

**Westonka**

HILLTOP PRIMARY  
SCHOOL



# **Family Handbook**

**2024-2025  
School Year**

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Office – (952) 491-8500  
 Attendance Line – (952) 491-8505  
 Nurse – (952) 491-8504  
 Adventure Club – (952) 491-8541

## HILLTOP

### 2024-2025

## CALENDAR

Office Phone: (952) 491-8500  
 School Hours: 9:05 am – 3:45 pm

Attendance Line: (952) 491-8505  
 Nurse Line: (952) 491-8504

### 2024-2025 SCHOOL LUNCH PRICES

Lunch Students: Free  
 Breakfast: K - Free,  
 Gr. 1-4 Free

Adult: \$4.95  
 2nd entree - \$4.00  
 2nd Breakfast - \$2.00  
 Milk: \$.60

#### AUGUST

7 New to Hilltop School and Kindergarten Family Ice Cream Social 6:30 – 7:00 pm  
 16 Kindergarten Class Lists Posted/Kindergarten Playground Playdate (1:30 pm and/or 6:30 pm)  
 21 PTA Executive Board Committee Meeting 9:00 am – 12:00 pm  
 22 Kindergarten Group Conferences 12:00 - 4:00pm  
 22 Staff Workshop Day  
 23 Grades 1-4 Class Lists Posted  
 26-30 Staff Workshop Week  
 28 Open House 4:00 – 7:00 pm /School Pictures during Open House

#### SEPTEMBER

3 First Day of School (Grades K – 4)  
 9-20 FAST Assessments/Reading and Math (Grades K – 4)  
 16 PTA Meeting, 6:30-7:30 pm/Media Center  
 20 MWHS Homecoming Parade/5:00 pm Hilltop Kazoo Band Gr 3-4  
 25 Hilltop Pictures/Class Photos/Lifetouch Photography  
 26 SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am

#### OCTOBER

12 Octoberfest 11:00 am- 3:00 pm  
 14 PTA Executive Committee Meeting 4:00-5:00 pm  
 16 **No School**, Professional Development  
 17-18 **No School**, Education Minnesota Conference  
 24 Hilltop Picture Retakes  
 24 SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am

#### NOVEMBER

4 **No School**, Professional Development  
 4 **No School**, Parent Conferences 12:00 – 8:00 pm  
 7 Conferences 4:00-8:00 pm  
 11 Veteran's Day Assembly 9:15 - 10:00 am  
 18 PTA Meeting 6:30-7:30 pm/Media Center  
 21 SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am  
 28-29 **No School**/Thanksgiving Break

# DECEMBER

2-6	Book Fair
3	Fine Arts Night: Music Concert and Art Showcase Grade 1 - 6:00 pm and Grade 3 – 7:00 pm
5	Family Fun Night 5-7pm
9	PTA Executive Committee Meeting, 4:00 pm
19	SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am
23- 3	<b>No School</b> , Winter Break

# JANUARY

6	School Resumes
9	Kindergarten Round-Up (4:30-6:00 pm or 6:00-7:30 pm)
17	<b>No School</b> , Professional Development
20	<b>No School</b> , Professional Development
24	Many Hands Many Meals
27	PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center
30	SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am

# FEBRUARY

2	PTA WAC Fun Event 3:00-5:00 pm
6	Science Fair/Spaghetti Dinner 5:00-7:00 pm
10	PTA Executive Committee Meeting 4:00-5:00 pm
17	<b>No School</b> , President's Day
18	<b>No School</b> , Parent Conferences 8:00 - 4:00 pm (virtual)
22	Bus Driver Appreciation Day
20	Parent Conferences, 4:00 – 8:00 pm (in person)
27	SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am
28	Hilltop Readathon

# MARCH

14	Spring Fun Night (Long Over) 7:00-11:00 pm
17	PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center
20	SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am
21- 30	<b>No School</b> , Spring Break

# APRIL

14	PTA Executive Committee Meeting, 4:00 pm
14-25	MCA Grades 3 and 4
24	SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am
28-May 1	Book Fair
29	Family Fun Night/dinner

# MAY

1	Grandfriends Day (Grade 1)
2	<b>No School</b> , Professional Development
5	PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center
5-16	FAST Assessment Grades K - 4
9	Kindergarten Concert at PAC 2:00 pm
9	Last day of AR
13	Fine Arts Night: Music Concert and Art Showcase Grade 2 – 6:00 pm and Grade 4 – 7:00 pm
15	SOAR Assembly 9:15-10:00am
16	All Library Books Due
16	AR Pancake Breakfast
19-23	Wolf Ridge, Grade 4 Students
26	<b>No School</b> , Memorial Day

# JUNE

3	<b>Last Student Day/Field Day</b>
4	Teacher Workshop Day

**The Westonka Edge**  
*Small School Advantages.*  
*Big School Opportunities.*  
*Real-Life Success Stories*

*Westonka Schools are just the right size. Small school advantages mean we know every child by name and we make it our goal to help every child to succeed. Big school opportunities mean our award-winning arts, academics and athletics programs are right up there with the larger school districts. Real-life success stories mean our students leave prepared for college and for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

**Arrival Time**

School begins at 9:00 AM. If your child does not ride the bus, please time his/her arrival for after 8:50 AM. Although teachers arrive earlier, they are not available to supervise the playground or hallways because they are preparing lessons, meeting with parents, or conferring with other staff members.

**Assemblies**

All-school assemblies are held on a regular basis for educational and enrichment purposes.

**Attendance/Absence**

Please call the school office Attendance Line (491-8505) before 8:00 AM if a student will be absent for the day. Upon returning to school the student should present a note to the attendance clerk.

The school must receive a phone call or note for the absence to be excused. When a child has more than three unexcused absences, the school will make a referral to the Hennepin County Be@School program.

If the child has 6 unexcused absences, the school will make a report to the Be@School program. The report will be reviewed and a determination will be made to send it to Child Protective Services through Hennepin County.

**Tardy:** Thirty minutes or less late to school or leaving early from school. **Five tardies equal 1 unexcused absence day.**

**Half-Day Absence:** More than thirty minutes late or leaving early will be considered a half-day absence.

Excused absences include:

- Illness (limited to 12 days – illness absences in excess of 12 require medical documentation. Otherwise the illness is considered unexcused),
- Death in immediate family,
- Professional appointments with documentation from clinic,
- Court appearances with documentation from court,
- Religious observations,
- School-sponsored activities.

Unexcused absences include:

- Any absence not included under the excused attendance procedure,

- Any absence that is not reported to the attendance line that meets the requirements for excused absence.
- Five tardies will equal one unexcused absence.

If school is in session, students are required to be at Hilltop. Students are given an unexcused absence if they do not attend school due to rain, snow, or temperature.

Pre-arranged family vacations/choice days are limited to five school days in a year. Please complete the online Hilltop Family Choice Day Request Form: <https://forms.gle/Ayyg3vHZeDJBKG6r9> at least two weeks prior to the requested absence. Homework must be completed by the time the student arrives back from the vacation/choice days, or else the vacation/choice days are considered unexcused. Any vacation days/choice days require a pre-phone call to the attendance line; a vacation form will be completed for your child and the homework will be sent home for completion. When homework is completed an excused vacation/choice day will be granted.

When a student is absent three or more days and is able to do school work, the parent may request assignments and materials from the school office. Students will be expected to make up the work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the teacher and parent.

All children between 6 and 18 years of age must attend school in Minnesota unless they have a legal excuse. The principal shall determine daily which students enrolled in school are absent and designate absence as excused, unexcused, or truant. Please try to arrange family trips and medical appointments outside of school time.

### **Animals in the Classroom**

To prevent exposure to allergens and to maintain the health and safety of the students and staff, animals are not allowed in the classroom or school. Please schedule animal visits at outside events (i.e. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Neighborhood Gatherings, etc)

### **Background Check**

In the best interest, and for the safety of the students in the Westonka Public School, we require each parent or community volunteer to complete the yearly Volunteer Informed Consent Form. The school district will perform random background checks on school volunteers. In addition, the School District may process a background check at its discretion. Background Check forms must be on file and approved before a volunteer can be in the classroom or attend a field trip. Five school days is needed to process a Background Check form. The forms can also be found on the school website, picked up in the school office or completed online in Family Access (Skyward).

### **Behavior**

Hilltop students are expected to use respectful and proper behavior at all times. Hilltop Primary follows the Westonka Student Discipline Policy found at the Policies page on the Westonka School District website.

### **Bikes**

Students may ride bikes or scooters to school. Bikes brought to school are the responsibility of the student. Westonka School District is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **Birthday Invitations**

Birthday invitations are not permitted to be sent through school. To access addresses for families that opt into the directory, please visit the Skyward Family Access site.

### **Birthday Treats**

In accordance with the Westonka Wellness Policy #5330, if a parent/guardian chooses to send something with their child to celebrate the birthday, it needs to be a non-food item. Non-food items can include bookmarks, pencils, erasers, notepads, etc.

