



“To Live, To Love, To Learn, To Leave a Legacy”

www.strideacademy.org

320.230.5340

Family and Student Handbook

2022-2023

Mission Statement:

STRIDE Academy nurtures individuals while fostering leadership and empowering students to attain their highest potential in a family-centered environment.

STRIDE Academy
3241 Oakham Lane
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Phone Number: 320.230.5340

Fax Number: 320.217.6318

Web Site: www.strideacademy.org

Email: first initial & last name @strideacademy.org (example: eskanson@strideacademy.org)

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

STRIDE Academy is a charter school authorized by the Minnesota Department of Education. As a charter school, we are a public, non-profit entity and receive funding through the Minnesota Department of Education. We must comply with all state and federal mandates that govern public schools in the State of Minnesota. We must also comply with requirements established by our authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities. Students are not assessed tuition fees to attend STRIDE Academy.

Eric Skanson, Ed.D.	Angie Lichy	Nathan Schwieters
Executive Director	K-4 Principal	5-8 Principal
Ext:	Ext:	Ext: 6579

STRIDE Academy School Board of Education Members:

Sara Fromm – Board Chair
Aaron Lundblad – Community Representative
Ahmed Ahmed - Parent Representative
Suzy McIntyre – Teacher Representative
Andy Lyman – Teacher Representative
Hassan Yusuf – Community Representative
Eric Skanson - Ex-Officio

Board meetings are usually held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm, in conference room 111 at STRIDE Academy. Meetings are open to the public. Board minutes are available on the STRIDE Academy website or upon request. See board meeting postings on the STRIDE Academy website or within each school building.

School Board Meeting Dates for the 2022-2023 School Year:

- July 21, 2022
- August 18, 2022
- September 15, 2022
- October 13, 2022
- November 17, 2022
- December 15, 2022
- January 19, 2023
- February 16, 2023
- March 30, 2023
- April 20, 2023
- May 18, 2023
- June 15, 2023

Staff Members:

Eric Skanson – Executive Director
Angie Lichy – Principal K-4
Nathan Schwieters – Principal 5-8
Marlene Grindland – Special Ed. Director
AnneMary Wielkiewicz – School Psychologist
Steve Swenson – Technology Coordinator
Cory Heinen – Building & Grounds Coordinator
Judy Theisen – Human Resource Asst.
Fardosa Hassan – Admin. Assistant/Secretary
Mara Kramer – Accounts Payable

Nancy Kalla – Paraprofessional
Amy Lindell– RN - On/Off-Site
Dahir Hassan – Cultural Liaison/Dean of Students 5-8
Jessica Sowers – Social Worker
Noel Kirchner – Kindergarten
Jordyn Birch – Kindergarten
Jennifer Feigum - Kindergarten
Valerie Weyer – 1st Grade
Erin Lent – 1st Grade

Val Dahl– 1st Grade
Ashlee Gibson – 2nd Grade
Jessi Flies – 2nd Grade
Kayla Silverberg – 2nd Grade
Grace Cote – 3rd Grade
Jennifer Geisler – 3rd Grade
Erica Louis – 3rd Grade
Amanda Jacques – 4th Grade
Laura Seeley – 4th Grade
Ben Alvord – 5^h Grade
Laura Maiers – 5th Grade
Chris Kirchner – 5th Grade
Katie Strand – 6th Grade
Sara Voss – 6th Grade
Alex Alvord – 6th Grade
Andy Lyman – 7/8th Grade Math
– 7/8th Grade Social Studies
Noah Cote – 7/8th Grade Science
BlairAnn Dressler – 7/8 Language Arts
Jason Fleege – Physical Education
Noah Cote– Physical Education/Health
Jamie Watrin – Music
Ted Chopp – Band
Julia Clark – Art
Justin Walters– Technology
Mikaela Yaeger- Title 1 Teacher
Hamida Ali - Dean of Students K-4
Suzy McIntyre – ML Coordinator/Teacher
Susan Janey – ML

Amy Gartland – ML
Jennifer Horner – ML
Paige Knorek– ML
Ashley Broughton – Special Education
Michele Kockler – Special Education
– Special Education
Mary Holden – Special Education
Matthew Dockendorf – Special Education
Shannan Daniels – Dyslexia Specialist
Judi Larsen – Speech/Language Pathologist
Judy Kelsch – Building Substitute Teacher
Mulkiya Ahmed – Lunch//Recess Monitor
Tanner Bechtold – Student Learning Support
Rochelle Berger – Paraprofessional
Fardosa Bile – Lunch/Recess Monitor
Robyn Elliott – Paraprofessional
Kathy Fritz – Kitchen Staff
Ellie Hamilton – Paraprofessional
Emma Hamilton – Paraprofessional
Hani Hashi – Paraprofessional
Cori Hilsgen – STRIDES Paraprofessional
Melissa Miller – Paraprofessional
Mary Molitor – Paraprofessional
Shamaad Noor – Paraprofessional
Heather Peterson - Library Paraprofessional
Sina Saad – Lunch/Recess Monitor
Linda Theisen – Paraprofessional
Nurto Yalahow – Lunch/Recess Monitor

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

In the best interest of the safety and well-being of all students, we are asking our families to follow the STRIDE arrival and dismissal procedures.

Before School:

- All Students will enter through door 20S.
- **Breakfast will be served from 7:45 to 8:20. Students being dropped off MUST arrive before 8:00 if eating breakfast.** Students who will be eating breakfast must go to the lunchroom for breakfast **before** going to their classroom.
- **School day begins at 8:15.**
- Students should NOT arrive at school prior to 7:45 a.m.
- Students who arrive between 7:45 and 8:15 will be supervised in the west gym.
- If you are dropping your child off in the morning without walking into the building, please respect other drivers and keep the flow of traffic moving. If you need additional time, please park your car. **Please DO NOT stop or park your car in any of the traffic lanes.**

After School:

- The instructional day ends at 3:05.
- **All students must be picked up no later than 3:15.**
- Parent Pick-up: All families will be provided a parent pick-up number that must be visible from the rearview mirror for the staff member to see. Once the staff recognizes the number and deems its safe,

the student(s) while escorted to that car. This will require all parents using this system to remain in single file for the flow of traffic to be continuous. Staff will only release children if and when cars are not moving and when the number is clearly visible.

- **If you need to walk in the building, you must park your car.**
- Parent pick-up will be on the east side parking lot and buses will be on the west side. No parents should park in the bus lanes at any time.
- **Please DO NOT stop or park your car in any of the traffic lanes.**
- For the safety of your child, if you are making a change to the end of the day transportation, a note, email, or phone call must be provided to the office or homeroom teacher. Please call the office (320.230.5340) **BEFORE 2:00 p.m.** in order to allow enough time for delivery to the homeroom teacher.

If you plan to pick up your children prior to the 3:05 dismissal, it is necessary for you to come to the office and sign them out. They will be dismissed from the office only.

Attendance

MN Compulsory School Attendance Law (Minn. Stat. § 120A.22) states that children between the ages 7 - 18, and ages 5 and 6 if they are enrolled, must attend school every day on time unless lawfully excused by the school. STRIDE Academy believes regular school attendance is vital for the child to experience optimum success at school and throughout life. Attendance habits developed in childhood often carry over into later school years and influence attitudes about work responsibility in later life. It is important that parents carefully consider any condition or activity that will keep the child out of school. Routine visits to doctor, dentists, etc., should be made after school hours, if possible. Parents are urged to consider the school calendar carefully when planning family vacations.

