

Discovery Woods School

K-6 Family Handbook



Discovery Woods

Public Charter School District #4198-07-010

Discovery Woods is a FREE K-6 public charter school authorized by Osprey Wilds.

604 N 7th Street, Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-8200

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Table of Contents

Staff and School Board Rosters	3
Welcome, Vision, & Mission	4
Operating Information	5
Health and Safety	9
Behavior and Discipline	11
Communication	13
Curriculum and Activities	14
Other Information	16
<i>Appendix A: School Year Calendar</i>	17
<i>Appendix B: School Supply List</i>	18
<i>Appendix C: School-Parent Compact</i>	20
<i>Appendix D: Chromebook User Agreement</i>	21
User Signature Page	25

School Staff Roster

Administration

Kara DeVriendt, Executive Director, office@discoverywoods.com

Brittney Buchite, Business Manager, business@discoverywoods.com

Lily Antoine, Administrative Assistant, mainoffice@discoverywoods.com

Teaching Staff

Emily Sipprell, 5th- 6th Grade Teacher

Ashley Gangestad, 2nd-3rd Grade Teacher

Chasidi Grant, K-1st Grade Teacher

Susan Kirby, Special Education Teacher

Jenni Blessing, Preschool Lead Teacher

Laiken Bladow, 4th Grade Teacher

Renee Huberty, K-1st Grade Teacher

Dawn Snook, Special Education Lead

Nick Forbes, Math & Social Studies Teacher

Educational Support Staff

Kaylyn Thompson, K-6 Behavior Interventionist

Tosha Nelson, Preschool Assistant

Ann Weber, Academic Interventionist

Cassie Brooks, Educational Assistant

Sara Prettyman, Educational Assistant

Karen Rock, Educational Assistant

Madelyn Harper, Educational Assistant

Joslyn Plourde, Educational Assistant

Samantha Thompson, Educational Assistant

Kayla Johnson, Preschool Assistant

Emily Jolie, Academic Interventionist

Breanna Mott, Educational Assistant

Mary Doucette, Educational Assistant

Heidi Rock, Educational Assistant

Brittany Thurstin, Educational Assistant

Other Support Staff

Nate Oanes, Technology Coordinator

Rob Gartner, Janitor

Kori Sawyer, After Care

Michael Knakmuhs, Boiler Technician

Andriah Schwartz, After Care

Amber Kounkel, Office Assistant

AmeriCorps Tutors

Mary Morris, K-3 Math Corps

Maddie Anderson, Early Learning Corps

Terry Ely, K-3 Reading Corps

School Board Roster

Emma Needham

Dawn Snook

Ashley Gangestad

Rebekah Kent-Ehlebracht

Matt Hastert

Denise Belden

Melina Kramer

Chasidi Grant

Kara DeVriendt

Chair/Parent

Vice Chair/Teacher

Secretary/Parent

Treasurer/Community Member

Member/Parent

Member/Parent

Member/Parent

Member/Teacher

Ex-Officio/Executive Director

Discovery Woods School Vision and Mission

Vision	<i>Discovery Woods is dedicated to educational excellence, environmental stewardship, and personal growth. Our students will have the foundation to be critical thinkers and responsible citizens.</i>
Mission	<i>To provide Brainerd Lakes Area families a choice for quality elementary education centered around the individual needs of the child with a focus on the environment.</i>

On behalf of the School Board and School Staff, we welcome all families to Discovery Woods School! The purpose of this Family Handbook is to acquaint families with the everyday happenings of the school, as well as any helpful policies and procedures that students and families must follow.

At Discovery Woods School (DWS), we are committed to:

Evidence-based Practice

Evidence-based practice refers to teaching methods, strategies, and interventions researched and proven to be effective. Evidence-based practices enable teachers to deliver a high-quality curriculum and instruction, ultimately improving educational outcomes for students. Evidence-based practice is vital because it promotes improvement for both teacher and student. As the evidence continually evolves based on new research, educators must continuously improve their teaching.

Family Partnerships

Educational partnerships between school and family are crucial for student success, foster positive attitudes, increase achievement, and improve behavior. Positive partnerships send a message to students that their family and school share the responsibility for their education. Research shows that students with involved families tend to have higher grades, attend school more regularly, and demonstrate improved behavior.

Environmental Stewardship

As a Charter School, Discovery Woods has an authorizer. The Charter Authorizer for the school is Osprey Wilds, whose vision is to promote “A healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth”. Each grade level K-6 participates in an environmental project during the school year as part of the school’s Environmental Learning Plan (ELP). Additionally, teachers use accessible outdoor spaces as an extension of the indoor classroom.

Diversity

Discovery Woods School is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment where all members of the school community feel valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. The school community honors the uniqueness of each individual and embraces diverse backgrounds to build a strong, inclusive community and prepare students for a global society.

Operating Information

School Calendar

Please see the school year calendar for Discovery Woods School in Appendix A

Safety and Student Arrival/Dismissal

Morning Procedures:

- School starts at **8:00 am**
- Drop-off is between 7:35 - 7:55 am. Students can not be in the building before 7:35 a.m.
- When dropping a student off at school in the morning, families may pull up in front of the building at the 7th Street entrance.
- Parents should not enter the building with their students upon dropping off in the morning. If there is a reason to enter the building, parents/guardians must stop into the office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass to be identified as a "safe" adult and sign out before leaving the building.

