



Parent and Student Handbook

Our Parent and Student Handbook has been prepared to help you become better acquainted with many of the policies and operations of Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools. Please read it carefully and become familiar with its contents. Students are responsible for knowing the guidelines and policies. Each school year parents/guardians will be required to sign off that they have reviewed the following policies, procedures and required notices included in this handbook.

Important District Policies

Please read the following document that contains important district policy information: [Click here.](#)

PLSAS Elementary Parent and Student Handbook

Arrival/ Dismissal Time For School

Five Hawks Elementary School	8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Glendale Elementary School	9:20 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.
Hamilton Ridge Elementary School	9:20 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.
Jeffers Pond Elementary School	9:20 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.
La ola del lago at Grainwood	9:20 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.
Redtail Ridge Elementary School	8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
WestWood Elementary School & SAGE Academy	9:20 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.

Dismissal During the Day

Parents/guardians are asked to send a note with their child prior to appointments and vacations, etc. For your child's safety, please include the name of the person picking up your child if it is someone other than the parent/guardian (they may be asked to show ID). Whoever picks up the child will be required to sign the child out of the office. A secretary will contact the child through the teacher. **Please do not go to the classroom to pick-up your child.**

Excused Absences

Parents/guardians are required to notify the office via a note or telephone call prior to 10:00 a.m. on or before the day their child will be absent for any reason.

Parents/guardians are asked to call, send a note or an email with their child prior to appointments and vacations, etc. Parents/guardians will be asked to show an ID prior to taking a child from school property. Dismissal for a student will be from the school office only.

An absence will be excused if the parent calls or emails the school or provides a written note which is signed by a parent/guardian and states that the absence is a result of one of the following conditions:

- 1) Illness, injury, or hospitalization of the student. Students are allowed up to 10 total absences a year, or 5 days in a row, due to illness. A doctor's note must be provided if your child is gone from school more than 10 total days over the school year, or 5 days in a row. Absences that are not counted in the 10-day maximum include chronic or long-term illnesses, which are verified by a doctor's signed statement and authorized by the principal.
- 2) Medical, dental, and other professional appointments, which cannot be scheduled outside school hours. This does not include haircuts, etc.
- 3) Family emergency, serious illness in family, or a death in the family.
- 4) Religious or cultural holidays or observances as approved by the administration.
- 5) Mandatory court appearances.
- 6) Conditions beyond the student's control. Examples are: automobile accident or delayed school bus due to inclement weather.
- 7) Pre-approved family trip/vacation. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule such trips during school breaks and vacations. Students are allowed a maximum of 5 days of preapproved family trips/vacations. Absences beyond the 5-day maximum are unexcused absences.
- 8) Compliance with any provision of a disabled student's Individual Education Plan, Section 504 Accommodation Plan, or Individual Health Plan.

Unexcused Tardies and Absences

Examples are:

- 1) Running late
- 2) Oversleeping
- 3) A malfunctioning alarm clock
- 4) Missing the bus
- 5) Shopping
- 6) Visiting friends
- 7) A haircut
- 8) At home or outing with parents
- 9) Non-district sporting activities

Extended Absences

1. Parents should be aware that according to Minnesota State Law, a student who is absent for fifteen (15) consecutive days must be withdrawn from the school enrollment.
2. No credit is earned during the time a student is not enrolled.
3. **Students under 18 years of age who have any combination of 7 unexcused absences will result in a referral to Scott County Human Services for educational neglect.**
4. If the student has suffered an extended illness and required work has not been completed, the class record will show an "Incomplete." A grade will be assigned after the work is completed according to the make-up policy guidelines.
5. If a student experiences an extended, long-term illness of 15 consecutive school days, he/she may be eligible for homebound instruction. Parents should contact the school social worker or the principal to make these arrangements.

