

**A+**  
***Student***  
***Handbook***

***For***  
***Drexel High School***



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# Rationale of this Manual

The A+ Program was established in 1993 as part of the Outstanding Schools ACT (OSA) by the Missouri State Legislature to enhance education opportunities for high school students. Schools who apply have three years to align curriculum and set standards for A+ before being designated an A+ School. Once designated as an A+ School, Drexel High School graduates who meet specific A+ criteria will be eligible to receive reimbursement for tuition, and general fees to attend any public community college, vocational or technical school in the State of Missouri for two years.

This manual is provided to students, parents, faculty and staff explaining the guidelines and policies of the A+ Program. It is the responsibility of the Drexel School District to follow these policies to ensure A+ designation is earned during the 2010/2011 school year, and is maintained. Accurate certification of students is crucial to the integrity of the program and A+ Schools designation.

**It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read this manual carefully to understand the guidelines and regulations that are a part of the A+ Program.**

- All Drexel students will graduate from high school.
- All students will complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and for which there are identified learning experiences.
- Drexel High School students will proceed from high school to a college, post secondary vocational or technical school or a high wage job with work place skill development opportunity.

# Eligibility

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Programs (Free tuition and general fees), a student must be certified as an A+ student by the Drexel High School. To qualify for certification, the student must meet the following criteria:

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Enter into a written agreement with your high school prior to graduation.
- Attend a designated A+ high school for 3 consecutive years immediately prior to graduation.<sup>1</sup>
- Graduate with an overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
- Have at least a 95% attendance record overall for grades 9-12.
- Perform at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring, of which up to 25% may include job shadowing.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Beginning with the high school senior class of 2015, have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course exam or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics.

## Student Enrollment in A+

Students are encouraged to enroll in the program early in their sophomore year, in order to track requirements, but not later than the first semester of the senior year.

An A+ Participation Agreement must be completed with all appropriate signatures and returned to the A+ Office.

Everyone requesting A+ enrollment after the beginning of their sophomore year must meet all criteria dating back to beginning of their freshmen year.

Students may not request A+ financial incentive after the fifth week of the fall semester of their senior year.

Eligible students must be enrolled in Drexel High School no later than three weeks after the beginning of the school year in the students' sophomore year.

## **Student Incentive**

Qualified A+ graduates will be eligible to receive the following:

- Tuition and general fees to attend any public community college, state certified vocational or technical school in the State of Missouri for two years.
- The financial incentives will be available only after the student has made a documented effort to secure any available post secondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.
- The tuition incentives will only be made available to reimburse the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition and general fees after available federal financial aid funds have been applied to those costs.
- Students will be eligible to receive financial incentives for two years if they are enrolled as a full time student (12 hours or more) and maintain a 2.5 GPA in the post secondary setting.
- Private scholarships will not affect eligibility for the A+ Program, nor will they reduce the State's responsibility to a college or technical school.
- Students must complete the two years of full time enrollment at a community college or public vocational / technical school within four years of graduating from Drexel High School.
- Financial need is not a factor in determining eligibility for the A+ Program.
- A list of local community colleges / technical schools that may accept A+ students is available from the A+ coordinator.

# **Grade Point Requirement**

The A+ student must graduate from high school with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. The cumulative non-weighted GPA is applicable to all four years of a student's enrollment in high school. The official transcript will document and certify that the GPA requirement has been met. GPA will not be rounded up.

## **Notification of A+ Status**

The A+ Coordinator will review all records of A+ Students, and names of eligible students will be submitted to the principal and Counselor for official certification upon graduation. Students and parents will be notified and the student's transcript will reflect A+ status.

## **Monitoring of A+ Program Status**

At the end of each semester, students who are participating in the A+ Program will receive a letter reporting their progress in each of the required areas. Any questions or concerns about the information reported should be directed to the A+ Coordinator.

## **Good Faith Effort**

The student is required to make a good faith effort to secure all available federal post secondary student financial aid funds that do not require repayment.

