

FAQs for Incoming Freshmen Families

When does the 2021-2022 school year start?

- [Here](#) is the 2021-2022 EDUHSD student calendar.
 - The first day of school is Monday, August 9, 2021.
 - The last day of school is Friday, May 27, 2022.
 - Please note various non-school days and holidays.
- Please plan vacations accordingly. For example, Fall final exam week begins December 13, and the Spring final exam week begins May 23. Students will be expected to attend final exams during the designated final exam period.

What is the PHS Bell Schedule?

- [Here](#) is the PHS Bell Schedule.

Is there a map of the PHS campus?

- [Here](#) is the PHS campus map.

When can I create a Parent Portal in Aeries?

- Important information about creating your parent account in Aeries will be mailed to your home sometime between late July early August
- If you do not receive a letter in the mail by the time school starts, please contact [Mindy Smith](#) in the counseling office.

How does Ponderosa High School communicate with the learning community, and how do I sign up?

- Ponderosa High School uses Parent Square as the platform for communication.
- Once an Aeries Parent Portal is created, the parent/guardian will need to add oneself as a contact in the Contact section in Aeries (making sure to include the email) and designate Y under “Lives With.”
- Once this step is completed, an invite will be sent to the email provided within 24 hours. You may need to check your junk/spam mailbox.

What is the difference between Parent Square and Parent Portal?

- Parent Square is the communication system used by Ponderosa High School to get important messages to PHS families; which includes school-wide announcements, attendance notifications, and upcoming events. Parent Square pulls your contact information from your Aeries Parent Portal. Therefore, you MUST create an Aeries Parent Portal and input your correct information in your Contact screen to be automatically enrolled in Parent Square.

How can I check my student's grades and/or attendance?

- Once you have created your Aeries Parent Portal, you will have access to your student's grades, missing assignments, and attendance. Ponderosa does not mail out report cards.

How can I communicate with my student's teacher(s) or counselor?

- In your Aeries Parent Portal in the “Classes” screen, you will find a direct link to all the email addresses of your student's teachers. Also, be sure to check the PHS webpage for [Teacher websites](#).
- The [Counseling](#) section of the PHS webpage is an excellent resource for finding out who your student's counselor is and how to contact them. We have four counselors at PHS, and students are broken down and assigned by alphabet.

Are all students issued lockers at Ponderosa High School?

- Not all students are issued lockers. We have more students than lockers; therefore, distribution to incoming freshmen is a lottery. If there is no locker assigned on your student's schedule, they can put their name on the Locker Request list in the counseling office during the first week of school.

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What are the graduation requirements for the El Dorado Union High School District (and, therefore, Ponderosa High School)?

- Page 7 of the [EDUHSD Course Directory](#) outlines the graduation requirements.
- The EDUHSD course directory offers course descriptions of all courses offered in the district. Be sure to double-check if the particular course your student is interested in is offered at PHS. [Here](#) is some helpful information comparing high school graduation credits with college requirements.

Is a Language Other Than English (LOTE) a graduation requirement?

- Contrary to what you might think, a LOTE is not required to graduate from Ponderosa High School. Students graduate from PHS each year who have never taken a foreign language (we offer Spanish and French).
- However...two years of the same LOTE are required for most universities to be eligible for admission. The UC/CSU systems, for example, require two years of the same LOTE as a minimum eligibility requirement.

Which level English should my incoming ninth-grader take?

- Ponderosa High School offers two English classes for incoming freshman: English 1 and Advanced English 1. Both courses are college preparatory and accepted by UC/CSU for college admission.
- Middle school English teachers make recommendations about the best fit English class based on current mastery of skills and anticipated skills needed.

If my student takes English 1 as a freshman, is Advanced English 2 available for my student during their sophomore year?

- Yes, students who take English 1 their freshman year may take Advanced English 2 their sophomore year if they maintained an A in English 1.

Is there a flowchart for PHS mathematics?

- [Here](#) is the flowchart for the PHS Math department

What is the difference between ICT Foundations and ECS?

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Foundations is a semester class (either Fall or Spring) and combined with Health during the other semester. Both classes are EDUHSD graduation requirements.
- Exploring Computer Science (ECS) is a yearlong class, which also meets the EDUHSD graduation requirement. This class would be in place of ICT Foundations and is the first class in the Computer Science pathway. Students who request this class must still take Health to meet the graduation requirement.
- [Here](#) is the EDUHSD course directory. ICT Foundations is described on page 36, and ECS is described on page 34.

How do I purchase PE clothes for my student?

- Parents will contact the student's Life Fitness 1 teacher for purchasing PE clothes.

Where do I find information regarding school breakfasts and lunches for my student?

- The link to the EDUHSD Nutrition Program is available [here](#).

Is there an Advanced Placement (AP) class available for freshman?

- Ponderosa High School does not have AP classes available to freshmen.

Should my student take six or seven classes during their freshman year?

- A full schedule at Ponderosa High School is six classes. The majority of freshmen are enrolled in only six levels.

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What are the UC/CSU minimum eligibility requirements?

- [Here](#) are the UC/CSU minimum eligibility requirements. PHS counselors will go into detail with this when they meet with freshmen during the fall semester.

Where will I find information to allow my student to take their medication in school?

- The Medication in School Form can be found [here](#).

Where can I find information about PHS clubs?

- [Here](#) is the current list of PHS clubs. We will hold a “Club Day” during lunch in late August. Students will have the opportunity to learn more about clubs and activities available on campus and how to join!

Where can I find information about PHS athletics?

- [Here](#) is information about PHS athletics.

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Where can I find information about the PHS College and Career Center?

- [Here](#) is the link for our PHS College and Career Center.

Is the School office/Counseling office open during the summer?

- The PHS main office and Counseling office have modified hours during the summer with only support staff available.
 - *Offices will be open Monday through Thursday only during the summer.*
 - *Tentative hours are: closed Thursday, June 24th and opening Monday, July 19th.*
 - *If you need anything while the campus is closed, the District Office is open for some services.*

Are the counselors or teachers available during the summer?

- No- teachers and counselors are not contracted to work over the summer. They do not check email or voice messages over the summer.