### **Birthday Book**

A Birthday Book can be donated to the library in honor of your child's birthday. Please see Mrs. Hempel to select and purchase a book for the library.

### **Book Fairs**

Hilltop sponsors two annual book fairs at school. Families may choose books for home and donate books for classroom use. All profits from the book fairs are used to purchase new books for the Media Center.

### **Breakfast Program**

Students can receive breakfast daily. For the 2024-2025 school year all students are eligible for free breakfast through state funding.

### **Broadcast Messaging**

Hilltop uses a broadcast messaging system to inform parents by telephone, text and/or e-mail of important events or emergency information. Be sure you have updated your "primary and secondary phone numbers" and "e-mail addresses" in Family Access. All messages will be directed towards these phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Parents should update their Family Access e-mail accounts in order to receive the important weekly messages.

### **Bullying Policy** (Policy #5140)

Hilltop Primary School is committed to providing all students and staff with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school are treated with dignity and respect. To that end Hilltop Primary School has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment when they occur. Hilltop Primary School prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization based on real or perceived race, sex, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, physical appearance, and/or personality characteristics. This policy is in effect while students are on property within the jurisdiction of the school district; while on school-owned and/or school-operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school district. Bullying as set forth above is defined as "The repeated use of physical, emotional, or social power to hurt someone." Bullying may include, but is not limited to: Verbal (teasing, name calling, gossiping, rumor starting, rumor spreading, verbal cruelty, threats, intimidation, humiliating, embarrassing, racial/ethnic slurs, cyber-bullying; Physical (humiliating, embarrassing, pushing, shoving, pinching, kicking, tripping, fighting, destruction of property, extortion, obscene gestures); or Social (purposeful exclusion, laughing at a student who is being bullied, rumor spreading) The full Policy 5140 is available in the main office or on the district website, [westonka.k12.mn.us](http://westonka.k12.mn.us)>About Us>School Board>Policy Manual.

### **Bus Transportation**

1. The Westonka District will not tolerate disruption, abusive language, aggressive or dangerous behavior, vandalism, and chemical usage, including smoking, on school buses.
2. Behavior and safety of children to, from and at all bus stops away from the school are the responsibility of parents.
3. Behavior and safety of children boarding or disembarking buses at the school is the responsibility of the principal and staff.

4. When the student boards the bus, the driver is responsible for student behavior and safety. When the student arrives at the school, the principal and staff assume responsibility. When the student arrives at the bus stop, the parents assume responsibility.
5. School employees and other citizens are encouraged to report intolerable bus rider behavior to the bus driver, who is obliged to report misbehaving students in writing to the transportation coordinator within 24 hours.
6. The transportation coordinator maintains files of all referrals on student misbehavior from the bus drivers, and notifies the principal or designee without delay.
7. The principal or designee investigates reports of student misbehavior and validates them through witnesses or admissions.
8. Primary principals are responsible for enforcing and recording bus rider discipline in the following procedures after a bus incident report is issued by a bus driver:
  - 1) After each bus referral the principal or Dean of Students confers with the student, and notifies parents.
  - 2) Three bus referrals will require the student to be banned from buses for 5 school days and will notify parents.
  - 3) A fourth bus referral may warrant a loss of bus privileges for 2 weeks.
  - 4) A fifth bus referral may warrant a loss of bus privileges for a period no longer than rest of the school year.

### **Cell Phones/Smart Watches**

Although we strongly advise against students bringing cell phones/smart watches to school, for safety and security reasons students are allowed to have them. However, students must keep cell phones/smart watches turned off during regular school hours and in their backpacks. If students need to call home they will use the office student phone. Students not adhering to this policy will have their cell phones/smart watches taken to the office to be picked up by their parents. The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen cell phones/smart watches.

### **Change of Address / Work / Phone, etc.**

Please update your Skyward *Family Access* account for address, e-mail, or phone numbers at work or home.

### **Conferences**

Family conferences are scheduled twice a year. These are important opportunities to discuss student goals and progress during the course of the year. Other conferences with teachers and principal can be arranged anytime during the year by contacting the teacher or school office. Conferences are also held for kindergarten students before school starts. Each child at Hilltop will be given *one conference slot* – we ask that parents please coordinate their schedules.

### **Contact Information**

District 277 is asking everyone to use Skyward Family Access to make sure we have your most current phone numbers and e-mail address in the event of weather-related or other announcements. The Skylert messaging system is set up to make calls to a primary phone number for food service and attendance announcements; a primary and secondary number for general and non-school hours emergency announcements; and three phone numbers for a school hours emergency message during the school day.

For most families, it will be most beneficial to have home and/or cell phones set as the primary and secondary numbers and a work phone set as the third number to be used during the school day. To make sure you are receiving these calls and/or texts to the correct phone numbers for you, please go to the Hilltop website and select “Family Access” from the menu at left. Log into Family Access with your

user name and password. On the next screen, which looks like a calendar, select “Skylert” from the left menu. You will see a page already populated with your family information. Make any necessary changes and select “Save”. You only need to do this once, even if you have more than one child in the district.

### **Custody Information**

In cases where parents are separated or divorced, and one parent has primary, physical, and/or legal custody the school requires verification of custody determination. The school must have on file the copy of the section of the divorce decree indicating custody and visitation rights. The school needs to have this legal documentation on file in order to assure compliance with any limiting court order. The school also requests that a note from the custodial parent be on file if there is an agreement that the non-custodial parent will be picking the child up from school. Parents may be asked to provide a calendar for their child with custody assignments.

### **Curriculum**

Westonka aligns all curriculum with the Minnesota State standards and Westonka benchmarks. The Westonka Curriculum Goals can be found on the Hilltop website.

### **Directory Information** (Policy # 5125)

The school district may disclose directory information of a student and information regarding parents without prior written consent of the parent or the student. If a parent or student does not want this information released, he/she must notify the school district by the end of the first week of school each year by completing the Annual Opt-Out Options form included in the back-to-school mailer. For information contact Carol Shukle, 952-491-8007. (A complete copy of policy 5125 is available in the main office or on the district website, [westonka.k12.mn.us](http://westonka.k12.mn.us)>About Us>School Board>Policy Manual.)

The following information is considered directory information:

**Student’s:** name, address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, participation in activities, height & weight (athletic teams), honors & awards.

**Parent’s:** name, address

Directory information does not include: religion, race, color, social position, nationality, and Social Security number.

### **Discipline**

As we strive to provide a positive and safe environment, a school-wide behavior management plan is used to provide students with expectations for proper behavior outside the classroom including regular positive consequences and appropriate negative consequences. Each teacher has a classroom plan that is posted in the classroom. The Westonka Discipline Policy can be found on the district website.

### **Dress Code**

Neat and proper dress contributes to desirable attitudes and behavior. We ask parents to check their student’s clothing, particularly to accommodate weather conditions. Students will be expected to go outside during the winter (until the temperature reaches below -10 degrees). This requires all students to have snow pants, a winter jacket, boots, hats and mittens. Students play outside at lunch and recess and should be dressed appropriately, especially when the weather is wet or cold. Labeling clothing helps us to return items that are lost.

Students are not allowed to wear any clothing that may cause interference with student learning is not allowed. Such dress may include, but is not limited to clothing with drug, alcohol, or sexually explicit or suggestive messages, representations which are inappropriate or demeaning to any groups, and clothing that is suggestive or provides inadequate coverings. Change of clothing will be provided in the nurse’s office.

### **Drop off /Pick up Area**



Between 8:50 – 9:00 AM and 3:40-3:55 PM, students must be dropped off or picked up in the designated pick up areas. Any students not picked up after 3:55 PM will be escorted to the office. We ask for student safety that parents come into the office to pick up and sign out students if leaving school early. Please do not park in the bus parking lot during school hours. All families will receive a name plate for pick up at the end of the day.

Doors open to Hilltop Primary School at 8:50 am. There will be no supervision prior to this time.

### **DARE Program**

Westonka District promotes prevention as stressed in the curriculum. The Minnetrista Police Department provides a DARE officer to work with students at Hilltop within the DARE program. The DARE program is taught formally to Grade 1 and 3 students. The officer also visits other grade level classrooms during the year in an informal manner.

### **Electronics Personal**

We advise against students bringing cell phones, smart watches and/or personal devices to school for security reasons but students are allowed to have them. All students are issued a school owned iPad and should use this device for all school/class work needed during school. These devices have been set up to provide as safe an experience as we can provide with filters and blocks in place. The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen cell phones or smart watches/personal devices.

### **Email**

All teachers and staff may be contacted via email addresses in the district. Addresses include the last name and first letter of first name with: @westonka.k12.mn.us. For example, smithj@westonka.k12.mn.us.

### **Emergency Information in Skyward Family Access**

Each student is required to have on file a Emergency Information containing information to be used in case of an emergency with the child or with the school. Please be sure to complete this information promptly with the correct information. Please inform the school office of any information that changes. All students must have at least two emergency contact names, other than the parents' names.