Afternoon Procedures:

- School ends at **2:50 pm**
- Parents/guardians are not to pick up students before 2:50 unless the office has been contacted prior to pick-up time.
- Notice of **pickup changes** must be provided to the main office **no later than 1:30 PM** on the day of the change. Office staff will not accept changes after this time.
- Buses line up on the south side of the school between 2:50-2:55 pm. Students are dismissed when their bus arrives. No parent parking in the bus lane.
- Students wait in their designated area until they are called for pickup.
- For safety reasons, students will be dismissed when their vehicle pulls up to the sidewalk near the front door. Parents/guardians are to wait in their vehicle, taking their place in the line of cars.
 - If a parent/guardian is coming to the doors of the building to pick up their child(ren), they are to park farther from the front doors or on the opposite side of the street to allow pick-up traffic to flow.
- Students may only be released to parents/guardians who are included on the Emergency forms.
- Parents/guardians will need to contact the school if anyone other than someone approved for pick-up will be picking up a student. Any person not on the emergency form who picks up a student must have identification for the student to be released.
- Children who are not picked up by 3:10 pm will be taken to After Care. Families will be billed for the days their child uses After Care.

Remember to keep the school informed about any changes to the emergency list. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to notify the office of all changes promptly. If a new person needs to be added to a student's pickup list, it must be done in person. The school can't make changes to the emergency list otherwise. If there is a court order denying someone contact with a child, a copy must be provided to the office.

School Parking

Discovery Woods School creates a learning environment that is safe for every child, family member, staff member, and guest. To help maintain safety:

- Park in designated parking areas only
 - Buses use the south side of the building; no parking or dropping off on that side
- Reduce speed when driving through the parking lot/school zone and watch for children
- Make sure children do not open the doors of the vehicle before coming to a complete stop
- Pull as close to the curb as possible during drop off and pick up
- Make sure children exit on the sidewalk side of the vehicle

Visiting/Volunteering at the School

Family Involvement

Discovery Woods School encourages family involvement.

- Families play an integral role in assisting with student learning.
- Families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.
- Families are full partners in a child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making at the school

As a Title I School, DWS is required to have a School-Parent Compact. Please see the School-Parent Compact in Appendix C

Visitors

DWS welcomes visitors throughout the school day. The term "visitors" includes all volunteers, parents/guardians, community members, etc. As a school safety measure, all visitors to classrooms must be pre-approved and follow the following protocols:

- All visitors must have a specific destination for their visit. Administrative staff reserve the right to deny entrance to visitors with no specific purpose or destination for their visit.
- All visitors entering beyond the main office must be prepared to show a driver's license or a valid state-issued ID for verification.
- All visitors must sign in at the main office immediately upon arrival and sign out before exiting the building. Visitors may choose to drop off items in the main office and leave the building.
- All visitors must wear a name tag or visitor's badge while in the building. This will identify visitors to the students and staff members.
- If volunteering in buildings, an annual criminal history background check must be completed prior to volunteering each year. Once volunteers have completed the background check process, they are placed on an "approved volunteer list" within the school.
- Adult visitors are advised to use adult/staff restroom facilities.
- All visitors/staff/volunteers are expected to observe the policies and procedures in the school's family handbook, a copy of which will be provided to the volunteer upon request.
- For the privacy of students and staff, cell phones, cameras, and recording devices may not be used in or near classrooms.
- The use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances is prohibited.
- Possession or carrying of knives, firearms, or any other weapon is prohibited.
- Abusive language and/or conduct endangering the health and safety of students, staff, and other volunteers are prohibited.
- All Board of Directors policies, administrative guidelines, and school rules governing adult and student conduct apply to visitors in our building.

Visitor Meals

Family members can eat lunch with a student, as long as they have made arrangements with the office **before 8:30 a.m.** on the day they will be visiting. Visitors will need to inform the office about how many extra lunches to order, and if they will be for adults or children, and with whom they will be eating. The cost of an adult meal

is \$4.10 and can be paid in the office. Visitors should have the correct amount of cash or pay by check.

Contacting a Student During the School Day

Messages for Students

It is understood that there may be times when it will be necessary for families to call the school office to leave a message for a child. Due to the number of calls received on a daily basis, DWS expects families to adhere to the following procedure regarding phone calls with messages for students. Please read them carefully.

- When you must call and leave specific instructions for your child, the message will be taken in the office. Your message will be sent to the classroom.
- Call **before 1:30 p.m.** to ensure that we have time to deliver the message.
- If you need to pick up your child before the school day officially ends, you will need to sign in at the office. Please do not call the office and ask that your child wait in the office for you to pick them up. It is important that the student be in his/her classroom as much of the day as possible.

Calls from Students

Students will not be allowed to call home from school to make changes to social arrangements they want to make with their friends after school. They must make these plans before or after school.

Parent Contact Information

The school makes every effort to try to keep student files current for emergencies, but we ask for families' cooperation in doing this. ANY time there is a change in a child's home address, phone number, parent cell phone number, work number, custody information, etc., please inform the office immediately. Do not call or email the teacher; speak with someone in the office to ensure information is updated in case of any emergency.

Background Searches

We conduct background searches on volunteers and staff as required by law. This does include board members. (There will not be a charge to the volunteer.)

Attendance Policies

Discovery Woods School emphasizes the significance of good attendance on school success. Discovery Woods School defines good attendance as attending at least 96% of the school year. Regular school attendance is an important ingredient for a successful education. Minnesota law requires students to attend school.

General Guidelines for attendance include the following:

- If a child is going to be tardy or absent from school, the parent or guardian must contact the office at (218) 828-8200 between 7:30 am and 8:00 am. In the event that the phone call is not answered, families should leave a voicemail.
 - Do not email or send this information with a sibling.
 - Do not contact the classroom teacher.
- Any absence or tardiness will remain unexcused if the school does not hear from a parent or guardian.
- An illness causing 3 or more days of absence from school requires a doctor's note upon the student's return.

