2026–27

Minnewaska Area Schools

Elementary School Handbook

ENGAGE EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY!

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Attendance, Daily MAS Policy 503
Minnesota Compulsory Attendance Law M.S. 120.10 states every child between 7 and 16 years of age shall attend a public or a private school, in each year during the entire time the public schools of the district are in session unless excused from attendance by the board upon application of his/her parent or guardian on the grounds specified in the laws. When a student has 7 absences (excused or unexcused), he/she is considered educationally at-risk, which is not in violation of the law but warrants the school to begin an intervention process.

If your child is absent, please call the school by 9:30 a.m. at 320-239-4800 or 320-634-4567

You may leave a message at this number 24 hours a day.

Call ext. 2000 at MAES or email afrey@isd2149.org

If we have not heard from a parent or guardian by 9:00 a.m. we will attempt to contact him/her for verification. We try the home or cell phone number first; should we not reach you, we will call the work number(s) listed. If we are unable to talk with you, we will leave messages on answering machines or voicemail. We will continue trying to contact you personally throughout the day. Please help us by calling to report your child's absence.

Please give the following information when you call:
- Your name
- Child's name
- Grade/Teacher's name
- Reason for absence

Absences, Excused
Excused absences may be given for the following reasons: Illness, necessary medical attention or appointments, serious illness or death of someone in the immediate family, emergencies calling for service of the student at home, trips or travel when arrangements have been made in advance with the principal and your child's teacher.

Should a student be ill more than 5 days a semester, a doctor's note may be required.

A student will be counted absent for vacation, but it will be excused vs. unexcused.

If a student arrives at school after 10:00 a.m., he/she will be counted as absent for the morning. If a student leaves school prior to 1:30 p.m., he/she will be counted as absent for the afternoon.

Absences, Unexcused
Unexcused absences may be given for missing the bus, staying home without a reason or failing to communicate where a child is. Minnesota Compulsory Attendance Law M.S. 120.10 also shares that students who have numerous unexcused absences can be reported to social services and the Pope County Attorney's office.

Parents will be notified when their child has 3, 5, and 7 unexcused absences. Through the process, Minnewaska Area Schools will make efforts to provide interventions and support for students finding difficulty in finding their way to school.

Early Departure

If it is necessary for a child to leave school early, please send a note with him/her to notify the teacher and office personnel. This includes medical appointments, music lessons, etc.

- Every student must check out at the office before leaving school. If you plan to pick him/her up at school, stop in at the office and we will call the student from the classroom.
- We will not release your child to anyone other than a parent or an emergency contact without a written note.

Absence, Makeup Work

If a student is absent due to an illness which you know will keep him/her out of school for more than 2 days, please call the classroom teacher or the office and arrangements will be made at that time to provide for makeup work.

- Parents should call the school prior to stopping for assignments. Class will not be interrupted for the teacher to prepare make-up work.
- All make-up assignments must be picked up from the office after dismissal.

In the event a student is absent, he/she is allowed 2 days per day absent to complete their missed work.

Tardiness

Students may arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. Students may not be dropped off before this time. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in his/her seat when class begins at 8:15 a.m. and within 5 minutes after lunchtime recess. (See the Daily Schedule for times.) When a student arrives late, he/she should report to the office to obtain a tardy slip. Please help us by making sure your child arrives on time each day.

If a student arrives at school after 10:00 a.m., he/she will be counted as absent for the morning. If a student leaves school before 1:30 pm, he/she will be counted absent for the afternoon.

Should a student demonstrate habitual tardiness that is unexcused, the district reserves the right to monitor and report to social services and the Pope County Attorney's office. Five unexcused tardies equal one unexcused absence.

Background Checks

Minnewaska School District is required by state statute 123B.63 to conduct background checks on all persons offered employment. This includes coaches and other extracurricular or academic coaching service providers, regardless of whether compensation is paid. The school district also contacts the state board of education to determine if disciplinary action has been taken for sexual misconduct or attempted sexual misconduct with a student.

Personal Items
Bike racks are provided for students who ride bikes to school. If they are ridden to school, we recommend students bring a chain lock to secure the bike to the rack.

Skateboards, roller blades, and wheeled shoes are considered transportation devices and are treated similarly to bicycles. They may be ridden to and from school, but may not be used during the school day or on school property. This includes recess. They should be kept in student lockers or in the office. Portable boom boxes, iPods, MP3 players, etc., should be kept at home. Water guns are not to be brought to school and are not allowed on buses. Trading cards and toys from home are not allowed in school.

Board, School--Meeting Schedule
Meetings are traditionally the third Monday, at 7:00 p.m. in the MAS Board Room. Monthly meeting dates are posted outside the district office. Should you look to attend a meeting and want a specific time and date, please reach out to the Minnewaska Area Schools District Office.

Bullying-Please see full District Policy 514 on the district website or ask for a copy from the office.

Bullying can be defined as intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harmful conduct that is objectively offensive and the conduct itself involves an imbalance of power that is repeated. The act itself must substantially interfere with a student's education or ability to participate in school activities.

The misuse of technology includes, but is not limited to, teasing, intimidation, defaming, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employees of the school district by sending or posting e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs, may also constitute an act of bullying.

ISD 2149 will act to investigate all bullying incidents and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employees of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. The primary contact for reporting bullying is the building principal.

