



"A warm welcome to all Taos Academy families, both familiar and new, as a new school year begins! The Taos Academy staff has been working with dedication to create a supportive environment for building relationships and learning together. Strong relationships are fundamental to personalized learning and creating an atmosphere of true academic excellence. Throughout the year, more will be shared about efforts to support each student in achieving their highest potential. As a Community School, a commitment to building closer partnerships with families and community organizations exists to offer even more enriching learning opportunities. Participation in upcoming family input sessions, training programs, community connection events, and various TA activities is encouraged. Let's start a journey of growth and collaboration!"

Message from the Principal

Dear Students, Families, and Staff,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! It is with great enthusiasm that I extend a warm welcome to all of our returning and new families. I hope you had a restful and rejuvenating summer and are as excited as I am for the journey ahead.

At Taos Academy, we are committed to providing a safe, challenging, and nurturing environment for every student. Our dedicated team of teachers and staff is ready to inspire our students to explore their potential, embrace new challenges, and grow into compassionate and resilient individuals.

Our school community thrives on collaboration, and I believe that our partnership with you, our families, is a vital part of our students' success. I encourage you to stay connected with us. I look forward to working together to make this a truly successful and memorable year for everyone.

Let's make this year our best one yet!

Sincerely,

Dr. Mae LaBella, Principal

New Policies

SY25-26

NEW: Closed Campus/Early Release Procedure - NO EARLY RELEASE

Taos Academy is a closed campus. Once students enter the building for the school day (8:00 to 4:00), they are not permitted to leave the campus, including during lunch. Students will not be released for lunch unless picked up by a parent/guardian. parent/guardians must provide early release documentation for the student to leave before 4:00, unless for an emergency. Documentation is a TA off-campus activities form or written verification of a Doctor's appointment. All students must check out from the office before leaving. **Please schedule all appointments on non-scheduled school days.** Emergency early release may be granted by the Director or designee. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE RELEASED EARLY WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION, EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCIES.**

NEW: Late Arrival after 8:00

Students arriving late, after 8:00 - Parent/guardian will need to pull into the front parking area, escort the student into the office, and sign in for late arrival.

New: Electronic/Wireless Communication Devices- (Anti-Distracted)

TA is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive learning and working environment. The use of Electronic Devices increases campus disruptions and results in an increased possibility of inappropriate communications.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for student use of non-school-issued electronic/wireless communication devices (E/WCDs) during school hours and school-sponsored activities. This policy is aligned with New Mexico Senate Bill 11 ([SB11 - New Mexico Legislature](#)).

Terms - SB11 - Section 1A.1-4

Electronic/Wireless Communication Devices:

Electronic/Wireless Communication Devices (E/WCD) shall mean any devices that accomplish their purposes electronically and include, without limitation, cellphones, smart watches, pagers, radios, wireless speakers/headphones (including earbuds), media/music players, laser pointers, video game consoles, personal computers, tablets, cameras, and any device that provides a wireless or Bluetooth connection with an unfiltered, non-TA, connection to the Internet.

School Day:

The instructional school day shall mean the normal hours of operation of the school from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

School Year:

The school year shall mean from the first day of school through the last day of the summer trimester session, as per the TA calendar.

General Policy - SB11 - Section 1B.1

A. Students are not permitted to use or be in possession of a non-school-issued E/WCDs during the school day.

B. Students with an approved exemption will be required to place E/WCD in a secured, monitored area, unless approved for medical use or documented as part of a disability need in an IEP/504 plan.

Exceptions - SB11-Section 1B.2-4,6 and Section 1C

A. Teachers may allow school-issued devices or pre-approved electronic devices to be used for educational activities during class, such as participating in polls, collaborating on documents, researching, or other instructor-approved activities. This includes text-to-speech, speech-to-text or other assistive technologies that aid in communication, navigation or learning. School-issued devices may be used during instructional and non-instructional times to aid in emergency communication and/or with the permission of the teacher.

B. Students with the following exemptions may use and be in possession of the E/WCD during instructional hours: a documented medical necessity or a disability accommodation documented in a student's IEP or 504.

C. Parents/guardians may apply for an exemption to address student safety or family hardship. For these exemptions, the student may NOT be in possession of the E/WCD. Students will be required to place the E/WCD in a secured, monitored area for the school day, unless approved otherwise by administration.

Student Privacy and Confidentiality - SB11- Section 1B.5

A. The school is dedicated to protecting student privacy and personal information related to any E/WCD use at school or school-sponsored events. This includes the use of school-issued devices. See TA Electronic Use Policy.

