Parent/Student Handbook*

*North Pole Academy*

**“Dedicated to excellence in education and to providing  
an atmosphere that fosters responsibility, dignity and individuality.”**

# Star of the North Secondary School

<http://son.k12northstar.org/>

## North Pole Academy

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Head Teacher	Bao Do
Administrative Secretary	Maggie Wade
Counselor	Andrea Wade
Resource	Ethan Gelineau Miranda Lockwood
Tutor	Debi Rogers
Middle School House	Diana Childs Tumi Traustason
High School House	Matt Casort Bao Do Sarah Warriner Casey Yordy

## Career Education Center

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Head Teacher	Craig Kind
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Counselor	Andrea Wade
Resource	Missy Gordon
English	Anna Swoffer
Science	Laurie Robertson
Mathematics	Marty Foster
Social Studies	Craig Kind

## Academic Policy Committee

President	Craig Kind
Vice President	Maggie Wade
Secretary	Stephani Hillen
Treasurer	Anna Swoffer
Student Member	TBD
CEC Parent Member	TBD
NPA Parent Member	TBD
Members:	Bao Do Laurie Robertson Debi Rogers

Welcome to Star of the North Secondary School. You can be proud to be part of a school where visitors and volunteers consistently remark on how nice our students are, how serious and committed they are, and how graciously and maturely they conduct themselves in public. This is a school of choice where students have chosen to follow the high expectations of this school. We expect you to take your education seriously, and take advantage of this opportunity with respect and appreciation for those who led the way for you.

As a Star of the North student, you will participate in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District curriculum and behavioral standards and, as a graduate, earn a fully accredited Fairbanks North Star Borough School District diploma. You may participate in any activities and events for which you are eligible. In addition, you will be offered a program with:

- an emphasis on quality academics.
- a school-to-work focus.
- flexible scheduling.
- an emphasis on parental and community involvement.

Attending Star of the North is a privilege. It is only for those who are committed to embracing the ideals on which it was founded. These are:

- Each student must be committed to his or her education and must take responsibility for his or her own learning. Teachers and staff will do everything in their power to assist you, but if you are not personally committed to your education, we do not have the resources to get you there. You must come in the door each day ready to learn.
- Many students have had difficulties in the past. Star of the North works closely and positively with each student. We make efforts to build strong, supportive relationships with each student. If you have had difficulties, you must commit to make a change for the better. We will help you.
- Star of the North is no place for trash talk, put downs and negativity. If you do not agree with the philosophy of this program, it is not the place for you. If a student is unhappy at Star of the North, he or she may return to his or her attendance area school, and indeed may be asked to do so.
- Star of the North is a supportive learning environment. Everyone is expected to interact in a positive and supportive manner to teachers and peers. Students and staff need a quiet, focused environment free of needless chatter and off task behavior.

- Parents, guardians, extended families, advocates and trusted adults are all a part of a young person's success in school. Star of the North works to create close contacts with the people most able to support you in school.
- All school district dress codes and behavioral guidelines are followed at Star of the North. Should students violate Fairbanks North Star Borough student codes of conduct, they will be subject to the same disciplinary actions as any district student. In addition, they may be asked to return to their home schools which have detention rooms and personnel in place to deal with behavioral issues.
- We are a small staff who works very closely with our students and parents to prevent the kinds of missteps that students take that get them into the disciplinary system. Our staff wears multiple hats, including teacher, mentor, counselor and disciplinary authority.
- Those of us who have been involved in Star of the North and its development think it's a very special place. We expect serious, respectful behavior at all times. Students are here to do the dignified, difficult work of learning. Students will be asked to leave if they are disturbing others or if they are contributing to an atmosphere that does not encourage achievement.
- Acceptance to Star of the North is dependent upon commitment, need, and in rare cases, willingness to participate in outside counseling or group therapy.

## **Description of Programs**

### **Middle School House**

The Middle School House is a self-contained learning environment for seventh and eighth graders. Core academics are stressed with an emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum. Typically there are forty students, two teachers and an instructional aide. Assignments vary from independent work, whole class instruction and small group work. Special attention is made to classroom community building through weekly class meetings, shared responsibilities and leadership opportunities.

We think that middle school should be a happy time in a student's life. Our Middle School is a safe, student-centered place to learn. We emphasize positive learning experiences without the distractions found in conventional middle schools. There are no passing periods, no lockers and no time independent of adult mentors. Middle school students are kept completely separate from high school students with the exception of specially selected high school students who serve as teacher aides. Students in the Middle School House remain with us for two years. At the end of eighth grade, students choose to try other high school opportunities or remain for our Ninth Grade House.