Important times and procedures involving attendance include:

- School starts at 8:00 am and ends at 2:50 pm.
- Students will not be let into the building before 7:35 am.
- Students not in the classroom at 8:00 am will be counted as tardy. Tardy students must report to the office with their guardian to sign them in before heading to class.

- If a child will be late and needs a school lunch, a call must be placed to the office before 8:30 am. Families should send a packed lunch to school if unable to call before this time.
- If the office does not hear from an absent child's parent/guardian by 9:00 am, the emergency contact will be called to verify the child's absence.
- If a child becomes ill or injured during the day, the school will contact the parent/guardian at one of the numbers provided on the **emergency form**.

Excused Absences Include

- Student Illness - A doctor's note must be provided after 3 consecutive days' absence
- Medical/Dental appointment
- Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- Significant family events, such as a death in the student's immediate family.
- Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week, or as agreed upon by the parent and school district.
- Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- Student under suspension.

Unexcused Absences Include

- Any time parents/guardians do not call the office to report their child's absence, or failure to send a note about the absence.
- Missed the bus
- Car trouble
- Baby-sitting
- Shopping/running errands
- Oversleeping
- Needed at home

Policy for Excess Absences or Tardies

Unexcused Absences:

1 day - The school will contact the parent/guardian by phone

3 days - The school will send a notification to the parent/guardian requesting a doctor's note

5 days - The school will request a conference with the parent

7 days - The school will file an Educational Neglect/Truancy Report with Crow Wing County (or the county of residence) and a letter to the parent/guardian with information about the report filed

Excused Absences:

5 days of excused absences - The office will send a letter to the parent on a case-by-case basis.

10-24 days or more per school year may warrant an Educational Neglect/Truancy Report to Crow Wing County or the county of residence to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Tardies:

3 tardies - The school will contact the parent/guardian

5 tardies - 5 unexcused tardies will equal 1 unexcused absence. The school may request a meeting with the parent/guardian.

* Excessive tardiness may lead to a truancy referral or other consequences.

Health and Safety

Allergen Information

Discovery Woods School collects allergy information from all families and maintains a student allergy list, which is posted privately in the main office and all classrooms. Families should check with the office or classroom teacher before sending any food into the school that may cause an allergic reaction for one or more students.

Student Breakfast

DWS students have an opportunity to eat breakfast between 7:35-8:00. Students may order a school breakfast or bring their own to school. DWS encourages healthy eating; snacks are to be healthy and low in sugar and salt. Fresh fruits or vegetables are a good snack option, as well as cheese, yogurt, hummus, and wheat crackers.

Student Lunch

Lunch is provided on-site through a contract with Brainerd School District 181. The lunch menu is indicated on a monthly lunch calendar. Students may bring their own cold lunch from home or may order a hot lunch. A lunch count is taken every day right away in the morning, and the lunch providers are notified regarding the number of meals to deliver each day. Students must arrive at school on time to order hot lunch. A call can be placed for a hot lunch if a child will be late for school.

Every family with children who attend DWS must fill out the free and reduced lunch Application for Educational Benefits and send it to Brainerd ISD 181. Please call ISD 181 **(218) 454-6939** with questions about a child's breakfast/lunch account or payments. When leaving a message, please include your name and number.

Birthday Treats

Discovery Woods School supports the celebration of birthdays as long as it is done in a manner that does not disrupt the normal flow of the day. In order to support healthy choices and the variety of dietary restrictions of students, **parents should be mindful about sending birthday cakes or sweet snacks**. Birthdays can still be celebrated without sweets and sometimes without food at all. Some ideas of how to celebrate include: Enjoying a healthy snack such as fruit or cheese (no homemade treats); passing out a pencil for each student; donating a special book to the classroom library; and having the class decorate a banner with special messages.

Emergency Procedures and Drills

Students practice fire drills once a month during warmer weather so they may practice how to exit the building safely. There are maps and exit plans in each room of the school to facilitate the rapid exit of the building. While taking care to explain the process to the children so they are not alarmed, staff and students treat these drills seriously as if they were real emergencies. Tornado drills are held from April through September. Children are instructed on what to do during a tornado. Intruder drills also take place. This is a situation where children may not go outside because there may be suspicious activity, or, depending on the situation, they would enter a room that would be safe during a tornado or would be able to be secured.

Student Illness and Medication

If your child becomes ill and misses school, please make sure to do the following:

- Call or email the office
- Do not contact the classroom teacher about the illness; contact the office.
- Do not send illness information with a sibling.
- Failure to call the office results in an unexcused absence.
- Call or email the office each day your child is home ill.
- If you visit a doctor, request a note and drop it off at the front office.

Medication Guidelines

Medications (prescription and non-prescription) must be sent to school in the original container labeled with the student's name, prescription number, directions for administering, and the doctor's name. They must be accompanied by a Medication Permission form from a physician as well. Students are not allowed to bring aspirin or any other kind of medication to administer to themselves. Parents must bring all medication to the office. All medication, both prescription and non-prescription, will be dispensed from the office.

Prescription Medication Form

- Must be signed by the physician.
- Form must be renewed annually.
- The container must be labeled by the pharmacy with the medication name, dose, and doctor's name.
- Inappropriate age or dose will not be given without a doctor's specific, signed order.
- Medication should be brought to the office by a parent.

Non-Prescription Medication Form

- Must be completed by the parent.
- Requires a signed note by the parent stating the name of the medication, dosage requirement, and the student's name.
- The medication must be in the original, unopened container. A plastic bag or mixed medications will be returned.
- Will be given according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Exclusion of an Ill Child

Children should be kept home if they have any of the following symptoms or illnesses: MN Rule 3 9503.0080.