Bus
In order to provide a "safe" environment for students when they leave the building in the afternoon, our procedure will include the following:

1. Students riding a bus will be walked to the bus by a staff member at the end of the day.
2. If a student walks or rides a bicycle, he/she will wait in the Media Center until ALL buses have departed.

3. Students being picked up by parents will meet their parent/guardian in front of the school along the curb.

Our policy is that if you pick up your student while school is in session, you continue to go through the office. The classroom teacher will not release your child to you!!!

Children going home in a different manner than usual:
At the beginning of the year, or time of admission, we ask parents to indicate how children go home. If a student will be going home in a different manner than usual, a note from the parent or guardian, signed and dated, must be sent to your child's teacher on or before the day of the change. Please use the assignment notebooks to communicate with your child's teacher. If there is a change due to unforeseen circumstances or emergencies during the school day please contact the school in one of the following ways; email the teacher and the office afrey@isd2149.org, or call the school and talk with the office or teacher if available. *Do not* leave transportation change messages on voicemail. Teachers or office personnel may be absent or may not have an opportunity to check messages before dismissal.

Bus, School Routes
Please call PALMER TRANSPORTATION at 320-634-3272 for bus information. Buses will stop only at designated bus stops.

BUS BEHAVIORS AND EXPECTATIONS

In 1994, the Minnesota Legislature made significant changes in the laws and rules governing pupil transportation. The law clearly states that riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right, and that privilege can be suspended when students do not comply with policies, rules or laws.

The law (M.S. 123.7991) requires that students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following key concepts.

1. Transportation is a privilege, not a right. (M.S. 123.801)
- A student's eligibility to ride a school bus may be revoked for a violation of school bus safety or conduct policies, or for violation of any other law governing student conduct on a school bus, pursuant to a written school district discipline policy.
- Revocation of a student's bus riding privilege is not an exclusion, expulsion, or suspension under the pupil fair dismissal act of 1974.
- Revocation procedures for a student who is an individual with a disability or under the Individuals with Disabilities Education act, United States Code, title 20, section 1400 et seq., section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, U.S. Code, title 29, section 794, and the American with Disabilities Act, Public Law Number 101-336, are governed by these provisions.

2. The school bus is an extension of the classroom. District conduct and discipline policies apply to the school bus and to bus stop areas as well as to school buildings and grounds.

3. The "Danger Zone"
- The "Danger Zone" is the area within 10 feet of the bus.
- The two areas which are the most dangerous, due to limited driver visibility, are the right rear area (including the right rear wheels) and the front of the bus (including the front corners).

4. Procedures for safely boarding/leaving a school bus.
- Be on time.
- Always line up single file to board (no pushing or shoving).
- Do not approach the bus until the driver opens the door.
- Use the handrail.
- Take one step at a time.
- Be seated quickly.
- Remain seated until the bus stops at your stop.
- Walk to the door.
- Take one step at a time.
- Move out of the "Danger Zone."
- If you must cross the street, wait for the driver's instruction or signal.
- Go directly home.

5. Procedures for the safe crossing of vehicle lanes.
   Move away from the side of the bus. (If you can touch the bus, you are too close!!!)
   As you move away from the bus, move to a point at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
   Turn toward the driver and make eye contact (make sure the driver sees you).
   Wait for the driver to signal you that it is safe to cross (either by the public address or by hand signal). When it's safe, complete the crossing.

6. School bus evacuations and other emergency procedures.
- There are three different evacuation plans:
  - Using only the front service door;
  - Using only the rear (or side emergency door), and
  - Using both the service and emergency doors.
- All students should know the location and basic function of the emergency equipment.
- In a real emergency, students should leave personal belongings on the bus.
- Students should gather in a group in a safe area about 100 feet away from the bus.

Minnewaska Area School Bus Drivers' Responsibilities:

a. The driver shall have authority on his/her bus in regard to the discipline of the students. It is understood that the driver is responsible to the Principal and that the Superintendent of Schools is the final authority.
b. The driver will not use corporal punishment or remove from the bus any student in order to maintain discipline. If a student is causing trouble that endangers others, it is recommended that the driver stop the bus, and telephone the parents, principal or the superintendent in order that they come and rectify the situation.

c. The driver shall notify the parents and/or principal of any discipline cases that he/she is unable to handle and will complete a discipline form if behaviors do not stop.
d. The driver will at no time transport any student other than those on his/her route unless permission has been granted by the principal or superintendent. Parents need to give written permission.
e. Driver discretion shall be used as to what materials can and can't be transported to and from school.
f. The driver is expected to complete his/her route unless road conditions are such that it is physically impossible. It is understood that the driver must use his/her judgment in driving his/her route for the safety of the students on the route.

Bus Drivers Report of Student Misbehavior:

Level 1: Minor Action: poor choice, first mistake. Intervention:
1. The driver and the student shall have a conference.
2. The driver may submit a written report of the incident on his/her bus.
3. Special seating may be assigned to the student by the driver.

Level 2: Moderate Action: behavioral, safety issue, occasional, repetitive. Intervention:
1. The driver shall submit a bus discipline report to the bus supervisor or owner, and the principal.
2. The driver, parent(s), bus supervisor/owner, and/or principal, shall meet with the student.
3. The parents shall receive a copy of the discipline report and/or contract from the principal.
4. Special seating may be assigned by the driver.
5. The student's bus privileges may be suspended for one week.
6. A contract with the student may be implemented including a plan, a consequence, a punishment, or restitution of the wrong may be established.

