



PODER Academy Student & Family Handbook

2019/2020 School Year
(revised 4-25-19)

PODER Academy
2201 Morrie Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82001

Table of Contents

Mission.....	2
Philosophy.....	2
Attendance.....	2
Tardiness.....	3
Homework.....	4
Independent Reading.....	4
Make-up Work.....	5
Cell Phones.....	5
Communication: A School & Family Partnership.....	5
Promotion to the Next Grade.....	7
Student Discipline.....	7
Suspension / Expulsion.....	8
Code of Conduct.....	8
Hours of Operation.....	10
Lost and Found.....	10
Messages / Voicemail.....	10
Nursing Services & Medication.....	10
Parent Custody.....	11
School Calendar & Closings.....	11
School Lunch Program.....	11
School Visitor Policy.....	11
Student Records.....	12
School Uniforms.....	12
Grievance Policy.....	13
Board of Directors.....	14
Parent Advisory Committee.....	14
Tennis.....	14
Chess.....	15
Transportation.....	15
School Supplies.....	15
Family Contract.....	16

The Mission

PODER Academy is a public charter school with one mission: To prepare students for college and beyond, through rigorous academic and athletic programs. We go above and beyond the traditional school model to give students what they need to gain acceptance to, and to graduate from, a competitive four-year college.

Students as young as kindergarten age will learn how to maintain good study habits, manage their time, and recognize the appropriate time and place for certain behavior. Accordingly, each party involved, from the parents, to the school, to the students, will be held accountable for some aspect of the overall mission.

The Philosophy

We believe the road to college begins in the early days of elementary where students develop the work ethic and discipline needed to achieve academic success. High expectations are set from day one and we dismiss the notion that “college isn’t for everyone.” We adhere to an unwavering belief that all students regardless of their incoming academic performance, socio-economic status, or native language, are capable of being excellent scholars and athletes, and have the potential to succeed in college...and beyond.

Our educational philosophy consists of five primary components:

- Mastering the Opportunity to Learn by Focusing on Literacy
- Implementing a Rigorous Curriculum in the Core Subjects of Reading, Writing & Math
- Preparing for Collegiate Success by Developing Tools for Advanced Work
- Improving Academic Performance by Providing a Structured Learning Environment
- Implementing a Culture of Success by Instilling a Foundation of Strong Values

Attendance

Attendance is the most basic requirement for academic success. Parents will be held accountable to adhere to the PODER Academy attendance policy in order to ensure that students are getting the classroom hours they need to succeed. Regular attendance is required and poor attendance will not be tolerated.

Parents are expected to ensure that students are at school every day, on time, and in school-issued uniform. Every effort should be made to schedule appointments after-school hours or on days when school is not in session.¹ Any student with five (5) or more unexcused absences in one school year will be considered “habitually truant” as defined by Wyoming Statutory Law.

¹ In this handbook, all references to “parents” include non-parent guardians and custodians. At PODER, guardians and custodians carry the same rights and responsibilities as parents.

Absences *will only* be excused for medical emergencies related to the student and/or immediate family members, (i.e. parents or siblings) or for extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student/parent. All absences must be excused by the Principal. Any absences that are not excused by the Principal will be considered unexcused.

The Principal reserves the right to request a doctor's note and/or any other documentation for verification purposes.

Absences due to Suspension:

Suspensions should be extremely rare at PODER Academy. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall be considered excused absences and will not be included in the count for habitual truancy per Wyoming statute.

Appointments and Early Pick-up:

Students are expected to stay in school until the very end of the day (4:00pm for regular dismissal). It is very disruptive to the learning environment when students leave school early. Therefore, students who leave early on multiple occasions without prior approval from the Principal will receive a call home to see if the issue can be resolved. If the issue persists, the Principal reserves the right to mark any and all such early departures as an unexcused absence.

Attendance Policy Procedure:

PODER Academy maintains attendance records for all students. If a student misses school, the school staff will contact the parent by telephone, writing, or in person to inquire as to the reason. After the *third* unexcused absence, the Principle will schedule a conference with the parents to discuss attendance issues. After the *fifth* unexcused absence, the Principal will notify the District Attorney who shall then initiate proceedings in the interest of the child under the Juvenile Court Act.

