

Prairie Elementary Student Handbook



1700 1st Avenue SW

Worthington, MN 56187-1301

Phone: (507)727-1250 ~ Fax: (507)727-1255

[Heidi Meyer, Principal](#)

[Cory Van Briesen, Assistant Principal](#)

[Cathy Mrla, Assistant Principal/Targeted Services Coordinator](#)

Office Hours 7:00 am – 4:00 pm

Student Hours 8:15 am – 3:15 pm

For the welfare and safety of all students, please do not arrive at school prior to 7:30 a.m.

Attendance

Prairie Elementary believes that it is essential to partner with parents and families to ensure that children attend school. School attendance is instrumental in student performance. Students who are chronically absent from school will not perform as well as their classmates who attend school regularly. Consistency in attendance is vital to a student's progress both academically and socially. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to cause the child to attend school and to inform the school of each and every absence. School personnel will attempt to contact the home if the absence has not been reported to ensure the child is not home alone. If your child must be absent please call the

Absence Line: (507) 727-1272

School responsibilities to improve school attendance:

- Take attendance each morning.
- If a student is absent, and no one has called, we call the home to be sure no one was left home alone.
- Follow the School District and State mandated attendance policies.
- Send letters to parents when attendance is poor.
- Hold attendance meetings when letters are not enough.
- Attendance Officer will help with contacting families.
- Bilingual Parent Liaisons will help with contacting families.
- Refer families to Family Services if we see a need or concern.
- Host Parent/Teacher conferences 3-times a year.
- Offer PASS classes to help parents better understand the educational process.
- Serve a nutritious breakfast every day.

- Health Office assists students who are not feeling well.
- Make our school a warm, inviting, and safe place to be.
- **Parent responsibilities to improve school attendance:**
- Stress the importance of a good education and the need to attend school.
- Make sure your child gets a good night's rest, every night!
- Have a bedtime routine so that your child is ready for bed in a timely fashion.
- Make sure your child has a nutritious breakfast either at home or at school.
- Help your child get up, or provide them with an alarm, so they have time to get ready for the day.
- Watch the time, or provide an alarm clock, so they don't miss the bus.
- If your child doesn't have a fever and they haven't thrown-up for 24-hours, they should be able to come to school.
- If your child is sick, has an outside appointment, family emergency, vacation, or etc., please call the school and leave a message concerning the absence. If you cannot call, sign a note concerning the absence and have your child give the note to their teacher the next day they attend school.

For further information about District 518 attendance policy refer to www.isd.518.net >District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 503

Background Checks

It is the policy of the school district to seek a criminal history background check for applicants who receive an offer of employment with the school district and on all individuals who are offered the opportunity to provide athletic coaching services or other extracurricular academic coaching services to the school district, regardless of whether any compensation is paid. The school district may also elect to do background checks of volunteers, independent contractors and student employees in the school district.

Bulletins/Newsletters/Classroom Correspondence

Students will bring home projects and work for you to see. Be sure to look over what is brought home so you are aware of your child's progress. Please take time to sit down with your child and allow them to show you their schoolwork. If your child sees that you take the time to look at their progress, they will bring papers home. This regular review of papers will give your child a chance to communicate to you the important parts of their day. It will also provide you a chance to detect problems your child might be having in different subjects. Please use this time to encourage and support your child in their efforts. Consult with your child's teacher regarding any concerns you may have.

Child Abuse and Neglect

It is the policy of the school district to fully comply with Minn. Stat. § 626.556 requiring school personnel to report suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse. This responsibility is not taken lightly nor is it done without probable cause. Parents will be notified by the Nobles County Family Service Agency if this action has been taken.

Communication

Communication between home and school is essential for student success. Please feel encouraged to share pertinent information from home with your child's classroom teacher.

Please inform the school office (727-1250) of changes in address, phone numbers, parent or guardian workplace, or changes in parental marital status. This information is necessary for our records in case of emergency.

If you need to get a message to your child, please call the office and leave the message with office staff. For emergencies, students will be contacted. Other messages will be collected and distributed to students by 2:45 each day. All incoming calls regarding end-of-day transportation should be made by 2:45 to assure that your child (and teacher) receives the message. When possible, planning ahead alleviates extra calls to the office. Notes are appreciated when sharing daily information with classroom teachers. Phone messages will be forwarded to teachers during the school day but will likely not be addressed during student contact time.