B. Photographing, video recording, or audio recording others without their explicit consent and in compliance with school policies is prohibited.

Consequences for Violations - SB11- Section 1B.7

A. Use of non-school-issued electronic/wireless communication devices (E/WCDs) in violation of this policy will result in the confiscation of the device.

1. Warning period - a warning will be issued in the first 2 weeks of school. Students will be asked to turn off their non-school-issued devices and put them away. Students will be reminded of the policy and consequences for further violations.
2. First recorded offense (after warning period) - the student will be required to turn in the E/WCD to the TA Administrator, and a parent/guardian will be required to pick it up by the end of the school day. The device will be stored in a secure, monitored area. Taos Academy is not liable for the loss or damage of any non-school-issued electronic/wireless communication devices (E/WCDs) brought to campus and/or confiscated from a student under this policy.
3. Second recorded offense - the student will be required to turn in the E/WCD to the TA Administrator, a behavioral referral will be issued by the TA Administrator and the parent/guardian is required to meet with the Principal or designee to recover the E/WCD. Taos Academy is not liable for the loss or damage of any non-school-issued electronic/wireless communication devices (E/WCDs) brought to campus and/or confiscated from a student under this policy.
4. Third recorded offense - the student will be required to turn in the E/WCD to the TA Administrator, a level III "chronic disruptive conduct" behavioral referral will

be issued by Principal or designee, and the parent/guardian is required to meet with the Principal or designee for processing a level III behavioral referral and to recover the E/WCD. Taos Academy is not liable for the loss or damage of any non-school-issued electronic/wireless communication devices (E/WCDs) brought to campus and/or confiscated from a student under this policy.

** Electronic Devices that are not recovered at the end of the school year may be disposed of by Taos Academy administration.

**Taos Academy is not liable for the loss or damage of any non-school-issued electronic/wireless communication devices (E/WCDs) brought to campus and/or confiscated from a student under this policy.

Communication and Training - SB11-Section 1D

A. The school will inform students and parents/guardians about this policy upon implementation and at the start of each school year.

B. Training on implementing this policy will be provided to teachers, administrators, and staff.

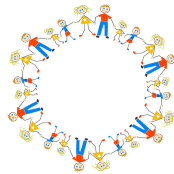
Publication and Evaluation - SB11-Section 1D

A. This policy will be posted on the school's website once adopted.

B. The policy's effectiveness will be reviewed and reported on annually.

Review and Amendments

A. This policy will be reviewed periodically and may be amended as needed to adapt to technological and educational changes.



Introducing Our Team: We are excited to welcome several new staff members to the TA team! All staff members at Taos Academy have been actively working to set the stage for an amazing school year. Please see below for the many roles they play in making our school the great palace that it is for our students:

Administration

Dr. Traci Filiss - Executive Director/Superintendent

Dr. Mae LaBella - Principal

Jamie Lucero-Martinez - Programs Director/District Testing Coordinator

Amy Lucero - Front Office Manager/Registrar

Ashley Duran - Administrative Assistant

Michelle DeHerrera - Attendance Officer

Cruz Duran - STEM Administrative Assistant/ Registrar /Assistant Health Officer

Pamela Rodriguez - Assistant Business Manager

Jose Espinoza - Maintenance/ Facility Manager

Chris Torrez - Security/Facility Support

Dr. Mary Diggin - Technology Administrator

Deborah Branchal - Dean, SSC, ELL/Bilingual Seal & Community Schools Coordinator

Special Education

Sarah Bradley - Special Education Director

Jeanette Henshaw - Special Education Coordinator

Patricia Meagher - Gifted Coordinator
Letricia Ortega - Special Education Teacher
Doug Gleason - Special Education Teacher
Andrea Olonia - Special Education Assistant
Sherry Arnowitz - School Psychologist
Kendra Risinger - Occupational Therapist
Marie LeCuyer - Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant
Margeaux Hurtado - Speech and Language Therapist
Aicha Froeschle - Physical Therapist

Early College High School/College Link

Patricia Meagher - College Link Advisor
Kelci Pike - Early College Coordinator/UNM Liaison

Career & College Readiness / 21st Century Teachers:

Megan Jenkins - CCP2
Robert Smith- 5/6 & 7/8 SmartLab
Patti Kravitz - MS PE, Health and Wellness, Apprenticeship Coordinator
Billy Pepper - CCP1 PE, Health and Wellness
Kelci Pike - CCP3 & CCP4, CTE Design
Jason Weisfeld - MS Global Green Leadership