Important Notes Regarding Attendance

- Attendance is taken in every classroom at approximately 8:35 a.m.
- **Please call the office before 9:00 a.m. when your child is absent.**
- Calls will be made home throughout the day in order to verify absences.
- Parents must send a note to the office or call the office in order to excuse absences.
- Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness.

Excused Absences: Regular attendance in school is a critical factor in student progress. The burden of a child being excused from school is placed on the parent/guardian. The school has the right to accept or not accept an excused absence. The school can reject invalid or unacceptable excuses from school. If it appears a parent/guardian is requesting that the school excuse excessive absences or keeping a child home for unacceptable reasons, the school has the responsibility to collect data and report excessive absences as truant to the proper authorities.

Examples of Acceptable Reasons for Absenteeism:

- Illness (The school may request medical verification.)
- Doctor, dentist, mental health or other medical appointment. We encourage parents to make appointments before or after school. (Medical note is required for medical excuse)
- Religious holidays
- Extreme family emergencies (house fire, serious accident)
- Death in the immediate family

Unexcused absences may result in a truancy petition. We will monitor attendance closely and report truancy as mandated by state law. We will work collaboratively with County agencies to assist in resolving issues that result in truancy petitions.

Examples of Unacceptable Reasons for Absenteeism:

- Staying home to baby-sit, “needed at home”
- Missed the bus, no way to get the student to school
- Student overslept or is “having a bad day”
- Travel, family vacations without prior approval
- Weather is too cold, too hot, too stormy
- Student has nothing to wear
- 7 unexcused tardies = 1 full unexcused day

Family Vacations/Camps: Children attending Stride Academy are expected to plan family vacations around the school calendar. Family vacations are not routinely accepted as excused absences. The Prior Approval Form must be completed and pre-approved by the building principal in order to receive an excused absence for family vacations during STRIDE Academy school attendance days. The form is available at the main office.

Parents will receive a letter home reminding them of the attendance policy. If the excessive absences continue, parents will be required to hand in a doctor’s excuse for each absence. Letters are sent out according to the following schedule:

- When a student reaches the following **unexcused** absences the following steps will be taken:
 - At **3** unexcused absences an *Attendance Alert Letter* will be sent to parents.
 - At **5** full day unexcused absences we will send an Initial truancy Referral form to the county in which the student resides. This letter is sent directly to the county and they send a notice to the parents.
 - At **7** unexcused absences an Educational Neglect Referral form is sent to the county.

Backpacks/Bags

Backpacks and bags are **not** allowed to be worn in the building during the school hours, except in grades 7-8 or with the approval of the building administrator. Backpacks and bags are to remain in cubbies/lockers.

Behavior Plan and Expectations

Research has proven that the foundation of an effective school begins with a safe and secure environment. The STRIDE Academy behavior plan is intended to promote a safe and secure environment for ALL students. In order to establish a culture of safety and security, we will:

- Develop positive relationships with ALL students.
- Clearly define behavior expectations for students.
- Communicate the expectations to students, parents, and staff members.
- Reward students for appropriate behavior and effort.
- Hold students accountable if they do not meet the behavior expectations.
- Supervision of ALL students is the responsibility of ALL staff.

STRIDE Academy will use a positive behavior system and students will be recognized for positive behavior throughout the school year. To encourage positive behavior and growth in our students, the STRIDE Academy staff has developed the following matrix called the “The Panther P.R.I.D.E.” in order to provide guidelines for students to follow and meet our expectations.

Student Accountability

From time to time, students do make mistakes. When students do not meet the expectations, a staff member will provide an opportunity for the student to correct the behavior. This may require the need for additional documentation, reminders, and assistance from our behavioral interventionist and administration.

STRIDE Academy Student/Family Handbook 2022-2023

<i>Get the Panther ...</i>	Responsibility	Organization	Attitude	Respect
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared Follow directions Be honest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the table/desk & area neat. Arrive on time. Have all necessary tools for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate Do your best Listen Believe in yourself Be positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on task Respect yourself, others and their property. Wait your turn Follow adult directions
Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hallways clean Walk on the right side Help others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use passes during class time Get all supplies on first trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greet peers & adults appropriately (quietly during class time) Use appropriate language, volume, and tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate positively with staff Respect personal space and property Keep hands and other body parts to yourself
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands before entering. Use quiet voices. Be responsible for trays, utensils, and tables. Don't waste food. Eat only food on your tray. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have your lunch code ready Raise hand for assistance Use time wisely Leave area clean Use proper table manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait in line patiently. Enter and sit quietly. Use positive statements and body language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow instructions of all adults. Use appropriate language and volume. Say "Please" and "Thank You".
Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get planner pass signed Wash your hands Leave bathroom clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only use two paper towels & dispose of them in trash can Go directly back to class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate volume and language Use silent greetings (smiles) in the hallway while passing others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flush Respect others privacy Respect the walls and property of the school
Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive & exit w/o disruptions Wait to be dismissed Encourage others positively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit in assigned area with your class Take care of personal needs before program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate Keep comments positive Use appropriate language, volume, and tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use applause appropriately Listen & watch attentively Respect the personal space of others
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen & Follow rules Stay seated until destination is reached Leave bus promptly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in bus room until dismissed Sit in assigned(preferred) seating area Keep all items inside bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words T.H.I.N.K. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands & feet to yourself Listen to the bus driver
Recess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use equipment properly Follow playground rules Make safe choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dress for weather Put away equipment properly Line up when whistle blows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include others Share equipment Cooperate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect equipment and property.

Breakfast

A “grab and go” style breakfast will be available for all students, beginning at 7:45 and ending at 8:15, or when the last bus arrives. All students must go to breakfast first, prior to going to their classroom.

STRIDE Academy will offer FREE breakfast AND lunch to all students, as part of the community eligibility provision.

Bullying

The Board of STRIDE Academy supports a secure school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. The staff is expected to create a climate in which all types of bullying are not acceptable.

Bullying is defined as any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern of those behaviors, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students in the school environment, including the school building, grounds, vehicles, bus stops, and all school-sponsored activities and events.

A student who engages in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

Anti-bullying efforts shall be aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

- To teach students that bullying is not acceptable behavior at STRIDE Academy and will not be tolerated.
- To train staff and students in taking proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring.
- To implement procedures for immediate intervention, investigation, and confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior.
- To initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors through re-education on acceptable behavior, discussions, counseling, and appropriate negative consequences.
- To foster a productive partnership with parents and community members in order to help maintain a bully-free environment.
- To support victims of bullying with individual, group and/or peer counseling.
- To help develop peer support networks, social skills and confidence for all students.
- To recognize and praise positive, supportive behaviors of students toward one another on a regular basis.

Communication Between Families and Teachers

Communication is essential for efficient functioning of the school and delivering quality education to all students. **THURSDAY FOLDERS ARE SENT ELECTRONICALLY . PLEASE UPDATE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS WITH THE SCHOOL IF YOU HAVE CHANGED IT.** The Thursday Folder will contain communication, newsletters, assignments, student projects, and information sent from the office and teacher(s).