At Prairie Elementary, we encourage and appreciate parental input and feedback. When discussing your ideas and/or concerns, we ask that you consider talking to your child's teacher first. Although we encourage contact with the classroom teacher first, we recognize that there are times when alternative contacts are necessary. In those cases, please use the following guideline (noting that if the concern is about a person in the line of process, please move to the next level):

1. Teacher contact
2. Building Principal contact
3. Superintendent contact
4. Board Member contact

Conferences

In the course of the school year, three parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled for each child. The conference dates are designated on the District 518 calendar. These conferences provide an opportunity to discuss your child's achievements and concerns with his/her teacher. This is also an opportunity to generally discuss your child's school experience and how to help him/her reach their potential. Please make every effort to attend and participate in these conference times. They are an important part of your involvement. If you have a desire to meet with your child's teacher at a time other than the regularly scheduled conference time, contact the teacher before or after the student instructional day, send a note with your child, or call the office to leave a voicemail message for the teacher to return your call.

Discipline/Expectation Program

At Prairie Elementary we utilize a Responsive Classroom model. The Responsive Classroom model encourages students to begin developing key social skills necessary to be socially and academically successful.

The Responsive Classroom Approach centers on seven key principles:

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach-individually, culturally, and developmentally-is as important as knowing the content we teach.

6. Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
7. How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

At the heart of the *Responsive Classroom* approach are ten classroom practices:

Morning Meeting - gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead

Hopes and Dreams - helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals

Interactive Modeling - teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique

Positive Teacher Language - using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline

Logical Consequences - responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity

Guided Discovery - introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility

Academic Choice - increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices

Classroom Organization - setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity

Working with Families - creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches

Collaborative Problem Solving - using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

Although Prairie Elementary emphasizes the development of self-discipline, we also recognize that there are instances when it will be necessary to administer disciplinary measures. It is the position of the Prairie Elementary that a fair and equitable discipline policy will contribute to the quality of the student's educational experience.

School Wide Expectations:

BE
RESPONSIBLE

BE
RESPECTFUL

BE
SAFE

When misbehavior occurs, the following actions may be taken:

1. Take a break (student directed return)
2. Take a break (teacher directed return)
3. Loss of privilege
4. Buddy Classroom, Apology of Action Plan
5. Solutions and problem solving with Principal or Behavior Specialis

Student Removal / Cool Down Procedure:

If you have a student on a Time Out or Cool Down plan, or if your child is involved in a crisis situation that requires assistance, teachers will utilize the following procedure to access the on-call staff:

1. Teacher will call the office at extension #5000.
2. Teacher will the secretary “This is ___(name) in room _#_. Please send someone for assistance.”
3. The secretary will notify on-call staff to access their services.

For further information about District 518 Discipline, Bullying, Weapons, Hazing Policies, refer to www.isd.518.net >District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 506

Discrimination

It is the policy of District #518 to comply with state and federal laws which prohibit discrimination in education programs, activities, or employment on grounds of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance or disability. Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to the Office of the Superintendent at 1117 Marine Avenue, P.O. Box 878, Worthington, MN 56187 or telephone 372-2172.

For further information about District 518 Discrimination Policies (including Section 504 and Title IX information) refer to www.isd.518.net >District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 521

Dress Code

Prairie Elementary staff believes that in order to maintain a safe environment conducive to learning, appropriate clothing needs to be worn. The parents/guardians and student are responsible to ensure neatness, cleanliness, and respectful appearance when coming to school. **Administrative judgment will determine appropriate dress.**

1. Clothes should be clean and neat.
2. Hats and caps must be removed upon entering the building.
3. Clothing with inappropriate messages will not be allowed. (This would include gang related items as defined in [District 518 Policy 504](#)).
4. Clothing that does not provide proper coverage will not be allowed. (This would include halter tops, spaghetti straps, low cut tops and midriff baring items. It would also include oversized pants that are worn unreasonably low. Undergarments should not be visible.)
5. Physical Education classes require students to wear athletic tennis shoes. (Shoes with wheels are not allowed, even if the wheels are removed.)

For further information about District 518 Student Dress and Appearance Policy refer to www.isd.518.net > District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 504

Field Trips

All classrooms take at least one field trip each school year. These field trips either tie directly to the curriculum at the grade level or provide enrichment. Parents will be asked to fill out a form giving permission for their child to go on each scheduled field trip. All students are asked to bring \$10.00 at the beginning of the year to cover costs for field trips. This should be paid during Back-to-School conferences.