Exclusion of Sick Children guidelines are as follows:

- Any child with a reportable illness or condition as specified by the health department that is contagious and a physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others.
- Chicken pox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over.
- Vomiting - 2 or more times since admission that day.
- Diarrhea - 3 or more abnormally loose stools since admission that day, or loose stools that cannot be contained within a diaper.
- Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye.
- Bacterial infection, such as strep throat or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy;
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies that are untreated and contagious to others.
- Fever: 100-degree Fahrenheit axillary or higher temperature of undiagnosed origin before fever-reducing medication is given.
- Undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition.
- Significant respiratory distress; fast, difficult, or different breathing, uncontrolled coughing, and/or wheezing..

If a student becomes ill or injured during the day, she/he will be kept isolated from the other children and under staff supervision. A parent or authorized pick-up person will be notified and asked to pick up the student. The student will be monitored, and comfort measures will be provided. In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called, and then the parent.

Parents are asked to notify the program within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays, when a child is diagnosed by a child's medical provider as having a contagious disease. Contagious illnesses will be reported

to all parents the same day the information is received. The staff will post a notice in a prominent place stating the illness, incubation period, early signs to watch for, and exclusion recommendations.

Immunizations

Upon enrollment, documentation of current immunizations must be submitted. For inadequately or unimmunized children, a signed, notarized statement of parental objection to the immunization or a medical exemption is required. From time to time, there may be children at the program who are not fully vaccinated. Vaccination is important to protect the health and safety of all the children and staff.

Inclement Weather Communication

Should it ever be necessary to cancel school, due to bad weather, please listen to local FM radio programming in the morning or watch the news TV-WCCO for updates.

Things to keep in mind during inclement weather include:

- Due to transportation sharing, DWS will start late or close at any time the Brainerd School District 181 does.
- If the weather causes a two-hour late start, do not bring students before 9:35 am.
- Do not call periodically to see if school is going to close early; we know when we get an official notification from the Brainerd School District.

In the event of needing someone else to pick up your child, do not ask the school office to call anyone for you; it is your responsibility to do so.

Maltreatment of Minors Policy

The policy of Discovery Woods School is to fully comply with Minn. Stat. §626.556, requiring school personnel to report suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse. It shall be a violation of this policy for any school personnel to fail to immediately report instances of child neglect, or physical or sexual abuse when the school personnel knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years. Due to the length of the Maltreatment of Minors Policy, a copy can be requested from the office, or it can be found under "Family Information" at the school's website - www.discoverywoods.com

Behavior and Discipline

Conduct

Students at DWS are expected to consistently behave safely and respectfully. Each child must take responsibility for his/her own behavior with guidance and support from adults. Staff will establish clear and consistent expectations to help each child assume responsibility for his/her own behavior.

If a student is not following a rule, a staff member will help to facilitate a plan to help the child assume his/her responsibility to correct the behavior. The parent/guardian will be contacted after repeated infractions, unless a child's safety is at stake. In that case, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted immediately.

Behavioral Guidance & Procedures

We expect all children and adults to observe four general rules of respect in actions and words:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for the environment
- Respect for materials, tools, grounds, and equipment

These rules apply to all areas of the school, including outdoor recreation areas and any off-site areas the classroom travels to for field trips.

DWS staff act as positive models for students. Staff model respect, kindness, cooperation, and encouragement. Students are encouraged to exemplify these characteristics in turn. Self-regulation strategies must be explicitly taught, modeled, and practiced. Teachers and support staff may use a variety of positive guidance techniques that include, but are not limited to:

- Providing clear and consistent rules and redirection
- Allowing children to try and resolve conflicts peacefully on their own
- Redirecting dysregulated students using humor, distraction, or calming techniques
- Anticipating problems before they occur to prevent behaviors from starting
- Avoiding judgment and criticism and guiding positive social interactions
- Offering children alternatives to aggressive behavior, such as walking away, ignoring, or talking through a problem

DWS uses components of Caring School Community, which is a research-based social-emotional learning (SEL) program that builds school-wide community, develops students' social skills, and SEL competencies. When positive guidance techniques are not working with a child and repeated misbehavior is occurring, teachers will inform and work with parents to establish a plan for the child. If the misbehavior is violent, the parents will be contacted immediately. Depending on the age and specific behavior of the child, parents/families may be contacted to provide support and guidance, the student may be sent to the director's office, or s/he may be suspended if the behaviors are severe enough to warrant this discipline. DWS handles misbehavior on an individual basis without compromising the safety and security of all students.

Disciplinary Policy

Learning is maximized in an orderly environment, one that is organized to encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity. Students can best learn individual and collective responsibility and gain maturity if they are provided opportunities to self-reflect on their behaviors with added adult support to develop a growth mindset and positive disposition toward others and for themselves. The School Discipline policy is intended to communicate expectations regarding acceptable conduct in school in order to provide a positive and optimal learning environment for all students. Due to the length of the Student Discipline Policy, a copy can be requested from the office, or it can be found under "Family Information" at the school's website - www.discoverywoods.com

Pupil Fair Dismissal Act

Public schools in Minnesota are governed by the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act that assures students will not be unfairly asked to leave a school, or be suspended without cause. A copy of this law is available upon request from the school. Also, further information about this law is available on the Minnesota Department of Education website.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Discovery Woods School strives to provide safe, secure, and respectful learning environments for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at school-sponsored activities. Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behavior, is conduct that interferes with a student's ability to learn and a teacher's ability to educate.