- If you would prefer your student’s Thursday Folder information to be hard copies instead of email, please let the school know.
- All teachers are expected to communicate with families as needed via e-mail, written notes, or telephone calls.
- Teachers will send home mid-term reports to communicate the academic progress of children.
- Please like us on Facebook, as we will communicate events on Facebook as well.
- Visit www.strideacademy.org, as we update information daily to our website.

Custody

In cases where parents are separated or divorced and only one parent/legal guardian has legal custody of a child, the school **must** be given a copy of the court order that determines custody and visitation rights. The school must have legal documentation in order to comply with any limiting court order. The school is unable to keep a non-custodial parent/legal guardian from picking up a child unless a valid restraining order or other appropriate legal documents are supplied to the school. State and federal data privacy laws recognize the right of a natural parent/legal guardian, regardless of child custody, to have access to the school records of his or her child. A non-custodial, natural parent/legal guardian may arrange to review the school record of his or her child as well as arrange to have materials from school, such as newsletters, mailed to them.

Discrimination

STRIDE Academy Board of Education has adopted the following policy regarding discrimination.

“No person shall, on the grounds of race, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, age, color, religion, ancestry, status with regard to public assistance, sexual or affectional orientation, familial status or disability be subjected to discrimination in any program operated by STRIDE Academy or in recruitment, consideration, selection, employment or rate of compensation by the Academy.”

Dress Code

STRIDE Academy establishes an expectation of dress and grooming that creates an environment conducive to learning and reflects attire appropriate for an educational setting. STRIDE Academy reserves the right to address any behaviors or dress that are not appropriate.

- Student clothing must allow identification of the student.
- Jewelry that presents a safety hazard to self and/or others may not be worn or brought to school. Examples include, but are not limited to: chains, spike rings, spike collars or bracelets. approval (i.e., student undergoing chemotherapy, medical situations, religious practice).
- Clothing or accessories with words, graphics or innuendo, that are obscene, vulgar, abusive or discriminatory, may not be worn or brought to school. Examples include, but are not limited to: ethnic, racist, sexual, or sexist remarks/images, such as swastikas, confederate flags, or other symbols of hate.
- Clothing or accessories that promote or advertise alcohol, chemicals, tobacco, or any product that is illegal for use by minors may not be worn or brought to school. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco logos. “Look alike” logos are also unacceptable.
 - Heavy/winter coats need to be kept in lockers and are not to be worn during the school day.
 - Shoes are to be worn at all times. Health and safety insurance codes are specific in addressing this mandatory requirement.

If a student wears an article of clothing that is considered questionable or repeatedly violates the expectations, they will be asked to change in order to continue their day. If a student does not have something to change into, the student will be provided attire. Continued violations will result in communication home to parent/guardian and could lead to school consequences. Administration reserves the right to determine if clothing is appropriate for school.

STRIDE Academy accommodates students’ free exercise of a sincerely held religious belief by allowing religious attire to be worn in place of a uniform bottom, and requests that it be of a solid color. The dress code is not intended to and shall not be implemented in a way that promotes a particular religion or particular religious programs.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices are important to the development of 21st century skills. STRIDE recognizes that many students come to school with personal technology devices and these instruments can be valuable learning tools. As a general rule, cell phones are not allowed during class, but each teacher is able to determine their own expectations for the use of technology in their classroom. Students and parents should also know that STRIDE is not responsible for the maintenance, care, or protection of students' personal property. If a student is using a cell phone or other electronic device without permission it will be confiscated.

If a cell phone or electronic device is being used without permission, the following steps will be taken:

- 1st offense: The devices will be confiscated by the classroom teacher and held for the remainder of the school day. The student may pick up their electronic device at the end of the day.
- 2nd offense: Brought up to the office and the parent must pick up.
- 3rd offense: Additional school consequences will take place.

A school phone is available in every classroom and office for any emergency communication. Our office phone is answered during all hours of school operation and we are happy to facilitate your incoming messages to your children every day. If possible, please make after school arrangements prior to the start of the school day. STRIDE Academy cannot accept responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged electronic devices.

Emergency Drills

- Fire: Minnesota schools are required to conduct a minimum of five fire drills each year. At least one of these drills must be an obstructed exit fire drill. Fire drills will be conducted on a regular basis as per the State Fire Marshall regulations. In each room, an emergency escape plan is posted.
- Tornado: Minnesota schools are required to conduct a minimum of one tornado drill each year. In each room, an emergency escape plan is posted.
- Lockdown: Minnesota schools are required to conduct a minimum of five lockdown drills each year.
- All personnel within the building at the time of the drill are required to participate in the drill, unless given prior approval from the principal.

Emergency School Closings

In case of inclement weather, it is advised for families to watch for STRIDE Academy's response on school closings, late starts, or early release announcements. **If the St. Cloud School District announces a change for inclement weather, we follow that district.** We will post these announcements on:

- STRIDE Academy Website
- Skylert Message (phone call/email home)
- Facebook
- Local Radio/Television Stations

Extra-Curricular Activities

STRIDE Academy offers both enrichment and athletic extra-curricular offerings for students. Information and registration forms for all activities will be available online through Thursday Folders. Please see the Activities Handbook for more information.

Field Trips

Students in all grades participate in field trips. These trips may require bus transportation. The field trips are carefully selected by the instructional staff to enhance and enrich students' learning. Some of the field trip expenses may be covered by a special subsidy provided by our STRIDE Academy Fundraisers. Parents may be asked to help cover the field trip cost. In special cases, arrangements may be made to

help reduce costs to parents. Field trip scholarships are available upon request through the school administrator. No child will be denied participation because of finances..

Food Allergies

If your child has food allergies, please contact our health office at STRIDE Academy to develop an appropriate lunch plan for your child. **All of our classrooms will be nut-free.** Any snacks/treats brought into classrooms **MUST** be nut-free.

Harassment

STRIDE Academy has a commitment to confront behaviors that are considered to be harassment. Prompt reporting and investigation by administration is mandated by the STRIDE Academy Board of Education. The following definitions of harassment apply:

Harassment is participating in, or conspiring for others to engage in badgering acts that injure, degrade, disgrace or threaten other individuals (examples include religious persecution or cruelty directed toward an individual with a disability).

Sexual Harassment is defined as, but not limited to:

- Words or actions relating to sex that are derogatory, offensive, exploitative and/or degrading; or
- A display or circulation of materials and/or pictures, which are sexually explicit or demeaning (including web-based or electronically transmitted information).

Racial Harassment and racial bias is defined, but not limited to:

- Words or actions relating to another individual's or group's race that is derogatory, offensive, exploitative and/or degrading; or
- A display or circulation of materials and/or pictures, which are derogatory to an individual's race (including web-based or electronically transmitted information).

Health Services

The mission of the STRIDE Academy Health Service Department is to “promote and support optimal health in staff and students for an optimal learning experience.”

Student school health support services are coordinated by a Licensed School Nurse and a team of trained unlicensed Health Service Assistants.

Immunizations: To go to school in Minnesota, students must show they've had appropriate immunizations or provide a Medical Exemption or Notarized Conscientious Exemption.