Level 3: Chronic Action: behavioral, dangerous, pattern, repetitive. Intervention:
1. The driver shall submit a bus discipline report to the bus supervisor or owner, and the principal. The driver, parent(s), bus supervisor/owner, and principal will meet with the student.
2. The parents shall receive a copy of the discipline report and/or contact from the principal.
3. Special seating may be assigned by the driver.
4. The student's bus privileges may be suspended for an indefinite period of time.
5. If the student's bus privileges are restored, he/she shall be assigned special seating for the balance of the year.

Level 4: Automatic Action: Federal, State or local law, e.g., MSHSL, state of Minnesota, dangerous weapons law, etc. Intervention:
The school has no choice in the intervention as it is mandated by law and will be handled in accordance with the law.

Subsequence Offenses: Any offenses committed after the third one shall be referred to the Superintendent of Schools for disposition. Such incidents are to be reported in the same manner as the third offense.

Calendar

2026 - 2027 CALENDAR

August 17..... New Employee Staff Day
August 24..... Inservice Staff Flex Day
August 25-27..... Inservice/Workshops
August 26 ..... K-8 Open House 3:30-7:30 PM
August 31..... First Day of School
October 12..... K-12 Conferences 3:30-7:30 PM
October 14..... K-6 No School - Parent/Teacher Conferences 7:30 AM -3:30 PM
7-12 Grade in Session
October 15 & 16 ..... No School - Fall Break
October 19..... No School - Teacher Inservice
November 6..... No School - Teacher Workshop
November 26 & 27 ..... No School - Thanksgiving
December 23 - 31..... No School - Winter Break
January 1.....No School - Winter Break
January 4 ..... School Resumes
January 15 ..... No School - Teacher Workshop
January 18.. ..... No School - Teacher Inservice
February 12..... No School
February 15.....No School - Presidents' Day
February 18..... K-12 Conferences from 3:30-7:30 PM
February 22.....K-12 Conferences from 3:30-7:30 PM
March 26 ..... No School - Spring Break
March 29..... No School - Teacher Inservice/Workshop
April 16..... No School
May 27..... Last Day of School
May 28..... Teacher Workshop & Graduation

MAES (Quarters)
November 5..... End of 1st Quarter
January 14..... End of 2nd Quarter
March 25..... End of 3rd Quarter

Student Days=169*
Teacher Days=182*
This includes 10 Workshop / In-Service / Parent / Teacher Conference days.
Emergency closing make-up days can come in the form of Flexible Learning Days through the school year or make-up days that occur during the school year or after.

Communication
A monthly newsletter will be sent home via email to families attending Minnewaska Area Elementary School. Families without internet access can request a paper copy.

Conferences, Parent/Student/Teacher
See the calendar for dates of Parent/Teacher/Student conferences. Students are encouraged to attend these conferences with their parents.

Discipline, Guidelines
MAES discipline process is called Laker Pride. Teachers will teach the Laker Pride expectations while students practice them. All of the appropriate behaviors are based on being responsible, respectful, and safe. (see Matrix on next page) Students may get a "Caught Being Good" ticket and their names will be entered into a weekly drawing. If a student does not follow Laker Pride they may receive consequences based on the Tiered Behavior Guidelines Document. Minnewaska Elementary has the fundamental authority to regulate student behavior. However, no student shall be dismissed from school without an attempt to use non exclusionary discipline. Please see the following pages for the Tiered Behavior Guidelines that include possible non-exclusionary consequences. Consequences will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

District Policy 506 Automatic Action: Federal, State or local law, e.g., MSHSL, State of Minnesota, dangerous weapons law, etc. gives us no choice in the intervention as it is mandated by law and will be handled in accordance with the law.

A teacher, school employee, school bus driver or other agent of a district may use reasonable force in compliance with Minnesota statutes 121A.582 and other laws.

Discipline Complaint Procedure: According to *Minn. Stat. 121A.61*, students, parents and other guardians, and school staff may file a complaint and seek corrective action when the requirements of the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, or the implementation of the behavior and discipline policies are not being implemented appropriately or are being discriminately applied.
The process is initiated by submission of a complaint in writing to the Superintendent or the superintendent's designee. The complaint must be submitted in writing and dated by the person making the complaint.

At Minnewaska Elementary we believe every student has a right to:

1. Be treated with respect and courtesy
2. Learn without disruption
3. Attend school every day
4. Feel safe

In addition, we endorse the right of teachers to feel safe in their classrooms and teach without disruption. If a student commits any of the following actions they will be suspended and the principal may make a recommendation to the Superintendent for expulsion. The Superintendent will decide if a hearing should be held in front of the Board

of Education to expel the student. In the event that police are notified of any of these significant events the school will notify parents on the same day.