Mandatory Tutoring:

If a student is in need of tutoring, parents **will be** obligated to ensure that their student is in attendance. Most tutoring is held directly after school so parents are expected to arrange for pickup at 5:00pm. However, some tutoring is mandatory for select students over winter break, summer break, and weekends. Students who do not comply with mandatory tutoring schedules may be held back in grade at the discretion of the Principal.

Tardiness

Getting to school on time is a key to academic success. Students who arrive late will likely miss academic instruction, disrupt the classroom, and distract other students. Statistically speaking, tardiness is one of the most common reasons why people lose their jobs in the workforce. Accordingly, we seek to promote professionalism as part of our overall mission to prepare students for the road to college.

Definition of Tardiness:

Students must arrive between **7:40am and 8:00am** every morning. Students arriving after 8:00am will be considered tardy. If a student is late to school, the parents must come in the front office and sign him/her in. Otherwise the student may be marked as absent.

Consequences for Tardiness:

Every **three (3) unexcused tardies** will equal one unexcused absence and will be recorded as such in the student's file. The Principal will call the student's parent to discuss the problem and develop a corrective plan. Excessive tardies coupled with unsatisfactory academic performance may lead to mandatory tutoring at the discretion of the Principal.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the school's educational program. It is designed to reinforce the skills that students learn in the classroom and to promote good study habits. Students should expect to spend at least 30 minutes on homework every night. Parents will be held accountable to help ensure that homework is neat, clean, and thorough.

Students will be asked to use their free time (i.e. lunch recess) to complete any homework and/or weekly assessments that are late, missing, incomplete, or lacking in effort. Moreover, students may also lose in-school privileges if they do not come prepared with all the necessary books and supplies. **Excuses made on behalf of the parent will not excuse students from this obligation.**

In addition, every student is required to spend at least 20 minutes reading every night, including weekends and holidays. **Reading Logs** will be sent home every day and must be returned with a parent signature to verify that the reading requirement was met and supervised.

Reading Logs will be included in the student's Homework Folder. Homework Folders are designed to help each student develop a sense of organization. All assigned homework must be completed and placed in this folder along with the Reading Log. Homework folders will go home with the student every day, and will be collected by teachers every morning.

Independent Reading

Research has shown that the #1 way to improve on reading skills is to READ, READ, READ. The students who read frequently outside of the school will perform higher on reading tests, and will generally score higher in non-reading classes as well. Supporting your student's independent reading at home is the #1 way to help him/her improve speed, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Although PODER students will have high-quality reading time during school, they must READ, READ, READ at home every night, weekend, and during vacations. Parents should make sure to supervise their student's reading for at least 20 minutes every night, including on weekends and holidays. It would be especially helpful to your student's development if you ask him/ her to read out loud and then take breaks to summarize what he /she has just read. Then

ask them to answer simple comprehension questions. Please do not sign your student's independent reading log if you have not actually seen him/ her read. You and your student may be tempted to cut corners, but skipping this important reading requirement will only hurt your student in the long run. READ, READ, READ. There are simply no short cuts.

Make-Up Work

After returning from an absence, students are expected to promptly complete any missed assignments. The time generally allowed to complete this work will be the number of days the student was absent, except in the case of an extended illness. For example, if a student was absent for one day, then he or she will have one day to make up any missed work.

In the event of a planned absence, parents should notify the student's teachers several days in advance so that they can prepare a packet of work for the student to complete during the absence. Again, absences from school directly hurt a student's academic progress. A student should only be absent in the case of a serious illness, family emergencies, and other unavoidable conflicts.

Cell Phones

Students are not allowed to use cell phones in school or on school field trips or excursions, unless otherwise approved by school personnel. If a cell phone is found on the premises during school hours, it will be confiscated and held by the Principal or Office Manager until the parent comes to the school to pick it up. Students will be able to make phone calls when necessary using the front office phone.

The school is not responsible for any incidents that arise due to social media usage outside of school hours. Parents frequently report cyber-bullying between students that occurs outside of school, and then request that the school issue a punishment. The school is not obligated to honor any such request.