### **Emergency Closing**

Emergency school closings due to severe weather or for any other reason will be announced through all four major Twin Cities television stations. Please instruct your children as to where they should go if sent home early from school and indicate the same on the emergency card. An All-District phone message will be sent if school is closing early. Parents should then email the classroom teacher on instructions of where their child should go after school closes. Any students without information will be sent to Adventure Club and parents will need to pay the fee.

### **Emergency Drills**

Drills for fire, severe weather, lockdowns, or other emergencies are conducted on a regular basis during the school year. Students are reminded that similar drills at home are a good safety measure for every member of the family.

### **Equal Opportunity - Title IX**

It is the policy of the Westonka District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, age, public assistance, marital status, religion, disability or national origin in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies. Violations should be reported to Carol Pomeroy, Title IX and Equal Opportunity Advisor, Westonka District, 5901 Sunnyfield Rd. E, Minnetrista, MN 55364 (491-8005).

### **Extra Curricular Programs**

Extra curricular offerings throughout the year are sponsored by the Westonka Community Education and Services Department. Information is sent through Friday emails, peachjar flyers or you may call the Community Education and Services office at 491-8040 for current programs.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are a primary source of learning for students. All classes participate in regular field trips for environmental, cultural, and social studies classes. A field trip permission form is signed at the beginning of the year by parents. Field trip fees are included in the annual school fees and should be paid at the beginning of the year. Families in need of scholarships to pay school fees should contact Mr. Moch.

Chaperones for field trips are scheduled with the classroom teachers. We do not allow younger or older siblings to attend the field trips for the child. Please find appropriate day care for the younger children. Background forms must be completed and on file at least five days prior in order to volunteer for the field trip.

### **Food Service (Westonka Foodies)**

Our school offers healthy meals each day. Westonka 2024-25, is part of Minnesota's Free School Meals Program. All students can get one breakfast and one lunch free of charge each day at school.

- **Students will still use a PIN and go through a cashier line.**
- *A la Carte items are offered for sale at each school. Customers must have money in their account to cover the full cost of each item in order to purchase.*
- Students in PK – 1<sup>st</sup> grade are not sold a la carte items with the exception of a milk with a bag lunch
- Breakfast *must* include a fruit or juice or entree alone will cost \$2.00.
- Lunch *must* include a fruit or vegetable or entree alone will cost \$4.00.
- Students that bring a bagged lunch from home or students wishing to purchase a 2nd milk will be charged \$0.60. Milk is not free without the selection of a meal.
- Adult lunch price will be \$4.95 or as established by the federal government in July 2024.
- Meal account checks should be payable to: ISD #277.

Westonka Foodies has transitioned to [LINQCONNECT.COM](https://linqconnect.com) for online payments, tracking student purchases, setting limits, etc. We encourage each household to register on LINQ Connect.

School menus are posted online at [www.westonkafoodies.com](https://www.westonkafoodies.com) along with nutrition information.

Hilltop Primary School Lunch Times:

Grade Level	Lunch Time
Kindergarten	11:50-12:10
First Grade	11:00-11:20
Second Grade	12:40-1:00
Third Grade	11:25-11:45
Fourth Grade	12:15-12:30

If you have any questions about the school meals program, please contact Westonka Foodies:

Laura Metzger, Director of Food & Nutrition (952)292-0775  
[metzgerl@westonka.k12.mn.us](mailto:metzgerl@westonka.k12.mn.us)  
Deb Bailey, Administrative Assistant (952)491-8088  
[baileyd@westonka.k12.mn.us](mailto:baileyd@westonka.k12.mn.us)

### **Friday Folders**

Every Friday, your child will bring home a folder with information from the school. Please read the information carefully and make sure you return the folder on Monday morning.

### **G.A.T.E.S. (Gifted and Talented Education Services)**

Hilltop's gifted/talented services meet during the school year. Children must qualify in order to receive the specialized programming. Qualification is determined by classroom performance, FastBridge Assessments, Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), and Cognitive Achievement Testing (CoGAT).

Students receive accelerated services in Grades 3 and 4. These services are one to two grade levels above the classroom standards.

Teachers modify and adjust curriculum for all students in the classroom. Special programs like Adventures in Art, Accelerated Reader and other enrichment opportunities are made available for all students.

### **Gym Shoes**

Students are required to wear gym shoes for physical education classes in the gym. It is recommended that students bring a pair to keep at school.

### **Harassment and Violence Policy**

See Appendix A for the policy.

### **Hazing Policy**

See Appendix A for the policy.

### **Health Services**

Hilltop has a Health Specialist or a district Health Specialist on duty during the school day. First aid equipment is available in the health office and each classroom. Vision and hearing screening is conducted for students annually at designated grade levels. Health records are maintained at school.

When an emergency or significant illness occurs at school, our procedure is to contact a parent or guardian at home or work. If a parent or guardian is unreachable, a relative or neighbor whose name appears on the emergency card is contacted. The child will be released to the emergency contact person. However, in instances where immediate medical attention is needed, the school will call 911 for emergency personnel and ambulance service. The parents or guardian will be called immediately after the emergency personnel have been contacted. If necessary or requested, the family physician will be consulted.

Your child should be kept home if:

- 1) he or she has a temperature of 100° or greater
- 2) he or she is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea

If your child has had a fever of 100 degrees or greater, the student needs to stay home for 24 hours after the fever has left and you no longer need to use medication to keep the temperature down.

The same 24-hour guideline applies to vomiting and diarrhea. For example, if your child vomits in the morning at breakfast time, do not send him/her to school in the afternoon, even if there is no vomiting at lunch. Wait until the following breakfast time, with no vomiting or diarrhea during the day or night. If there has been no further vomiting or diarrhea, you can send him/her to school.

If a child is not running a fever, but is obviously not feeling well enough to participate in classroom activities (for example, is very tired, has continual coughing, excessive runny nose, outdoor recess, etc.), it is a good idea to keep him/her at home. Your child may need extra sleep, fluids or medication to get rid of these symptoms. Otherwise, he/she is more likely to stay sick longer.

Sending an ill child to school exposes other children to your child's illness. Children easily pass germs through their play and close contact with each other. Please send your child back to school when he/she is fully recovered. Then everyone will have the opportunity to experience the best from his/her school day.

To check a specific illness or disease, check out Hennepin County Health Department's website: [www.hennepin.us/childcaremanual](http://www.hennepin.us/childcaremanual)

Please call your child's school when your child is staying home due to illness.

### **Hilltop Rules**

SOAR

Safe  
Own It!  
Achieve  
Respect

### **Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Technology Materials**

The school district is providing students and employees with access to the school district computer system, which includes Internet access. The purpose of the system is more specific than providing students with general access to the Internet. The school district system has a limited educational purpose, which includes use of the system for classroom activities, educational research and professional or career development. Users are expected to use Internet access throughout the district system to further educational and personal goals consistent with the mission of the school district and school policies. Hilltop follows the Westonka Public School Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy, which can be found in the appendix.

District purchased materials in the technology area will be assigned to individual students in the classrooms. Students are expected to care for the materials and return them in the same state that they received them. Students will be charged for replacement costs for lost, damaged, or broken devices.

### **Kindergarten Information Night**

Parents and children who are eligible for the next year's kindergarten class are invited to school in January for Kindergarten Information Night. The Information Night offers parents an opportunity to meet teachers, learn about district services, ask questions and get all the forms needed for the start of school. We must see each student's birth certificate (not hospital certificate) to register him/her for school. Families who cannot attend Kindergarten Information Night, or who move into the area during the summer, can enroll online and contact the school office for a tour or general information. It's important to enroll a new child before the first day of school.

### **(Student) Locker Search (District Policy #5156)**

**Lockers:** Lockers are school property. They are loaned to the students for storing books, backpacks, other educational materials and clothing necessary for our climate. School officials may open and inspect lockers for any reason. Searches of lockers can **be conducted at any time without the presence of the student.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Lockers are not absolutely safe. As a result, the following guidelines are in place:

1. Do not place any item in your locker that disables the locking mechanism. Doing so can result in damage to the locker and easy access to your locker. You are responsible for any damage to your locker. Also, detention will be assigned.
2. Do not leave valuables in your locker. The school is not responsible for lost/stolen property. There is a locked, secured room available for the storage of your athletic bags during the school day.
3. Do not share your locker with another student. You are responsible for what is in your locker including writing and stickers, etc.

**Personal Possessions:** To ensure all students' safety, personal possessions can be searched with reasonable cause at any time. This includes backpacks, purses, clothing, vehicles, cell phones, MP3 players, and other possessions.

Lockers belong to the school but are loaned to students for keeping backpacks, coats and other school materials. Please do not leave anything valuable in your locker. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. School staff has the right to look in lockers at any time.