Hooked on Laker Pride * Student Expectations

Hooked ON LAKER PRIDE	Playground	Cafeteria	Hallway	Bathroom	Bus	Assembly	Classroom
Be Respectful	●Listen to others ●Include others ●Use kind words	●Use level 1-2 volume ●Listen to others ●Use manners ●Line up quietly	●Use level 0-1 volume ●Keep hands and feet to myself ●Close locker quietly	●Use level 0-1 volume ●Flush the toilet ●Remain in your own stall and give others privacy	●Use level 1-2 volume ●Listen to others ●Use kind words	●Use level 0 volume while speaker is talking ●Eyes on the speaker ●Sit so others can see ●Use the bathrooms for emergencies only	To be determined by classroom teacher and students.
Be Responsible	●Follow playground rules ●Put the playground equipment away ●Line up when the signal is given ●Use level 0-1 volume when entering the building	●Use time wisely ●Use two hands to hold your tray ●Clean up spills ●Eat your own food	●Walk together on the right side of the hallway ●Keep the hallway neat and clear	●Wash hands ●Use 1 squirt of soap and 1-3 pushes on the paper towel dispenser ●Place garbage in the trash containers	●Be on time for bus ●Keep the bus clean ●Report inappropriate behaviors	●Enter and exit the assembly using level 0-1 volume ●Participate appropriately (clapping, asking questions on the topic)	To be determined by classroom teacher and students.
Be Safe	●Play within the boundaries ●Use playground equipment correctly ●Be gentle with others	●Remain seated until dismissed ●Keep hands, feet, and other objects to myself ●Walk	●Have a calm body ●Walk forward and pay attention ●Keep locker doors closed	●Keep water in the sink ●Leave the lights on	●Stay out of danger zones ●Keep hands and feet to myself ●Sit down and stay seated ●Keep entire body inside the bus at all times	●Have a calm body	To be determined by classroom teacher and students.

Minnewaska Area Elementary School Tiered Behavior Guidelines

Purpose: The purpose of the hierarchy of consequences for misbehavior is to:

1. Improve the educational environment for students, teachers, parents and staff.
2. Create a fair and consistent system that promotes positive behavior and self-discipline.
3. Reinforce school rules, policies and expectations.
4. Maintain a safe and orderly school environment.

Parents and students must be aware of rules, policies and expectations about acceptable and unacceptable behavior in our school. All people involved in the school have the responsibility of creating a positive environment within the building, on school property or at any school event. These guidelines are intended to be implemented being mindful of the student's age, maturity and ability.

The attached hierarchy of discipline consequences contains a list of possible misconduct and consequences. This is not an all-inclusive list and administration reserves the right to judge actions and behavior which are not on the list but may be a threat to the safe and orderly environment of the school.

Bus Misconduct – Bus behaviors are reported to the building principal by Palmer Bus Company. The Administrator works in collaboration with the Director of Transportation following these guidelines.

1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense	Additional Offenses
Warning, Review and Reteach of Bus Expectations by Administrator	Review and Reteach of Bus Expectations, Stop and Think Letter & call home by Administrator	Review and Reteach of Bus Expectations, Stop and Think Letter & call home by Administrator. Bus Suspension 1-3 days at discretion of Administrator/Transportation Director	Parent meeting with the Transportation Director and Administrator 3-5 day bus suspension	10 day or longer bus suspension.

Absences/Truancy – Following Pope County Attendance Policy, attendance is tracked by the Elementary Office Attendance Secretary

- Parents are to call the office to report their child's absence, in order for the absence to be excused
- A Physician's note may be required for extended illnesses of 10 days or more
- ~~5~~ 3 Tardies = 1 unexcused absence

After 3 Unexcused Absences	After 5 Unexcused Absences	After 7 Unexcused Absences
A letter is mailed to the family	A letter is mailed to the family	A letter is mailed to the family and to Pope County Social Services

Level 1

Level One discipline is used for **minor acts** of misconduct which interfere with safe and orderly school procedures and learning. The behavior is managed by the adult in the setting of the infraction. The misconduct behaviors of Level One do not significantly violate the rights of others; do not put others at risk or harm; are not chronic.

Examples of Level 1 Behaviors	Possible Level 1 Consequences
• Inappropriate Language • Defiance/Insubordination/ Non-compliance • Disrespect • Disruption • Dress Code Violation • Inappropriate Display of Affection • Lying/Cheating • Physical Contact/Aggression • Property Misuse • Skip Class/Elopement • Technology Violation	• Verbal reprimand • Teach/re-teach correct behavior- use teachable moments • Special seating arrangements • Loss of privileges (minimal) • Classroom behavior contract • Any other disciplinary technique that promotes positive behavior that is approved by administration • Making amends with peers • Confiscating items • Increased supervision • Class meeting on topic • Optional phone call/written communication sent home from teacher.

Level 2

Level Two Discipline is used for **intermediate** acts of misconduct, which interfere with safe and orderly school procedures and learning, **requiring intervention beyond the classroom**. Repeated violations of Level One Behaviors, become Level two. These misbehaviors are more intense and are directed against persons or property, but do not seriously endanger the health, safety or well-being of others.

Examples of Level 2 Behaviors	Possible Level 2 Consequences
• Higher intensity or repeated violations of Level 1 Behaviors	• Staff works with the student to resolve the issue. • Lunch spent in the office/reset room • Student removal from activities or classroom • Assigned seating

	● Self- Charting behaviors ● Student contract/behavior support plan ● Check in/Check out with an adult ● Skills practice/role playing ● Students are required to clean, repair or replace damage ● Any other disciplinary technique that promotes positive behavior that is approved by administration ● Phone call/written communication sent home ● Conference with teacher and/or parent/guardian ● Increased supervision ● Referral to counselor ● Individual Skills coaching

Level 3

Level Three discipline is used for **serious** acts of misconduct including repeated misbehavior that is similar in nature, disruptions of the school environment, and threats to the health, safety, property or well-being of others (puts others at risk or harm). These offenses must be reported to the building Administrator.