Health Services

While your child is at school, the District #518 school nurse, along with other school personnel, work to provide a safe and healthy atmosphere. Please feel free to contact the school nurse with any health concerns. Nursing services are available during regular school hours from 8:00 am- 3:30 pm. Parents are responsible for notifying other entities (bus company, extracurricular supervisors/coaches, etc.) regarding health conditions/concerns for their child.

Public School Nurses: Wendy Donkersloot, RN at PE, Kayla Scmitz, RN at WMS, Joni Reitmeier, RN at WHS, and Alyssa Smith, RN at PE and ALC

Cell phone:	360-9083	
Prairie Elementary:	727-1272	FAX: 727-1255
Middle School:	727-1182	FAX: 372-1424
Senior High School:	727-1173 x 3026	FAX: 372-4304

The school nurse is "on call" during school hours for all emergency situations.

Health Screening

Hearing, vision, and color blindness screenings may be completed at various intervals during your child's school years. These screenings do not replace medical check-ups by your family doctor. Parents will be notified if the screening results are not within normal limits for your child's age. If you do not want your child to participate in the health screenings, please contact the school nurse in writing at the beginning of the school year.

Healthy Habits

Healthy kids make better learners. Make sure your child gets plenty of rest. Provide your family with a nutritious breakfast each morning, or use the school breakfast program.

Frequent bathing, hair washing, and clean clothing help to promote good personal hygiene habits. Remind your child to brush their teeth regularly. It is recommended that each child see a dentist at least yearly.

Head lice can be a problem in schools. To prevent the spread of head lice, tell your child not to use someone else's comb, brush, hair clips, or hats. We also recommend that parents check their child's hair weekly for head lice to reduce the number of classroom outbreaks. Please notify the school health office if lice have been found so that we may alert other parents of the situation. All cases of head lice are kept confidential.

Home visits

Home visits by the school nurse are made at the request of the parent, school administrator, or other school personnel. Home visits are made when it is in the best interest of the child's educational experience.

Illness

Please call the attendance line each day your child is ill with the reason. Children who become ill at school will be sent home only after a parent/guardian or designated person has been notified. Please keep your child at home if they have a fever of 100 or higher or have vomited or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours. Written permission from the doctor should be sent to the school if a student returns before the recommended time.

Immunization Requirements:

Parents are required to provide the school with the month, day, and year of all required immunizations. If there is a medical reason why the child cannot be vaccinated, or if a parent objects to the immunizations, proper documentation must be provided to the school.

The following are required by the State of Minnesota **before** a student can go to school:

Kindergarten – 5 DPT, 4 Polio, 2 MMR, 3 Hep. B, 2 Varicella-or year of chickenpox disease

Age 7 - 6th Grade – 3 DPT, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 1 or 2 Varicella-or year of disease

7th-12th Grade – 3 DPT and 1 Td*, 3 Polio, 2 MMR, 3 Hep. B, 2 Varicella- or year of disease

*Unless a Td was given after the 7th birthday, the Td must be repeated 10 years after the last dose.

Medical Emergency Information and Accidents at School

Please inform the school if your child has a health condition or need that may require medical or emergency care during the school day. Having up-to-date health information will help school personnel keep your child as safe as possible while at school. In case of an emergency at school, first aid will be administered promptly. Emergency medical care will be initiated if appropriate. An attempt will be made to notify the parent or guardian before seeking additional medical attention, if any is needed.

Please notify the school office with emergency numbers for your child. Call the school immediately with any change in emergency phone numbers.

Medications at School

We strongly encourage that parents arrange to have students take their medication before or after school hours. However, we understand that there are times when it may be necessary for the student's health that medication and/or medical treatments be administered at school.

The District #518 School Board [Policy for Medication](#) and Health Office Guidelines for Medication Administration will be followed when administering any medications to students during school hours. If you would like a copy of the policy or guidelines, please contact the school health office.

If your child is to have any medication during school hours, you must contact the school nurse or school health office before the medication will be given. Medication will NOT be given without properly completed SCHOOL medication permission forms. School medication permission forms are available in the health office or online at www.isd518.net.

Click on “Medication Permission Form”. Cough drops can be given but must be supplied by the parent with a note to the teacher, and both are kept in the teacher’s desk.