- Parents must complete the file for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) prior to graduation. The FAFSA summary report must be sent to the community college or public vocational / technical school that the student is planning to attend. A copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) must be on file in the A+ Office.
- The FAFSA form is available from the Counseling Office in December of the year of graduation. Parents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after

January 1 of that school year. Application can be made on line at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

You first need a pin number for the online process and that can be obtained at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).

- Financial incentives will only be awarded to reimburse the unpaid balance of the costs of tuition and general fees after available federal post secondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to costs.

## Career Pathways

Each student is required to declare a Career Path. Career Clusters are designed to give a student direction to take courses that will be relevant to his / her chosen field of study after high school. A Career Path may be changed at any time. Students may choose from the following career clusters:

● Agriculture and Natural Resources  
● Arts and Communications  
● Business, Management and Administration

● Health Services  
● Human Resources  
● Industrial and Engineering Tech

## Attendance Requirements

To be eligible for the A+ financial incentive, a student must have a 95% (approximately no more than 8.70 days absent per year or 52 hours per year) cumulative attendance record beginning with their freshmen year. According to state A+ guidelines adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education, participating A+ school districts shall make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes. The student will acquire the habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. A student who does not meet the 95% attendance requirement will not be eligible for the A+ financial incentive.

The following attendance guidelines are required of all students participating in the A+ Program:

- Students must attend an A+ designated school for three consecutive years prior to graduation. Early graduation is discouraged.
- A cumulative attendance record will be kept from the beginning of the A+ student's freshmen year until graduation.
- The official record of attendance is kept by the High School office. Students attending Cass Career Center have their attendance reported to the high school.

## **Attendance Review Process**

After receiving attendance information, the parent / guardian will have 10 calendar days to file an appeal with the A+ Coordinator. If an appeal is not filed within 10 calendar days of notification, a waiver for days missed will not be considered.

Anyone making an appeal should use the "A+ Attendance Appeal Form" available in the A+ Office. A sample is included in this handbook.

The A+ Coordinator will convene the Attendance Review Committee within 10 calendar days of receiving notice of an appeal.

An A+ Review Committee will be composed of a counselor, a building principal a teacher and one business leader from the community to review stated grounds of the appeal.

The A+ Coordinator will act as a facilitator and a non-voting member of the review committee.

After the Attendance Review Committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents by letter within 10 calendar days. The decisions of the review committee will be considered final.

## **Attendance Waiver Guidelines**

Anyone submitting a request for an A+ attendance waiver for days missed shall provide the A+ Coordinator with the following official documentation.

### **Documentation Required for Attendance Waiver**

- Doctor or Dentist (Excuse presented to the principal within 5 days of actual absence)
- Chronic health problems (Letter from doctor and school nurse)
- Hospitalization (Letter signed by doctor)
- Court dates (Court Letter)
- Funeral (Funeral pamphlet or program)
- Religious holiday (Minister's Letter)
- Exchange student- study overseas for one semester or year (Documentation from agency)
- Personal / Family calamity -fire, flood, etc- (Principal's letter)
- Catastrophic illness -long term- (Principal / Doctor letter)
- Intermittent home bound (Principal / Doctor letter)

No student will receive a waiver if absences are due to any of the following:

- Personal / family vacation
- Suspension from school for any reason
- Truancy
- Skipping classes
- Transportation problems (unless on a late school bus)

Attendance requirements for A+ are not to be confused with general attendance requirements as stated in the Drexel High School Student Handbook.

## Tutoring

In order to qualify for the A+ financial incentive, students are required to perform at least 50 hours of unpaid school-based tutoring / mentoring of younger students. The tutoring activities must:

- Involve A+ students with students from lower grades in the district;
- Provide, as an ultimate goal, encouragement to students in lower grades to get motivated, stay in school and strive for good grades;
- Students seeking A+ financial incentive must meet the following qualifications prior to beginning a tutoring experience:
  1. Have a 2.5 GPA, 95% attendance, good citizenship status, and a signed A+ statement of participation.
  2. Commit to 50 hours of tutoring.
  3. Sign a tutoring agreement and have a tutoring permission form on file in the A+ office.