For the full Policy 5156 Search of Student Lockers, please see the appendix at the back of the handbook.

### **Locker**

Students are assigned a locker in the hallway outside of their room to hold coats, boots, book bags, etc. Locks are not used on these lockers. Students are not allowed to add stickers and magnets to their lockers.

### **Lost & Found**

Lost clothing is located in our Lost and Found area by the cafeteria. Small items are kept in the office (jewelry, keys, etc.). **Unclaimed items are donated to charity every other week during the school year.**

Please remember to:

- \* Clearly label your student's coats, caps, boots and clothing with full name and grade.
- \* Try to locate the item immediately upon discovering it is lost. Don't wait too long.
- \* Use caution in allowing articles of sentimental or monetary value to be brought to school. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items.

### **Lunchroom/Playground Expectations**

All students will follow the school-wide behavior expectations, as outlined earlier, on the playground and in the cafeteria. These behaviors will be taught and expected.

- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
- Use equipment properly
- Use acceptable language
- Stay in assigned area
- Show respect to others
- Play safely; tackling games are not allowed.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

Under [Minnesota Statute 626.556](#), persons in designated professional occupations are mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

### **Media Center**

The Media Center provides students with essential information and purposeful activities, and implements the goals of the total education program. A Media Specialist and an assistant are responsible for directing the media program, including the multimedia computer stations and computer lab. There are over 14,000 books plus audio-visual and computer software in our collection with a computerized check out and card catalog. Students, staff and parents use the Media Center's materials and facilities for study and leisure.

Students are required to pay for any damaged or lost books.

### **Medications**

If it is necessary for your student to take medication in school, please contact the health office to obtain a form which gives authorization to administer medication by school personnel. This form must be filled out by both you and your physician. Medication will not be administered without this authorization. This includes non-prescription drugs like aspirin or Tylenol. Any medications must be in their own original prescription container, not in an envelope, plastic bag, etc. Medications must be turned into the health office and not carried around school. Please call the school district nurse (952.491.8104) or building health specialist (952.491.8504) with questions regarding medications.

### **Message to Classroom Teachers**

One of our most important jobs is to make sure each child gets where they need to go at the end of the day. We need to be efficient in the way we receive and deliver messages regarding end-of-the-day changes to classroom teachers. Anytime you need to make changes to your child's end-of-the-day schedule (an early pick up time or a different destination), you must notify the school office by phone call, email or note. Many times, the notes you send to the classroom teacher never leave the child's backpack. Also, if you email or leave a voicemail for the classroom teacher and there is a substitute teacher, those messages may not be retrieved.

If you need to make changes after the school day has started, call the office (952-491-8505) before 3:00 pm. Between 3:00 and 3:10, office staff complete an end of day change form to be delivered to the classrooms so that both the student and the teacher are aware of the changes. While we will try, we cannot promise that messages received after 3:10 will get to the teachers.

### **Newsletter**

The *Hilltop News* is sent home by e-mail weekly with school information. All e-mail addresses are updated through the parent Family Access account and are the responsibility of the parent.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE (EOE)/CIVIL RIGHTS INFORMATION**

The District does not discriminate in any manner on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability in the full utilization of or benefit from the educational institution or the services rendered thereby to any person in violation of Minnesota Statutes Section 363A.13. The District will ensure physical and program access for disabled persons in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Section 363A.13.

The District does not, on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age, (1) refuse to hire or to maintain a system of employment which unreasonably excludes a person seeking employment, (2) discharge an employee, or (3) discriminate against a person

with respect to hiring, tenure, compensation, terms, upgrading, conditions, facilities, or privileges of employment, in violation of Minnesota Statutes Section 363A.08.

The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational program or activity which it operates, in admission to such programs, or in employment. The District is required by Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106 not to discriminate in such a manner.

The District does not discriminate on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 and 34 C.F.R. Part 104. The District does not discriminate in admission to or access to, or treatment or employment in, its program or activity on the basis of disability.

The following persons have been designated to coordinate and handle inquiries regarding the District's nondiscrimination policies including Title IX, Section 504/ADAAA and human rights.

Emily Rustman  
5901 Sunnyfield Rd. E. Minnetrista, MN 55364  
952-491-8031

Westonka Policies specifically pertaining to Civil Rights include 4220 Employee Sex Nondiscrimination; 4108 Employee Disability Nondiscrimination; 5220 Student Sex Nondiscrimination; and 5108 Student Disability Nondiscrimination. Copies of these policies are available at the school office or on the district website, [westonka.k12.mn.us](http://westonka.k12.mn.us)>About Us>School Board>Policy Manual.

Further information on this discrimination statement can be obtained from the Office of Civil Rights or the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

### **Outside Doors**

All outside doors on the building are locked during the school day from 8:50 AM - 3:35 PM, except for the west entrance Door 15S in the front of the school. They can be opened from the inside for emergency reasons. **All visitors, entering the building must use the main entrance and sign in at the office.**

The front west school entrance door is open from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm. Adventure Club pickup is through Door (12E) by the Early Learning Center.

### **Parking**

Parking is only permitted in designated areas during the school day. Cars may park in front of the school, please do not park in the bus lot. Please also remember that you must have a handicap sticker to park in the handicap areas.

### **Peanut/tree nut Allergies**

In any given school year, we have a number of students and staff with peanut allergies or tree nut allergies (almonds, walnuts, cashews, etc.)

In an effort to keep our students and staff safe, we ask that you:

- Frequently remind your students not to share any of their lunches or snacks,
- Check with the school nurse if you would like to bring a snack for a class party,
- Bring treats and snacks that are peanut and nut free.

### **Permission Form for Field Trips and Dutch Lake Property Visits**

At the beginning of the year, a permission form for field trips and visiting of the Westonka Environmental Learning Center Property will be given to parents to sign. This form also includes directory information and bus rules and regulations.

### **Personal Property**

The school or bus company is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items. Children should not bring electronics, trading cards, toys or other personal property to school. The school day is for instruction, and time will not be taken out of the day to deal with lost, broken or stolen items. Any personal property items will be confiscated and kept in the office for a parent/guardian to pick up. Thank you for your cooperation. The school will not be responsible for personal items.

### **Pesticide Application Notice**

Several health and safety-related notices are available on the district website [www.westonka.k12.mn.us](http://www.westonka.k12.mn.us) under Contact Us Forms. Topics include asbestos management, indoor air quality and the use of pesticides. Hard copies of these notices are also available in all Westonka school buildings. Parents will be notified prior to pesticide applications and an estimated schedule of pesticide applications, if planned, will be available for review at the school main office. Parents may specifically request individual prior notice of pesticide applications by contacting the district office at 952-491-8007.

### **Pictures**

Our school contracts annually to have pictures taken of each child early in the school year. Information regarding prices and date is distributed through e-mail, website and newsletter. Pictures are also taken in the fall and spring. Picture purchase is optional.

### **Pledge of Allegiance** (Policy #5310)

The Westonka Board of Education has mandated that each school recite the pledge of allegiance regularly in each classroom. We do this through morning announcements. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the pledge of allegiance for any personal reason may elect not to do so. Students must respect another person's right to make that choice.

### **PTA**

Cooperation between home and school is key to our students' success. The Parent - Teacher Association plays a vital part in involving parents in school through a variety of activities and regularly scheduled meetings serving the needs of students, teachers, and parents. Watch for specific information about this year's PTA. There are opportunities for everyone to be involved through the PTA.

### **Recess**

Students go outside for recess with adult monitors at all times. It is extremely important that the students are dressed for the weather, especially the winter elements. We recommend hats, gloves, snow pants, and boots for winter. Students are only allowed to stay indoors for recess if there is a medical note by a certified doctor with limited outdoor requirements.

Students will go outside until the temperature or wind chill is at or below -10 degrees.

### **Release of Students at Day's End**

All students are expected to board their assigned buses, the parent pickup line or attend Adventure Club at the end of the day unless they have a note from parent/guardian with other directions.

Students who wish to ride a bus other than their own must bring a note to their classroom teacher. The note should include which bus should be taken, the drop off spot, and the parent signature. If a note is not brought to school, the child will be sent home on his/her regular bus. Classroom teachers will then bring the note to the receptionist for a bus pass.

### **Release of Student During the Day**

When you wish to have your student dismissed early, it is necessary for the parent to come to the office to check the student out. No child will be released without checking in the office. Any restrictions on who



may pick up or contact a student at school must be indicated on the student's emergency card or presented in writing to the office.

If a person other than the parent guardian is picking up the child, a note must accompany the child to release the child to this individual.

### **Report Cards**

Students in Kindergarten through 4th grade will receive a report card two times a year to review the progress made by students. The progress is based on the district learner outcomes for each learning area and specific goals. Report Cards are posted on the Family Access site.

### **School Age Child Care (Adventure Club)**

Westonka District offers a quality school age child care program, Westonka Adventure Club, that meets right here at Hilltop. Our goal is to conveniently and affordably meet the needs of parents in District #277. Children in Preschool through grade 4 are served before school, after school, and on school release and vacation days. The program is open from 6:30 AM - 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday and during the summer.