Common Diseases, Etc.

Disease	Early Symptoms	Incubation Period	Attendance Restrictions
Chicken Pox	Slight Fever- general feeling of illness-vesicular eruption	2-3 Weeks	Excluded from school usually 5-7 days from start of rash, or until all are completely dry.
Head Lice	Itching, nits (eggs), live lice		Excluded from school until nits are removed by fine combing hair, using Nix or Rid shampoo, and washing all clothes, vacuuming furniture and vehicles.
Impetigo	“Water Blister” like eruption		Excluded from school until treated with antibiotics for at least a full 24 hours.
Pink-Eye	Pink, Mattery eyes		Excluded from school until medication has been used 24 hours.
Ring Worm	Round reddened area- light center		Excluded from school until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
Fifth Disease/Slap Cheek	Red cheeks, fever		No exclusion necessary- most contagious before rash erupts.
Scarlet Fever or Strep Throat	Nausea, fever, sore throat and fine rash	2-5 days	If medication is given, they may return to school after 24 hours. Physician will advise when to return to school.

Homework

Every student will have homework during the year. The amount and type of homework varies according to grade and classroom teacher. Students are expected to return homework to school when due and completed to the best of their ability. Establishing a time and place for doing homework and giving assistance is very helpful. Should a problem come up with an assignment, please send a note with your child or contact his/her teacher at school.

Inclement Weather

It is the general policy of District #518 to be open every scheduled school day. Official announcements regarding District #518 operations during inclement weather are broadcast over KWOA radio, 730 on your AM dial, and 93.5, 95.1, and 104.3 on your FM dial, beginning at 6:00 a.m. Announcements are also on KELOLAND- TV, keloland.com, and Channel 3. Shout Point, a district call-out system, will call each student's home to inform parents of the closing. **Students and parents are asked not to call radio stations or the school to inquire about school closing.**

Safety of students and staff are of primary importance to District #518 in its attempt to be open each scheduled day. Some days, because of inclement weather, decisions need to be made whether or not to cancel school for the day, delay the start of school, or close school early.

With a decision made by 6:00 a.m. in the case of a late start, the elementary and secondary students will ride their regularly scheduled buses two hours delayed. For Prairie, school begins at 10:15 a.m. on late start days. Have a plan in place for weather related school cancellations for your family.

Winter Recess:

- Make sure your child dresses appropriately for the weather. Students will go outside for recess as often as possible.
- Wear winter coats, hats, mittens, scarves, boots and snow pants. Students must have boots and snow pants in order to be allowed to play in snowy areas.
- Students will go outside if the wind chill is 0° or higher.
- Students **MUST** have a note from a doctor in order to stay inside if the wind chill is 0° or above.

Informational Fliers

Fliers to be distributed at Prairie Elementary should be approved by the principal. Approved fliers need to be copied and counted, ready for distribution to each classroom. Classroom teachers and office personnel will not be responsible for collection of returned materials.

For further information about District 518 Distribution of Non-School-Sponsored Materials Policy refer to [_ www.isd.518.net](http://www.isd.518.net)
>District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 505

Internet & Email Violations

Internet usage is a privilege and not a right. It is to be used only for legitimate educational purposes. The following types of misuse may result in loss of privilege and other possible consequences including a conference, detention, suspension, or possible expulsion:

1. Harassment of others in an obscene, derogatory or other offensive manner. This could include sending sexually explicit or racially and gender inappropriate jokes, messages, etc. Threats against others would also fall into this category.

2. The school district reserves the right to discipline students for actions taken off-campus if the actions are intended to have an effect on a student or the actions adversely affect the safety and well-being of a student while at school.
3. Plagiarism of materials.
4. Violation of copyrighted works or trademarks.
5. Transmission of personal information about oneself or others.
6. Disruption of the network or programs; introduction of viruses.
7. Downloading obscene or pornographic materials.
8. Failure to follow directions of a supervisor in the use of the Internet. Free speech in student use of the Internet is limited in the same way it is in school newspapers. Supervisors can limit student access.

For further information about District 518 Internet Acceptable Use and Safety, and Electronic Communication Policy refer to www.isd.518.net >District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 524

iPads

Students at Prairie Elementary will be using iPads to equip students with digital learning skills. Kindergarten, first and second grade students will not be bringing iPads home. Third and Fourth grade students may occasionally bring their iPads home for school work. If you have any questions regarding iPads, please refer to the iPad Implementation Handbook or ask your child's teacher.