Examples of Level 3 Behaviors	**Possible Level 3 Consequences**
● Absences/Truancy ● Abusive/ Inappropriate Language ● Bullying ● Bus Conduct ● Defiance ● Disrespect ● Disruption ● Theft ● Harassment ● Inappropriate Location/Out of Bounds ● Physical Aggression ● Property Damage/Vandalism ● Technology Violation ● Other - use of illegal items, forgery, plagiarism	● Student removal from activities or classroom ● Loss of related privileges ● Lunch in the office/Reset room ● Time spent in Reset room ● Half-day/Full day in school suspension ● Check in/Check out system ● Student required to clean, repair or replace damage ● Any other disciplinary technique that promotes positive behavior that is approved by administration ● Conference with students ● Phone call/written communication sent home from administration ● Conference with teacher and/or administration with the parent/guardian ● Increased supervision ● Referral to counselor and/or Mental Health ● Student behavior plan

Level 4

Level Four discipline is used for the **most serious** acts of misconduct. Behavior misconduct that violates district, city, and/or state policy or laws. The offense must immediately be reported to the building Administrator. These violations require the intervention of outside agencies and may include law enforcement.

Examples of Level 4 Behaviors	Possible Level 4 Consequences
● Higher intensity or repeated violations of Level 3 Behaviors ● Physical Violence/Assault ● Arson ● Bomb Threat/False Alarm ● Sexual Assault ● Possession of illegal items	● Phone call from administration ● Criminal behavior will be referred to law enforcement for further action ● Full day in school suspension ● Full day out of school suspension ● Referral to an alternative education program ● Expulsion ● Referral to an outside agency ● Referral to counselor and/or Mental Health ● Conference with teacher and/or administration with the parent/guardian

In addition, Minnewaska Area Elementary uses predictable responses for students to have a clear and consistent consequence for specific behaviors. Students who are able to remove themselves from the situation they are misbehaving in are able to return to class within a normal time frame. Should a student be unable to follow required directions, they will not return to class until they can demonstrate the ability to listen to adult directions.

District Weapons Policy 501

At Minnewaska Area Schools we believe every student and staff has a right to:

1. Be treated with respect and courtesy
2. Learn without disruption
3. Attend school every day
4. Feel safe

In addition, we endorse the right of teachers to feel safe in their classrooms and teach without disruption. Therefore, we have zero tolerance for the following actions. If a student commits any of the following actions they will be suspended and the principal will make a recommendation to the Superintendent for expulsion. The Superintendent will decide if a hearing should be held in front of the Board of Education to expel the student.

1. A loaded or unloaded firearm, a weapon, device, laser or electronic stun weapon equipment, chemical substance, or other material that in the manner it is used, or could ordinarily be used, or is intended to be used, is readily capable of causing serious bodily injury.
2. Assaulting a school staff member.

ATTIRE / CLOTHING POLICY District Policy 504

Parents are urged to assist the school in ensuring that their children wear appropriate clothing to school and school functions. Students are given the opportunity to determine their own dress and appearance provided that it:

1. Meets standards of personal hygiene.
2. Doesn't impair one's safety or cause a hazard to others.
3. Doesn't interfere with or disrupt the learning process, as interpreted by office staff and faculty: possible examples below.
5. Clothing with slogans and/or graphics that promote violence, use of tobacco, alcohol, or other controlled substances or sexual activity are not to be worn to school or school activities.
6. Students are to keep hats, caps, coats, and backpacks in their lockers during the school day.

NOTE: State laws require that shoes are worn in public places.

With changes in weather, layering of clothing is recommended. Snow pants and boots are required for winter. Whenever possible, students will be outside during recess. When

extremely cold temperatures are recorded, or if rainy conditions occur, students will remain indoors at the discretion of building administration.

Dismissal
Dismissal is at 2:45 each day. Students have the opportunity to be picked up, walk home, ride the bus at dismissal or the late bus depending on their route or attend the After School Program.
Students who are not picked up by 3:00 will move to the After School Program for a charge of $8/day.
Only students on specified bus routes are part of the late bus. Specified bus routes are determined by Palmer Bus Service.

Emergency Drills
In an effort to keep all children safe and to meet state and federal guidelines, we will practice fire drills, holds, and severe weather procedures during the school year. We make great efforts to practice these drills in such a way as to prevent frightening children.

Emergency Information
Please notify the office promptly if you have a change of address or home, work, or cell phone numbers. It is critical that we have current phone numbers and the name of the emergency contact person.

Pledge of Allegiance District Policy 531
The Pledge of Allegiance takes place each morning at the beginning of the day in all classrooms. We respect each student's right not to participate due to religious reasons.

Field Trips
Minnewaska Area Elementary and Intermediate Schools offer a variety of extended learning experiences beyond the classroom to enhance the educational experience. Field trips are a privilege for students to attend. MAES reserves the right to have students remain in the classroom setting should behaviors demonstrated have the potential to negatively impact the experience. MAES faculty will be in contact with parents prior to the field trip to share challenging behaviors and alternate student plans.

Forgotten items
Please drop off any forgotten items such as lunch(s), assignment notebook or homework in the office. To avoid classroom interruptions these items will be delivered at an appropriate time. Students will not be allowed to call home for forgotten items.