Family Activities

We understand that students may need to be absent from school occasionally to participate in family activities/vacations. However, family activities/vacations which cause students to be absent more than 5 school days are discouraged and **will result in unexcused absences**. Your child's academic progress depends upon his/her consistent attendance and subsequent access to all educational programming. Although missed assignments can be completed, it is extremely difficult to replicate instructional activities, discussions, small group work, etc. that have taken place while your child was absent from school.

Please notify your child's classroom teacher and the school office well ahead of time when you know your child will be absent due to a planned family activity/vacation. Your child will be expected to complete all homework upon his/her return.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. Hold your child accountable for regular attendance and for following the attendance policy.
2. Limit absences by scheduling appointments, vacations, etc. after school or on non-school days.
3. Notify the office by phone call, email or in writing of an extended absence before the absence. Contact the principal to discuss an extended absence.
4. Students must be present for state and district mandated testing dates such as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAIII), and the MAP tests. Testing date windows are published on the district calendar.
5. Contact the office, social worker, and/or teacher if you have any concerns about your child's attendance.

Bicycles, Skateboards and Rollerblades

Skateboards and rollerblades should not be used on school property. Please see the specific elementary school website for expectations around bicycle use.

Birthdays

Due to allergies, socioeconomic and nutritional concerns, we ask that students refrain from bringing in treats on their birthday. You may honor your student by purchasing a "birthday book" for the Media Center or make a donation to the Prior Lake-Savage Area Education Foundation in your child's name.

We ask that students do not bring birthday invitations to school. For the respect of the feelings of students who have not been invited to the party, we ask that you deliver these by some other means. We also ask that students not give gifts of any kind to others at school.

Book and Equipment Care

Textbooks, library books, and many other learning materials are supplied free to all students with the understanding that they will be returned in good condition. It is the student's responsibility to take proper care of these instructional materials.

An overdue notice from the media center will be sent home with your child when a library book has not been returned on time. If the book cannot be located, media center staff will inform parents of the cost to replace the lost item. If library books or classroom textbooks are torn, defaced with crayon or marker, or otherwise damaged, a fine in accordance with the amount of damage will be assessed. Families will be assessed a replacement fee for lost or damaged textbooks.

Building Security

The main office will be open during school hours. All other doors will be locked when not in use by students and staff. Parents of Kids' Company students will have access to the Kids' Company entrance to the building through use of a code on a keypad. All employees will wear district name badges. Volunteers and visitors are required to sign-in at the main office and wear a visitor badge when in the building. Adults who are not wearing an appropriate identification badge will be stopped by staff and questioned about their purpose in the building. Students will participate in and practice the following drills throughout the school year: bus evacuation drills, fire drills, a tornado drill, and five lockdown drills. Security procedures are also in place should students ever need evacuation to another site.

Care/ School Community

All elementary schools utilize the C.A.R.E.S. acronym, which describes social skills children need in order to become successful academically and socially.

C – Cooperation

A – Assertion

R – Responsibility

E – Empathy

S – Self-Control

All elementary schools use the Responsive Classroom philosophy to create a safe, respectful and responsible school culture. The Responsive Classroom is an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to balance the teaching of academic skills with the teaching of social skills as an integral part of everyday school life. It is an approach to curriculum, classroom organization and management, and parental involvement grounded in the rich theory of child development, learning and developmental psychology.

The Components of Responsive Classroom include:

- **Morning Meeting-** a daily routine that builds community, creates a positive climate for learning and reinforces academic and social skills.
- **Rules and Logical Consequences-** a clear and consistent approach to discipline that fosters responsibility and self-control. Classrooms work together to create, teach, and practice classroom rules. Logical consequences help children regain control, make amends, and get back on track when they forget or choose not to take care of themselves or each other.