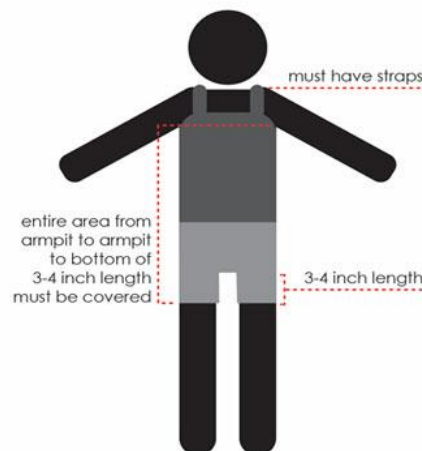
As required by law, DWS has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. This policy protects students against bullying and harassment based on actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, immigration status, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation, including gender identity and expression, academic status related to student performance, disability, status concerning

public assistance, age, military status, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic defined in Chapter 363A. This policy also protects any student who voluntarily participates in any school function or activity, whether the student is enrolled in Discovery Woods School or not. Due to the length of the Anti-Bullying Policy, a copy can be requested from the office, or it can be found under “Family Information” at the school’s website - www.discoverywoods.com

Dress Code

Discovery Woods School respects students’ rights to express themselves in the way they dress. All students are also expected to respect the school community by dressing appropriately for an educational environment. This policy is intended to guide families. Minimum Requirements:

- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs (see images below). Tops must have shoulder straps. Rips or tears in clothing should be lower than the 3 to 4 inches in length.
- Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment (pajamas, bedroom shoes, or slippers shall not be worn, except for school activities approved by the Executive Director during dress-up days).
- See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meets the minimum requirements of the dress code.
- The intention of this policy is not to abridge the rights of staff to express political, religious, philosophical, or similar opinions by wearing apparel on which such messages are stated. Such messages are acceptable as long as they are not lewd, vulgar, obscene, defamatory, profane, or do not advocate violence or harassment against others.



Communication

The staff at DWS are here for the well-being of the students. Families and staff can work together to ensure that each child is well cared for and can reach their full potential within the school. It is helpful for staff members working with students when families provide any relevant information that will help guide positive working relationships with the student. Staff support the work of the parents or guardians, and parents support the work of the educators. Several ways for parents to stay connected and updated about their children and school events throughout the school year include the following:

Family Conferences

Conferences allow students to share the amazing work they have been doing with their families, as well as allow for questions and concerns to be addressed between parents and teachers. Although conferences are scheduled twice per year for all students, a parent may request a conference at any time to discuss concerns about their child. If a parent is unable to attend a conference in person, a phone or virtual conference is an option. Parents/guardians of students with an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) are required to meet once a year with the special education team in addition to parent-teacher conferences.

Report Cards & JMC

Progress reports will be sent to parents electronically twice per year at the end of each semester. These reports give summary information about how a child is performing in all content areas. DWS uses a student

management system called JMC. Families will receive emails and text messages through this system. Report cards are created and sent through this system

Newsletters & Events

DWS will send out a monthly newsletter highlighting events and giving information such as the lunch menu and reminders of closings. Teachers will also send out classroom newsletters at least monthly to update families about what is going on in each student's classroom. Throughout the year, DWS offers family engagement opportunities like student showcases at the end of each semester, a literacy and math night, field trips, Scholastic book fairs, and other classroom-specific activities.

Parent/Guardian Grievance Procedure

It is the goal of DW to provide a quality environment that supports the child as well as works with the family to meet individual needs. It is important to the staff and school board to ensure that we are following our mission to serve children and families by offering a quality program. Thus, we wish to make it possible for families to let us know when they feel we have not met their needs. To address and resolve grievances regarding the program, the following procedure has been established:

- First, parents with concerns regarding school policies, administration, educational methods, or overall concerns regarding the facility or equipment should address grievances with the Director. The Director will schedule a meeting with the parent as soon as possible. At the time of the meeting, the group will try to come to a solution to the issue or closure on the topic.
- Second, parents who feel their concerns have not been adequately addressed may submit their grievance in writing to the DWS Board of Directors. Two members of the Board and the Director of the school will meet with the parents to seek a resolution to the problem, either verbal or written. A written report will be sent to the parents and filed in the school records.

Discovery Woods School wishes to address any concerns that may arise with parents or families. All concerns are taken seriously.

Board meetings

As a public charter school, DW holds monthly board meetings to discuss the ongoing operation of the school. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings. These meetings give parents the opportunity to learn more about the operation of the school as well as provide a platform to address ideas and concerns.

Curriculum and Activities

Academics

Across grades K-6, a math curriculum called Open Up Resources Math is used. In Kindergarten, the University of Florida Literacy Institute, or UFLI, is used to build strong foundational literacy skills, including letter formation, phonemic awareness, and decoding. In 1st grade, and the first half of the year in 2nd grade, a literacy curriculum called Flyleaf Publishing is used to continue teaching foundational literacy skills and move beyond these skills to explore sentence building, vocabulary, and comprehension. In the second half of 2nd grade through 6th grade, an English language arts curriculum called Bookworms is used, in which vocabulary, comprehension, and various writing activities are practiced regularly. In grades K-3, science and social studies switch off by week or unit during the same time block. In grade 4, science and environmental education are taught every day, and social studies is integrated into an extended English language arts block. In grades 5-6, social studies is taught every day, and science/environmental education is taught every day in separate learning blocks.