## Policies of the Tutoring / Mentoring Program



- Tutoring must be school sponsored.
- Students may obtain a Tutoring Log Sheet in the A+ Office. These sheets must be completed and turned in to the A+ Office to receive credit for tutoring.
- A+ students can not tutor a sibling or family member.
- Log sheets must be turned in to the A+ Office before the end of the semester during which tutoring occurred to be included in the semester report to parents.
- It is the student's responsibility to maintain his/her tutoring log record and turn it in to the A+ Office upon completion.
- Tutoring may be done during the school year or during summer school.
- Tutoring must be done on school premises.
- Scheduled times for tutoring are important, and absences should occur only in cases of emergency. Notification of absence must be made to the A+ Coordinator or supervising teacher in a timely manner.
- Failure to follow the Tutoring guidelines may result in disciplinary action, and/or dismissal from the A+ Program.
- **No financial compensation may be accepted for tutoring/mentoring activities.**
- **A+ students will be academically ineligible and not allowed to tutor if he or she has earned one (or more) grades of "F". Academically ineligible students regain eligibility at the end of the next designated grading period (mid-term or quarter).**

**A statement must be signed by the participant and on file in the A+ office that the participant understands the tutoring guidelines.**

## **Citizenship Requirement**

Participation in the A+ Program is an honor and a unique privilege for Drexel High School students. Students pursuing the A+ financial incentive must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and alcohol. Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the high school office. The Principal will assign consequences for infractions of the discipline code and those administrators are responsible for certifying the accuracy of the student's discipline record.

## For A+ Participation

***Students should conduct themselves as responsible representatives of the school. A+ participants must always serve as exemplary examples of high ethical character. As recognized representatives of their school, members are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior on and off school grounds and to conform to and support existing state laws.***

### **Section A: Policy Criteria**

#### **ISS / OSS:**

- All participants begin each school year with good citizen status. Good citizen status equals zero (0) points.
- Each disciplinary referral that results in an in-school or out-of-school suspension takes away from good citizen status. In-school suspension results in a three-point penalty for each day assigned. Out-of-school suspension results in a five-point penalty for each day assigned.
- The accumulation of twenty-one (21) points during anyone school year will result in the revocation of the participant's good citizen status and his/her removal from the program with no opportunity for reinstatement.

#### **A+ Position on Chemical Abuse:**

1. In accordance to state A+ rules, all student use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or possession or use of non-prescribed controlled substances or paraphernalia for their use will not be tolerated, and the violator will be subject to removal from the A+ Program.
2. Rule enforcement will be consistent and immediate. School officials are not expected to police off-campus, non-school activities unless the violation is brought to public attention and is clearly proven. *Conversation held in the presence of a staff member by an A+ participant regarding their attendance at parties with drugs and/or alcohol or use of drugs and/or alcohol will be considered sufficient evidence for removal from the A+ Program.*
3. The Administration will be notified of all violations of the A+ Code of Conduct and the consequences of the infraction which is immediate

dismissal from the A+ Program with no opportunity for reinstatement. In addition to the A+ Program penalty, such infractions will also be subject to appropriate Board of Education disciplinary policies.

**Safe Schools Act**

4. Any violation of the Safe Schools Act is grounds for immediate and permanent dismissal.

**Section B-Procedures**

1. All reports of violations of the Code of Conduct are to be made to the A+ Coordinator and to the Principal.
2. The A+ Coordinator contacts the student and the parents to inform them of the violation and procedures to be followed. If requested, a meeting is scheduled within ten (10) school days. This meeting includes the A+ Coordinator, Principal, Superintendent, the student, and his or her parents.
3. The A+ Coordinator and Principal will determine the course of action. The student and his/her parents are notified of the decision immediately.
4. Any student who violates the guidelines will be terminated from the A+ Program.

**Section C-Right of Appeal—Due Process**

A student and his or her parents may appeal a decision by writing a letter to the coordinator with copies to the principal, within ten (10) days following notification of dismissal. This letter should state a request for a hearing with the school administration.

Within ten (10) school days after the letter is received, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents and the participant of the time and place of the appeal hearing. The Superintendent, Principal, and A+ Coordinator and a board of three A+ Program committee members will hear both sides of the case and will take action, which they consider to be in the best interests of the student and the A+ Program. During the time between the original decision and the hearing, the Principal has the authority to waive the action that has been taken.