Medication Management in School Guidelines: Whenever possible, the parent or legal guardian should make arrangements so that it is not necessary for school personnel to administer medication to a student. However, there are cases when a student's health could be compromised by not getting medication during school hours. When sending any *prescription* or *nonprescription* medication to school each year, parents must send:

1. Written parent permission (Medication Administration Form) authorizing school personnel to administer medication during school hours.
2. A written order from the physician (Medication Administration Form) indicating the necessity of any (prescription or over-the counter) medication, including dose and how often it can be given. The physician may fax the order to the school at 320.217.6318.
3. Only medication supplied in the original labeled bottle/package will be administered. For prescription medication, the pharmacist can supply a duplicate labeled container so one can be kept at home and one can be kept at school. Each container should have the phone number of the

pharmacy, student's name, physician's name, medication's name, dosage, time to be given, and route (oral, inhaled, etc.).

4. For the safety of all students and required school bus protocol; parents are required to bring their child's medication to the school health office directly.
5. Medications are stored and will be administered within the Health Service Office.
***Exceptions: are students who may carry an asthma inhaler or an Epi-Pen and the following is then required:
 - a. A written doctor's order and written parental permission for student to "self-carry".
 - b. The student must demonstrate to the school nurse competency in administration. Other special requests may be discussed with the School Nurse.
6. Half Tablets - Health Service staff are NOT responsible for breaking tablets in half. This will not be done at school. When there is a physician order to give one-half of a tablet, please talk with your pharmacist.
7. Field Trips - If your child takes daily or as-needed medication, you will be receiving a form to complete indicating whether or not there is a need for this medication on field trips. A designated teacher will be administering necessary medication. Health Services staff do not routinely accompany students on field trips.

Students with Special Health Support Needs: Parents are asked to contact the school nurse prior to the school year to discuss the support needs of their child during the school day. This includes students with medical support needs, such as: severe allergies, asthma, seizures, diabetes, toileting support, etc. The School Nurse will work with the family and the student's health care provider.

Lockers and Cubbies

School lockers and cubbies are the property of Stride Academy. At no time does the school relinquish its exclusive control of lockers/cubbies provided for the convenience of students. School authorities may conduct inspection of the interior of lockers/cubbies at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Lockers/cubbies should not be written on, damaged, or used to house obscene or illegal items. No pictures, stickers, etc. will be placed on the outside of the lockers/cubbies. For health and sanitary reasons, food or liquids must be stored in appropriate containers. Students are not permitted to eat or drink at their lockers. If so, the item will be confiscated until the end of the day. Students are expected to use their assigned lockers/cubbies for the duration of the school year. Students are not allowed to switch or share lockers with another student. The school will not be held responsible for missing property. Never keep money or valuable property in lockers/cubbies.

Only 5th-8th grade students are allowed to have locks on their lockers, if they so choose. Only locks provided by the school are allowed on lockers. Any unapproved locks (locks brought from home) will be removed. Locks will be returned to STRIDE Academy at the end of the school year. Remember to never share combinations with others. If your locker or lock is not functioning properly, please report this to the office staff or the teacher.

Lost & Found

Parents are strongly encouraged to check the lost and found often and to write their student's name on clothing. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity on a monthly basis and at the end of the school year.

Lunch

Lunch and milk is available on site at STRIDE Academy. **STRIDE Academy will offer FREE breakfast AND lunch to all students, as part of the community eligibility provision.** If a student is bringing a lunch from home, but chooses to take milk from school, they **will** be charged for the milk.

Menus

Monthly breakfast and lunch menus will be posted to our website and in each classroom.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is a framework to improve outcomes for all students that organizes district-level resources to address each individual student's needs such as academic and/or behavior needs using research-based instruction and interventions that vary in intensity. An MTSS framework includes (a) screening of all students using valid and reliable measures, (b) tiers of instruction that vary in intensity, (c) collaborative teams that review data, problem solve, and organize instruction, (d) frequent progress monitoring using valid and reliable measures to determine the impact of evidence-based interventions, and (e) a system to ensure that instruction including interventions are evidence-based and implemented with fidelity.

The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team is a committee made up of teachers and other staff members who are called upon to provide interventions and assistance to students who are struggling, both academically and behaviorally. Teachers who bring their concerns to this team are also expected to communicate to the child's parents about these concerns. As always, please communicate with your child's teacher if you have any concerns.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

- **P.A.C. (Panther Activities Club)**
 - The STRIDE Academy Activities Club is an organization composed of parents, staff, and friends of STRIDE Academy. The Activities Club will provide additional support to all extra-curricular activity programs at STRIDE Academy through volunteerism and financial support. The Activities Club will help purchase supplies, equipment, provide scholarships, help with team events, as well as recognize students' participation beyond what the activity fees provide.
- **P.A.T.H.S. (Parents and Teachers Helping Students)**
 - All parents, guardians, and teachers of STRIDE Academy are members of PATHS and are invited to attend the monthly meetings. PATHS is a volunteer organization of parents and guardians who want to assist our teachers and staff in making STRIDE Academy the best school it can be! The meeting agenda will be posted on the PATHS bulletin board.
- **Volunteers**
 - We anticipate having many volunteers working in the building.
 - We need to complete background checks on anyone directly interacting with our students in school and register them for safety purposes.
 - Volunteers will be expected to comply with school policies and procedures and maintain expectations of the school and classroom.
 - When a volunteer comes to school to work, she/he must sign in at the office and obtain a visitor's badge, which will visibly identify them to staff and students.
- **Fundraising** - We appreciate any fundraising support or ideas you may have to offer. Please contact the office or a representative from PATHS for additional information on fundraising procedures. The ability to raise additional funds greatly increases the opportunities for academic enrichment at STRIDE Academy. STRIDE Academy also collects Food Club Points, Box Tops, and participates in Target's Red Card program, and Amazon Smile.

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences

Parent/Teacher conference dates and times are as following:

- **October 27, 2022:** 3:30pm-7:30pm
- **November 3, 2022:** 8:00am-12:00pm
- **March 16, 2023:** 3:30pm-7:30pm
- **March 23, 2023:** 3:30pm-7:30pm

Pets

Pets are only to be brought to school with principal permission and in a kennel or other restrained housing. Please communicate with your child's teacher prior to bringing pets to school to ensure proper procedures are being followed.

Photographs

Photographs are taken in the fall of the year. Individual and class composite photographs are available for purchase. **Picture day is September 19, 2022, with picture retake day being October 25.**

Pledge of Allegiance

State Statute requires schoolwide recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reason may elect not to do so. Students and staff must respect another person's right to make that choice.

Recess

STRIDE Academy believes in providing opportunities for students to participate in recess. Kindergarten through 6th grade will have a daily 20 minute recess. Recess will be supervised by Stride Academy staff. Students will have recess both inside and outside year round, depending on weather conditions. Please make sure your student is dressed appropriately. If the outside temperature is below 0 degrees with or without wind chill or raining, students will be inside for recess.

Safety Issues

The overall safety of STRIDE Academy students and personnel is the number one priority. Decisions made regarding safety are made in the greatest interest to the safety and security of all persons in the building.

- All school doors will be locked during the school day, including the main/front door. All staff, visitors, and volunteers will wear name tags or guest identification.
- Parents, visitors, and volunteers need to check in at the office and wear identification when visiting or working at school. Adults without identification will be asked to check in at the office.
- Students need to be checked in and out from the office. Parents checking out children during the day should come to the office to check their child out of school.
- A note or phone call is required for the school to release a child to anyone other than a parent.
- All students and staff will participate in regularly scheduled fire, lockdown, and tornado drills.
- Please notify the office by no later than 2:00 pm if there is a change in afternoon transportation.
- NO parking along the front curb, fire lanes or bus areas.
- All students must be picked up from school by 3:15.

