



Science Focus Program

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2024-2025 Student Handbook

*Science Focus Program
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Intent of Student Handbook

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents and staff as a guide to the rules, regulations, and general information about the Science Focus Program. Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained within it. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the procedures and rules contained in this handbook.

Although information found in this handbook contains detailed and specific information on a variety of topics, the handbook is not intended to be all encompassing so as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during any school day, or school year. This handbook does not create a “contract.” The administration reserves the right to make decisions and rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well being of all students. The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. Should the situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations. This handbook is a supplement to the LPS Important Information Handbook (<https://www.lps.org/about/important/2024-2025/booklet/ib-eng.pdf>) to clarify how rules, regulations, and general information about Lincoln Public Schools applies to SFP.

Science Focus Program School Values

At SFP, we contribute positively to our community when...

We OWN OUR LEARNING

Take responsibility for learning and homework, be fully present, self-directed, efficient with time, have goals, sustain effort, see failure as an opportunity

We ADVENTURE

Take risks in learning, develop passions, take a global perspective, try new things, embrace the trial and error process, embrace discomfort, go outside to interact with the natural world

We COLLABORATE

Be a productive group member, work with a variety of peers (consciously avoid making exclusive groups), share the workload, respectfully disagree, challenge each other on ideas

We SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Communicate with respect, create cooperative working relationships, value others’ unique set of skills, be inclusive, offer and accept support, give and receive kindness

What is the LPS Science Focus Program?

The Science Focus Program is a small community of mature learners participating in traditional and non-traditional styles of learning – a place where students play an active role in defining their learning environment and education. Science is the theme for all course content and instruction in the school, but science is taught through an interdisciplinary approach to learning, pulling in mathematics, writing, reading, communications, and the social sciences. SFP has a capacity of 100 students and 5 teachers in math, English, social sciences, and science.

Students learn how to critically think about the world and themselves both inside and outside of the classroom through the sciences. Independent, motivated, adventurous students who are looking for a creative approach to learning are invited to join the Science Focus Program. Students will discover strengths, interests, and skills that will prepare them for a future filled with choices and opportunities.

At SFP, we focus on the whole student in addition to academics. We have four focus statements to help us work toward success in all facets of life. We expect students to do their best to grow in these areas:

1. At SFP, we own our learning.
2. At SFP, we adventure.
3. At SFP, we collaborate.
4. At SFP, we support each other.

Students can apply to be a student at SFP through our website, and oftentimes students are encouraged to apply by an administrator or counselor at their home high school. Students and parents or guardians must agree to SFP expectations if selected to attend. While at SFP, students may continue to participate in athletics or other student activities at their home high school.

For more information please contact Science Focus directly at (402) 436-1780.

Honors and Awards at SFP

Students' GPA at SFP is combined with their home high school where they will be recognized for academic and classroom achievement, including Graduation Honors at their home high school.

Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools Inspire Award:

Each year the staff select one student to receive the Foundation for LPS Inspire Award. We select one student who acts as a leader, inspires other students, and is active in their school community, or takes what they learn and applies it to their lives.

Subject Specific Awards

Each year SFP teachers select outstanding senior student(s) to receive recognition for their efforts. Each award may be given to one or more students. Students are recognized at the SFP End of the Year Celebration, and commemorated on a plaque that is located in the school.

- Social Science Award
- Recognition of Outstanding Senior Research
- English Language Arts Award
- Physics Award
- Math Award

Courtney Cusick and Michael Berg Award

These two scholarships are awarded each year for two SFP students that carry on the qualities Courtney and Michael exemplified in the Zoo School Community:

- avid learners
- reflective, critical thinkers,
- generous hearts and spirits,
- community builders within and beyond Zoo School,
- fun-loving and creative,
- pioneers.

The families of these two great friends have established scholarships in Courtney's and Michael's names, who we lost too soon in a tragic accident. We are privileged to be able to award these scholarships to two current students whom we feel carry on the qualities that Courtney and Michael exemplified in the Zoo School community. Read more about their [legacy at SFP](#).