Fundraising Programs
Minnewaska Area Elementary School asks that you help save the following and also are looking for volunteers to take charge of each of these programs; if interested please contact the office:

1. BOX TOPS for Education
Box Tops have gone digital. Download the free app -available via iTunes App Store and Google Play - then simply select the school you would like to support. Then, users scan

your store receipt, which automatically identifies all participating Box Tops products and bonus offers, and instantly adds cash to your school's earnings online. Receipts must be scanned within 14 days of purchase.

2. Tom's Grocery Slips
We collect Tom's grocery slips. When we save $100,000 worth of slips, we will receive $1,000 to use for student activities and resources.

Thanks for helping us save, as we use the monies for student activities, etc.

Cellular Phones/Personal Devices

Minnewaska Area Elementary School Prek-3 prohibits the use of cellular phones during the instructional day. Should a student bring a cell phone, it should be stowed away in a locker and essentially "invisible" during the school day. Cell phone misuse will be handled with the cell phone collected, given to a principal and the owner visiting with the principal at the end of the day. Repeated violations will involve parental conferences. MAES is not responsible for cell phones and other personal electronic devices.

Elastic Clause

The administration of Minnewaska Area Schools reserves the right to amend any provision in this handbook deemed to be in the best interest of the educational process. Furthermore, the principal retains the right to issue penalties for acts of discipline not specifically stated herein and to alter any penalties as considered necessary. Each situation is different and will be handled on an individual basis.

Gum, Candy, and Pop
Students are not permitted to chew gum at school. Candy and food may not be sold by one student to another. Pop and candy are not to be eaten or drank in the cafeteria and should not be sent as part of a student's noon lunch.

Health Services
The nurse's office is located next to the Principal's Office. The nurse is on duty during the scheduled school day. If a student is ill or has been injured, the parent or guardian will be notified and a decision will be made to have the student return to the classroom, go home, or be referred to the clinic or dentist.

Cumulative health records are maintained for each student, including immunization records, test results, screening data, and personal observation. Referrals are made by the nurse to the family physician or family dentist whenever necessary, to help the student enjoy the best physical and emotional health. The nurse will help parents obtain the advice and assistance they need to solve family health problems. The nurse and other school personnel are acquainted with school, community, and state resources available.

Medication District Policy 516

As required by M.S. 126.202 the Minnewaska Area Schools will utilize the following medication procedures:

1. Prescription medication that may be taken orally, inhaled, or applied externally may be administered to your child by the nurse or her trained designee during the school day, if required. For long-term medications, authorization forms must be renewed at the beginning of each new school year.

2. Parents must contact the nurse to identify the student who requires medication and provide:
a. Written parental permission for school personnel to administer it.
b. It is also REQUIRED that written orders from a licensed health care provider be obtained and should include the diagnosis, the name of the drug, dosage, route of administration and time interval the medication is to be taken.
c. Medication MUST be brought to school in the ORIGINAL container, appropriately labeled by the pharmacist or healthcare provider. Unlabeled medications will NOT be administered by school personnel at ANY TIME.
d. Medication will be stored in a locked drawer to prevent poisoning or drug abuse.

3. NO INITIAL DOSE OF A PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL. THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT THE STUDENT IS TOLERATING THE MEDICATION BEFORE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

4. Written authorizations from BOTH parent and doctor are needed for the administration of ALL prescription medications. Parents or guardians may provide a non-prescriptive pain relief medication (analgesic) to have available in the nurse's office if needed. Written authorization from the parent/guardian for the student must accompany the medication to be kept in the nurse's office.

5. Medication administered after school is dismissed will be discouraged.

6. Health personnel may refuse to administer prescribed medication to any student when the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have not fully completed the approved "Authorization for Dispensing Medication" form.

7. If a student refuses to take the prescribed medication, the nurse or health personnel will notify the principal. The parent(s) or guardian(s) will be contacted immediately and if they are not available, the prescribing doctor will be contacted.

8. Medication administration will be documented on a log sheet that includes the student's name, medication name, dosage, time and date administered, and signature of the person administering the medication.

<u>Dental Services</u>
Students are encouraged to make dental appointments for times outside the school day. It is good dental health practice to visit the dentist on a regular basis.

Emergency Information
The care of an accident or illness at school is first aid only. In case it is necessary to contact you, please make sure we have current home, work, and emergency phone numbers on file. Please notify the school immediately of any changes.

Head Lice
Parents are urged to periodically check children for head lice. This will help isolate cases before a serious problem develops. If head lice are discovered, the student will be sent home. Treatment must be completed before students will be readmitted to school.

Minnewaska Area Schools reserves the right to require students to treat all forms of lice before returning to school.

Illness
Many students and parents are frequently concerned about when students should stay home or attend school. The following information is intended to help with this decision:
1. If a student has had a fever of 100° or more, the student needs to stay home 24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal without fever reducing medication.

2. If a student has vomited or had diarrhea, the student needs to stay home until 24 hours after the last episode.

3. If a student has any rash, check with the family physician before sending him/her to school with a diagnosis.

REMEMBER to inform the school when you intend to keep a student who is ill at home.

Medical Exceptions
All children are expected to participate in physical education classes and be outdoors at noontime unless we receive a written note from the doctor excluding them from these activities, whether it is on a permanent, temporary or restrictive basis.

Vision and Hearing Screening
Health services personnel and trained volunteers will screen all 1st – 3rd-grade students for any signs of vision and/or hearing problems. Any students not passing the initial screening are rechecked by the nurse. Referrals are made to the parent if the child appears to have a problem that should be diagnosed and or corrected by a trained specialist or doctor. Screening results are sent ONLY to parents of students needing further testing and possible treatment by their doctors.