Communication – A School and Family Partnership

Academic success for each student will require an effective partnership between the school and the parents. Accordingly, every parent must commit themselves to becoming partners in the education of their student. The first step of this commitment is to understand, and to sign-off on the *PODER Family contract*. The contract outlines the required commitment for parents, students, and teachers. Parents and students should expect to go beyond the minimum duties identified in the contract. If you have any questions or concerns about this commitment, it is important that you address those questions or concerns with the Principal before the school year begins or as soon as possible. A copy of the contract is included at the end of this handbook.

Communication is an integral element for an effective partnership. There are several ways that the school will communicate with parents throughout the year:

- **Thursday Folder:** Every Thursday, your student will bring home a weekly update from the school. This will contain important information about the schedule/calendar, events, announcements, field trips, and other important reminders. It is very important that you take the time to read the Thursday folder in its entirety.
- **Teacher Phone Calls:** When necessary and appropriate, teachers will speak with each of their students' parents over the phone to describe how the student is progressing.
- **Report Card Conferences:** At the end of each quarter, parents will be required to come to the school for Report Card conferences with their student's teachers. Parents will receive a written Report Card at the conference. These are important opportunities for parents to learn about their student's progress and needs. Participation by parents at Report Card conferences is required.
- **Behavior Alert / Academic Alert:** If your student is experiencing a behavior or academic problem, PODER will send home a written notice. Parents should make sure to review the concerns outlined in the letter with their student. PODER asks parents to acknowledge receipt of the notice by signing and returning to the school an acknowledgement form. Parents should contact the school if they have any questions or wish to discuss the issue.
- **Meetings:** The school may request a meeting with you and your student to discuss a behavior or academic issue that needs to be resolved. If you would like to schedule a meeting with a teacher or administrator, please contact them directly.
- **Visits:** If you wish to visit the school, please see the School Visitor Policy discussed below.
- **Parent Concerns:** PODER has an open door policy and it welcomes comments and questions from parents or anyone else in the community. If you have a question, concern, or suggestion relating to school policy, academic grades, discipline decisions, or anything else, we invite you to schedule a meeting with your student's teacher, or any member of the Administrative team, as appropriate.

Grievance Policy

PODER Academy has adopted a **Grievance Policy** by which all parents and/or members of the community should adhere to. (The Grievance Policy is discussed further below.) It is understood that parents will have strong opinions about issues concerning the students. However, it is an expectation that parents will express these opinions in a professional and respectful manner. If a parent is disrespectful to a teacher or administrator, the conversation will be cut short and continued at a later time.

Promotion to the Next Grade

PODER Academy maintains high standards for academic promotion. Neither parents nor students should assume that a student will pass from one grade to the next. The student must earn promotion by demonstrating mastery over the required academic content. Promotion decisions are based on student grades, standardized test scores, attendance, and homework completion records among other measures.

Generally speaking, in order to be promoted to the next grade, students must demonstrate proficiency and have a final grade of 80% or higher in each of the core skill classes: Reading, Writing, and Math. A student may not be promoted if he/she is performing significantly below grade-level standards. We will look thoughtfully at student test scores, examples of student work, teacher observations, and other measures, including attendance and behavior, to make these decisions. Special Education students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be held to the same standards as the rest of the students, but will be promoted to the next grade based on successful completion of the goals outlined in their IEP, in conjunction with PODER Academy standards. Students with IEPs who have significant attendance or behavioral problems unrelated to their IEPs may be retained for these reasons.

Student Discipline

We believe the road to college begins in the early days of elementary where students develop the work ethic and discipline needed to achieve academic success. High expectations are set from day one and reinforced through an intricate system of rewards and penalties. Every aspect of the day is well structured in order to maximize efficiency. Teachers are trained to ‘sweat the small stuff’ and to rectify any disruptive behavior at its root.