Academic Support Teachers:

Gayle Densow - Literacy Support for HS

Academic Advisors:

5th & 6th Grade Advisors - Cal Van Willigen & Emmett Moulton
7th & 8th Grade Advisors - Megan Jenkins & Rachel Wetmore
9th Grade Advisors - Jason Weisfeld & Kelsea Connell
10th Grade Advisors - Billy Pepper & Bill Hood
11th/12th Grade Advisors - Patricia Meagher (& College Link advisor), Robert Smith, Ted Werre
* Curriculum & Rosetta Stone Coordinator - Tami Martinson
* eSports Coordinator - Cal Van Willigen
* FLEX Advisor- Bre Messerole
* Dorota Witney - Math Enrichment, Math Lab

All teachers may be reached via email using first initial and last name@taosacademy.org as follows: alucero@taosacademy.org. Please reach out! We love to hear from you!



Please read carefully: Parking Lot Flow & Safety Rules

DROP OFF each morning is from 7:45 to 7:55. School starts promptly at 8:00.

PICK UP each afternoon is from 4:00 to 4:15. Students not picked up by 4:15 will be escorted to the front office.

All traffic is one way onto and off of the TA campus. Cars enter through the west gate and exit through the east gate. Please note that traffic is low before 7:55 or after 4:05 if you prefer not to wait in line!

NEW: Students arriving late, after 8:00 - Parent/guardian will need to pull into front parking area, escort student into the office, and sign in for late arrival. Gates close at 8:00.

Gates open at 3:45 for pick up at 4:00. No early release without approved release form.

MS students: Drop Off/Pick up in the back of the main building:

- **5th and 6th Grades:**
STEM building along the turf - Stay straight and continue to the back of the building. Stay to the right. Pull up to cones at the end of the turf.
- **7th and 8th Grade:**
Back of Main Building - Stay straight and continue to the back of the building. Stay to the left. Pull up to cones past the safe areas.
- **Tuesday/Thursday - STEM Classes & MS Plus Program:**
Back of Main Building on Right - Stay straight and continue to the back of the building. Stay to the right and pick up along the turf. Pull up to the cones.

HS students: Drop Off/Pick up in the front of the main building:

- **9th, 10th, 11th, 12th & HS SSL:**
Front of Main Building - Pull forward into the farthest space along the sidewalk and wait in the car for students. No parking in the front of the building. NO parking in front lanes. Overflow waiting area in student parking lot.
- **Monday/Wednesday - STEM Classes**
Back of Main Building on Right - Stay straight and continue to the back of the building. Stay to the right and pick up along the turf. Pull up to the cones.

Parking:

- Stay straight or turn right (west) into visitor parking. First day overflow and special events parking to the south and east of the building.
- **Safe Zones** are marked with orange/yellow cones for students to wait for their parents. Students must be dropped off or picked up along the safe area ONLY.
- Students may not cross the parking lot for any reason during drop off or pick up times.
- Student walkers/bike riders will be released at 4:10 to avoid conflict with traffic and will be escorted across the street to the sidewalk.
- **All students leaving early must be signed out by their parents**



HS LEADERSHIP DAYS 8/13 - 8/14

These are required instructional days for all HS students. As stated earlier, Taos Academy is built on relationships and these trips offer students and teachers the chance to learn and get to know one another outside of the school environment. Parents and/or students are responsible for transportation and lunch. *All trips require a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian. Permission slips and gear lists are linked below and hard copies are available at the front office.*

Wednesday 8/13 - High School Leadership Day for 9th and 11th

- **Grade 9** will participate in the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Challenge Course and on-campus team building activities from **8:00 am - 4:00 pm**. Drop-off and pick-up at Taos Academy Campus.
 - **BRING WATER & LUNCH.**
 - **Challenge Course Participation Forms here**
- **Grades 10 & 12:** The Student Success Lab and College Link will be open for students.
- **Grade 11** will be rafting the Racecourse on the Rio Grande with Los Rios River Runners. Students need to meet at 9:00 am at the Rio Grande Visitor's Center in Pilar. *Don't be late or you may miss the bus!* Pick up time is at 1:00 at the same place. **Parents and/or students will be responsible for transportation to and from Pilar**
 - **BRING LUNCH**
 - **Permission Slip link here**
 - **Directions and Gear List links here**