If a student fails to return the learning device at the end of the school year or upon termination of enrollment in ISD 518, that student will be subject to criminal prosecution or civil liability. The student/parent will be required to pay the replacement cost of the learning device. Failure to return the learning device will result in a theft report being filed with the Police Department.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten registration is held in March. Kindergarten teachers will have conferences with parents and children before the start of school. **Children five years of age on or before September 1 may enter kindergarten at the beginning of the school year.** Physicals and current immunizations are required for students entering kindergarten.

Leaving School During the Day

There are times when it is necessary for a child to leave school early for an appointment, etc. We would appreciate it if you would attempt to schedule those appointments either before or after school, or on those days when school is not in session. However, when it is necessary for your child to be excused during school hours, we ask that a note with your request be given to your child's classroom teacher. When you come to get your child, please park your vehicle in the parking lot and report to the office. Do not park along the curb. If someone other than yourself is picking up your child, office personnel must receive a note or telephone call from you giving your permission. This individual must also report to the Prairie Elementary Office prior to the dismissal of your child. Your cooperation helps to ensure the safety of all children.

Lockers/Desks

Pursuant to Minnesota statutes, school lockers and desks are the property of the school district. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers or desks provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers and desks may be conducted by school personnel 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 authorities 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 student's personal possessions, the school officials must provide notice of the search to students whose lockers or desks were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.

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.

Lost and Found

There is a "lost and found" box located near the cafeteria at Prairie. Students may also check at the office for lost property. Parents are encouraged to write their child's name on items like coats, boots, etc. if possible. Items that are unclaimed will be given to an appropriate agency after six months. We strongly discourage students bringing items of value to school.

Lunch

All schools within District #518 use a computerized food service accounting program. This system allows a student to establish a lunch account, which is used for every purchase a student makes related to the food service program. Each student is issued a lunch number. If you wish to check on your student's account balance or receive electronic notification you may contact DeeAnn at 727-1190 or e-mail deeann.cral@isd518.net.

Deposits can be dropped off in the office. If you send a check, please write your child's account number or name on the check. When a student's account gets low, a notice is sent home requesting additional money. Money left in the individual's account at the end of the year will be carried over to the next school year. Money left in a fourth grader's account will be available to him/her at the Middle School.

Lunch Collection Procedure for District #518

When a family lunch account reaches \$15.00, a note will be sent home with the student. This note will be given to the student's teacher and the teacher will send the note home with the student. The note will explain the balance in the lunch account and ask the parents to send additional lunch money. Additionally, you will also receive an automated call if your balance hits -\$5.00.

Breakfast: Breakfast is available for students from 7:45-8:15 a.m. Breakfast for kindergartners is free. The cost is \$1.00 per day for regular breakfast for students grades 1-4. An adult breakfast is \$1.75. All prices are subject to change. Students that qualify for free or reduced lunch receive free breakfast.

Lunch: The school serves a nutritional meal consisting of five components: protein (main dish), fruit, vegetables, bread, and milk. There is a first and second choice for the main dish. Children participating in hot lunch are required to

select from at least three of the components. The cost is \$2.10 per day for regular lunch. An adult lunch is \$4.00. All prices are subject to change.

Milk: Milk is served as part of the hot lunch program with extra milk costing an additional \$.25. Students may also purchase milk to drink with their cold lunch.

Reduced Meal Prices: School District #518 participates in the National School Lunch Program, which allows children from households that meet certain household monthly income criteria to receive lunch for free or at a reduced price of \$0.40. Breakfast is free to all who qualify for the free/reduced meal program. Families must apply each year and may apply for these benefits at any time during the school year. The application will be treated confidentially and will be used only to determine eligibility and verification of data.

Media Center Guidelines

The media center is open from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. daily.

Kindergarten, First and Second Grade students will check out 2 books every week. Third and Fourth Grade students can have a total of 3 books checked out. If the student has one book checked out they are allowed to check out one more book. If the student has two books checked out no more additional books will be checked out.

Overdue Book Policy:

Overdue books are defined as books that are not returned to the library on a given due date. Students are not allowed to check out more books than their grade level allows.