Students are prohibited from talking and/or wandering in the hallways, and bathroom breaks are monitored closely. This serves to minimize the excessive ‘horse play’ that can often lead to bullying. Students may lose various privileges such as recess, La Junta, field trips, or other social events for violations to the Code of Conduct (discussed below), while students who exemplify model behavior are given a variety of privileges, and are recognized at an assembly held each week. A strong and demanding school culture lies at the heart of our method and is a central ingredient to our success.

The staff at PODER Academy is trained to use a problem solving approach with regard to discipline. Suspension is not a preferred method of handling behavior issues and the school will only do so after other options have been exhausted. However, the Principal will have the final authority on all disciplinary issues including suspension/expulsion.

The policy with regard to **seclusion and restraint** shall follow LCSD #1 Board policy. Students do not have an expectation of privacy with regard to their desks and/or backpacks. Therefore, school officials reserve the right to search these areas should a safety concerns arise, or suspicion of possession of prohibited items and/or substances. Whenever possible, the student may be present during the inspection of backpacks or lockers.

Suspension / Expulsion

When the Principal receives information or allegations of misconduct that he determines to grounds for suspension, he will immediately notify the student involved and the parent/guardian of the student via telephone. The Principal will specify the nature of the information and why it is considered grounds for suspension. The student will then have an opportunity to be heard if he/she so opts for one before the suspension is finalized. Within twenty-four hours, the Principal will give a written notice of suspension to the parent/guardian of the student involved.

The Principal may suspend a student for a period exceeding ten school days or expel a student for a period not to exceed one year, provided the student is afforded an opportunity for a hearing in accordance with the procedures of the Wyoming Administrative Procedure Act.

The procedure for suspension and/or expulsion will follow 21-4-305 and 306 of the Wyoming Statutory Law.

Suspension/expulsion of Students with a Disability

Students with a disability according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 enrolled in District programs may be suspended or expelled in the same manner and for the same reasons as other students provided all District, state, and federal requirements are met prior to imposing the suspension or expulsion. The school will defer to LCSD 1 Board policy with regard to the procedure and specific provisions relevant to this policy.

Code of Conduct

The following *Code of Conduct* will set forth, in explicit terms, the bounds of acceptable behavior at PODER Academy. Students shall adhere to all expectations and exhibit a sense of pride and professionalism that will carry forward to college and beyond.

The *Code of Conduct* was designed to ensure student safety at all times, and to limit distractions so teachers and students can focus on what is important, and that is preparing for college. Parents will be advised and held responsible for knowing the school's *Code of Conduct*, and it should be understood that parental reinforcement of school policies and values are a necessary part of the overall mission.

The following rules will outline the basic expectation for student behavior both in and out of the classroom but is by no means all encompassing:

Rules:

- 1. Disrespectful and/or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.**
- 2. Students shall not disrespect teachers, students, or school property.**
- 3. Students must arrive at school in school-issues uniform every day.**
- 4. Students shall not arrive late to school.**
- 5. Chewing gum is not permitted on school grounds.**
- 6. Students may not chew gum, eat, or drink anything other than water during class, unless otherwise approved by school personnel.**
- 7. Students shall not bring headphones, cell phones, gaming devices, or any other electronic devices to school, unless otherwise approved by school personnel.**
- 8. Students must always come prepared for class.**
- 9. No excessive horseplay, play-fighting, or inappropriate touching of other students will be permitted.**
- 10. The use of profane or otherwise inappropriate language will not be permitted.**
- 11. Stealing will not be permitted.**
- 12. Students shall not leave school grounds for any reason without adult supervision.**
- 13. No possession of weapons on school grounds will be permitted.**
- 14. No fighting, violence, or threats of violence will be permitted.**
- 15. No possession or sale of any drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substance will be permitted.**
- 16. No harassment of any form will be permitted including that of a racial or sexual nature.**
- 17. Students must attend any mandatory detention or make up for any time missed.**

Depending on the nature and circumstances of each infraction, a student may be subjected to a range of disciplinary action including a loss of in-school privileges (i.e. recess), required after-school detention, weekend detention, and/or immediate out-of-school suspension and possible expulsion.

Parents of students who are repeatedly disruptive may be requested to sit in on the student's class, meet with the administrative team, and/or take the student home early. Any student declared to be "Habitually Disruptive" due to three (3) or more suspensions from school, may face an expulsion hearing.