Adventure Club provides a relaxed, trusting atmosphere where children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, and grow in confidence, independence, and respect for themselves and others. A wide variety of individual and group activities are available including art, books, games, dramatic play, crafts, cooking, manipulative toys, sports, computers, outdoor play, carpentry, music, and special field trips. Care is provided by qualified and caring professionals who create a warm, nurturing, and supportive environment for your child. For information regarding fees or other questions, call the Hilltop Adventure Club (491-8553) or the Community Education Office (491-8046).

### **School Hours**

The school day is 9:00 AM to 3:40 PM.

### **School Fees**

School fees are charged per student per grade level. The fees vary based on field trips and expenses for each grade level. All fees need to be paid for students to participate in these activities. Scholarships are available for families that apply for the scholarship and qualify.

### **Search of Student Lockers**

See Appendix A for policy.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The Westonka District has a sexual harassment and violence policy, which applies to all students and staff in school programs, activities or the learning environment. The policy is available from the District Office upon request. Violations should be reported to Emily Rustman, Human Rights Officer, Westonka District, 5901 Sunnyfield Rd. E, Minnetrista, MN 55364.

### **Sexual Offender Notification**

Minnesota state law requires police departments to notify local residents when a convicted adult sexual offender moves into their jurisdiction. In the event that a school building receives such notification, this information will be relayed to current building users and kept on file in the school office. For further information contact the local police department.

### **School Improvement Team**

A School Improvement Team, composed of teachers representing grades and subjects, helps ensure academic excellence. The team looks into ways of improving instruction and focuses on data to give the school direction in teaching and learning.

### **School Property and Books**

Textbooks, books, equipment and other property of the school are very expensive. Students will be required to pay for lost or damaged items.

### **Special Education**

The Westonka District's philosophy is to provide an appropriate educational program for all students, based on their individual needs. Hilltop offers a complete range of services for students with identified special needs. Our special education program is designed to be an integrated part of the entire school. Parents and staff work together in determining which students require special education services. An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is designed by the parents and staff for each of these students. State of Minnesota criteria in the various disabilities areas are used in the identification process. Students with learning disabilities, emotional/social difficulties, speech and language concerns, sensory impairments, physical handicaps or who are mentally handicapped receive services at Hilltop in the classroom and the special education learning center.

Parents who would like to have their child evaluated to determine if they qualify for special education services may do this by making a request in writing and sending it to the principal. This request will then be shared with the Student Strategies Team in the building. This committee consists of regular and special team members and meets regularly for the purpose of recommending educational interventions (including special education child studies) to meet individual needs of students. Parents may meet with the building team to explain their concerns if they wish or a staff person may present their concerns. The building team must respond in a timely fashion to any such request for service consideration.

### **Spirit Wear Fridays**

Every Friday is Spirit Wear Day. We encourage students to wear Hilltop or White Hawks spirit wear, or school colors (red and/or black) on those days. During morning announcements, student names will be randomly drawn, and if those students are wearing spirit wear or colors, they receive a small prize provided by our PTA.

### **Standardized Testing**

Standardized tests (FAST) are administered in Grades K- 4. Results are shared with parents and used to evaluate curriculum and program outcomes.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in reading and mathematics, based on state learning areas, are given in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

The Cognitive Achievement Test (CoGAT) is given to Grades 2 and 4. The CoGAT is used to determine qualification into the Accelerated Math and Reading Programs.

Parents/guardians have a right to not have their student participate in state-required standardized assessments. Minnesota Statutes require the Minnesota Department of Education to provide information about statewide assessments to parents/guardians and include a form to complete if they refuse to have their student participate.

The form at the end of this handbook **needs** to be completed and returned to your building principal if you are requesting to have your child not participate in state-required standardized assessments such as the MCAs.

If you have any questions about opting out of statewide assessments, please contact Mark Femrite, Asst. Supt. of Teaching and Learning at [femrite@westonka.k12.mn.us](mailto:femrite@westonka.k12.mn.us) or 952-491-8002

### **Student Council**

Students in Grade 3 and 4 may run for election to Student Council. Elections are held in the fall in the homeroom classroom. The Student Council is responsible for community outreach including, but not limited to: Food Drive, Toy, Hat and Mitten Drive, and direct service oriented projects throughout the school year.

### **Student Placement Requests**

Parents may participate in giving input on their child's learning style every year. Requests must be in writing before April 1<sup>st</sup> of the preceding school year. A sound, educational reason for this request must be included. Forms are available for these requests. We cannot guarantee all requests can be met because of class size, etc. Teacher requests or student friend placements are NOT honored.

### **Student Records / Data Privacy**

Access to student's records is limited to parents, legal guardians, and professional staff. A parent/guardian who wishes to examine a student's record shall contact the principal to set up an appointment to review the record. Release of student records to an outside source adheres to the district policy. Limited personal information about students may be released or made public without the consent of parent/guardian if it is designated as student directory information. Parent/guardian may request directory information not be published by submitting a written request to the District Office.

### **Telephone**

All classrooms are equipped with telephones. Students' use of the phone should be for emergencies only. Arrangements for after school activities and visiting friends should be made outside of school time. Phone messages to students should be made before 12:00 PM to insure they can be delivered.

Messages to students about changing after school arrangements should be directed to the school office and not left on the teacher's voicemail. Teachers can normally be reached in the morning from 7:50 AM - 8:30 AM. Each staff member also has a voice mailbox that can receive messages and may provide information about the class activities. Please give staff at least 24 hours to return phone messages.

### **Tobacco Free (Policy #1511)**

Tobacco possession and use of tobacco by students, staff, visitors, and tenants is strictly prohibited in school buildings and vehicles, on school property, and at school or district-sponsored events or activities which are under district jurisdiction. For the purposes of this policy, tobacco included all forms of tobacco, including but not limited to chewing tobacco, cigarettes, cigars, any product containing nicotine or used for the purpose of smoking, "water vapor cigarettes", electronic cigarettes and look-alike products.

### **Valuables**

We discourage students from bringing any valuables from home to Hilltop. Students should only bring school curriculum to Hilltop. We cannot ensure the safety of valuable items. Hilltop will not be responsible for any items brought from home. (Please see Page 11: Personal Property)

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are always welcome at Hilltop. A volunteer must make prior arrangements with a teacher before visiting a classroom. All volunteers must check in at the office before going to specific rooms in the building. However, please note that all custody agreements will be followed.

Visitors and volunteers must wear identification nametags from the office. School board policy requires that all staff also wear an identification badge. A Background Check Form must be processed and on file in the office.

We do not allow visitors to come to school just to spend time with a child, friend, or grandchild – unless it is a day arranged by the school. Please schedule this time outside of the school day. All visitors must use the Hilltop appointment scheduler found on the website.

### **Walking to/from school**

For safety reasons we discourage students from walking to and from school. However, students who wish to walk to school are required to have written permission from their parents/guardians. An exception will be the Sunnybrook neighborhood. Crossing guards will be available on Game Farm Road to help children cross safely.

### **Weapons**

#### **WEAPONS (Policy #1512)**

No student or employee shall possess a weapon when in the school building, on school grounds, or on any school-sponsored trip or activity. “Possession” refers to having a weapon on one’s person or in an area subject to one’s control including lockers and vehicles on school property or at a school trip/activity.

“Weapons” are identified in three categories:

1. Any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; air guns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nunchucks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.
2. Any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or non-functional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.
3. Articles designed for other purposes (i.e., lasers, or laser pointers, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.), to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

### **Exceptions**

The exception listed below is stated for the purposes of protecting those that fall into the specific exception listed. As with any exception, the administration reserves the right to carry out disciplinary action if other facts and/or evidence is revealed in the investigative process.

A student who finds a weapon on the way to school or in a school location, or a student who discovers that he or she accidentally has a weapon in his or her possession, and takes the weapon immediately to the principal’s office shall not be considered to possess a weapon. If it would be impractical or dangerous to take the weapon to the principal’s office, a student shall not be considered to possess a weapon if he or she immediately turns the weapon over to an administrator, teacher or head coach or immediately notifies an administrator, teacher or head coach of the weapon’s location.

Minimum corrective action shall include initial suspension for five days, confiscation of weapon, notification of police, parent notification, and may include referral to the core discipline committee for possible further consequences.

Pursuant to Minnesota law, a student who brings a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school will be expelled for one year. The school board may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

### **Website**

The Westonka School District has an extensive website with information about each school and other district programs. You can find it at [www.westonka.k12.mn.us](http://www.westonka.k12.mn.us)

### **Westonka Foundation**

The Westonka Foundation is an independent, nonprofit corporation that functions solely to fund educational programs and projects not being funded through the district budget. More information on foundation events and support is available at 491-8267.