End of the Trimester Policy for Overdue Books:

At the end of a given trimester, students with overdue books will not be allowed to check out books. Students are given several reminders two weeks before the trimester ends that they have overdue book(s).

Paying for Damaged or Lost Books:

Damaged books will be reviewed by the Media Specialist. A decision will be made if the book can be repaired and put back on the shelf with a \$3.00 fine. The student will pay full cost to replace books that cannot be repaired. Books that aren't repairable will remain property of the district and will be discarded (not returned to students).

Lost book(s) must be paid by the student before they are allowed to check out again.

New Student Registration

Students new to the district need to register at the District Office. The phone number is 372-2172 and can be called to set up an appointment for registration. Prairie Elementary School handles kindergarten registration in March.

Notification System

District 518 utilizes a notification system that will communicate events, activities, emergencies and other related information to students, parents, staff and community members. You have the right to refuse this service by providing a written statement of refusal to the district and/or contacting tom.ahlberg@isd518.net or call 727-1132 to unsubscribe which will occur within ten days of the notification to unsubscribe. The District utilizes this system to communicate many forms of information so please consider your choice carefully to ensure that it will not negatively affect your ability to receive important notifications.

Nuisance Items

Students are prohibited from possession or use of articles that are nuisances, illegal, distractions, or that may cause harm to persons or property at school and school-sponsored activities. Nuisance items such as electronic devices, cell phones, cameras, laser pointers, trading cards, etc. may be confiscated and returned to the student at the discretion of the teacher and/or principal. Parents may be required to pick items up in the office. We strongly encourage your child **not** to bring items of value to school. The school will not be responsible for locating/replacing lost items brought to school.

Orchestra

Orchestra is offered to students in 4th grade.

Outside Groups Using School

Anyone wishing to use Prairie Elementary facilities after school hours must contact office personnel to learn its availability. Approval at the district level is also required. Groups using Prairie Elementary may be charged a fee and are required to leave the facilities in the same condition as found. Adult supervision is required. Students and adults using Prairie Elementary after school hours are expected to follow building rules. Upon completion of the scheduled activity, an adult is required to ensure all individuals have left the building, the doors are locked, and the alarms set.

Parent Involvement

You, the parent, are the primary educator of your child. Your involvement with your child's elementary school experience is of utmost importance for his/her development. Parental involvement will benefit both you and your child.

Parents are partners in the educational development of children and they should play an active role in the development of school and system goals. Parent involvement includes:

- Attending conferences, meetings, classroom events, musical functions, and other school-related activities
- Developing new ideas regarding greater student achievement and learning opportunities
- Understanding curriculum
- Understanding student conduct and policies and procedures relative to student conduct
- Providing a safe school
- Building a feeling of pride toward Prairie Elementary in both students and parents
- Communicating with classroom teachers
- Conducting/participating in fundraising efforts

Parties/Special Events

It has become a custom that students bring treats on their birthday for the other students in the classroom. This is an optional practice and is mentioned here merely to inform you that the school does not object to this practice. We encourage healthy choices or non-food treats. A list of suggested healthy/non-food item treats will be shared with you by your teacher. **Parents are discouraged from bringing cakes, party favors, etc. in order to keep the distraction to the learning environment to a minimum.**

Pesticide Application

An estimated schedule of applications of pesticides is available for review or copying in the district office. If requested, parents may receive prior notice of each application.

Pet Policy

Due to the high number of students with many allergies, we are asking that animals with fur or feathers not be present in the building. For educational purposes, animals with fur or feathers will be allowed to be viewed outdoors with prior consultation with the classroom teacher.

Pledge of Allegiance

As required by [Minnesota law, \(Article 120, May 27, 2003\)](#), all public schools shall recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America one or more times each week. The recitation shall be conducted as follows; 1) by each individual classroom teacher or the teacher's surrogate; or 2) over a school intercom system by a person designated by the school principal or other person having administrative control over the school. The school district must instruct students in the proper etiquette toward, correct display of, and respect for the flag, and in patriotic exercises. At Prairie Elementary the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited each morning as part of the morning announcements. A student may decline to participate, and students must respect all others in their choice to recite, or not recite, the pledge.

Photo Release Policy

In the course of the school year, students may be photographed/videotaped for educational and/or promotional purposes (including publications, presentations, or broadcasts via newspaper, internet or other media sources). Parents must provide written objection if they are opposed to their student being photographed for school purposes/events.