Hours of Operation

Hours of operation are from 8:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Students are required to arrive at school on time and to remain in school until dismissal at 4:00 P.M. Mandatory tutoring sessions will be held on various days after-school, on weekends, or during breaks if necessary. All parents or visitors of the school must adhere to the visitor policy described below. Any member of the administrative team reserves the right to restrict entry for safety reasons.

Lost and Found

The school will keep a small lost and found box near the main office. Parents may come in any day between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. to search the Lost and Found. At the end of every quarter, items left in the box may be donated to a local charity.

Messages / Voicemail

Messages and calls to teachers and students during the school day are discouraged except in cases of emergencies. If you have an emergency, and need to get a message to your student or his/her teacher, please call the front office. The front office will then relay the message to the intended teacher(s) as soon as reasonably possible.

Nursing Services & Medication

PODER Academy will offer a limited range of nursing services for students, and will defer all other medical issues to the district nurse, or to the parents. Parents will be notified of any cause for concern, as determined by school personnel, and are expected to promptly communicate with the school about any medical conditions the student may have.

In the event of an emergency, the school will first contact the paramedics before contacting the parents.

School personnel will not be permitted to administer medication of any kind without approval from the parent, who must first complete an "Administration of Medication" form as required by the State Health Department. This policy applies to all medicine, including aspirin, Tylenol,

and other over-the-counter medicines. All student medicines will be kept in a locked cabinet. The school will keep a detailed log of all medicines that are administered by the school's staff. All policies not covered in this section with regard to health and safety of students will align with the LCSD 1 Board policy, including provisions with regard to *mandatory immunizations*.

Parent Custody

Schools across the country have increasingly found themselves in the middle of custody disputes. However, schools are not in the legal position, nor are they the appropriate place, to decide what parent should have custody, and when. Accordingly, PODER will assume that both parents have a legal right to pick up a student unless the school has received a court order that stipulates otherwise. The school will not assume any duty to comply with parent demands to the contrary without a court order.

School Calendar / School Closings

Please see the PODER Academic Calendar for the scheduled school days for the academic year. A calendar will be provided during registration and is also available on the school's website (www.poderacademy.com). Please note that we do not follow a traditional calendar. Be sure to review PODER's calendar carefully and contact the school if you have any questions.

PODER will generally defer to the Laramie County School District 1 with regard to school delays and closings although P.A.S.S. reserves final authority in this regard. If the school determines it necessary to close, announcements will be sent out via text and email (on file) and Facebook. Parents may also call the school's main telephone number: (307) 632-2248.

School Lunch Program

Both breakfast and lunch will be available at PODER. The federal government will provide funding so that students who qualify for assistance can enjoy breakfast and lunch for free, or at a reduced price. To participate in this program, you will need to complete a form online that the school will provide to you. If your student does not qualify for the program, the school will contact you to arrange for payment of school meals.

Parents may also send a lunch to school with their student. If you are sending lunch to school with your student, we ask that you send nutritious foods. Please do not let your student bring unhealthy drinks (e.g., colas or juices heavy in sugar) or unhealthy snacks to school. The school lunch menu can be found on the school's website.

School Visitor Policy

Visitors and parents are a vital part of the school community and all volunteers, observers, and partners are welcome. However, unannounced visits can be disruptive to the educational program and also pose **safety risks** so they are generally not permitted. Parents who would like to visit should call at least one day in advance to schedule a class-visit. The school

Administrative team reserves the right to deny and/or limit visitor requests, and it reserves the right to schedule visits for certain dates and times as appropriate.

Upon arriving, all visitors must sign in at the Main Office and any disruptive visitors may be asked to leave. If a visitor is coming to school to drop something off for a student or to leave a message, the visitor must first check in at the main office.

PODER is a closed campus for the sake of student safety. Accordingly, unannounced, unscheduled, and unauthorized visitors are simply not permitted to enter the facility. Parents or other members of the community will not be allowed to enter the building until 8:00am during the week unless otherwise permitted by the Principal.

