New Student Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will there be homework every night?
   On average, students will receive 1 ½ hours of homework on a daily basis in all core classes. Each homework assignment from their core classes will approximately take 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

2. Is new student academy required?
   *Due to the uncertainty of the COVID Pandemic, New student academy or summer school will be postpone. We will post more details as they are available. Thank you for your patience.*

3. What is the purpose of the DSST: GVR Middle School uniform?
   The purpose of the uniform is to create a professional, safe and respectful community where students can place their sole focus on learning. Please refer to the formal dress code in your orientation packet or in the handbook.

4. Will DSST: GVR MS provide transportation?
   Yes, for the 2020-2021 will participate in Far Northeast success express.

5. What time will school start and finish each day?
   DSST: GVR MS will have an extended school day. This means that our school day will be longer than other DPS schools. Normal school hours will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 7:45 am to 3:30 pm and Wednesday 7:45 am – 2:15 pm unless a student has been assigned CP, Refocus, or Mandatory Tutoring then that student will stay for until 4:15 pm. This schedule is tentative and may be subject to change.

6. How will you handle discipline issues?
   The DSST: GVR community is founded on the school’s six core values: respect, responsibility, integrity, courage, curiosity and doing your best. The core values provide students with the opportunity for self-improvement, individual growth, and character development. The core values define our rules and behavioral expectations. Consistently living these core values is expected of all students for their benefit and the benefit of the entire school community. The program at DSST: GVR MS has systems in place to promote a strong school culture and community by holding students accountable for living these six core values.

   School authorities have the right and responsibility to manage student conduct and create an orderly, positive, and safe learning environment. Conduct which disrupts learning or threatens to disrupt the operation of the school, which interferes with the rights and privileges of students or other citizens, which endangers the health, safety or welfare of any person, or which damages property will not be tolerated. Any violation of school rules will subject a student to disciplinary measures.

7. What kinds of extra-curricular or after-school programs do you have?
   **Extracurricular activities include:**
   - Student clubs based on student and parent interest
   - Competitive sports: Basketball, Flag Football, Soccer, Volleyball , Track and Cross Country

   **Curricular activities include:**
   - College Prep (Required for students who don’t complete their homework)
   - Tutoring and other academic support
8. **Can my student bring a cell phone to school? What about other electronics?**
   We understand that many students have cell phones for safety and communication reasons. Cell phone use by students is not permitted within the school building or during the school day. All cell phones and other electronics must be stowed in a students’ backpack or locker in the off position. If a student is seen using or holding a cell phone or other electronic device, or if a cell phone rings during the school day, the equipment will be confiscated until a parent can come and pick it up.

9. **What if my student cannot stay for their assigned CP/Refocus/Mandatory Tutoring?**
   Under extreme circumstances, if a student cannot serve his CP/RF/MT, a parent or guardian must contact DSST: GVR administration in order to excuse the absence. A student will receive an automatic Refocus for skipping CP or MT and may be suspended for skipping Refocus.

10. **Will breakfast be provided?**
    We participate in the cooking from scratch healthy eating program with DPS. It’s an amazing food service! **All** students receive free breakfast during the school year! We eat breakfast together in the commons from 7:30 to 7:45 am.

11. **What are the requirements for promotion to the seventh and eighth grades? Will DSST: GVR MS retain students who do not meet requirements?**
    Students must receive a passing grade (70% or higher) in all of their core classes to be promoted to the next grade. Students must also earn a passing grade (70% or higher) on their Reading, Writing, and Math year end final assessments. Students who receive 2 or more failing grades in their core classes will repeat the grade, and student with one failing grade will be assigned summer school and will retake the year end final assessment.

12. **If a student graduates from the Middle School, will he or she automatically go to the High School?**
    Yes, students who meet the requirements after the 8th grade will be promoted to the high school. In essence, DSST: GVR MS will become a secondary school serving grades 6 to 12.

13. **How DSST will: GVR MS meet the needs of special education students?**
    Special Education students who are on an IEP or 504-plan will be served in an inclusion model; they will be in the same classes as other students. DSST: GVR MS will have a special education teacher who will make sure the goals on the IEP are met. Special Education students may be placed in Math and English support and seminar classes, in addition to their regular courses. In these classes, students will be given more time to work on core skills, receive additional instruction, and reinforce necessary strategies. Also, teacher, peer (high school students), and mandatory tutoring may be assigned to provide more support. Please indicate in your registration information that your student has an IEP or 504-plan so we can set up services as soon as possible.

14. **How will DSST: GVR MS meet the needs of students who have been identified as Gifted and Talented?**
    The middle school program at DSST: GVR MS will work hard to create and implement differentiated instructional practices so that we can have non-tracked heterogeneous classes that level instruction to meet student learning needs. Teachers will create Level 1 and Level 2 (and in some cases Level 3) approaches to challenge students at all levels in heterogeneous classes, and use flexible grouping strategies that allow for constantly changing instructional groups, based on student mastery levels and learning needs. Levels of mastery and identification of learning needs will be based on student performance on our Benchmark Interim Assessments.
15. What are DSST’s Core Values?
The six DSST Core Values are Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Courage, Curiosity and Doing Your Best. They are the foundation of DSST and are an active part in the daily lives of each community member. Visitors to our community most often remark that the values are not simply words on walls but are tangibly lived by students, staff, and families at DSST.

16. What are Morning Meetings?
Morning Meetings, which happen most days of the week, start the day and give us a chance to spend time building our school culture and community. Often they include every DSST staff member and student but sometimes they just include one grade. They typically include things like “shout outs” where individuals can acknowledge others’ moments of living our Core Values, announcements and a program. The daily program theme changes but typical themes include our Core Values, college, career, self-improvement and celebrations.

17. What is an Advisory?
An advisory is a group of roughly 15 students, all of one gender, who meet with the same teacher (advisor) daily. The purpose of this group is to ensure that each student knows a smaller group of students and one teacher very well. It also provides each student with more localized support to ensure that no student slips between the cracks - it is the job of each advisor to ensure that they have a sense for what’s going on with each of their students and to help them when they may be in need. They can also act as a resource for families so that they have another person at the school whom they can contact about their child’s time at school.