Homework
Homework is considered a part of the student's total program. Students are expected to complete all homework assignments on time. Students in grades 1 - 3 have student planners to keep track of assignments. Homework varies from grade to grade and classroom to classroom, but generally includes practice activities, research, supplemental reading, writing, project work, and unfinished work.

In the event a student is absent, he/she is allowed 2 days per day absent to complete his/her missed work.

Invitations, Party, and Birthday Treats
To avoid hurt feelings, unless all the boys and/or girls in your child's class are invited to a party, please do not send invitations to school for distribution.

It is the policy of the district that homemade treats are not to be served in the classrooms due to liability reasons. If a child brings a treat to school, please keep in mind that it should be purchased. The district also encourages treats other than food or beverages during celebrations. (Ideas: games, something for the class in lieu of cupcakes, etc.) .

Late Starts/Early Closings
When school is late or called off due to inclement weather or dismissed early due to approaching bad weather, school personnel will send a message to ALL families via School Messenger. Announcements will also be posted on the website and broadcast over a variety of local TV and radio stations.
PLEASE make arrangements with your child PRIOR to a storm so he/she knows what procedure to follow in the event of a storm day.

Before school care will open 2 hours late if school is 2 hours late/or will be closed if there is no school due to weather.
Lockers
Lockers are assigned to all students. These lockers are mainly for clothing storage. Students are to respect the privacy of their peers by following the "hands-off" rules where someone else's locker is concerned. Students are not to put locks on their lockers unless they are already attached. Do not leave valuables or money in lockers since the school cannot be held responsible for stolen property.

Lost and Found
Please check the Lost and Found area in the school cafeteria often to retrieve lost items. Should items continue to be left in the lost and found, they will be donated to area centers.
Media Publications
During the year we publish newsletters and web pages. Students' pictures and artwork are featured in our newsletter and/or used for promoting our school or enhancing our web page.

Minnewaska Area Elementary School will NOT use the following on district web pages:
- the last name of any K - 3 student
- personal student email addresses

Minnewaska Area School District #2149 reserves the right to photograph, videotape or interview your child for school publications or articles. This policy only applies to photographs, videotapes, and interviews. If you DO NOT wish to have your child photographed, videotaped, or interviewed, please inform your child's building principal. If

parents choose to opt out, this would exclude your child's picture from yearbooks, music programs, and other types of school media.

Messages to Teachers
Teachers may not answer phone calls while they are teaching class. They will return calls to parents before or after school or during preparation time. They have access to their email during their prep time, therefore if you have an immediate message, please call the office.

Money and Valuables
The school assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen articles. Children should not bring money or other valuables to school. Valuable items may be checked into the office.

Payment of Fees & Expenses
Parents will have the option of paying fees and expenses online through the SchoolPay online payment processing program. Check the district website (www.minnewaska.k12.mn.us) for details.

Pets
Although we love pets, students must check with teachers prior to bringing one to visit. No pet or live animal of any sort may be taken on the bus. If a student brings an animal to share with the class, the animal cannot stay the entire day and must be accompanied by an adult.
Pictures
Student pictures will be taken in the first couple weeks of school with a make-up date in early fall. Jostens will be responsible for taking pictures and sharing them with families.

Students are not required to purchase any pictures, but all must have their picture taken as part of the class for the Elementary School YearBook.

Preschool
Early Childhood programs available at Minnewaska Area Schools include:

- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) -A fee based program for children ages birth up to kindergarten age and their parents. Many program offerings are available including classes and special events.
- Little Lakers Preschool – A tuition based program for ages 3-5 year old children that provides a variety of learning experiences. Scholarships are available. Find more information on the school website.
- Early Childhood Special Education – A school/home based program for children ages birth to kindergarten age requiring special intervention to maximize their learning potential.

Food Services

Our school offers healthy meals each day. In 2025-26, we will continue Minnesota's Free School Meals Program. All students can get one breakfast and one lunch free of charge each day at school.

Although no application is required to receive this free meal benefit, filling out the Application for Educational Benefits is still important! Your child(ren) may qualify for other benefits like reduced fees at school. Your application may also help the school qualify for education funds, discounts, and other meal programs.

Who should complete this application? Children in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and foster, homeless, migrant and runaway children qualify without reporting household income. Alternatively, children can qualify if their household income is within the maximum income shown for their household size on the instructions.

Please fill out an application form and either mail it or bring it to the elementary or district office. You must reapply each August, regardless if you were on the program the previous year. The application form is available on our website or from the Food Service office. This information is confidential and you are urged to apply and use these programs.

Students may bring a cold lunch and purchase milk for .50. Your student should bring a nutritious lunch. A copy of the monthly menu is posted in the cafeteria and on the website. If your child has certain foods that he/she cannot eat or dislikes, please check the menu beforehand and send a cold lunch on those days when these foods are served.

Lunch with Your Child

Parents/Guardians or approved visitors may join your student during lunch any time during the school year. Please let your child's teacher and the office know when you will be eating lunch at the school, so we can plan for you.

We suggest that you avoid the months of September and May. Times vary from grade to grade, depending on their schedule.

Searches District Policy 502

Desks and lockers are the property of the school district and can be searched at any time. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of desks. 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.

Electronic Communication/Records: Electronic communications and electronic records, accounts, and passwords created by students while they are off-campus may be searched when school officials have reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of school rules. The search will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.