Three Kinds of Logical Consequences are:

- o Take a Break
- o Loss of Privilege
- o Apology of Action (You break it, You fix it)
- **Academic choice-** an approach to giving children choices in their learning that helps them become invested, self-motivated learners. Academic choice allows children to work at their own ability level and be appropriately challenged.
- **Guided Discovery-** a format for introducing materials that encourages inquiry, heightens interest, and teaches care of the school environment.
- **Reaching Out to Parents/Guardians-** School staff strive to create a partnership between school and home by working to create strong relationships with parents and guardians through newsletters, web pages, phone calls, email, conferences, and invitations to classroom and school events.
- **Classroom Organization-** strategies for arranging materials, furniture, and displays to encourage independence, promote caring, and maximize learning.

Self-discipline and consideration for others is encouraged and reinforced at school. Maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning for the individual child and for all children is a priority for everyone who works with the children at this school.

PBIS – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

PBIS – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is a school-wide student management system that works hand in hand with Responsive Classroom. PBIS impacts the entire student body by acknowledging positive behavior and establishing a school culture where clear expectations support positive behavior.

A teaching matrix for school-wide expectations provides examples of expectations in various settings within the classrooms and non-classroom areas. Procedures used when expectations are not met are

stated specifically for students, staff and parents. Every attempt is made to use consistent language with students and families and to seek out supportive adults within the school and home to increase the student's success both academically and socially at school.

Celebrations

Throughout the school year all PLSAS elementary schools will have various celebrations that may include student learning, the seasons, E-STEM, and special school events. While we will not hold classroom parties for Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day, we will provide a variety of celebrations and special events, with some that will include volunteer opportunities for family members.

Events and celebrations will be communicated by your child's teacher or through the school office. Additionally, teachers will hold special celebrations of learning, depending on the grade level. We will honor and respect family traditions and holidays and invite students to share their traditions during morning meetings, conversations, and share & tell activities.

We look forward to a year of learning and a year of celebrating students!

Communication

You are encouraged to communicate with us at any time you have comments or questions about your child's education or the school. There are several ways you can stay in touch with us. School phone systems have voicemail for all teachers.

Reporting

Fall parent/teacher conferences will be conducted in Fall and Spring. Progress reports will be available online through Infinite Campus Information System. Individual student results on standardized testing or Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment will also be available in Infinite Campus. Progress reports and report cards are available to custodial and non-custodial parents electronically via Infinite Campus unless the office has legal documents stating otherwise.

On-going parent-teacher communication is encouraged. Informal conferences, questions, expressions of concern, etc. can be addressed by phone, email or in-person at any time that is convenient for all individuals involved. Communication will also be facilitated through classroom newsletters, calendars and monthly building newsletters.

Infinite Campus

Infinite Campus is a web-based tool for parents/guardians to access student information. Parents are assigned an activation key to set up an Infinite Campus account. Infinite Campus houses information such as bus stops, teacher assignments, official grades, school calendar, contact information and health information. Parents also have the capability of entering or changing their email addresses and phone numbers online. This is extremely important for those parents who would like to receive email communications from their school. **Please notify the transportation office at 952-226-0050 if your family does not have computer access for your bussing information.**

We are asking all parents of current students to complete an annual update in Infinite Campus before the first day of school. If your child has not yet attended school at PLSAS, you do not need to complete this update. The information in Infinite Campus is used in the event of an emergency, to communicate with you about important events including school closures, and to help us better understand our students' needs.

To start, visit our website at www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us and login to Infinite Campus in the Parent portal. Then click on "More," then "Online Registration" and follow the prompts. For assistance, contact Lynn Wiczorek at 952-226-0062 or lwiczorek@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us

SchoolMessenger

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools also communicates with families using SchoolMessenger. All families that have an email address and phone number registered with the district will receive periodic communications about school related events, emergencies, school closures, and links to other pertinent information. This information will be communicated through emails, text messages, and phone recordings.

Rapid Connects

The high speed phone dialing system, Rapid Connects, is the system in place to reach parents quickly during an early-release day due to weather or in the event of a school emergency.

The Rapid Connects phone system has the ability to automatically send a voice message to all of our students' parents/guardians on up to three phone numbers per student within minutes. Outside of the ability to communicate in a timely fashion, fewer staff will be needed to pass along key information.