Field Trips

Parents or guardians must sign a permission form for field trips. If a class is to take a field trip, information and permission slips will go out to families at least a week before the trip. The permission slip must be signed and returned to school for children to attend the field trip. Transportation for a field trip will always follow state regulations regarding transporting children. Students will be transported on a school bus or another appropriately equipped vehicle. At times, teachers need parent volunteers to chaperone field trips. There are a variety of volunteer opportunities, including book fairs, reading to a class, parent-organized fundraising events, gardening, organizing the library, and much more. Never hesitate to contact the school or your child's teacher to learn more about other volunteer opportunities. Staff will take emergency cards (with emergency numbers for the child's parent, persons to be called if a parent can't be reached, and the child's doctors), a first aid kit, and attendance records on all field trips.

Testing

DWS completes screening, also known as benchmarking, three times per year in reading and math using FastBridge Assessments. Screening provides important data to determine whether a student is on track for grade-level success or may be at risk for learning challenges. Further diagnostic assessments may occur to pinpoint a student's needs in intervention settings.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests are given to all public school students starting in the 3rd grade. Students in grades 3-6 take the MCA reading and math; in addition, students in grade 5 take the MCA science. These assessments occur in April.

Please refer to the testing calendar on the school website - www.discoverywoods.com

Computer Use

The use of Discovery Woods devices and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Any misuse or abuse of the conditions listed below will result in the loss of privileges.

- Computers are for academic purposes only. Any other activity without teacher permission is not allowed, including games, playing music, internet messaging, non-school-related email, etc.
- Students are only allowed to print materials related to their class or project work, and must receive permission from a staff member before printing.
- Students must take proper care of the computers while they are using them.
- Students are not allowed to download files or programs from the internet.
- Students are not allowed to use the internet unsupervised. The school uses a website blocking tool called GoGuardian to ensure students are not able to access inappropriate websites.
- Any form of vandalism is not allowed. This includes any malicious attempt to physically deface, disable, destroy, or hack into computers or the network, or to harm or destroy data of another user.

Students who do not comply with the above conditions will have their privileges revoked. On the first offense, the student will lose privileges for 2 weeks. For the second offense, the student will lose privileges for 1 month. On the third offense, the student will lose privileges for the remainder of the year. In cases of vandalism, students and their families will be responsible for any reasonable costs necessary for the repair or replacement of the item, as well as potential legal consequences.

Parents and students will be provided with the Discovery Woods School Chromebook User Agreement to read over and sign before receiving a Chromebook to use. This agreement can be found in Appendix D.

Other Information

Classroom Animal Visitation

Service animals are permitted to accompany a person with disabilities on school property and school buses consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended, Minnesota Statute §256C, and Minnesota Statute §363A.19. A person who is training a dog to be a service dog shall also be permitted to have the dog on school property. No other animal meant for support or otherwise will be allowed at school.

Electronic Games and Cell Phone Policy

DWS understands that some students have a long bus ride and are allowed to use electronics on the bus; therefore, students are permitted to bring electronic games and cellphones to school. However, they must keep these items turned on silent in their backpacks throughout the day. Students are not permitted to use their cell phones during the day unless permission is given in an emergency to use their phone in the office. Students and parents should understand that student hall cubbies are not able to be locked; therefore, if an electronic device goes missing, the school is not responsible for theft or loss of student personal property.

The United States Flag and Pledge

DWS adheres to the Minnesota State Statute (121A.11), which requires the proper display of a United States flag while school is in session. Furthermore, the statute requires reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at least once a week in each classroom, as led by a teacher or surrogate. Staff and students have the right to decline participation in reciting the pledge, and others must respect their right to do so.

School Supplies

Please see Appendix B for the DWS school supply list

Although every effort will be made to update the Family Handbook on a timely basis, the DWS Executive Director and the Board of Directors reserve the right, and have the discretion, to change any policies or procedures without notice, consultation, or publication, except as required by law. Discovery Woods School will do its best to communicate any changes to families as they occur. Please contact the school's Executive Director with any questions or concerns regarding the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

Appendix A - School Year Calendar

Discovery Woods 2025-2026 Calendar									
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	In Session	Workshop
August	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Teacher Workshop 8/25-8/28	4
	31								
September	1	2	3	4	5	6	Letter Day 9/1 - No School	4	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	First Day of School 9/2	5
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		5
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		5
	28	29	30						2
								Days - 21 Hours - 131.25	
October			1	2	3	4	No School - Inservice Day 10/3	2	1
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		5
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	No School 10/16-10/17, EM Conf 10/16	3
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		5
	26	27	28	29	30	31			5
								Days - 20 Hours - 125	
November							1		0
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		5
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	No School - Inservice Day 11/10	4
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		5
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	No School - Thanksgiving 11/27-28	3
	30								
								Days - 17 Hours - 106.25	
December	1	2	3	4	5	6	No School - Inservice 12/1	4	1
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		5
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		5
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	No School - Winter Break 12/24-1/2	2
	28	29	30	31					0
								Days - 16 Hours - 100	
January				1	2	3	No School - Winter Break 12/24-1/2	0	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No School - Inservice 1/6	4
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Half Days 1/15 and 1/16	5
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	No School - MLK Day 1/19	4
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	End of 1st Semester 1/18	5
								Days - 18 Hours - 112.5	
February	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		5
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	No School - Inservice 2/13	4
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	No School - President's Day 2/16	4
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	(Snow Making)	5
								Days - 18 Hours - 112.5	
March	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		5
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	No School - Spring Break 3/9-3/13	0
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	School Resumes 3/16	5
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		5
	29	30	31						2
								Days - 17 Hours - 106.25	
April			1	2	3	4	No School - Spring Holiday 4/13	2	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	No School - Inservice 4/6 (snow make-up)	4
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		5
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		5
	26	27	28	29	30				4
								Days - 20 Hours - 125	
May				1	2				1
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		5
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	No School - Memorial Day 5/25	5
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	KinderFriend Day 5/28	5
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Last Preschool Day 5/29	4
	31								
								Days - 20 Hours - 125	
June		1	2	3	4	5	6	Half Days 6/1 and 6/2	1
								Last Student Day (K-6) 6/2	
								End of 2nd Semester 6/2	
								Teacher Workshop 6/3	
								Total Days	169
								Instructional Hours:	11
								PreK- 1,044	
								K-6- 1,051	