### **Ninth Grade House**

The Ninth Grade House is also an integrated, self-contained learning community of fifteen to twenty ninth graders who work collaboratively in one classroom. Students are selected carefully in order to maintain a positive, healthy environment. The high school teachers rotate through the class delivering instruction. Emphasis is made on successful completion of core academics and the development of study habits that will contribute to success in high school. It is important to note that the ninth grade house has a closed campus. Under no circumstances do ninth grade students leave during the day unless they are on a class activity or are picked up by a parent or guardian. At the completion of ninth grade, most ninth grade students go to the larger high school for the wider opportunities available to them there. Some students are allowed to remain on a case-by-case basis, but Star of the North wants all students to have access to the varied opportunities available to them in the comprehensive high school and encourages them to try that setting.

## **High School House**

Students are admitted to the High School House based on need and their ability to work independently. The High School House is a community with self-directed learning, small-group instruction and individualized tutoring. Teachers and students work closely together to meet curriculum goals. Students seek help from their teachers as they need assistance and frequently assist others in need of help. Every student is matched with a staff member who serves as an adult advocate who intervenes in areas of academic or behavioral difficulties, monitors attendance, follows up on class work and sees to the student's overall well being. The atmosphere is friendly and collegial.

The High School House places a strong emphasis on student independence, adult guidance and advocacy, as well as individual achievement. Students at Star of the North Secondary, North Pole Academy spend over half of their time in school doing independent learning. Time spent in school is for intentional, concentrated work. Star of the North expects students to cover and master the educational material in order to earn the high school credits. Students who graduate from Star of the North Secondary are self sufficient, able to realize satisfaction and success, and are prepared to participate in the world around them.

High school students must earn the minimum 22.5 credits required for a Fairbanks North Star Borough School District diploma, including credits from the required core areas. All students will be enrolled in at least four classes.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

### **Middle School**

Students may apply for enrollment at Star of the North Middle School if they are eligible for advancement to 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Ninth Grade**

Students may apply for enrollment at Star of the North Ninth Grade if they have successfully completed an 8<sup>th</sup> grade program. Only first time ninth graders are considered for admission.

### **High School**

Students may apply for enrollment at Star of the North, North Pole Academy if they have accumulated at least six high school credits and can work independently. Students with less than six high school credits will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All high school students must demonstrate:

- the need for an alternative education program;
- the commitment to complete high school and to learn vocational and life skills necessary to be a successful adult; and
- the willingness to identify and change destructive behaviors that interfere with your education or the education of others.

## **Admission Procedures**

Read this handbook, complete an application and schedule an interview. You and your guardian will interview with a teacher. If you have an IEP, a representative from the school district special education department may be asked to join us for the interview. You will be informed a few days after your interview if you've been accepted, if you'll be placed on a waiting list, or if another placement is recommended. You may be asked to attend a support group or counseling as a condition of your acceptance into Star of the North.

After your acceptance to Star of the North Secondary School, you must:

- review and sign the admission contract (Appendix A) with a teacher and your parent or guardian.
- withdraw from your current school.
- obtain and submit up to date immunization records.
- submit required transcripts.
- complete required enrollment papers and district forms.
- schedule classes.

## **Guidelines for Continued Membership in Star of the North, North Pole Academy**

### **Respect for the Learning of Yourself and Others**

- Star of the North students spend most of their limited time in school doing independent learning. Time in school is for concentrated, quiet work. Visiting and talking during work time robs you and your peers of the right to an education. This behavior will not be tolerated. Students who repeatedly need to be redirected will be asked to return to their home school.
- When you come into the High School House find a quiet place to work. Don't go to the same place day after day. Find a place where you can concentrate, away from known distractions and friends. It is a good idea to sit near the instructor who teaches the subject you are working on. Only one student is allowed per table until all spots are filled; then you may double up.
- Students are expected to make continual progress in all their academic areas. Make a plan to finish work on a daily basis. This is a goal-oriented program. You must work with teachers to set goals and monitor your achievement.
- Star of the North students are expected to seek help from their teachers. Students who do not seek help when they have questions, and choose to leave work unfinished or misunderstood will have their membership in Star of the North re-evaluated. All assignments must be 100% complete with a 75% or greater accuracy.