Thursday 8/14 - High School Leadership Days for 10th and 12th

- **Grades 9 & 11** The Student Success Lab and College Link will be open for students.
- **Grade 10** will participate in the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Challenge Course and on-campus team-building activities from **8:00 am to 4:00 pm**. Drop-off and pick-up at Taos Academy Campus.
 - **BRING WATER & LUNCH.**
 - **Challenge Course Participation Forms here**
- **Grade 12** will meet at 9:00 am at the Rio Grande Visitor's Center in Pilar for rafting the Rio Grande with Los Rios River Runners. *Don't be late or you may miss the bus!* Pick up time is at 1:00 at the same place. **Parents and/or students will be responsible for transportation to and from Pilar.**
 - **BRING LUNCH**
 - **Permission Slip link**
 - **Directions and Gear List list**



MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP DAYS: **Wednesday, August 20th & Thursday, August 21st**

The Middle School Orientation and Leadership Days schedule is as follows:

- **5th & 6th Grade:**

- **Wednesday, August 20th-Thursday, August 21st:** 5th and 6th grade students have their overnight camping trip at Amole Canyon Group Shelter!
 - Students should arrive at the group campsite at Amole Canyon Group Shelter Campground at 1 pm on Wednesday, August 20th.
 - Please make sure students have eaten lunch prior to drop off. TA will provide snacks, dinner, breakfast, and lunch on Thursday.
 - Make sure to review the gear list [here](#). If students need any of the supplies listed, please email Miss Pike. We have lots of extra gear!
 - All Students must submit a [permission slip to attend](#).
 - Pick up is between 12:30 and 1 pm on Thursday.

- **7th Grade:**

- **Wednesday, August 20th:** 7th-grade students have their Outdoor Ed and potluck at the Rio Brava Group Shelter from 10 am to 6:00 pm.
 - Students should arrive at the group campsite at the Rio Bravo Campground in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area at 10:00 am. Students should bring a sack lunch, two full water bottles, and dress in layers - ready to play outdoors, rain or shine!
 - Families are invited to attend a Family Potluck with teachers, students, and other families from 4:30 pm - 6 pm prior to pickup. Please bring a food or beverage item to share! Taos Academy will be providing spaghetti.
 - [Permission slips here](#)

- **8th Grade:**

- **Thursday, August 21st:** 8th-grade students have their Outdoor Ed and potluck at the Rio Brava Group Shelter from 10 am to 6:00 pm.
 - Students should arrive at the group campsite at the Rio Bravo Campground in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area at 10:00 am. Students should bring a sack lunch, two full water bottles, and dress in layers - ready to play outdoors, rain or shine!
 - Families are invited to attend a Family Potluck with teachers, students, and other families from 4:30 pm - 6 pm prior to pickup. Please bring a food or beverage item to share! Taos Academy will be providing spaghetti.
 - [Permission slips here](#)



What to bring and expect for the first day:

ALL students will attend TA on their regularly scheduled days. Middle school students attend campus on Monday and Wednesday from 8-4; high school students attend Tuesday and Thursday (8-4). College Link lab times will be scheduled around their UNM class schedule and must accommodate one full advisory time (4 hours).

Please be sure to bring:

- Your school supplies
- A full water bottle (labeled with the student's name). Access to the water fountain may be limited; please plan ahead!
- Lunch and snacks for the day
- **STUDENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE (SIGNED)**
- **FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE (SIGNED)**

STUDENT SUPPORT

HS Student Success Lab will be offered for our high schoolers from 8-12 Monday through Thursday, starting August 25th. Please take advantage of our open computer lab staffed with tutors and get your Edge on! This is a great opportunity to get a jump start on the academic year.

Student Success Planning:

All students with a GPA of lower than 2.0, credit recovery, a failure in more than two core academic classes in the prior semester and/or not meeting proficiency in any academic area, will be put on a Student Success Plan. Students and families will work with the advisor to create a plan for increased student achievement and success here at TA, which may include required attendance at SSL or MS+, and/or additional STEM class attendance to boost engagement and student skills.

At the 9 week mark, an appropriate placement meeting will be scheduled by the advisor with the parent, student, curriculum coordinator and director to discuss success at TA and continued enrollment.

MS+

Middle School Plus (MS+) is offered from 8-4 on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting August 26th for grades 5-8. Attendance is voluntary and not bound to an 8:00 am arrival **UNLESS** a student is on a Student Success Lab contract. Students must be enrolled in a STEM class in order to stay after 12 pm.

In MS+, Taos Academy provides a learning service for middle school students on their optional days that is flexible and based on the needs of participating students. Service components include: student-driven progress tracking for meeting social and academic goals, support for completing coursework, restorative practice techniques, and other activities that provide a rich environment for students to interact with each other, our staff and our community.