Appendix B



604 N 7th Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-8200
www.discoverywoods.com

All DW Students

Backpack
Headphones in a Ziploc bag (Not preschool)
Kleenex
Cleaning wipes
Colored pencils
Pencil top erasers
Washable markers
Whiteboard/Dry Erase markers (thin & thick)
Small Whiteboard/Dry-Erase erasers
Highlighters
Outside shoes/boots
Inside shoes for the classroom/PE class
Personal water bottle

K-1 grade

\$20 to cover a portion of the classroom supplies and/or:
Magic erasers
Playdough
Hand Wipes
Food Coloring (liquid)
Stamp Pads (washable)
Optional- Super One/ Dollar Store gift cards

2-3 grade

\$20 to cover a portion of the classroom supplies
1 Composition notebook

4th grade

\$20 to cover a portion of the classroom supplies
1 Composition notebook

5th-6th grade

\$20 to cover a portion of the classroom supplies and/or:
2 composition notebooks
Calculator (TI-108 or the TI-30xs will be used in future grades)

Preschool

\$20 to cover a portion of the classroom supplies and/or:
Magic erasers
Play-Doh
Student Scissors
Hand Wipes
Water Color Paints
Food Coloring (liquid)
Stamp Pads (washable)
Optional- Super One/ Dollar Store gift cards

After Care: Crayola crayons, colored pencils, Play-Doh, beads, string, paints, watercolor paper, and paintbrushes.

Office: Packing tape, duct tape, pens, white and colored card stock, band-aids

****Please label with student's name/initials: headphones, backpacks, shoes, water bottles, and jackets. All other supplies are SHARED within the classroom.***

Appendix C

SCHOOL - PARENT COMPACT

Discovery Woods School, and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) agree that this compact outlines how the parents, school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve state standards.

School Responsibilities

Discovery Woods School will:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables students to meet the state standards as follows:
 - The school will incorporate the student/parent/school compact as a component of its School Parental Involvement Policy:
 - The school-parent compact will be a part of the School Parental Involvement Policy will be a part of the Student Handbook.
 - During regular parent/teacher/student conferences, the classroom teacher and/or Title I Coordinator will explain the school-parent compact to families.
 - Per request, the school will assist parents of children served by the school in understanding topics such as the following:
 - The State's academic content standards
 - The state and local academic assessments
 - The requirements of Title I
 - The school will make materials available to help parents/guardians work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement and to foster parental involvement.
 - The school will work with its teachers and support staff in regard to connecting and communicating with parents/guardians as equal partners.
 - The school will ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents/guardians of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
- Hold parent-teacher conferences (at least annually in elementary schools) during which this compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement.
- Update parents with reports on their children's progress.
- Ensure reasonable accessibility for communication between parents/guardians and school staff
- Encourage parents to volunteer and participate in their child's class and to observe classroom activities.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents will:

- Ensure consistent school attendance for my child
- Read with my child at home
- Participate in parent-teacher conferences and communications with the school about my child.
- Advocate for my child's emotional and academic success
- Stay informed about my child's education by reading all notices from the school

NOTE: Each school receiving funds under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) must develop a written school-parent compact jointly with parents for all children participating in Title I, Part A activities, services, and programs. That compact is part of the school's written parental involvement policy, developed by the school and parents under section 1118(b) of the ESEA. The compact must outline how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.



Chromebook User Agreement

Obtaining a Device

The user agreement must be signed by a parent or guardian to receive a school-issued device. Find the signature page at the end of this document.

Returning Your Device

1. If the student needs to take home a device for distance learning, the device must be returned within a week. Failure to turn in a device will result in the student being charged the full replacement cost. The district may also file a report of stolen property with the Brainerd Police Department.

2. Any software or media loaded onto that particular device will need to be transferred by the student before turning in the device. The school district will erase any personal information from the device upon return.

3. Transfer/Withdrawing Students

a. Students who transfer or withdraw from Discovery Woods School must turn in their device and charger to the main office on their last day of attendance. Failure to turn in the device will result in the student being charged the full replacement cost. Any damage found on the device at the time of return may be assessed a repair fee. Unpaid fines and fees of students leaving Discovery Woods School may be turned over to a collection agency. The district may also file a report of stolen property with the Brainerd Police Department.

b. Any software or media loaded onto that particular device will need to be transferred by the student before turning in the device. The school district will erase any personal information from the device upon return.

Taking Care of Your Device

Students are responsible for the general care of the device that they have been issued by the school. Devices that are broken or fail to work properly must be taken to the main office immediately. If a loaner device is needed, one will be issued to the student until their device can be repaired or replaced. Please note that repair costs will be assessed for any damage to the loaner device, just as they would to the assigned device.

1. General Precautions

a. No food or drink should be next to your device while it is in use.

b. Cords, cables, and removable storage devices must be inserted carefully into the device.

c. Devices must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels.

- d. Devices should not be forced into a locker or book bag, as this may break the screen.
- e. Heavy objects should never be placed on top of devices.
- f. Do not expose your device to extreme temperatures or direct sunlight for extended periods. Extreme heat or cold may cause damage to the device.
- g. Always bring your device to room temperature before turning it on.