Portfolios at SFP

The Science Focus Program conducts semester portfolios in lieu of semester final exams. A portfolio is an organized record of your academic experiences, achievements and professional development. It consists of a collection of documents which illustrate the variety and quality of work done, along with reflections on these documents and on development over time.

Research

Research Day at SFP

Each year all students at the Science Focus participate in an all-school poster session. Students prepare a scientific poster of their long term projects and present their findings to their peers. Parents are invited as well.

Senior Research Night at SFP

Senior Research Night is held in conjunction with Research Day. This is the culmination of the work students have done during their senior year. Students prepare a scientific poster of their long term

projects and present their findings to their peers. The senior capstone projects attract a wide variety of community members to observe these high level projects, including parents, business, government, and school officials.

Advisory at SFP

Learning and creating quality work is a top priority at Science Focus. Students at SFP learn how to refine and improve their skills and knowledge to become successful learners, producing high quality work. To ensure academic success, all students are assigned to an Advisory time during their Research class while at SFP. Students will work with teachers to complete assignments/projects or relearn/retest over essential objectives, thus improving overall performance in school. Our goal is for each SFP student to achieve their potential in every course they are enrolled in throughout the school year. Advisory time is typically 30 minutes every other day.

Purpose of the Science Focus Advisory Program

- To provide each student with consistent academic support
- To prepare students for postsecondary education by meeting all high school course objectives
- To encourage supportive relationships and build self-efficacy
- To provide students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in all academic environments

SFP Attendance Process

Developing and maintaining regular attendance is one of the most important steps to becoming a successful student, and is an expectation for students attending Science Focus. When a student is not in school, the possibility of learning the classroom objectives and earning credit is significantly reduced. SFP students will follow a three-tiered attendance system within our Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) program. The interventions listed below will be implemented to help students maintain good attendance. Incentives will also be awarded for students who make improvements to their current attendance patterns.

LPS Board Policy 5140 .1 places school absences into two categories: School Excused (SE) and Not School Excused (NSE). School Excused absences include those excused by a doctor or the school health office and any absence approved by school administration such as student activities, suspensions, or students currently in alternate placements. Absences that are Not School Excused and are subject to attendance interventions include Parent Acknowledged, Illness, and Truancy. The law also states that students who accumulate 20 days of Not School Excused absences in one school year may be referred to the County Attorney.

Step One Interventions - 10 days (or the hourly equivalent) of Not School Excused absences

- Generally at this point the school will hold a **Collaborative Plan Meeting. Because SFP is a program - not a school - this will involve the home attendance school.**
- An SFP Academic Contract may be considered at this time.

Step Two Interventions - 15 days (or the hourly equivalent) of Not School Excused absences

- An SFP Academic Contract may be considered at this time.

Step Three Interventions - 20 days (or the hourly equivalent) of Not School Excused absences

- At this point depending on circumstances you may refer to the County Attorney. **Because SFP is a program - not a school - this will involve the home attendance school.**
- An SFP Academic Contract may be considered at this time.

Truancy:

Students are expected to be in class during class time. Leaving the building is not permitted during instructional time or passing periods. Administrator response may vary depending on the situation from verbal warning to out of school consequence depending on number and severity of the offense.

Tardies:

Being on time to class shows respect to your teacher and classmates, and helps you succeed in class.

Science Focus Academic Expectations

Science Focus is a program that students choose to attend based on a commitment to a science-based education program where a unique community of learners is transformed through critical thinking and interaction with the world.