## Probation while a part of the A+ Program

Disciplinary probation within the A+ Program is used with the understanding that even the best student makes mistakes. Probation is designed to recognize this characteristic in young people. However, receiving the A+ financial incentive is an honor and should be treated as such.

Students who are designated A+ students should demonstrate distinctive qualities and be role models for other students. Their character and ethics should meet high standards.

A student will be placed on probation for the rest of the semester upon receiving:

1. More than 2 in school suspensions in a semester.
2. Any referral of Out-of-School suspension.

If no further misdeeds occur, the student will be returned to full A+ status at the end of the semester. Any student who is placed on probation two times in one semester will be automatically removed from the program. A student who receives two semesters of probation during their high school career will have their disciplinary record reviewed by the A+ Review Committee for continued probation or possible dismissal from the program.

## **Removal from the A+ Program**

A student may be removed from the A+ Program when:

- Within the semester while on probation, the student commits another offense that would result in another probationary action.
- After two semesters of probation, a review by the A+ Review Committee shows that earlier disciplinary consequences did not positively affect students' behavior.
- Any student who commits a serious offense involving drugs or alcohol or which falls under the Safe Schools Act will be immediately dismissed from the program.
  1. Possession, use, sale or transfer of alcohol, drugs or narcotics.
  2. Possession of drug paraphernalia.
  3. Criminal activity as defined by the Safe Schools Act.
  4. Possession of a weapon (under provisions of Chapter 571 MO. Revised Statutes)
  5. Assault on a student
  6. Physical threat to staff member
  7. Vandalism / theft
  8. False fire alarm / bomb threats and misuse of emergency equipment
  9. Serious sexual misbehavior / exposure
  10. Possession of dangerous items
  11. Dangerous behavior

## **Unlawful use of Drugs / Alcohol**

An A+ student will not sell, possess, or use alcohol, controlled substances or drug paraphernalia as defined by law and stated in the Drexel Student Handbook. The use of prescription medicine is allowed under Board Policy. Students and parents are responsible for understanding and following those guidelines.

## **A+ Citizenship Probation Appeal Process**

Student and parents / guardians may appeal a disciplinary decision using the following process:

- Students and parents / guardians will have 10 calendar days to appeal a decision that is made dealing with discipline or probation.
- Anyone making an appeal should use the A+ Appeal of Citizenship form available from the A+ Coordinator.
- Within 10 days of receiving a written appeal, the A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Review Committee. The Committee will be composed of a guidance counselor, a principal, a teacher and one business leader.
- The parent / guardian and student should appear in person before the committee.

The A+ Coordinator will act as facilitator and a non-voting member of the A+ Review Committee. After the committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents /guardians by letter within 10 days. The decisions of the Review Committee will be considered final.

# Drexel High School

## A+ Attendance Appeal Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

This request is to appeal the school absences(s) of my son/daughter for the following: (Please check)

Semester: 1<sup>st</sup> semester \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> semester \_\_\_\_\_ School year \_\_\_\_\_  
Appeal will be: In person \_\_\_\_\_ In writing \_\_\_\_\_

In the space below, please indicate the date(s) of absences(s) and the reason for the request to be reviewed. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.

**Date of Absence Reason for Absence**

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Parent Signature

Student Signature

This form must be forwarded to the A+ Office within 10 days of the date of the absence notification. Parents will be notified of a hearing date scheduled within 10 days of the appeal notice.

## Drexel High School A+ Citizenship / Probation Appeal Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

This request is to appeal A+ Citizenship / Probation for my son/daughter for the following:

(Please check)

Semester: 1<sup>st</sup> semester \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> semester \_\_\_\_\_ School year \_\_\_\_\_  
Appeal will be: In person \_\_\_\_\_ In writing \_\_\_\_\_

In the space below, please indicate the basis of your appeal concerning the citizenship and / or probation and the reason for the request to be reviewed. If additional space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

Student Signature

This form must be forwarded to the A+ Office within 10 days of the date of the citizenship/probation notification. Parents will be notified of a hearing date scheduled within 10 days of the appeal notice.