### **Wolf Ridge**

Students in grade 4, along with a group of staff and parents, spend an exciting week at the Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Finland, Minnesota. They spend the week learning about our environment and have an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities including canoeing, rope course, tree study, animal tracking, wall climbing, etc. Students and parents may participate in fund raising activities to cover the cost of the trip or may contribute money to the students account at any time prior to the trip.

Students must be enrolled at Hilltop prior to Wolf Ridge to be eligible for the program. Money raised for Wolf Ridge is not refundable, as this money becomes part of the grade level quota for the year. Students entering Hilltop during third or fourth grade will be required to contribute an extra fee towards the trip.

The total cost for attending Wolf Ridge is \$450/student. Students may raise this money through the fall fundraiser or through donations into the student's account.

### **Yearbook**

Each year the PTA sponsors an annual pictorial account of the year with pictures of all the students and many of the activities from the year. All students receive a yearbook as it is part of the school fees.

## Appendix

### HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE POLICY 4110

#### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.

#### II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The policy of the School District is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability. The School District prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.
- B. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel harasses a student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel through conduct or communication based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability, as defined by this policy. (For purposes of this policy, school district personnel includes school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the district.)
- C. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel of the School District inflicts, threatens to inflict, or attempts to inflict violence upon any student, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.
- D. The School District will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment or violence based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel who is found to have violated this policy.

#### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Assault" is:
  - 1. an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death;
  - 2. the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another; or
  - 3. the threat to do bodily harm to another with present ability to carry out the threat.
- B. "Harassment" prohibited by this policy consists of physical or verbal conduct, including, but not limited to, electronic communications, relating to an individual's or group of individuals' race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability when the conduct:
  - 1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment;
  - 2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or

3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.
- C. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- D. Protected Classifications; Definitions
  2. "Disability" means any condition or characteristic that renders a person a disabled person. A disabled person is any person who:
    - a. has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment which materially limits one or more major life activities;
    - b. has a record of such an impairment; or
    - c. is regarded as having such an impairment.
  3. "Familial status" means the condition of one or more minors being domiciled with:
    - a. their parent or parents or the minor's legal guardian; or
    - b. the designee of the parent or parents or guardian with the written permission of the parent or parents or guardian. The protections afforded against harassment on the basis of family status apply to any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of an individual who has not attained the age of majority.
  4. "Marital status" means whether a person is single, married, remarried, divorced, separated, or a surviving spouse and, in employment cases, includes protection against harassment on the basis of the identity, situation, actions, or beliefs of a spouse or former spouse.
  5. "National origin" means the place of birth of an individual or of any of the individual's lineal ancestors.
  6. "Sex" includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, and disabilities related to pregnancy or childbirth.
  7. "Sexual orientation" means having or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person or having or being perceived as having an orientation for such attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness. "Sexual orientation" does not include a physical or sexual attachment to children by an adult.
  8. "Status with regard to public assistance" means the condition of being a recipient of federal, state, or local assistance, including medical assistance, or of being a tenant receiving federal, state, or local subsidies, including rental assistance or rent supplements.
- E. Sexual Harassment; Definition
  1. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
    - a. submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of employment or an education; or
    - b. submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment or education; or
    - c. that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or education, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment or educational environment.
  2. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
    - a. unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature;
    - b. unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;
    - c. unwelcome, sexually motivated, or inappropriate patting, pinching, touching, or physical contact, other than necessary restraint of student(s) by teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel to avoid physical harm to persons or property;

- d. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status;
  - e. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or educational status; or
  - f. unwelcome behavior or words directed at an individual because of sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression.
- E. "Remedial response" means a measure to stop and correct acts of harassment or violence, prevent acts of harassment or violence from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of a student who is the target or victim of acts of harassment or violence.
- G. Sexual Violence; Definition
  - 1. Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof which involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 609.341, includes the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks, or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas.
  - 2. Sexual violence may include, but is not limited to:
    - a. touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another person's intimate parts, whether that person is of the same sex or the opposite sex;
    - b. coercing, forcing, or attempting to coerce or force the touching of anyone's intimate parts;
    - c. coercing, forcing, or attempting to coerce or force sexual intercourse or a sexual act on another; or
    - d. threatening to force or coerce sexual acts, including the touching of intimate parts or intercourse, on another.
- H. Violence; Definition  
Violence prohibited by this policy is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another or group of individuals because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.

#### IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. Any person who believes she or he has been the target or victim of any harassment or violence prohibited by this policy by a student, teacher, administrator, or other School District personnel, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment or violence prohibited by this policy toward a student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate School District official designated by this policy.
- B. The school district encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the principal or building supervisor of each building or available from the school district office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well. A person may report conduct which may constitute harassment or violence anonymously. However, the school district may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses.
- C. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to a school district human rights officer or to the superintendent. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant.
- D. In each school building: The school principal or designee is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy at the building level. Any adult School District personnel who receives a report of harassment or



violence prohibited by this policy shall inform the school principal or designee immediately. The school principal or designee shall ensure that this policy and its procedures, practices, consequences, and sanctions are fairly and fully implemented and shall serve as a primary contact on policy and procedural matters.

- E. A teacher, school administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other school employee shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include acts of harassment or violence. Any such person who witnesses, observes, receives a report of, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute harassment or violence shall make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the harassment or violence and shall inform the building report taker immediately. School district personnel who fail to inform the building report taker of conduct that may constitute harassment or violence or who fail to make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the harassment or violence in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.
- F. Upon receipt of a report that alleges a violation of this policy as described in paragraph III. B above, the school principal or designee must notify the School District Human Rights Officer immediately. The principal or designee may ask the complainant clarifying questions to determine whether the complaint alleges a violation of this policy. The school principal or designee may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. If the complaint alleges a violation of this policy, a written statement of the facts alleged will be forwarded as soon as practicable by the school principal or designee to the Human Rights Officer. If the report was given verbally, the school principal or designee shall personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the Human Rights Officer. Failure to forward a complaint that alleges a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action against the school principal or designee.
- G. In the District: The School District designates the Director of Special Services as the School District Human Rights Officer with responsibility to oversee administration of these procedures and to monitor compliance and to receive reports or complaints of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy. If a complaint involves the Director of Special Services, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent.
- H. The School District shall conspicuously post the name of the Human Rights Officer, including mailing addresses and telephone numbers.
- I. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy will not affect the complainant's or reporter's grades, activities, future employment, or work assignments or educational or work environment.
- J. Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.
- K. Reports of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy are classified as private educational data and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.
- L. The School District will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the School District's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations.
- M. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of violence or harassment is prohibited.
- N. False accusations or reports of violence or harassment against another person are prohibited.
- O. A person who engages in an act of violence or harassment, reprisal, retaliation, or false reporting of violence or harassment, or permits, condones, or tolerates violence or harassment shall be subject to discipline or other remedial responses for that act in accordance with the school district's policies and procedures.  
Consequences for students who commit, or are a party to, prohibited acts of violence or harassment or who engage in reprisal or intentional false reporting may range from remedial responses or positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate violence or harassment or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of violence or harassment may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge.

Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of violence or harassment may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

**V. INVESTIGATION**

- A. By authority of the School District, the Human Rights Officer, within three (3) school days of the receipt of a report or complaint alleging harassment or violence prohibited by this policy, shall undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by School District Officials or by a third party designated by the School District.
- B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.
- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the School District should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.
- D. In addition, the School District may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the target or victim, the complainant(s), students, teachers, administrators or other school district personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged harassment or violence prohibited by this policy.
- E. The alleged perpetrator of the act(s) of harassment or violence shall be allowed the opportunity to present a defense during the investigation or prior to the imposition of discipline or other remedial responses.
- F. The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. The School District Human Rights Officer or his/her designee shall make a written report to the superintendent upon completion of the investigation. If a complaint involves the superintendent, the report will be given to the School Board. The report will include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

**VI. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION**

- A. Upon completion of an investigation that determines that a violation of this policy has occurred, the School District will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, an apology, warning, counseling or training, a change in the behavior intervention plan, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. School District action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, state and federal law and applicable School District policies.
- B. The school district is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school district. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of targets or victims of harassment or violence and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of alleged perpetrators of harassment or violence who have been involved in a reported and confirmed harassment or violence incident of the remedial or disciplinary action taken, to the extent permitted by law.
- C. In order to prevent or respond to acts of harassment or violence committed by or directed against a child with a disability, the school district shall, where determined appropriate by the child's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 team, allow the child's IEP or Section 504 plan to be drafted to address the skills and proficiencies the child

needs as a result of the child's disability to allow the child to respond to or not to engage in acts of harassment or violence.

**VII. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL**

The School District will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel who commits and act of reprisal or who retaliates against any person who asserts, alleges, or makes a good faith report of an alleged violation of this policy, who testifies, assists or participants in an investigation of retaliation or alleged harassment or violence, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to an alleged violation of this policy. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline the individual(s) who engaged in the harassment or violence. Remedial responses to the harassment or violence shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct.