2. Students may choose to purchase a case for their device at their own expense. Students may choose to decorate their case appropriately, ensuring that school policy is followed.

3. Carrying devices

- a. Always transport devices with care.
- b. Never lift devices by the screen.
- c. Students should never carry their device while the screen is open unless directed to do so by a teacher.

4. Screen Care

- a. The device screen can be damaged if subjected to heavy objects, rough treatment, some cleaning solvents, and other liquids. The screens are particularly sensitive to damage from excessive pressure.
- b. Do not put pressure on the top of a device when it is closed.
- c. Do not store a device with the screen open.
- d. Make sure there is nothing on the keyboard before closing the lid (e.g., pens or pencils).
- e. Only clean the screen with a soft, dry microfiber cloth or anti-static cloth.

Using Your Device

1. Personalizing the Device

- a. Devices must remain free of any decorative writing, drawing, stickers, paint, tape, or labels. Spot checks for compliance may be done by school staff at any time.
- b. Students may add appropriate music, photos, and videos to their devices. Personalized media are subject to inspection and must follow the Discovery Woods acceptable use policy.

2. Logging Into a Device

- a. Students will log into their devices using their school-issued Google account username and password.
- b. Students should never share their account passwords with others. In the event of a compromised account, the Discovery Woods School reserves the right to disable the account.

3. Using Your Device Outside of School

- a. Students are encouraged to use their devices at home and other locations outside of school.
- b. A Wi-Fi Internet connection will be necessary for the majority of device use; however, some applications can be used while not connected to the Internet.

Operating System and Security

Students may not use or install any operating system on their device other than the current version that is supported and managed by the district.

1. No Expectation of Privacy

- a. Students should not expect confidentiality or privacy concerning any usage of a device, regardless of whether that use is for district-related or personal purposes, other than as specifically provided by law.
- b. The district may, without prior notice or consent, log, supervise, access, view, monitor, and record use of student devices at any time for any reason related to the operation of the district. By using a device, students agree to such access, monitoring, and recording of their use.

2. Monitoring Software

- a. Teachers, school administrators, and the technology department staff may use monitoring software that allows them to view the screens and activity on student devices.

3. Virus Protection

- a. The district has enabled virus protection on the Chromebooks; there is no need for additional virus protection.

4. Content Filter

- a. The district utilizes an Internet content filter that complies with the federally mandated Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). While on district property, all devices will have all Internet activity protected and monitored by the district.
- b. Families are encouraged to contact their internet provider regarding setting up filtering options on their home internet, if desired.

Software on devices

1. Apps and Extensions

- a. Device software is delivered via the Discovery Woods School portal. These are web-based applications that do not require installation space on the hard drive.

2. Google Apps for Education

- a. Devices seamlessly integrate with the Google Apps for Education suite of productivity and collaboration tools. This suite includes Google Docs (word processing), Spreadsheets, Presentations, Drawings, Forms, Sites, Gmail, Groups, Voice, and Blogger.
- b. All work is stored within Google Apps.

Repairing or Replacing Your Device

1. Repair/Troubleshooting

- a. All repair/troubleshooting concerns should be directed to our main office (218) 828-8200 or the IT Coordinator at tech@discoverywoods.com.
- b. A replacement device will be given if available during repairs.
- c. Depending on how the damage to the device occurred, students or staff may be held responsible for costs associated with the repair.

2. Lost Devices

- a. Lost devices will be charged at the cost of the complete replacement in the table below.

3. Stolen Devices

- a. The Discovery Woods School will require that a police report be submitted in cases of theft. Fraudulent reporting of theft will be turned over to the police for prosecution. A student making a false report will also be subject to disciplinary action as outlined by the district-wide student disciplinary policy.

Appropriate Use and Digital Citizenship

1. School-issued devices should be used for educational purposes, and students are to adhere to the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and all of its corresponding administrative procedures at all times.

2. If students need to sign up for specific services on their device, they should **ALWAYS** use their Discovery Woods School account issued by the school. While working in a digital and collaborative environment, students should always conduct themselves as good digital citizens by adhering to the following:

- a. **Respect Self.** Students will show respect for themselves through their actions. Students will select online names that are appropriate. Students will use caution with the information, images, and other media that they post online. Students will carefully consider what personal information about their life, experiences, or relationships they post.
- b. **Protect Self.** Students will ensure that the information, images, and materials they post online will not put them at risk. Students will not publish their personal details, contact details, or a schedule of their activities. Students will report any attacks or inappropriate behavior directed at them while online. Students will protect passwords, accounts, and resources.
- c. **Respect Others.** Students will show respect to others. Students will not use electronic media to antagonize, bully, harass, or stalk people. Students will show respect for other people in their choice of websites. Students will not visit sites that are degrading to others, pornographic, racist, or inappropriate. Students will not record/photograph others without their explicit permission.
- d. **Protect Others.** Students will protect others by reporting abuse and not forwarding inappropriate content materials or communications.
- e. **Respect Intellectual property.** Students will request permission to use copyrighted or otherwise protected materials. Students will cite all uses of websites, books, media, etc. Students will

acknowledge all primary sources.

Device Policy & Usage: Receipt of Notification and Understanding

Your signature on this document states that you have read, understand, and agree to abide by the compliance requirements of the Discovery Woods School Policy regarding the use of computers and the internet.

While the district Google logins provide a basic level of safety measures, please be aware that when the district-issued device is being used on a home or public internet network, any filtering of content will be provided by that home or organization; the school content filters only work within the schools.

Additionally, students may be charged for the repair and replacement of devices at the discretion of school administration, and the cause of device damage

School Year

Printed Student Name

Device #

Parent/Guardian Signature (REQUIRED)

Date