Student Records

The school Administrative team is in charge of student record keeping and will manage access in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”), and all relevant Wyoming public records statutes. FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and provides certain rights to parents of students who are under the age of 18.

Pursuant to FERPA, the school administration may discuss, explain, and/or make available to the student or his/her parents any “education record” on file. If a parent would like to examine a student’s record, the parent should submit a request in writing to the Principal. Within a reasonable time, the parent will be allowed to inspect the file and request a copy of some or all of the information contained in the record. There are two different types of student education records and each type is treated differently:

Directory Information: Directory Information is basic information about students such as name, address, telephone number, date of birth, participation in activities, awards received, etc. This information may be made available to non-parents for certain, specific uses without the consent of the student or parent. For example, teachers may distribute class lists to everyone in the class so that students may communicate between themselves outside the school. If a parent wants to prevent such information from being disclosed, he or she should submit a request in writing to the Principal.

Confidential Records: Confidential Records include grades, evaluations, disciplinary actions, and health records. Confidential records will not be made available to any person outside of PODER without the written consent of the parent.

School Uniforms

All students must come to school in school-issued uniform every day. If a student arrives at school and is out of uniform, parents will be called and asked to bring in a uniform before the student is sent to class. There is a required school uniform for the following key reasons:

1. **Uniforms unite PODER as a community.** The school uniform is a visual representation of our school community, and the virtues and expectations that students are expected to live up to.
2. **Uniforms reduce distractions and clothing competition.** In schools that do not require uniforms, students often focus more on what others are wearing, or not wearing, and this can become a major distraction. Uniforms eliminate this distraction.
3. **Uniforms instill equality.** Students come to school dressed in the same manner, so no one is made to feel different or bad about the clothes they have, or don't have.
4. **Uniforms look professional.** The uniforms are neat and professional, so students come "dressed for work" and are mentally prepared for the day ahead.

Students may not change out of uniform at any point during the school day. Students must wear the school-issued uniform on all school field trips and excursions.

A complete listing of all approved uniform items can be found in the front office. The school will add various items every year from which parents and students can choose from. Prices for each item are set merely to recover the cost of purchase, shipping and handling.

PODER is a tennis academy and students will be active, so tennis shoes are required. Students are also required to wear socks or leggings at all times. Every effort should be made to eliminate unnecessary accessories such as bracelets, earrings, necklaces, because they get lost easily and create distraction.

Parents may purchase all uniform items at the school office between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M daily. Uniforms must be paid for by cash or money order. The school does not accept personal checks or credit cards. There is a No Return policy.

Grievance Policy

The school is committed to addressing all issues of concern in the most judicious and efficient manner possible. Accordingly, parents and community members are asked to follow the grievance process outlined below:

- **Step 1:** If you have a concern that relates specifically to someone else in the PODER community, we ask that you attempt to resolve the issue by communicating directly with the person who is the subject of that concern.
- **Step 2:** If Step 1 is unsuccessful, or if you have an issue of concern related to curriculum, grades, or teacher conduct, we ask that you schedule a meeting with the Principal to address the concern.
- **Step 3:** If Step 2 is unsuccessful, or if you have an issue of concern other than curriculum, grades or teacher conduct, we ask that you schedule a meeting with the Chief Operations Officer and Chief Executive Officer, who will then address the concern jointly.

- **Step 4:** If Step 3 is unsuccessful, you may address the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees requests that you submit your concern in writing to the Main Office at least 7 days prior to the next Board of Trustees meeting. This will ensure that your concern will be placed on the agenda for the upcoming meeting. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will determine the manner by which issues of concern will be addressed during the Board meeting. Any decision rendered by the Board of Trustees will be final and binding.

Board of Directors

Members of the Board of Directors are nominated by the CEO and approved by other sitting board members. The Board of Directors will maintain oversight over the school's budget and governance policies, and will ensure that the school is aligned with the Mission Statement. Furthermore, the Board will ensure that the school operates in compliance with all applicable state and district policies. The specific role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors are described in the By-Laws. The Board of Directors meets every two months usually after school hours. The school community and general public are invited to attend the board meetings. Notices and agendas for each Board Meeting are posted at the school and on its website.