Report Cards

The Prairie Elementary school year is divided into three reporting periods. Parents of students will receive a Progress Report form after the completion of each reporting period. Please take the time to sit down with your child and discuss his/her progress.

The marking codes on Prairie's Progress Report have been designed to provide you with information about your child's effort and achievement levels. The document also summarizes your child's attendance on a trimester basis.

Retention

Retention of a student may be considered when professional staff and parents feel that it is in the best interest of the student. There is a specific process that is followed by classroom teachers when significant difficulties are exhibited by a student. When the procedures followed indicate that retention should be explored, a team convenes to make the determination based on gathered data. Physical development, maturity, emotional factors, and specific learning needs shall be considered as well as a student's scholastic achievement. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

Sexual Harassment and Violence

School District #518 maintains a firm policy prohibiting sexual harassment and violence against students and employees. Sexual harassment is a pattern of behavior or words of a gender demeaning or sexual nature that are not welcome and which pressure, intimidate, or make the recipient uncomfortable. Sexual violence is an act of aggression, which includes a sexual act or sexual purpose. Students and employees are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner consistent with the spirit and intent of this policy. All persons are to be treated with respect and dignity. Any student or employee, or any third person with knowledge or belief of such conduct, should report the incident to the principal or superintendent. Reprisal or retaliation against someone who complains or who cooperates in the investigation of a complaint is prohibited. The consequences of a violation of this policy may include training in gender equity and sexual harassment issues, administrative conference with student and parents, reassignment of student, detention, suspension, exclusion/expulsion in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, referral to police or other outside agencies, or other action as the district deems appropriate.

For further information about District 518 Harassment and Violence Policy refer to www.isd.518.net > District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 413

Special Education Programs

In accordance with state and federal mandates, District #518 seeks out, assesses, and serves students with disabilities. District staff uses a comprehensive child study process to systematically screen, assess, and, if identified, provide special education and related services. When a referral is received, the building Child Study Committee meets to determine if any evaluation is necessary and by whom it should be done (school psychologist, special education teachers, speech/language clinician, etc.). If an evaluation is indicated, parents are notified by letter and asked for their approval. If consent is obtained, the evaluation is completed. After the evaluation is completed, general and special education personnel involved meet with parents to decide on an appropriate placement for the child. An individualized program is developed for the child and services are provided in accordance. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are reviewed on at least an annual basis with school personnel and parents.

A copy of the Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards pertaining to special education is available in the office.

Statewide Testing Information and Parental Refusal Form

See appendix A found at the end of the handbook

Student Records

Student records are kept on each child for his/her entire school career. The cumulative folder contains such items as copies of progress reports, reading record cards, school attendance, etc. These records are confidential, and access to a student's record is limited to school employees working with that student, his/her parents, and the student. We request parents make an appointment to view their child's records. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained to release these records to another party.

Support Services

The following support services are available to students at Prairie Elementary. Please contact the office for information about these services.

- After School Academic Programs
- Bilingual Parent Liaisons
- Early Childhood Special Education
- English as a Second Language
- Reading Recovery
- Special Education
- Title 1 Services
- Translator/Interpreters
- School Social Worker
- School Counselor

Tobacco

School District #518 is a tobacco free environment. Tobacco is not permitted in school buildings, school vehicles, or on school grounds. Visitors are required to follow this policy.

For further information about District 518 Tobacco Policy refer to www.isd.518.net >District>District Office>School District Policies Policy 419

Transportation

Automobile Transportation

When students are transported to school by automobile, students must be brought to the front entrance. When picking up students after school, use the front entrance driveway and proceed to the outside gym doors on the east side of the building where your child will be waiting.

Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is provided by District #518 for all elementary children. Bus schedules are determined just prior to the opening of school and may be printed in the Worthington Daily Globe at that time. Please save the printed schedules along with the other bulletins, which amend the information in this handbook. Bus routes and schedules may change during the school year due to the mobility of the families in District #518. Please be flexible and allow for changes. Riders should:

- Be ready at their pick-up spots five (5) minutes early
- Wear appropriate clothing in case of bad weather and/or mechanical failure
- Memorize their bus numbers
- Bring a note from a parent to justify a change in riding routine. Students will adhere to the original plan unless a note is sent.

If a need for a change in the bus routine arises during the day, please call the Prairie Office before 2:45 pm, and a message will be given to your child.