Parents are encouraged to contact Jamie Lucero-Martinez at jlucero-martinez@taosacademy.org with questions about the Middle School Plus enrichment program. We welcome your ideas and support!



COLLEGE LINK and DUAL CREDIT Students:

- All dual credit **UNM classes begin the week of August 18**, and all College Link and Friday Early College Program students are required to attend their very first day of class.
- The last day to drop a class without receiving a W on your transcript is Tuesday, September 2
 - Make sure to accept the invitation into the Dual Credit Google Classroom and communicate regularly with Miss Pike to stay up to date on textbook ordering, important information, dates, etc.



UNM Classes begin the week of August 18th. Students make sure to join the ECHS Google Classroom for information on how to access your courses, request purchase for all textbooks and course materials, as well as other important information.

TA FLEX Online Program is back!

Taos Academy will continue to offer a FLEX learning option for eligible students. Students should be on track in their studies, demonstrate excellent independent work habits, and have a family member who will serve as their learning coach who is available to support them in their work.

Interested families should review the handbooks and application packet. Applications may be emailed to Dr. Mae LaBella at mlabella@taosacademy.org or dropped off at the front office. These should be turned in by Friday, August 28th for high school students and Friday, August 28th for middle school students.

*** Regardless of FLEX eligibility or application status, all students should plan to attend their Orientation ON CAMPUS per the schedule posted above. This is part of your responsibility as a FLEX student.



Special Education: Families of Special Education Students: If you are joining Taos Academy for the next school year and have an IEP, please drop off a hard copy or email a digital copy of your last evaluation and current IEP. If you have any questions or want to check in prior to the start of school, we are happy to connect with you in person.

As documents come in, we will be developing a Transfer IEP and contacting you to set up a meeting. If you have any questions or concerns or need to set up a meeting prior to the Transfer IEP, please contact Mrs. Sarah Bradley or Jeanette Henshaw. We look forward to working with you and your child.

If your child brought home any binders or manipulatives please return to use again for the new school year. If you have spare binders at home we are happy to accept binders and other school resources. Thank you for your support & welcome to Taos Academy!

Our Special Education Team includes:

Leticia Ortega & Douglas Gleason as our Special Education Case managers and Direct Service Providers. Andrea Olonia is our Special Education Educational Assistant. Patricia Meagher is our Gifted Coordinator.

Jeanette Henshaw jhenshaw@taosacademy.org
TA Special Education Coordinator 575-758-3109
Ms. Henshaw will be focusing on school level support for students and teachers.

Sarah Bradley sbradley@taosacademy.org
TA Special Education Director 575-758-3109 x 104
Mrs. Bradley is our district level Special Education administrator, focusing on compliance, processes, and oversight.

Additional Parent Support/Resources:

[NM Parents Reaching Out](#)
michelle.tregembo@state.nm.us
[OSEA Flier](#)

505-841-4565



MS STEM+Art Institute classes are for 7 weeks and will begin the week of August 26th. Classes will be announced **Monday, August 18th** and will be first come first serve with a **\$15 materials fee required at signup.**

HS STEM+Art Institute classes are for a full semester and will begin the week of August 27th. Classes will be announced on **Tuesday, August 13th** and will be first come first serve with a **\$30 materials fee required at signup.**

Registration will open on August 19th no exceptions. Fees must be paid at the time of registration. All registration will take place in the STEM office.

Please contact Jamie Lucero-Martinez jlucero-martinez@taosacademy.org or Cruz Duran cduran@taosacademy.org for more information.



Mark Your Calendars!

- 8/7- Student/Parent Orientation Training - MS 9 am to 12 pm, HS 1 pm to 4 pm
- 8/11 - Governing Council Meeting 5:30, Middle School Orientation -
- 8/12 High School Orientation - 8am-4pm
- 8/13-8/14 - High School Activity Days
- 8/20-8/21 - Middle School Activity Days
- 8/25 - STEM + Art Begins
- 8/27 - Community Council 4:15pm
- 8/28- Ribbon cutting ceremony 4-7pm



Mark Your Calendars!

- 9/1 - Labor Day - No School
- 9/5 - MS Make-Up Day
- 9/08 - Governing Council @ 5:30
- 9/19 - Professional Development
- 9/24 Community Council

If you have any questions feel free to call or email the contacts below:

Amy Lucero alucero@taosacademy.org 751-3109

Ashley Trujillo atrujillo@taosacademy.org 751-3109