Parent Advisory Committee

The Parent Advisory Committee will provide support to the school in a variety of ways, including the coordination of fundraising activities, community outreach and social events. This committee will provide a parent perspective, and will seek out ways to enrich the overall school community. They will meet once a month, and everyone is invited to attend.

Tennis

Research has shown that tennis can increase physical fitness as well as mental capacity. We also believe that specialization is the key to success. Therefore, students at PODER Academy will train all year around with a specialized tennis instructor as part of their school day.

The majority of classes will be held outside, so students will be exposed to a wide range of conditions from sunny and hot days, to frigid and windy days. Therefore, students must come to school prepared for the elements. Gloves, long sleeve PODER shirts, jackets, wool caps, ear warmers, PODER pants, and scarves are encouraged when the weather is cold. Sunglasses, sunscreen, short sleeve PODER shirts, hats, and PODER shorts are encouraged when weather is hot. The tennis instructor will make a determination as to whether each student is dressed appropriately for the weather. Students deemed unprepared will not participate in tennis and will go to chess instead.

Students will be using rackets that can lead to injury if not used properly. Therefore, every student is required to follow all instructions and abide by all court rules set by the tennis

instructor. Students who do not comply after a warning has been given may be barred from the tennis court until the school determines the student is fit to return.

Tennis shoes will be required at all times. Students without tennis shoes may be barred from participation at the discretion of the tennis instructor.

Chess

Chess players are masters of strategic thinking, and are trained to think several moves ahead. It requires intense focus, discipline, critical thinking and determination. We believe these qualities go hand-in-hand with academic success, and serve to give students the mental edge needed to compete in high school and college.

Students will be required to remain alert at all times and behave appropriately. Any students who cause disruption or misuse any of the chess pieces will be given a warning, and then sent to meet with the Principal if the problem persists.

Transportation

Transportation will be provided for students in need via school bus through the Laramie 1 School District. Student riders must abide by all district rules of conduct while on the bus. The LCSD #1 assumes authority over all behavior issues while on the bus and reserves the right to remove any student from the bus for a specified amount of time or indefinitely. Bus drivers will notify parents of any issues and will also notify the Principal.

The school will do its best to ensure that bus stops are placed in locations that are convenient for as many parents as possible. However, there are no guarantees as to the proximity of each stop to individual student homes, and parents will ultimately be responsible to make arrangements to get students to and from the bus stop safely. The school does not assume liability for students who walk to and from the bus stop independently.

The school does not assume liability for student prior to their arrival inside of the school. Nor does the school assume liability for students after they leave school grounds upon dismissal. Bus drivers will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all students who exit the bus are accounted for. Students who are not accounted for will remain on the bus and brought back to the school until arrangements are made for pick-up.

School Supplies

Students will be given a list of required school supplies to buy at the beginning of the school year. Please keep in mind that a designated portion of these supplies are dealt with as donations and are integrated into the school's general inventory. **Therefore, we are unable to return designated supplies should a student withdraw after the start of the school year.**



2201 Morrie Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 632-2248
www.poderacademy.com

Student / Family Contract

PODER Academy is a high performing college prep academy. It is also a school-of-choice with expectations that may differ from LCSD #1 schools. The following items are not subject to negotiation. Therefore, it is important that parents and students understand these expectations, and voice any concerns or questions prior to their first day at school.

The following contract is not a legal document, but rather a fair notice as to what the school requires in order to meet its commitment to prepare each student for college and beyond.

Parent Commitment

- **Emergency contact** – Parents must keep an updated and working cell phone number with the front office.
- **Absences** – The school can not honor its commitment if the students are not in school. Therefore, parents will be held accountable for excessive unexcused absences.
- **Disruptive Behavior** – Academic success is a two way street and does not rest solely on the school. Therefore, parents may be required to sit with their student at school if they are repeatedly disruptive.
- **Saturday / After-school detention** – Parents are required to sit with their student should they earn after-school and/or Saturday detention. If they are unable to attend, a designated guardian must attend in their place.
- **Custody disputes** – The school is not in a legal position to decide what parent should have custody. Accordingly, the school will not assume any duty to comply with parent demands without a court order that says otherwise.
- **Late student pick-up** – If a parent or designated guardian has not arrived for pickup by 5:30pm (1:30pm on early dismissal days), the school reserves the right to arrange for transport to a waiting facility at the Sheriff's office.
- **Cell phones** – Student cell phones are strictly prohibited at PODER. Phones must be left in backpacks. Any phones that are confiscated will be held at the front office for parent pick-up at dismissal.