Academic Contract:

- A student may be considered for an Academic Contract if they are not having academic success and/or are not in regular attendance.
- Students at SFP have made the choice to attend Science Focus, and students are accepted based on potential to find success in a new environment. SFP has a limited number of spaces, so students must make use of their space at SFP by attending regularly and earning credits.
- Students with poor attendance and multiple failing grades may be placed on a Contract
- A parent/guardian meeting will be held to outline the specific expectations a student must meet to continue attending SFP.
- Students will be provided multiple supports and interventions to help students become successful.
- If a student does not meet the expectations of their contract, the student will lose their place at SFP.
- Re-admittance into the Science Focus will occur only if the student indicates a commitment to demonstrating responsible academic behaviors. A personal interview with an administrator is required before the student can be considered for readmission.

Science Focus Behavior Expectations

Important Information Booklet

This handbook is only a supplement to the LPS Important Information Booklet, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.lps.org/about/important/2024-2025/booklet/ib-eng.pdf> This Important

Information Booklet is intended to be used by students, parents and staff as a guide to the rules, regulations, and general information about Lincoln Public Schools. Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained in it. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the rules contained in this handbook.

Expectations in the Lincoln Children's Zoo

The Science Focus Program is located within the Lincoln Children's Zoo. Students experience learning through exposure to careers, natural phenomena, and the atmosphere of a world class zoo as part of our classroom. We are allowed to use the zoo as our campus, from going out individually to study or venturing out with your class to learn. The zoo is open during school hours, so we have to be on our best behavior at all times and be aware that anyone in the public may be visiting.

Students can exit into the zoo from the door by the Multipurpose Room (if that room is not in use by the Zoo at that time) or from the first floor hallway. When unaccompanied by a teacher, students must return to school by exiting out of the main gates and walking around to Door #1.

Science Focus is a Drug / Alcohol / Tobacco / Vape Free Campus

Smoking, Tobacco, and Vaping

Smoking and vaping (by students or adults) is prohibited at Science Focus, in the building or on school grounds. Students are not to have any smoking or vaping related products visible in the building or on campus.

The use and/or possession of any device or material related to smoking/vaping will result in consequences:

- Confiscation (parent/guardian will need to pick up)
- In School Suspension (served at their home attendance school)
- Out of School Suspension
- Possible referral to Student Services

Drug/Alcohol Related Offenses

When a student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol and/or in possession of illegal substances, the student may be searched as well as any of their property on this campus (including vehicle searches). The student may be referred to the Lincoln Police Department and possibly cited.

Possible Consequences

- Suspension from school
- Possible referral to Student Services
- Mandatory parent/guardian conference prior to returning
- Other interventions as determined by administration

Personal Electronic Devices and Communication

Science Focus respects instructional time and wants all students to learn, earn credits, and graduate. Students who are focused on learning are much more successful than students who are missing learning due to a device.

All personal electronic devices are expected to be powered off and put away during the instructional period (this includes cell phones, smart watches, earbuds, etc.). Personal electronic devices should not be visible or used in class. Not visible means the phone can be on the student's person, as long as the student is not using the device. Students may use their personal electronic devices before and after school, between classes, and during lunch.

If a student is accessing a personal electronic device during the instructional period, then the following sequence of consequences will be applied. Compliance at any step will prevent movement to the next step.

Step 1: The teacher will ask the student to put their personal electronic device in the designated storage location in the classroom.

Step 2: The teacher will contact the office and the device will be collected and held in the main office (or designated location) for the remainder of the day and logged as an electronic device infraction (Regulation 5420.4). If the student refuses to turn over the device, they will be removed from the classroom and escorted to the office or designated problem-solving location.

Electronic Device Logged Infractions

1st Offense: Returned to the student at the end of the school day. Offense logged.

2nd Offense: Returned to the student at the end of the school day. Offense logged. Parent/guardian notified.

3rd Offense: Return to the student at the end of the school day and a building-level in-school corrective plan developed. Parent/guardian notified. Offense logged.

If habitual non-compliance with personal electronic device restrictions leads to frequent disruptions to learning, the teacher will write a referral and the student's administrator will work with the student and family to determine a personalized plan to meet the expectation.