**VIII. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

**IX. HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE AS ABUSE**

- A. Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under Minnesota Statutes Section 626.556 may be applicable.
- B. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the School District from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

**X. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING**

- A. This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students and staff members.
- B. This policy shall be given to each School District employee and independent contractor who regularly interacts with students at the time of initial employment with the school district
- C. This policy shall appear in the student handbook.
- D. The School District will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.
- E. The School District may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent and reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, resourcefulness, and/or sexual abuse prevention.
- F. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

## **HAZING POLICY 5109**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- A. No student, teacher, administrator, coach, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing.
- B. No teacher, administrator, coach, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone or tolerate hazing.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of hazing is prohibited.

- E. False accusations or reports of hazing against a student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee are prohibited.
- F. A person who engages in an act of hazing, reprisal, retaliation, or false reporting of hazing or permits, condones, or tolerates hazing shall be subject to discipline or other remedial responses for that act in accordance with the school district's policies and procedures. Consequences for students who commit, tolerate, or are a party to prohibited acts of hazing may range from remedial responses or positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate hazing or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of hazing may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of hazing may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.
- G. This policy applies to hazing that occurs during and after school hours, on or off school premises or property, at a school functions or activities, or on school transportation..
- H. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.
- I. The school district will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, coach, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to :
  - 1. Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking or placing a harmful substance on the body.
  - 2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  - 3. Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  - 4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.
  - 5. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves a violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations.
- B. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- C. "On school premises or school district property, or at school functions or activities, or on school transportation" means all school district buildings, school grounds, and school property or property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for school district purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, and all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips. School district property also may mean a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting hazing at these locations and events, the school district does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.
- D. "Remedial response" means a measure to stop and correct hazing, prevent hazing from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of a student who is the target or victim of hazing.
- E. "Student" means a student enrolled in a public school or a charter school.

- F. "Student organization" means a group, club or organization having students as its primary members or participants. It includes grade levels, classes, teams, activities or particular school events. A student organization does not have to be an official school organization to come within the terms of this definition.

#### **IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the target or victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. A person may report hazing anonymously. However, the school district may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses.
- B. The school district encourages the reporting party to use the report form available from the principal or building supervisor of each building or available from the school district office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.  
The building principal the principal's designee, or the building supervisor (hereinafter the "building report taker") is the person responsible for receiving reports of hazing at the building level. Any adult school district personnel who receives a report of hazing prohibited by this policy shall inform the building report taker immediately. Any person may report hazing directly to a school district human rights officer or to the superintendent. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant.  
The building report taker shall ensure that this policy and its procedures, practices, consequences, and sanctions are fairly and fully implemented and shall serve as a primary contact on policy and procedural matters.
- C. A teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, and other school employees shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances or events which might include hazing. Any such person who witnesses, observes or receives a report of, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the hazing and shall inform the building report taker immediately. School district personnel who fail to inform the building report taker of conduct that may constitute hazing or who fail to make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the hazing in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of hazing will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, work assignments or educational or work environment.
- E. Reports of hazing are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school district's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations. The building report taker, in conjunction with the responsible authority, shall be responsible for keeping and regulating access to any report of hazing and the record of any resulting investigation.
- F. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school district's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

#### **V. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION**

- A. Within three (3) school days of the receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, the school district shall undertake or authorize an investigation by school district officials or a third party designated by the school district.
- B. The building report taker or other school district officials may take immediate steps, at their discretion, to protect the target or victim of the hazing, the complainant, the reporter, and students or others pending completion of an investigation of alleged hazing prohibited by this policy.

- C. The alleged perpetrator of the hazing shall be allowed the opportunity to present a defense during the investigation or prior to the imposition of discipline or other remedial responses.
- D. Upon completion of an investigation that determines that hazing has occurred, the school district will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act and applicable school district policies and regulations.
- E. The school district is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school district. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students who are targets or victims of hazing and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of alleged perpetrators of hazing who have been involved in a reported and confirmed hazing incident of the remedial or disciplinary action taken, to the extent permitted by law.
- F. In order to prevent or to respond to hazing committed by or directed against a child with a disability, the school district shall, where determined appropriate by the child's individualized education program (IEP) team or Section 504 team, allow the child's IEP or Section 504 plan to be drafted to address the skills and proficiencies the child needs as a result of the child's disability to allow the child to respond to or not to engage in hazing.

**VI. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL**

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, coach, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district who commits and act of reprisal or who retaliates against any person who asserts, alleges or makes a good faith report of alleged hazing, who provides information about hazing, who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation of alleged hazing, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such hazing. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment or intentional disparate treatment. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline the individual(s) who engaged in the prohibited conduct. Remedial responses to the prohibited conduct shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct.

**VII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY**

- A. This policy shall appear in each school's student handbook and in each school's building and staff handbooks.
- B. The school district will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.

## **BULLYING PROHIBITION POLICY 5140**

**I. PURPOSE**

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate students in a safe environment. The school district cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the school district and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of the school district in its normal operations, it is the school district's intent to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- A. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, or an individual adult or group of adults, is expressly prohibited on school district property or at school-related functions. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to individuals who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any individual student whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of the student, other students, or employees. The misuse of technology including, but not limited to, teasing, intimidating, defaming, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district by sending or posting e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings, including blogs, also may constitute an act of bullying regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off school district property and/or with or without the use of school district resources.
- B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited.
- E. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are prohibited.
- F. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, or false reporting of bullying or permits, condones, or tolerates bullying shall be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with school district's policies and procedures. The school district may take into account the following factors:
  - 1. The developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved;
  - 2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature of the behavior;
  - 3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior;
  - 4. The relationship between the parties involved; and
  - 5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.
- G. The school district will act to investigate all complaints of bullying and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, contractor, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.
  - 1. The school district may exclude or add certain individuals as being subject to this policy, based on the amount of their student contact.
  - 2. The school district may remove certain contractors/volunteers from this policy if these individuals have little or no contact with students to avoid unnecessary application of the policy.

### III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the definitions included in this section apply.

- A. "Bullying" means intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and:
  - 1. an actual or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or
  - 2. materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.

The term, "bullying," specifically includes cyberbullying as defined in this policy.

- B. “Cyberbullying” means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device. The term applies to prohibited conduct which occurs on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, on school transportation, or on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, or off school premises to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts student learning or the school environment.
- C. “Immediately” means as soon as possible but in no event longer than *two full school days*.
- D. “Intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct” means, but is not limited to, conduct that does the following:
  - 1. Causes physical harm to a student or a student’s property or causes a student to be in reasonable fear of harm to person or property;
  - 2. Under Minnesota common law, violates a student’s reasonable expectation of privacy, defames a student, or constitutes intentional infliction of emotional distress against a student; or
  - 3. Is directed at any student or students, including those based on a person’s actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, immigration status, sex, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation including gender identity and expression, academic status related to student performance, disability, or status with regard to public assistance, age, or any additional characteristic defined in the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA). However, prohibited conduct need not be based on any particular characteristic defined in this paragraph or the MHRA.
- E. “On school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation” means all school district buildings, school grounds, and school property or property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for school district purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, and all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips. School district property also may mean a student’s walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting bullying at these locations and events, the school district does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.
- F. “Prohibited conduct” means bullying or cyberbullying as defined in this policy or retaliation or reprisal for asserting, alleging, reporting, or providing information about such conduct or knowingly making a false report about bullying.
- G. “Remedial response” means a measure to stop and correct prohibited conduct, prevent prohibited conduct from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of a student who is the target or victim of prohibited conduct.
- H. “Student” means a student enrolled in a public school or a charter school.

#### **IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE**

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. A student



may report bullying anonymously. However, the school district's ability to take action against an alleged perpetrator based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.

- B. The school district encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the principal of each building or available from the school district office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.
- C. The building principal or the principal's designee or the building supervisor is the person responsible for receiving reports of bullying at the building level. Any person may report bullying directly to a school district human rights officer or the superintendent.
- D. A teacher, school administrator, contractor, or other school employee shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include bullying. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall inform the building principal immediately.
- E. Reports of bullying are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.
- F. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant's or reporter's future employment, grades, or work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- G. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school district's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

**V. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION**

- A. Within three days of the receipt of a complaint or report of bullying or other prohibited conduct, the school district shall undertake or authorize an investigation by the building report taker or a third party designated by the school district.
- B. The building report taker or other appropriate school district officials may take immediate steps, at their discretion, to protect the target or victim of the bullying or other prohibited conduct, the complainant, the reporter, and students, or others, pending completion of an investigation of the bullying or other prohibited conduct, consistent with applicable law.
- C. The alleged perpetrator of the bullying or other prohibited conduct shall be allowed the opportunity to present a defense during the investigation or prior to the imposition of discipline or other remedial responses.
- D. Upon completion of an investigation that determines that bullying or other prohibited conduct has occurred, the school district will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited conduct. Remedial responses to the bullying or other prohibited conduct shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct and shall take into account the factors specified in Section II.F. of this policy. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements; applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act; the Student Discipline Policy 5150, school district policies; and applicable regulations.
- D. The school district is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school district. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students who are targets of bullying or other prohibited conduct and the parents(s) or guardian(s) of alleged perpetrators of bullying or other prohibited conduct who have been involved in a reported and confirmed bullying incident of the remedial or disciplinary action taken, to the extent permitted by law.