SeeSaw

SeeSaw is a student-driven digital portfolio and tool that empowers students to create, reflect, share and collaborate. Your child will be able to "show you what they know" using photos, videos, drawings, text, PDFs, and links. You will see all of your child's work in one place along with important classroom updates and information from the school office. You will be able to easily access your child's portfolio via the free SeeSaw Family App, or by logging on to SeeSaw on any device. As a family member, you will receive notifications anytime your child adds work samples to their portfolio, or important information is posted.

Court Orders/Court Papers

Please provide our school office with any current copies of court papers/orders that legally restrict a parent or family member from having contact with your child or releasing your child to that family member or parent. We can only enforce the most current copy of court papers that we have been provided.

Diversity

Students in PLSAS elementary schools represent many cultures, races, origins, and ethnicities. Students also choose to represent themselves in many ways perhaps by interests, clothing preferences, activities, or friendship groups. It is our belief that each student should be respected for their differences and how they choose to represent themselves and should not be subjected to ridicule, or rejection from others. All students and staff are expected to be tolerant of these differences and accepting of this diverse school community.

Electronic Devices

Personal electronic devices must be turned off in the classroom and are not to be used during school hours unless under the direct supervision and permission of the instructor. Personal devices may not be used during recess or lunch time. The school district is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Any personal electronic devices should be kept in backpacks or with the teachers during the day so that students can focus on learning without distractions.

Emergency Names, Phone Numbers & Email Addresses

It is crucial that current work and cell phone numbers are in Infinite Campus so we can contact families in an emergency. This is also true for other emergency contacts. *For your child's welfare, please keep us informed of any changes so that we can reach you if needed.*

If you are going to be out of town and another adult is responsible for your child, it is important that we are aware of these changes in writing prior to your period of absence. In the event of an emergency if

we are unable to reach you or the emergency contact person(s), we will call 911 for immediate assistance. It is, therefore, critically important that we have such current data on file.

Field Trips

Classes go on field trips throughout the year and parents may be invited to help with supervision. When the class travels outside the Prior Lake-Savage School District, specific informational letters and permission forms will be sent home.

There are various times during the course of the year when we wish to take the children to local places off our school grounds such as other district schools, the park, local stores, etc. For such trips within the Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools, parents will be asked to sign a general permission slip that will be effective for the entire year.

Food and Beverages in the Building

Whenever possible, food and beverages are to be consumed and in the cafeteria in accordance with School Board Policy. Food and beverages are never allowed in the gym. All food that is part of lunch, whether purchased at school or brought from home, is to be eaten in the cafeteria. No food is allowed on the playground during recess, regardless of where it came from.

Research indicates that elementary age children increase learning potential and benefit from nutritious snacks and water during the school day. Therefore, it is a common practice for students to be permitted to bring a nutritious snack to school on a daily basis. Scheduled snack breaks are permitted and encouraged. Water bottles or drinking cups may be requested by the classroom teacher for water consumption. In an effort to encourage healthy eating habits, snacks should consist of items such as fruits, vegetables, cheeses, pretzels, or crackers. Beverages other than water are also discouraged due to possible damage to carpet and other classroom equipment.

Food and beverages for special grade level events or class rewards are permitted. When donating food, it is best to communicate with the classroom teacher. In some cases, specific restrictions may be in place due to students with food allergies or other health concerns. **All food must be store purchased. Homemade items are not acceptable due to state health codes.**

Gifted/Talented Program - SAGE

The SAGE Academy, housed at WestWood Elementary is a full-time gifted program offered to qualified students in grades 3-5 throughout the district and outside of the district's attendance boundaries. SAGE is a school-within-a-school with teachers well versed in differentiation and curriculum modification for high-ability learners.

Students are eligible for SAGE Academy if they meet the identification criteria which includes test data (i.e., Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), FastBridge, or another nationally normed achievement test. Teacher and parent input is also considered. Students who qualify are invited to attend SAGE Academy.