## School Hours

The **Middle School** day is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. One-half hour is allotted for lunch. No one is admitted before 7:30. If you come in before 8:00, you must read quietly or work on assignments. This is work time for the teachers.

The **Ninth Grade** day is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. One-half hour is allotted for lunch. No one is admitted before 7:30. If you come in before 8:00, you must read quietly or work on assignments. Again, this is work time for the teachers.

The **High School** has flexible scheduling:

- Students with fewer than 16 credits must attend school for a minimum of **five hours** of focused learning work per day, excluding a thirty-minute lunch break. A thirty-minute break cannot be taken until the student has completed three hours of concentrated work.
- Students with greater than 16 credits, who are working and enrolled in Diversified Cooperative Education must attend a minimum of three hours per day, with no break.
- The High School House hours are from 7:30 to 3:00.

You will work independently, or with a tutor or teacher during the times you are not in a scheduled class. You are allowed to grab quick snacks and go to the restroom, but this cannot be frequent and it cannot disrupt others.

## **Attendance**

Attendance requirements are closely monitored. Parents or guardians must call before the end of the day when an absence occurs. Teachers will call missing students. Students who do not meet their attendance requirements will be asked to return to their attendance area school.

High School students must sign in and sign out every day with your assigned teacher. We are happy to greet you and say goodbye every day. We use this opportunity to check in with you to see how you are doing.

High School students must also put in three hours of work before you take a break for lunch. Leave quietly and don't forget to sign out and back in with an instructor. When you leave for the day, please clean your desk area.

## **Electronics**

Cell phones are not allowed during class. They will be confiscated and progressive discipline will be used. Please make sure cell phones are silenced during school hours. Personal audio devices are acceptable; however, use them quietly and remove your ear buds or headphones when moving about the building. Students who spend too much time on their music players will lose the privilege of using them.

## **Media**

Consistent with school district policy, computers are for school use only. Do not use them for personal e-mail or as a music player.

Library books must be checked out. An instructor will show you the procedure. No one is allowed to work in the library unless they have permission and are with a staff member.

## **Transportation**

### **Bus Transportation**

Bussing is provided to Star of the North for students in the North Pole attendance area. Students are picked up in their neighborhoods by the middle/high school bus with other local students and brought to North Pole Middle School. There, you will transfer to a shuttle bus and be brought to Star of the North.

Bussing is a special privilege given to the charter school by the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. Bus misconducts and misbehavior while waiting for the shuttle will result in the loss of your bus privileges.

### **Driving**

Driving a car on campus is a privilege. Please show the school secretary your driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. Drive slowly and park considerately of others. Student plug-ins are available on a first come, first served basis. Snow machines and four wheelers are not allowed on school property.

## **Star of the North Meetings**

Friday mornings are usually a time when we gather together as a group to talk about job skills, life issues and day-to-day operations. We have meetings to talk about issues that need to be addressed, make announcements and build the school community. We may have guest presenters. These meetings are required for each Star of the North student. We are a community, and meetings are important community time.

Plan to attend school on Friday mornings regardless of whether or not a meeting is scheduled. Students must adjust work schedules to reflect this.

## **Care for the Environment**

We believe that a beautiful, well ordered environment is critical for the comfort and well being of everyone. Star of the North students are required to maintain the environment as well as contribute to its beauty.

- All materials must be returned to their proper storage place. Students are expected to keep their immediate area clean and tidy.
- Ask permission to enter a storage room.
- In addition, it is important to keep the bathrooms clean. Please report any misuse immediately.
- Do not use a staff member's desk, file cabinet, phone or personal items unless you have permission.

## **Custodial Duties**

We do not have a full-time custodian, so you must be willing to help with cleaning on a regular basis. You cannot participate in Star of the North unless you agree to follow the cleaning schedule.

## **Family-Teacher-Student Conferences**

Star of the North Secondary School is proud of the family/school connection we have developed. Each student and parent or guardian must participate in a thirty-minute conference twice a year. These conferences will be scheduled each semester. It is important that the parent or guardian realizes that this is a condition of continued enrollment.

## **Counseling Services**

Vocational counseling services are available from our school counselor. Guest speakers are occasionally invited to brief students regarding post secondary opportunities.

## **Grading**

Course work is graded using the school district policy. In addition, no assignments will be graded unless they are complete. All work must earn a 75% or better. Any assignments with a lower score must be improved to at least 75%. A partially finished unit or assignment, even if it is well done, will be an “F” unless it is 100% complete. All course work must be completed by the end of the semester.