- E. In order to prevent or respond to bullying or other prohibited conduct committed by or directed against a child with a disability, the school district shall, when determined appropriate by the child's individualized education program (IEP) team or Section 504 team, allow the child's IEP or Section 504 plan to be drafted to address the skills and proficiencies the child needs as a result of the child's disability to allow the child to respond to or not to engage in bullying or other prohibited conduct.

**VI. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL**

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

**VII. TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

- A. The school district shall discuss this policy with school personnel and volunteers and provide appropriate training to school district personnel regarding this policy. The school district shall establish a training cycle for school personnel to occur during a period not to exceed every three school years. Newly employed school personnel must receive the training within the first year of their employment with the school district. The school district or a school administrator may accelerate the training cycle or provide additional training based on a particular need or circumstance. This policy shall be included in employee handbooks, training materials, and publications on school rules, procedures, and standards of conduct, which materials shall also be used to publicize this policy.
- B. The school district shall require ongoing professional development, consistent with Minn. Stat. § 122A.60, to build the skills of all school personnel who regularly interact with students to identify, prevent, and appropriately address bullying and other prohibited conduct. Such professional development includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - 1. Developmentally appropriate strategies both to prevent and to immediately and effectively intervene to stop prohibited conduct;
  - 2. The complex dynamics affecting a perpetrator, target, and witnesses to prohibited conduct;
  - 3. Research on prohibited conduct, including specific categories of students at risk for perpetrating or being the target or victim of bullying or other prohibited conduct in school;
  - 4. The incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
  - 5. Internet safety and cyberbullying.
- C. The school district annually will provide education and information to students regarding bullying, including information regarding this school district policy prohibiting bullying, the harmful effects of bullying, and other applicable initiatives to prevent bullying and other prohibited conduct.
- D. The administration of the school district is directed to implement programs and other initiatives to prevent bullying, to respond to bullying in a manner that does not stigmatize the target or victim, and to make resources or referrals to resources available to targets or victims of bullying.
- E. The administration is encouraged to provide developmentally appropriate instruction and is directed to review programmatic instruction to determine if adjustments are necessary to help students identify and prevent or reduce bullying and other prohibited conduct, to value diversity in school and society, to

develop and improve students' knowledge and skills for solving problems, managing conflict, engaging in civil discourse, and recognizing, responding to, and reporting bullying or other prohibited conduct, and to make effective prevention and intervention programs available to students.

The administration must establish strategies for creating a positive school climate and use evidence-based social-emotional learning to prevent and reduce discrimination and other improper conduct.

The administration is encouraged, to the extent practicable, to take such actions as it may deem appropriate to accomplish the following:

1. Engage all students in creating a safe and supportive school environment;
  2. Partner with parents and other community members to develop and implement prevention and intervention programs;
  3. Engage all students and adults in integrating education, intervention, and other remedial responses into the school environment;
  4. Train student bystanders to intervene in and report incidents of bullying and other prohibited conduct to the schools' primary contact person;
  5. Teach students to advocate for themselves and others;
  6. Prevent inappropriate referrals to special education of students who may engage in bullying or other prohibited conduct; and
  7. Foster student collaborations that, in turn, foster a safe and supportive school climate.
- F. The school district may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent or reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, and resourcefulness.
- G. The school district shall inform affected students and their parents of rights they may have under state and federal data practices laws to obtain access to data related to an incident and their right to contest the accuracy or completeness of the data. The school district may accomplish this requirement by inclusion of all or applicable parts of its protection and privacy of pupil records policy (See MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515) in the student handbook.

## **VIII. NOTICE**

- A. The school district will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents or guardians, and staff, and this policy shall appear in the student and parent handbook.
- B. This policy or a summary thereof must be conspicuously posted in the administrative offices of the school district and the office of each school.
- C. This policy must be given to each school employee and independent contractor who regularly interacts with students at the time of initial employment with the school district.
- D. Notice of the rights and responsibilities of students and their parents under this policy must be included in the student discipline policy (See MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506) distributed to parents at the beginning of each school year.
- E. This policy shall be available to all parents and other school community members in an electronic format in the language appearing on the school district's or a school's website.
- F. The school district shall provide an electronic copy of its most recently amended

policy to the Commissioner of Education.

**IX. POLICY REVIEW**

To the extent practicable, the school board shall, on a cycle consistent with other school district policies, review and revise this policy. The policy shall be made consistent with Minn. Stat. § 121A.031 and other applicable law. Revisions shall be made in consultation with students, parents, and community organizations.

**SEARCH OF STUDENT LOCKERS POLICY 5156**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide for a safe and healthy educational environment by enforcing the school district's policies against contraband specifically with regard to lockers.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

**A. Lockers and Personal Possessions Within a Locker.**

Pursuant to Minnesota statutes, school lockers are the property of the school district. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers may be conducted by school officials for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The personal possessions of students within a school locker may be searched only when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. The search of personal possessions will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness. As soon as practicable after the search of a student's personal possessions, the school officials must provide notice of the search to students whose lockers were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.

**B. A violation of this policy occurs when students use lockers for unauthorized purposes or to store contraband. A violation of this policy occurs when students carry contraband in their personal possessions within a locker.**

**III. DEFINITIONS**

**A. "Contraband" means any unauthorized item possession of which is prohibited by school district policy and/or law. It includes but is not limited to weapons and look-alikes, alcoholic beverages, controlled substances and look-alikes, overdue books and other materials belonging to the school district, and stolen property.**

**B. "Personal possessions" includes but is not limited to purses, backpacks, bookbags, packages, clothing, and electronic devices, but are not limited to cell phones, computers, external storage devices and other mobile devices.**

**C. "Reasonable suspicion" means that a school official has grounds to believe that the search will result in evidence of a violation of school district policy, rules, and/or law. Reasonable suspicion may be based on a school official's personal observation, a report from a student, parent or staff member, a student's suspicious behavior, a student's age and past history or record of conduct both in and out of the school context, or other reliable sources of information.**

**D. "Reasonable scope" means that the scope and/or intrusiveness of the search is reasonably related to the objectives of the search. Factors to consider in determining what is reasonable include the seriousness of the suspected infraction, the reliability of the information, the necessity of acting without delay, the existence of exigent circumstances necessitating an immediate search and further investigation (e.g. to prevent violence, serious and immediate risk of harm or destruction of evidence), and the age of the student.**

**E. "Weapon" means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nunchucks; throwing**

stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.

**IV. PROCEDURES**

Portions of this policy may be printed in the student handbook and shall be disseminated to parents and students in the way other policies of general application to students are disseminated. The school district shall provide a copy of this policy to a student the first time the student is given use of a locker.

**V. DIRECTIVES AND GUIDELINES**

School administration may establish reasonable directives and guidelines which address specific needs of the school district, such as use of tape in lockers, standards of cleanliness and care, posting of pictures and posters which may constitute sexual harassment, etc.

**VI. SEIZURE OF CONTRABAND**

If a search yields contraband, school officials will seize the item and, where appropriate, turn it over to legal officials for ultimate disposition.

**VII. VIOLATIONS**

A student found to have violated this policy and/or the directives and guidelines implementing it shall be subject to discipline in accordance with the school district's Student Discipline Policy, which may include suspension, exclusion, or expulsion, and the student may, when appropriate, be referred to legal officials.

## Statewide Assessments:

### Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

#### Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#). These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K–12 districts and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education and statewide assessments give educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

#### Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)

MCA and the alternate assessments (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)/Alternate MCA) are the annual assessments in reading, mathematics and science that measure a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards.

#### ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English, based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

### Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments helps families see a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students can use MCA results:

- For Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) in grade 10.
- For course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.

English learners who take the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements, have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

### Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions on how to use money and resources to support all students.

### Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the form below. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

## Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student would not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Since all eligible students are included in some calculations even when they do not participate, school and district accountability results are impacted. This may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

Explore the  
[Statewide  
Testing page](#)  
for more  
information.

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any additional consequences for not participating.

(education.mn.gov > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

### Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1% of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by the beginning of each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

## Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade in School: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Refusal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting your student out of this school year:**

☐ MCA/MTAS Reading

☐ MCA/Alternate MCA Science

☐ MCA/MTAS Mathematics

☐ ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Contact your school or district for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20\_\_\_\_ to 20\_\_\_\_ school year.)