School Bus Procedures - Riding a school bus is a privilege.

Bus Guidelines

Students must ride on their assigned bus only. According to District 742 transportation guidelines, students are not permitted to ride a bus other than the one they are assigned. They may not switch buses nor ride to a friend's home on a different bus. This policy is an issue of safety. Contact District 742 and STRIDE if any changes are needed in your transportation needs.

Transportation Bus Phone Numbers

District 742: 320.370.6940
Spanier: 320.251.3343
Voigt: 320.253.0510
Trobecs: 320.251.1202
Palmer: 320.204.1180

Bus Safety Training

Bus Safety Training will be provided to all STRIDE Academy students soon after the beginning of school. Training verification slips are required for all students. Free bus safety curriculum and resources are available from the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

School Bus Safety Expectations

- Respect Self
 - Stay out of the bus danger zone.
 - When riding the bus, remain seated at all times.
- Respect Others
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to yourself.
 - Use quiet voices and be courteous.
 - Follow the driver’s instructions.
- Respect Property
 - Bring only school-approved items on the bus.
 - Be respectful of bus space and equipment.

Bus Discipline Policies

STRIDE Academy will follow District 742 Bus Discipline Policies, Guidelines, and Consequences.

If a student does not follow the district rules on a bus, the following steps will be taken:

1. The driver will attempt to resolve the problem. Bus rules will be reviewed with students.
2. A seat may be assigned in an attempt to better manage the student’s behavior.
3. When the driver is unable to manage a student’s behavior, an incident report will be written.

This report is used to inform parents and the school of unacceptable behavior.

Minor Offenses: May include, but are not limited to:

- Standing on the bus
- Yelling, excessive noise
- “Play fighting”, horseplay
- Pushing, shoving, teasing, profanity
- Minor forms of insubordination where student complies within a short time
- Eating, drinking, littering on the bus
- Other offenses as reported by the bus driver

1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense	5th Offense	6th Offense	7th Offense
Warning by	Warning by	1-3 day	3-5 day	5-10 day	10 day	School Year
Trans.	Principal	suspension	suspension	suspension	suspension	suspension
Dept.						

Major Offenses: May include, but are not limited to:

- Hanging out of the windows
- Throwing of ANY object
- Fighting, physical aggression, assault
- Harassment, threats, bullying behavior
- Serious insubordination- where student does not comply
- Possession, use/distribution of chemicals or tobacco
- Possession of weapons
- Lighting of matches or other flame/fire items
- Vandalism to the bus
- Dangerous or destructive offenses
- Unauthorized entrance/exit through emergency door
- Other illegal acts or offenses reported by the driver

1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense	5th Offense
1-3 day	3-5 day	5-10 day	10 day	School Year
suspension	suspension	suspension	suspension	suspension

The length of the suspension will be determined by the degree of the offense. Parents will be notified of bus suspensions by the building administrator

School Calendar

The school calendar provides for 168 days of student instruction. Our school calendar is available on the website – www.strideacademy.org.

Snacks and Treats at School

General Policy:

- Students are encouraged to drink water during the school day. If they wish to carry water with them, it must be in a clear water bottle and not contain any flavored additives. No carbonated beverages will be allowed during the school day.
- All STRIDE Academy classrooms are nut-free. ONLY nut-free snacks are allowed into classrooms.

Birthday Snacks Brought to School:

- We encourage you to consider healthy snacks, or pencils, stickers, etc as ‘treats’. We will not accept cakes, cupcakes, cookies, and candy to be brought in for birthday treats.
- Students are not allowed to drink soda or juice boxes in the classrooms.

Snacks:

- All snacks should be nutritious (i.e. fruit, crackers, and cheese, etc.) and in accordance with the Wellness Policy.
- Snacks must be nut-free.
- Students are not allowed to drink soda or juice boxes.

Standardized Testing

STRIDE Academy uses district assessments to monitor student progress and to make programming changes when needed. Students will be assessed multiple times per year and the data will be shared with parents during conferences. The State of Minnesota requires administration of the MCA tests (Minnesota Statewide Comprehensive Assessment) for 3rd-8th grades. We follow the MDE (Minnesota Department of Education) calendar of testing dates. STRIDE Academy uses the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) computerized test to help improve student achievement. The NWEA (MAP) tests will be given in the fall, winter and spring for all Kindergarten – 8th grade students. Parents will receive their child’s individual progress three times per year. The ACCESS Test is administered to English Language Learners. We will notify parents of specific testing dates.

Tobacco Use

STRIDE Academy is a tobacco free school. Anyone engaging in these behaviors will be asked to leave school property.

Visitors

For the safety and well-being of all children, the following guidelines regarding visitors in the building have been developed:

- All visitors, including parents and volunteers, must check-in at the school office and receive a badge. Anyone not wearing a badge will be escorted to the office to receive one.
- Children visiting (former students, relatives or friends wishing to visit STRIDE Academy) need prior approval from classroom teacher and principal, as these types of visits are a distraction from the learning environment for students. Children must be accompanied by an adult and sponsored by a teacher.

Weapons

In accordance with state and federal laws, weapons of any kind are strictly forbidden in all school buildings, on all school grounds and buses. Under this policy, look-alikes (including toy guns, squirt guns, toy knives, etc.) may be considered to be weapons. Students may NOT have pairing knives in their school lunches. Students must be instructed not to bring any of these objects on the bus or to school.

Withdrawal or Transfer

The following procedure is established for students withdrawing from school:

1. As soon as you know that a child is being withdrawn, notify the school office of the last day of attendance.
2. The student must pay for any lost library books, and turn in any school books to his/her teacher.
3. Parents will be asked to fill out a withdrawal form and exit survey.
4. The student must remove all personal property from his/her desk.
5. When the school receives formal notification of the student's enrollment in another school, his/her records will be forwarded to that school, providing the parent has signed a statement authorizing transfer of these records.

School Board Policies

514 BULLYING PROHIBITION POLICY *2010*

Rev.

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, 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 students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any 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.
- 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, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

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

- A. "Bullying" means any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, by a student that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing distress to one or more students and which substantially interferes with another student's or students' educational benefits, opportunities, or performance. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, conduct by a student against another student that a reasonable person under the circumstances knows or should know has the effect of:
 - 1. harming a student;
 - 2. damaging a student's property;
 - 3. placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property; or
 - 4. creating a hostile educational environment for a student.

- B. “Immediately” means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- C. “On school district property or at school-related functions” 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.

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 Dean of each building 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 district’s director.
- D. A teacher, school administrator, volunteer, 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. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, the school district shall undertake or authorize an investigation by school district officials or a third party designated by the school district.
- B. The school district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of bullying, consistent with applicable law.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, 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; school district policies; and 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 involved in a bullying incident and the remedial action taken, to the extent permitted by law, based on a confirmed report.

VI. 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 annually will provide information and any applicable training to school district staff regarding this policy.
- B. 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.
- C. 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 victim, and to make resources or referrals to resources available to victims of bullying.

VIII. NOTICE

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 handbook.

- Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 121A.03 (Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence)
Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.69 (Hazing Policy)

526 HAZING PROHIBITION POLICY

[Note: The Commissioner of the Department of Education approved Model Policy 526 – Hazing Prohibition as the State’s Model Policy.]

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, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing.
- B. No teacher, administrator, 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. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and after school hours.
- E. 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.
- F. The school district will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, 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 violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations.
- B. “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 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 dean or director.
- B. The building principal is the person responsible for receiving reports of hazing at the building level. Any person may report hazing directly to a school district human rights officer or to the superintendent.
- C. Teachers, administrators, volunteers, contractors and other employees of the school district shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances or events which might include hazing. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall inform the building principal immediately.
- D. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of hazing will not affect the complainant or reporter’s future employment, grades or work assignments.

V. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- A. Upon 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 school district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of hazing.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, 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 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, school district policies and regulations.

VI. 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 hazing 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 hazing. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

VII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

[Note: Proper reference should be made to the appropriate handbooks in each school district.]

This policy shall appear in each school's student handbook and in each school's Building and Staff handbooks.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 121A.69 (Hazing Policy)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)

502 SEARCH OF STUDENT LOCKERS, DESKS, PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, AND STUDENT'S PERSON

[Note: School districts are required by statute to have a policy addressing these issues.]

I. PURPOSE

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

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. 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. Desks

School desks are the property of the school district. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of desks provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of desks may be conducted by school officials for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

C. Personal Possessions and Student's Person

The personal possessions of students and/or a student's person may be searched when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. The search will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness. D.

It shall be a violation of this policy for students to use lockers and desks for unauthorized purposes or to store contraband. It shall be a violation for students to carry contraband on their person or in their personal possessions.

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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 "lookalikes," 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, book bags, packages, and clothing.
- 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.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. School officials may inspect the interiors of lockers and desks for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.
- B. School officials may inspect the personal possessions of a student and/or a student's person based on a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. A search of personal possessions of a student and/or a student's person will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.
- C. As soon as practicable after a search of personal possessions within a locker pursuant to

this policy, the school officials must provide notice of the search to students whose possessions were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.

- D. Whenever feasible, a search of a person shall be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex. A second school official of the same sex shall be present as an observer during the search of a person whenever feasible.
- E. A strip search is a search involving the removal of coverings or clothing from private areas. Mass strip searches, or body cavity searches, are prohibited. Strip searches will be conducted only in circumstances involving imminent danger.
- F. A school official conducting any other search may determine when it is appropriate to have a second official present as an observer.
- G. A copy of this policy will be printed in the student handbook or disseminated in any other way which school officials deem appropriate. The school district shall provide a copy of this policy to a student when 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 pin-ups 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.

Legal References: U. S. Const., amend. IV Minn. Const., art. I, § 10 *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 469 U.S. 325, 105 S.Ct. 733, 83 L.Ed.2d 720 (1985) Minn. Stat. § 121A.72 (School Locker Policy)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 503
Orig. 1995
Rev. 2002

Rev.2010

503 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

[Note: The provisions of this policy substantially reflect statutory requirements.]

I. PURPOSE

- A. The school board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, benefits students socially, provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students and establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance. It is intended to be positive and not punitive.
- B. This policy also recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parent or guardian, teacher and administrators. This policy will assist students in attending class.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Responsibilities

1. Student's Responsibility

It is the student's right to be in school. It is also the student's responsibility to attend all assigned classes and study halls every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class or study hall. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request any missed assignments due to an absence.

2. Parent or Guardian's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to ensure the student is attending school, to inform the school in the event of a student absence, and to work cooperatively with the school and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

3. Teacher's Responsibility

It is the teacher's responsibility to take daily attendance and to maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class and study hall. It is also the teacher's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly. It is also the teacher's responsibility to provide any student who has been absent with any missed assignments upon request and/or upon return. Finally, it is the teacher's responsibility to work cooperatively with the student's parent or guardian and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

4. Administrator's Responsibility

- a. It is the administrator's responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes and study halls. It is also the administrator's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly to all students, to maintain accurate records on student attendance and to prepare a list of the previous day's absences stating the status of each. Finally, it is the administrator's responsibility to inform the student's parent or guardian

of the student's attendance and to work cooperatively with them and the student to solve attendance problems.

- b. In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, the students of the school district are REQUIRED to attend all assigned classes and/or study halls every day school is in session, unless the student has been excused by the school board from attendance because the student has already completed the studies ordinarily required to graduate from high school, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Attendance Procedures

Attendance procedures shall be presented to the school board for review and approval. When approved by the school board, the attendance procedures will be included as an addendum to this policy.

1. Excused Absences

- a. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:
 - (1) Illness.
 - (2) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
 - (3) A death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
 - (4) Medical or dental treatment.
 - (5) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
 - (6) Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week.
 - (7) Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
 - (8) Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing.
 - (9) Removal of a student pursuant to a suspension. Suspensions are to be handled as excused absences and students will be permitted to complete make-up work.
- b. Consequences of Excused Absences
 - (1) Students whose absences are excused are required to make up all assignments missed or to complete alternative assignments as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher.
 - (2) Work missed because of absence must be made up within two days for each day absent. Any work not completed within this period shall result in "no credit" for the missed assignment.

However, the building principal or the classroom teacher may extend the time allowed for completion of make-up work in the case of an extended illness or other extenuating circumstances.

The school may require a doctor's note if absences become excessive.

2. Unexcused Absences

a. The following are examples of absences which will not be excused:

- (1) Truancy. An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district.
- (2) Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.
- (3) Work at home.
- (4) Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.
- (5) Vacations with family.
- (6) Personal trips to schools or colleges.
- (7) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (2 tardies equal one unexcused absence).
- (8) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- (1) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56.
- (2) Days during which a student is suspended from school shall not be counted in a student's total cumulated unexcused absences.
- (3) In cases of recurring unexcused absences, the administration may also request the county attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota statutes.
- (4) Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to discipline in the following manner:
 - (a) After the 2nd cumulated unexcused absences, a student's parent or guardian will be notified by mail that his or her

child is nearing a total of 3 unexcused absences and that, after the 3 unexcused absence the absences will be reported to the county.

- (b) After such notification, the student or his or her parent or guardian may, within a reasonable time, request a conference with school officials regarding the student's absences and the prescribed discipline. The notification will state that the school strongly urges the student's parent or guardian to request such a conference.
- (c) If the result of a grade reduction or loss of credit has the effect of an expulsion, the school district will follow the procedures set forth in the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56.

C. Tardiness

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness.
2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness
 - a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office for an admission slip.
 - b. Tardiness between periods will be handled by the teacher.
3. Excused Tardiness

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

 - a. Illness.
 - b. Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
 - c. A death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
 - d. Medical or dental treatment.
 - e. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
 - f. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
 - g. Any tardiness for which the student has been excused in writing by an administrator or faculty member.
 - h. Late bus
4. Unexcused Tardiness

- a. An unexcused tardiness is failing to be in an assigned area at the designated time class period commences without a valid excuse.
- b. Which includes:
 - i. Missing the bus
 - ii. Waking up late
- c. Consequences of tardiness: 7 unexcused tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence.