Health Concerns

If you have any health related concerns for your child such as medication or a chronic health concern, please contact the health office.

[District Health Services Webpage](#)

Homebound Instruction

A child may receive homebound instruction if he or she has been ill or hospitalized and a doctor certifies that the student will be absent from school for fifteen days or more. Homebound instruction may begin on the eleventh day of the student's absence. Contact the principal for more information.

Homework and Independent Reading Policy

The purpose of homework is to provide practice, reinforcement, or extension of learning presented at school. Depending upon the grade, students will have additional homework such as practicing math skills, or studying and reviewing for tests. A kindergarten student's homework should be able to be completed in 10 minutes, first grade in 15 minutes, second grade in 20 minutes, and third grade through fifth grade in 30 minutes. If homework requires more time than this or your child is struggling with the homework, please contact your child's teacher. There may be nights with no homework given the strategies and skills practiced in the classroom that day.

Students are also encouraged to read at home on a daily basis. Independent reading strengthens a child's reading skills and encourages students to make reading a life-long pursuit. Kindergarten and first grade students should read at home for 10 minutes per day, second graders should read at home for 20 minutes, and third through fifth graders should read at home for 30 minutes per day.

Make-up work

When a child is absent from school due to illness, homework may either be sent home when the child returns to school, or may be picked up by parents upon request. Please make arrangements directly with the teacher when picking up homework. Teachers need time to gather make-up work for students as they are busy teaching during the school day. A reasonable amount of time is given for completion of work. Please check with the teacher for specifics.

Vacation

Class work missed while on vacation may be available upon the student's return from the vacation. Teaching is a dynamic activity and planning assignments a week or more in advance is not always an effective practice. Teachers will allow a reasonable amount of time for students to complete make-up work.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items are located in designated areas in each school. Unclaimed items may also be held on the bus for one or two days for students to claim. **Parents are encouraged to label all students' clothing, footwear, backpacks and lunch boxes, etc.** for ready and quick identification by the owner. Students should be encouraged to check the lost and found if they have lost something. All unclaimed items are given to a charitable organization several times during the school year following notification to families through the Principal's newsletter/Seesaw.

Parent-Teacher-Children Organization (PTC)

PTC, which stands for Parents, Teachers and Children, is the elementary school's volunteer organization made up of parents, teachers and principals, working together to benefit our children in the best way possible. The school PTC provides many volunteers and offers funds to elementary schools for the purpose of providing educational extras for the students.

PTC meetings will be held monthly. Check the district calendar for the meeting dates and locations. We hope you consider being an active part of this organization.

Procedure for Picking up Children

Pick Ups During the School Day

If you are picking up your student during the school day for doctor/dental appointments, etc., please send a note to your student's teacher specifying the pick-up time and reason. You will sign your student out from the office. Adults picking up children may be asked to provide identification. If they are returning to school after an appointment, you will sign them back in.

Children will not be permitted to leave school with anyone other than their parents and/or legal guardian(s) unless we have **written authorization** from you. Please send your child's teacher a written note (in advance if at all possible) notifying him/her when your child will be picked up from school and by whom. If you forget to send a note, an advance call to our office is appreciated.

Please notify the office immediately regarding any person(s) legally restricted from picking up your child. **We will need a current copy of legal court papers which state specifically those restrictions to keep on file in the office.**

Recess and Weather

We encourage students to dress for the weather. **Students will always go outdoors for recess unless the "Feels Like" temperature falls below -5 degrees F or it is steadily raining.** All elementary schools will check the local weather forecast using weather.com or a similar website to determine the "Feels Like" temperature.

If a child cannot go outdoors due to health conditions, please contact our health office so that alternate arrangements can be made.

Withdrawing Children

If you will be moving and your child will be withdrawn from the Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools, please inform the school office by sending a note, email or phone call indicating the date of the last day of attendance. Once your child is enrolled in their new school, we will send their records when they are requested.