Additional Information: Students are encouraged to take their personal electronic device with them in the event of an evacuation as long as it results in no evacuation delay.

Recording the image or voice of another person with an electronic device, without the express permission of the person recorded, or the failure to promptly delete such a recording following the request of the person recorded violates the LPS Responsibilities of Students (Policy 5480).

If a student brings their device to class, they do so at their own risk and, in doing so, specifically agree to hold Lincoln Public Schools harmless from all liability, damages, claims, costs, expenses, or other charges of any kind or nature whatsoever resulting from bringing their device to class.

Communicating with your student during school hours

Please contact the SFP office with messages that need to get to students during the school day. Texting your student during class time directly disrupts instruction and the learning of everyone within the classroom setting. The SFP Support Staff is happy to help you and will quickly pass along messages. Thank you for your help with this matter and for protecting our instructional time.

Appropriate School Clothing

If a student's dress interrupts or distracts from classroom activities or is seen as inappropriate for the school setting, the student will not be permitted to continue wearing the clothing in school. This includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: offensive/obscene/vulgar; hate speech; reference to or advertises drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; threatens safety; gang symbols; guns/weapons/violence. Clothing must cover all private parts and undergarments. The administration will be the judge of appropriate apparel. Students wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to turn the items inside out or change clothing. There are times that students will be outdoors and expectations for dressing appropriately will be communicated in advance.

Student IDs

Students will use their ID to scan into the building. New IDs can be reprinted at the home high school for a fee.

Mental and Behavioral Health Point of Contact

<https://home.lps.org/socialworkers/mental-behavioral-health-points-of-contact/>

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

- The building opens at 8:00 a.m.
- Class begins at 10:10 a.m.
- Students will be allowed to enter the building upon arrival.
- Students must enter the building through Door 1 (Main entrance through the Main Office).
- Students must scan their student ID each morning at the Student Check-In Center in the vestibule.

Dismissal

- Students are dismissed from the building at 3:00 p.m.
- Students should go home without delay, unless participating in an activity.
- The building closes at 4:00 p.m., and students not participating in a club or activity, should be off school grounds.

Note: Students waiting for rides after 3:30 p.m. are expected to wait in the office. There are three reasons for this expectation:

- 1) Supervision is only provided outside until 3:30.
- 2) Parents will know where their students are located.
- 3) During cold or inclement weather, this is a warm and dry location.

Dismissal from school during the school day

Students are required to check out in the main office when leaving the campus for any reason before the end of their scheduled day. Parental notification is required for all students under 19. If a student is dismissed due to illness, he/she must be seen in the office prior to exiting and a parent will be contacted.

Bell Schedule

Science Focus Bell Schedule	
*Block	Time
A1/B1	10:10–11:35
A2/B2	11:40–1:05
LUNCH	1:05–1:35
A3/B3	1:35–3:00

SFP runs an alternating block schedule. The week type (A or B) can be determined from the Friday newsletter or by calling the office:

A Week - MWF = A days, TR = B days

B Week - MWF = B days, TR = A days

Lunch

Students will either bring their lunch, purchase lunch from the Zoo Cafe, or pre-order school hot lunch for the following week. Students will be allowed to eat lunch in the halls, commons, Multipurpose Room or outside, including the zoo. When finished, they will be allowed to spend the remainder of their lunch period in these same areas or going out into the zoo.

Students in 9th and 10th grade are required to stay on campus for lunch.

Consequences for students in 9th/10th grade leaving campus during lunch, or for all students returning late from lunch.

- 1st Offense- Verbal Warning
- 2nd Offense- Verbal Warning/ Parent Phone Call
- 3rd Offense- Lunch Detention / Parent Phone Call
- 4th Offense- Lunch Detention / Parent Phone Call
- 5th Offense- Day of ISS at Home Attendance School / Parent Phone Call
- 6th Offense - Day of OSS / Parent Meeting
- Continued Issue- OSS and Possible Referral to LPS Student Services