Special Education Services and Student Disability Nondiscrimination District Policy 521

Minnewaska Area Schools provides a free appropriate public education to students ages 0-21 who meet the State of MN eligibility criteria for special education services. If parents have concerns about their child's development, please visit with their classroom teacher about your concerns.

After a referral has been made, parents are contacted regarding future meetings. If intervention data is not available, the district may recommend that interventions be implemented and data collected prior to proceeding with a special education evaluation. Once the team determines an evaluation is needed, nothing will be completed without the parent's written consent. The evaluation will be conducted in all educational and/or behavioral areas that may affect the child's progress in school.

After the evaluation is completed, a meeting is held to determine if the child is eligible and if so, to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP). No initial services will be implemented without the parents written consent.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
The school provides programs for children beginning at birth for children who meet MN criteria for Early Childhood Special Education. Children ages 0-3 who qualify are provided services within their home or daycare setting. Children ages 3-5, maybe provided services within the Little Lakers Preschool, Head Start, ECFE or daycare setting. Please talk to your child's Preschool teacher if you have any concerns or questions.

Title I
Schools are allocated funds from the Federal government based on a formula that includes tax return information from specific years and numbers of students participating in the free and reduced lunch program. The funds are used to provide supplemental help to students in the reading and math areas. These funds provide salaries of Title I teachers and tutors, who provide parent programs and in-servicing.

A selection procedure called a "needs assessment" which includes state and local testing scores identifies those students with the greatest needs for supplementary instruction. A child will not receive supplemental help (Title I program) without parental written permission.

Title IX District Policy 522
The School district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities.

Volunteers
We invite parents to become involved in school activities. When parents get involved with their child's education, everyone benefits.

Each fall, help is sought in a number of areas. New volunteers are welcome! Please contact our classroom teachers to see when it would be most beneficial. Classroom visits and/or volunteering must be approved by the classroom teacher or principal prior to arrival.

Areas in which to volunteer include: classroom, vision and hearing screenings, and field trips, just to name a few.

Psychologist
Our School Psychologist is in charge of ability testing to help determine whether a child is eligible for special education services. No testing can begin without parents' written permission, in advance.

Recording Students or Staff
Students are prohibited from photographing, recording or making any electronic record of other students, staff, or visitors without express consent of the individual that is the subject of the recording, photograph, or electronic record. This policy applies to students during the school day, instructional and non instructional time, while on transportation or while participating in school events.

Replacement, Textbooks, Chrome Books and Library Books
Students who damage or lose a textbook, chrome book and/or a library book will be required to make restitution. The dollar amount will be determined by consideration of the following factors: The extent of damage and the value of the item when purchased. Lost items would be the full value of the item.

Report Cards
Parents of students will receive reports from their student(s)' teacher(s) on a semester basis.

School Hours
MAES:
Students may not be dropped off at school prior to 7:45 a.m. There is no supervision, inside or outside, until that time. Families who would like to drop their child off before 7:45 a.m. may enroll their child in MAS Before School Childcare. If a student wishes to remain after school, he/she must be under the direct supervision of a faculty member, in the After School Childcare Program or qualify for the late bus. ALL SCHEDULES are subject to change.

Classes begin at 8:15 am. Dismissal occurs at 2:45 pm.

Students in grade PK-K eat breakfast with their classes. Students in grade 2-3 who choose to may receive breakfast between 7:55 and 8:15 a.m.

Security
The following steps are taken to increase security:
1. Doors will be unlocked during student arrival and departure times only.
2. All doors will be locked during the school day so visitors will need to be buzzed in.
3. In the main entry on the south wall there is an intercom panel, push button to contact the office to be buzzed in.
4. Once buzzed in, please come into the office to sign in.

5. All visitors are required to provide a valid picture ID and wear a visitor sticker while in the building.

ALL VISITORS MUST SIGN IN Visitors must sign in and out at the kiosk in the main office providing a valid picture ID. ALL visitors will receive a visitor sticker from the office personnel. Visits to classrooms or other areas will not be allowed without prior permission from the classroom Teacher or Principal.

Anyone in the building without a visitor sticker or district badge will be redirected to the main office.

Supplies
Children attending elementary school are furnished with all necessary textbooks and workbooks. Personal items such as folders, pencils, colors, rulers, pens, etc. are purchased by the individual family. Tennis shoes are required for participation in physical education classes. School supplies list can be found on the elementary school home page at www.minnewaska.k12.mn.us

Tests
Minnewaska Area Elementary and Intermediate Schools complete a variety of assessments in order to determine student proficiency, student growth and proficiency of set standards and materials across the district. Our goal in using assessments is to determine what students know and understand in order to instruct them to the next level of learning. Formal assessments are listed below.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA's) — Grade 3
FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) – Grades K-3
NWEA Grades 2-3

Informal reading tests and reading placement tests will be administered to all new students and others, as needed.

MDE Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Ticket, Minnewaska Area Family, and Student Activity
Activity cards may be purchased in the Community Education office.

Visitors
Parents are welcome to visit their student's classrooms. State law requires all visitors to check in the office. Visitors must provide a valid ID at the office and wear a Visitor sticker any time they are on school grounds during the school day. Visits to the classroom must be scheduled in advance with the classroom teacher.

Preschool children are not to accompany parents when visiting a classroom. Also, visiting school-age children may not attend classes with friends.