D. Participation in Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored Events

- 1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day and any school-sponsored events.
- 2. School-initiated absences will be accepted and participation permitted.
- 3. A student may not participate in any activity or program if he or she has an unexcused absence from any class during the day.
- 4. If a student is suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
- 5. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, he or she must present a physician's statement or a statement from the student's parent or guardian clearing the student for participation that day. The note must be presented to the coach or advisor before the student participates in the activity or program.

III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

Copies of this policy shall be made available to all students and parents at the commencement of each school year. This policy shall also be available upon request in each principal's office.

IV. REQUIRED REPORTING

A. Continuing Truant

Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 120A.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for:

- 1. Three days if the child is in elementary school; or
- 2. Three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

B. Reporting Responsibility

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 provides that the school attendance officer or other designated school official shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

1. That the child is truant;
2. That the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
3. That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the child at school pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
5. That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
6. That if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260;
7. That if the child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 260C.201; and
8. That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

[Where services and procedures under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A are available within the school district, the following provisions should also be included in the policy.]

C. Habitual Truant

1. A habitual truant is a child under the age of 16 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school, or a child who is 16 or 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school.
2. A school district attendance officer shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 (Compulsory Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.24 (Reporting)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.26 (Enforcement and Prosecution)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.28 (School Boards and Teachers, Duties)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.30 (Attendance Officers)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.34 (Violations; Penalties)
Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)

Minn. Stat. § 260C.007, Subd. 19 (Habitual Truant Defined)
Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 (Notice to Parent or Guardian When Child is Continuing Truant)
Goss v. Lopez, 419 U.S. 565, 95 S.Ct. 729 (1975)
Slocum v. Holton Board of Education, 429 N.W.2d 607 (Mich. App. Ct. 1988)
Campbell v. Board of Education of New Milford, 475 A.2d 289 (Conn. 1984)
Hamer v. Board of Education of Township High School District No. 113, 66 Ill. App.3d 7 (1978)
Gutierrez v. School District R-1, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)
Knight v. Board of Education, 38 Ill. App. 3d 603, 348 N.E.2d 299 (1976)
Dorsey v. Bale, 521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)

Adopted: June 2005

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MSBA/MASA Model Policy 501

Orig. 1995

Rev.2005

501 SCHOOL WEAPONS POLICY

[NOTE: School districts are required by state statute to have a policy addressing these issues. ATTENTION: This policy incorporates certain provisions of the Minnesota Citizens' Personal Protection Act of 2003. That law was struck down by the Minnesota Court of Appeals. However, in the 2005 session, the Minnesota legislature reenacted this law effective retroactively and without interruption from April 28, 2003. The reenacted law is now in effect.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

No student or nonstudent, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in this policy. The school district will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer or member of the public who violates this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. "Weapon"

1. A "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 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, nun chucks; 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. No person shall possess, use or distribute 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. No person shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e., laser 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.
- B. “School Property” includes any school building or grounds, whether leased, rented or owned or controlled by the school, locations of school activities or trips, bus stops, school buses or school vehicles, school-contracted vehicles, the area of entrance or departure from school premises or events, all locations where school-related functions are conducted, and anywhere students are under the jurisdiction of the school district.
- C. “Possession” means having a weapon on one’s person or in an area subject to one’s control in a school location.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

- A. 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 school employee or immediately notifies an administrator, teacher or school employee of the weapons location
- B. It shall not be a violation of this policy if a nonstudent (or student where specified) falls within one if the following categories:
1. Active licensed peace officers;
 2. Military personnel, or students or nonstudents participating in military training, who are on duty performing official duties;
 3. Persons authorized to carry a pistol under Minn. Statute 624.714 while in a motor vehicle or outside of a motor vehicle for the purpose of directly placing a firearm in, or retrieving it from, the trunk or rear area of the vehicle
 4. Persons who keep or store in a motor in a motor vehicle, pistols in accordance with Minn. Stat. 624.714 or 624.715 or other firearms in accordance with Statute 97B.045;
 - a. Section 624.714 specifies procedures and standards for obtaining a pistol permits and penalties for the failure to do so. Section 624.715 defines an exception to the pistol permit requirements for “Antique firearms which are carried or possessed as curiosities or for their historical significance or value.
 - b. Section 97B.045 generally provides that a firearm may not be transported in a motor vehicle unless it is (1) unloaded and in a gun case without any portion of the firearm exposed; (2) unloaded and in the closed trunk; or (3) a handgun carried in compliance with Section 624.714 and 624.715.
 1. Firearm safety or marksmanship courses or activities for students or nonstudents conducted on school property;
 2. Possession of dangerous weapons, BB guns, or replica firearms by a ceremonial color guard;
 3. A gun or knife show held on school property;
 4. Possession of dangerous weapons, BB guns, or replica firearms with written permission of the principal or other person having general control and supervision of the school

5. Persons who are on unimproved property owned or leased by a school or school district unless the person knows that a student is currently present on the land for a school-related activity.
 6. Persons must have written permission from the Executive Director as well as a principal for someone to possess a dangerous weapon in a school location.
- C. **Policy Application to Instructional Equipment/Tools**
While the school district takes a firm “Zero Tolerance” position on the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students, and a similar position with regard to nonstudents, such a position is not meant to interfere with instruction or the use of appropriate equipment and tools by students or nonstudents. Such equipment and tools, when properly possessed, used and stored, shall not be considered in violation of the rule against the possession, use or distribution of weapons. However, when authorized instructional and work equipment and tools are used in a potentially dangerous or threatening manner. Such possession and use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.
- D. **Firearms in School Parking Lots and Parking Facilities**
A school district may not prohibit the lawful carry or possession of firearms in a school parking lot or parking facility. For purposes of this policy, the “lawful” carry or possession of a firearm in a school parking lot or parking facility is specifically limited to nonstudent permit-holders authorized under Minn. Statute 624.714 to carry a pistol in the interior of a vehicle or outside the motor vehicle for the purpose of directly placing a firearm in, or retrieving it from, the trunk or rear area of the vehicle. Any possession or carry of a firearm beyond the immediate vicinity of a permit-holder’s vehicle shall constitute a violation of this policy.
- V. **CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENT WEAPON POSSESSION/USE/DISTRIBUTION**
- A. The school district takes a position of “Zero Tolerance” in regard to the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students. Consequently, the minimum consequence for students possessing, using, or distributing weapons shall include:
1. Immediate out-of-school suspension;
 2. Confiscation of the weapon;
 3. Immediate notification of the police;
 4. Parent or guardian notification; and
 5. Recommendation of the Executive Director for dismissal for a period of time deemed appropriate.
- B. Pursuant to Minnesota Law, a student who brings a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school will be expelled for at least a year. The school board may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis.
- C. **Administrative Discretion:**
While the school district takes a “Zero Tolerance” position on the possession, use, or distribution of weapons by students, the Executive Director may use discretion in determining whether, under the circumstances, a course of action other than the minimum consequences specified above is warranted. If so, other appropriate action may be taken, including consideration of a recommendation for lesser discipline.

VI. CONSEQUENCES FOR WEAPON POSSESSION/USE/DISTRIBUTION BY NONSTUDENTS

A. Employees

1. An employee who violates the terms of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including nonrenewal, suspension, or discharge as deemed appropriate by the school board.
2. Sanctions against employees, including nonrenewal, suspension, or discharge shall be pursuant to and in accordance with applicable statutory authority, collective bargaining agreements, and school district policies.
3. When an employee violates the weapons policy, law enforcement may be notified, as appropriate.