The High School House is a continuous progress curriculum, and your work will be accepted, within reason, at any time in the semester. Unit tests must be passed before the next unit is given to you. You are expected to make progress in all the classes in which you are registered, yet you have some flexibility about what you work on and when you work on it. This works well, except in the cases where a student chooses to move or transfer mid semester. Should you withdraw or transfer mid semester, and you are not done with course work equal to the weeks of the semester, you could have an “F”, even if you have done really well on the work you have completed. Admitting schools need grades that show what you have done based on mid-quarter and quarter progress.

## **Special Education**

Star of the North does not have the staffing for intensive special education needs. The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District provides programs for young people with highly specific needs. We do accept students who have learning difficulties and work closely with them to monitor their progress. IEP goals and accommodations are addressed in the classroom setting by the regular education teacher with monitoring by an adjunct special education teacher. Students who have been receiving one-on-one help in a resource room will not have that level of support. In order to be successful in this school, students must be able to work independently. Students who need a great deal of activity, a teacher or paraprofessional with whom to work one-on-one, or have a lot of trouble focusing on work may not do well in this setting, particularly in our High School House. The High School House, in particular, resembles a quiet library.

## **NPHS and NPMS Classes and Activities**

Students enrolled at Star of the North, under certain circumstances, may be enrolled in classes at NPHS or NPMS. However, it is up to the Star of the North teachers to decide if this is appropriate for a particular student, and we will not allow it until the student has had one successful semester exclusively at Star of the North.

You may participate in extra-curricular activities at NPHS or NPMS, providing you meet the qualifying criteria. If you are not attending an assigned class or activity, you are not allowed to be on the main campus during school hours without a pass. While in the NPHS or NPMS buildings, you must follow the school rules and you are subject to the same disciplinary procedures as any student.

**We look forward to working with you as you begin this journey. Welcome!**

**Appendix A**

**Star of the North Secondary School  
North Pole Campus**

Student Contract

Star of the North Secondary School is a public school of choice in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District that offers students various levels of expectations depending on the age and academic level of the student.

As a student of Star of the North Secondary School, I acknowledge that I am a capable learner and will come to Star of the North every day ready to learn. I realize that I must do homework in order to achieve my goals. My commitment to Star of the North is my first priority and time for school comes before time for work. When I have a job I will make sufficient time in my schedule for school.

As a student at Star of the North Secondary School I will: **(Please read and initial each item.)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend school daily with a 95% or better attendance rate. This means I will miss no more than 5 days in a semester unless there are extenuating, verifiable medical or family circumstances. If I do not meet 95% I will be asked to return to my attendance area school the following semester. My parent/guardian will call NPC at 490-9025 each day that I am ill/unable to attend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Display a positive attitude that contributes to the peace and well being of the school environment. I will be encouraging and supportive of my fellow students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Respect the learning of others by doing quiet concentrated work with no disruption of the environment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contribute to the school environment by participating in my assigned housekeeping duties without complaint.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete all work within the designated time and seek help from my teachers when I have difficulties or questions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete all work with at least 75% accuracy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take part in all standardized testing, including the completion of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE).

I understand that: **(Please read and initial each item.)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Use of cell phones for calls or text messaging is not allowed during class. Cell phones will be confiscated if students are using them during class. Parents and guardians are to call the school office if they wish to speak with their student.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Star of the North is a school where students are expected to be respectful of themselves, others at school and school property. If I do not live up to these expectations, I will promptly call my parent/guardian. In cases of disrespect, violence or vandalism I will be picked up immediately by my parent/guardian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am subject to all FNSB School District student conduct policies and realize that Star of the North is not staffed for disciplining procedures. I understand that time consuming disciplinary actions will jeopardize my enrollment at Star of the North.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Displays of vulgarity of any kind will result in community service, a parent phone call or meeting and progressive discipline.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When my homework and or daily work is not completed satisfactorily, my teachers may require me to stay after school for Homework Club or extended hours. The following days work best for my parents' transportation schedule: Mon \_\_\_\_\_ Tues \_\_\_\_\_ Wed \_\_\_\_\_ Thurs \_\_\_\_\_  
I will be picked up by a parent/guardian no later than 3:30 p.m. unless alternative arrangements have been approved.

I recognize that Star of the North Secondary School is an optional public education program. If I am unable to fulfill the obligations of this contract, I realize I may be asked to return to my home school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name/Date (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature/Date