- **Social media** – The school can not regulate student social media usage outside of school hours, nor will the school issue a punishment for bullying or inappropriate activity that occurs outside of school.
- **Thursday Folder** – Parents often express frustration that they do not get information from the school that was actually sent home in the Thursday folder. Therefore, parents are expected to read the Thursday folder which is sent home with each student and posted on the school’s website.
- **Homework** – Students should expect to have roughly 1 hour of homework / reading per night. Parents are expected to help monitor and ensure that students are completing their homework and reading log.
- **Visitor Policy** – Unfortunately, schools across the country have been forced to increase building security due to an increase in violence. Accordingly, parents are welcome to sit with their child, but must get prior approval from the Principal. All visitors must sign at the front desk.
- **Unruly parents** – Any parent who becomes aggressive, fails to follow the building rules, and/or poses any perceived danger as determined by the school’s staff, shall have their rights to enter the building and/or property revoked. The school has developed a relationship with local law enforcement that can arrive at the school on moment’s notice.
- **Communication** – The parents, teachers, and staff, are on the same team. There is no need to verbally attack and/or yell at a teacher or staff member. Conversations must remain civil at all times, especially in front of students.

Student commitment

- **Classroom** – Students should not talk over teachers, have conversations while the teacher is speaking, or create disruptions. If a teacher or staff member says “no”...that means no.
- **Self-Responsibility** – Students should not blame others or make the excuse that “everyone else was doing it too.” Take responsibility for your own actions and own up.
- **Dishonesty** – Lying, fabricating, exaggerating will not be tolerated and dishonesty will only make the consequences worse.
- **Bathroom Breaks** – Abuse of bathroom privileges will not be tolerated. This means taking an excessive amount of time and/or engaging in activity that is against the rules.
- **Student Property** – Students must keep their hands out of others belongings.

- **Respect for Teachers** – Students will not always ‘gel’ with every teacher. This is also true at the college level. So tension with a teacher will not excuse bad behavior.
- **Public Display of Affection** – There is a time and place for dating activities. During school hours is not one of them. Students will be held to the same professional standard of conduct that employees are.
- **Uniforms** – Students must arrive in school-issued uniform with no exceptions.
- **Facility rules** – Gum is not allowed anywhere on campus. Students are not permitted to eat or drink anything other than water, unless authorized by a teacher or a staff member.
- **Computer usage** – Internet and computer usage can be revoked at any time for misuse.
- **Code of Conduct** – All students must read and understand the PODER Code of Conduct.
- **Homework** – Student should expect at least an hour of homework / reading every night. It is the student’s responsibility to get this done.
- **Eye witness** – Students must report any bullying, self-harm, or harassment to a school staff member as soon as possible

PODER Commitment

- Teachers and staff will arrive on time & prepared to conduct classes in a professional manner.
- The school will monitor all homework and notify parents when homework is not complete.
- The school will make every effort to ensure that students are engaged and progressing.
- The school will enforce all classroom rules and school policies consistently and fairly.
- The school will communicate with parents/guardians of students with reasonable frequency and provide both positive and negative feedback.
- The school will maintain the highest standards of academic performance and student behavior.
- The school will do its part to ensure that PODER is a safe environment for all students and other community members.
- The school will notify the appropriate party (i.e. parents, DFS, police) if there is a belief that a student is in physical danger or is being subject to neglect or abuse of any kind.



2201 Morrie Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 632-2248
www.poderacademy.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THIS IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT BOTH STUDENT AND PARENT HAVE READ THE STUDENT / FAMILY CONTRACT, HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IT, AND UNDERSTAND IT.

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date