In order to maintain a safety in and around a school bus, specific guidelines have been developed. The following acts are prohibited and may result in loss of bus privileges:

- Standing in a moving bus
- Placing any part of the body or any articles out the window
- Throwing items on the bus
- Excessive noise, which would tend to distract the bus driver
- Profane or obscene language or action
- Defacing or damaging the bus, inside or out
- Throwing items out the bus window (This offense may result in civil action)
- Smoking or chewing tobacco on the bus (This offense will result in suspension from school)
- Fighting or intentionally provoking fights in or around the bus (This offense may result in suspension from school)
- Possessing any type of weapon as defined by District 518 policy on the bus

Bus Discipline Procedures

Students transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible to the driver of the bus. Riding the school bus is a privilege that can be revoked for inappropriate behavior. Students are expected to follow the same standards of behavior while riding a bus as they are in school or at a school-sponsored activity. All school rules are in effect while a student is waiting at a bus stop or riding the bus. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with these policies. The driver of any school bus shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils transported. MS 121A.59 provides, “transportation is a privilege not a right for an eligible student.” Revocation of a student’s bus riding privilege is not an exclusion, expulsion, or suspension under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.

Video Monitoring

District 518 uses video monitoring equipment on school buses and within District 518 buildings and facilities.

Visits to the School

Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom during school hours. Please check first with your child's teacher as to the best time and day to visit. All visitors must check in the office to get a visitor's pass before going to classrooms. Visits should be kept to a thirty-minute limit so as to not distract the educational environment in the classroom.

Some grade levels discourage visits the first few weeks of school. Visits early in the year may make it difficult to establish a routine here at school. Again, please contact your child's classroom teacher before visiting.

Siblings and children visiting from other schools will not be allowed to attend school with your child.

Volunteering in the classroom

Prairie Elementary School welcomes classroom helpers. Parent help is utilized in many ways at Prairie, i.e., listening to children read, field trip chaperone, guest speaker, working fundraisers, sharing special abilities and interests, and helping with academic tasks. Please communicate your desire to help in your child's classroom.

Parent helpers are an integral part of our school. We encourage you to participate in this important role as Prairie Elementary pursues quality education. Volunteerism is one measure of a community's dedication to its youth. We continue to need fathers, mothers, grandpas, grandmas, aunts, uncles, college students, and neighbors to enrich educational experiences for our students.

All volunteers that will be here on on-going basis must go through a criminal background check. Forms may be obtained at the District Office.

Please consider participating in one or more of the following ways:

- Help as a volunteer classroom assistant, assisting in the classroom on a regular basis
- Put up bulletin boards
- Listen to students read
- Supervise students completing assignments
- Construct teaching materials
- Assist in the practice of basic skills
- Other tasks upon which you and the teacher agree
- Help as a volunteer for special occasions
- Chaperone a field trip
- Be a guest speaker
- Help with a one-day program
- Assist with classroom parties and special events
- Attend and participate in parent meetings
- Baby-sit for other parents who are volunteering at school
- Make inexpensive teaching aids at home that will later be used in school
- Tutor students with special needs

Withdrawing Students

Please contact the office if you are moving to another school district as soon as it is known, in order to receive the proper information regarding transfer procedures.

The last date of attendance and your new address is needed. School records will be mailed as soon as the school to which your child has been enrolled has contacted us.

Prairie Elementary will forward school records upon the request of the new district of residence. Teachers will summarize academic achievement and provide the receiving school with placement information.

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 academics 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, noncredit 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 Academic Skills (MTAS)

- Based on the Minnesota Academic Standards; given annually in grades 3–8 and high school in reading and mathematics; given annually in grades 5, 8 and high school for science.
- Majority of students take the MCA.
- MTAS is an option for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

- Based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.
- Given annually to English learners in grades K–12 in reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Majority of English learners take ACCESS for ELLs.
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an option for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

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](https://education.state.mn.us) (education.state.mn.us > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing).

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.31, subdivision 4a, requires the commissioner to create and publish a form for parents and guardians to complete if they refuse to have their student participate in state-required standardized assessments. Your student's district may require additional information. School districts must post this three page form on the district website and include it in district student handbooks.

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.

Date _____ (This form is **only** applicable for the 20____ to 20____ school year.)

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 choose 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

_____ MCA/MTAS Science

_____ MCA/MTAS Mathematics

_____ ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS

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 _____