B. Other nonstudents

1. Any member of the public who violates this policy shall be informed of the policy and asked to leave the school location. Depending on the circumstances, the person may be barred from future entry to school locations. In addition, if the person is a student in another district, that school district may be contacted concerning the policy violation.
2. If appropriate, law enforcement will be notified of the policy violation by the member of the public and may be asked to provide an escort to remove the member of the public from the school location.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. 97B.045 (Transportation of Firearms)
Minn. Stat. 121A.05 (Referral to Police)
Minn. Stat. 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act) Minn. Stat. 121A.44 (Expulsion for Possession of Firearms) Minn. Stat. 609.02, SUB.6 (Definition of Dangerous Weapons)
Minn. Stat. 609.605 (Trespass)
Minn. Stat. 609.66 (Dangerous Weapons)
Minn. Stat. 624.714 (Carrying of Weapons without Permit, Penalties)
Minn. Stat. 624.715 (Exemptions; Antiques and Ornaments) 18 U.S.C. 921 (Definition of Firearm) in re C.R.M. 611 N.W.2d 802 (Minn. 2000)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal of School District Employees)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline) MSBA/MASA Model Policy 525 (Violence Prevention)

Parent/Guardian Guide and Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Testing

This information will help parents/guardians make informed decisions that benefit their children, schools, and communities.

Why statewide testing? Minnesota values its educational system and the professionalism of its educators. Minnesota educators created the academic standards which are rigorous and prepare our students for career and college.

The statewide assessments are how we as a state measure that curriculum and daily instruction in our schools are being aligned to the academic standards, ensuring all students are being provided an equitable education. Statewide assessment results are just one tool to monitor that we are providing our children with the education that will ensure a strong workforce and knowledgeable citizens.

Why does participation matter? A statewide assessment is just one measure of your student's achievement, but your student's participation is important to understand how effectively the education at your student's school is aligned to the academic standards.

- In Minnesota's implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, a student not participating in the statewide assessments will not receive an individual score and will be counted as "not proficient" for the purpose of school and district accountability, including opportunities for support and recognition.
- Students who receive a college-ready score on the high school MCA are not required to take a remedial, non credit course at a Minnesota State college or university in the corresponding subject area, potentially saving the student time and money.
- Educators and policy makers use information from assessments to make decisions about resources and support provided.
- Parents and the general public use assessment information to compare schools and make decisions about where to purchase a home or to enroll their children.
- School performance results that are publicly released and used by families and communities, are negatively impacted if students do not participate in assessments.

Academic Standards and Assessments: What are academic standards? The Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards are the statewide expectations for student academic achievement. They identify the knowledge and skills that all students must achieve in a content area and are organized by grade level. School districts determine how students will meet the standards by developing courses and curriculum aligned to the academic standards.

What is the relationship between academic statewide assessments and the academic standards? The statewide assessments in mathematics, reading, and science are used to measure whether students, and their school and district, are meeting the academic standards. Statewide assessments are one measure of how well students are doing on the content that is part of their daily instruction. It is also a measure of how well schools and districts are doing in aligning their curriculum and teaching the standards.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of (MTAS) (MTAS) ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

Why are these assessments effective?

Minnesota believes that in order to effectively measure what students are learning, testing needs to be more than answering multiple choice questions.

- To answer questions, students may need to type in answers, drag and drop images and words, or manipulate a graph or information.
- The Reading and Mathematics MCAs are adaptive, which means the answers a student provides determine the next questions the student will answer.
- The Science MCA incorporates simulations, which require students to perform experiments in order to answer questions.

All of these provide students the opportunity to apply critical thinking needed for success in college and careers and show what they know and can do.

Are there limits on local testing?

As stated in Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.301, for students in grades 1–6, the cumulative total amount of time spent taking locally adopted districtwide or schoolwide assessments must not exceed 10 hours per school year. For students in grades 7–12, the cumulative total amount of time spent taking locally adopted districtwide or schoolwide assessments must not exceed 11 hours per school year. These limits do not include statewide testing.

In an effort to encourage transparency, the statute also requires a district or charter school, before the first day of each school year, to publish on its website a comprehensive calendar of standardized tests to be administered in the district or charter school during that school year. The calendar must provide the rationale for administering each assessment and indicate whether the assessment is a local option or required by state or federal law.

What if I choose not to have my student participate?

Parents/guardians have a right to not have their student participate in state-required standardized assessments. Minnesota Statutes require the department to provide information about statewide assessments to parents/ guardians and include a form to complete if they refuse to have their student participate. This form follows on the next page and includes an area to note the reason for the refusal to participate. Your student’s district may require additional information.

A school or district may have additional consequences beyond those mentioned in this document for a student not participating in the state-required standardized assessments. There may also be consequences for not participating in assessments selected and administered at the local level. Please contact your school for more information regarding local decisions.

When do students take the assessments?

Each school sets their testing schedule within the state testing window. Contact your student’s school for information on specific testing days.

- The MCA and MTAS testing window begins in March and ends in May.
- The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs testing window begins at the end of January and ends in March.

When do I receive my student’s results?

Each summer, individual student reports are sent to school districts and are provided to families no later than fall conferences. The reports can be used to see your child’s progress and help guide future instruction.

How much time is spent on testing?

Statewide assessments are taken one time each year; the majority of students test online. On average, the amount of time spent taking statewide assessments is less than 1 percent of instructional time in a school year. The assessments are not timed and students can continue working as long as they need.

Why does it seem like my student is taking more tests?

The statewide required tests are limited to those outlined in this document. Many districts make local decisions to administer additional tests that the state does not require. Contact your district for more information.

Where do I get more information?

Students and families can find out more on our Statewide Testing page (education.state.mn.us > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing).

Parent/Guardian Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

To opt out of statewide assessments, the parent/guardian must complete this form and return it to the student's school.

To best support school district planning, please submit this form to the student's school no later than January 15 of the academic school year. For students who enroll after a statewide testing window begins, please submit the form within two weeks of enrollment. A new refusal form is required each year parents/guardians wish to opt the student out of statewide assessments.

(This form is only applicable for the 2021-2022 school year.)

Date: _____

Student's Legal First Name: _____

Student's Legal Middle Initial: _____

Student's Legal Last Name: _____

Student's Date of Birth: _____

Student's District/School Grade: _____

Please initial to indicate you have received and reviewed information about statewide testing.

I received information on statewide assessments and chose to opt my student out. MDE provides the Parent/Guardian Guide and Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Testing on the MDE website (Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing).

Reason for refusal:

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

MCA/MTAS Reading or MCA/MTAS Science

MCA/MTAS Mathematics ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

Contact your school or district for the form to opt out of local assessments.

I understand that by signing this form, my student will lose one opportunity to receive a qualifying score that could potentially save him/her time and money by not having to take remedial, non-credit courses at a Minnesota State college or university. My student will not receive an individual score and will be counted as "not proficient" for the purpose of school and district accountability. My school and I may lose valuable information about how well my student is progressing academically. In addition, refusing to participate in statewide assessments may impact the school, district, and state's efforts to equitably distribute resources and support student learning.

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

To be completed by school or district staff only:

Student ID or MARSS Number: _____